

The National Newsmagazine

SPOTLIGHT

Dec 7-13, 2001



CIVIL SERVICE Time to Deliver

- Family Planning: Indonesian Experience
- AIDS DAY: Health Hazards
- Extension of the Trade Treaty
- AYAR Conference in Taiwan

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COVERSTORY : Time To Deliver

As the state of emergency is imposed, people now expect the civil service to play its part.

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FAMILY PLANNING : For The People

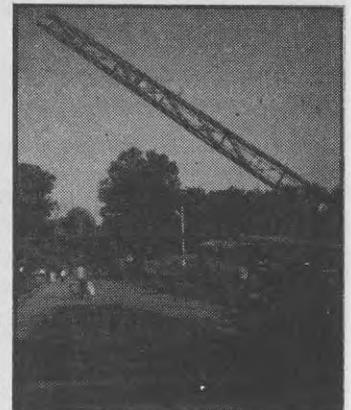
An integrated health system based on community participation can help manage a country's population.

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NEPAL-INDIA TRADE TREATY : Extended Coverage

The trade treaty is extended for 3 months more giving a breathing space before the core issues are resolved.

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SPOTLIGHT

THE NATIONAL NEWSMAGAZINE

Vol. 21, No.21, December 7, 2001 (Mansir 22, 2058)

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Cover Design
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Distribution
Bazaar International
228 Sanchaya Kosh Bldg. Kathmandu
G.P.O Box 2480, Ph: 222983 Fax : 229437
e-mail : bazaar@mos.com.np

Printers : Kishor offset Press (P.) Ltd.
P.O. Box 4665, Galkopakha, Thamel,
Kathmandu, Tel: 351044 (Off), 351172 (Res.),
Fax : 977-1-351172,
E-mail : kishor@groupktm.mos.com.np

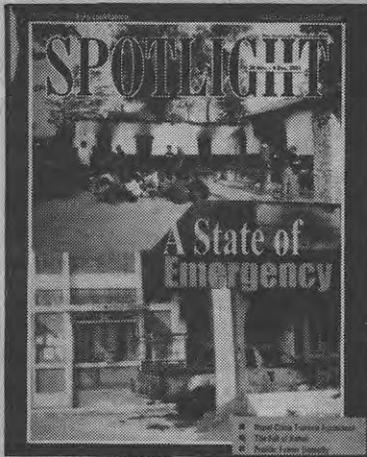
C.D.O. Regd. No
151/039-40
Postal Regd. No
42/057/58
U.S. Library of Congress
Catalogue No. 91-905060

EDITOR'S NOTE

It is, indeed, very sad and ironical that the paragon of democratic parties had to take resort to clamp most draconian laws on the people to restore law and order. The brutal violence perpetrated by the Maoists, perhaps, left no option for the popularly elected democratic government of Nepali Congress led by Sher Bahadur Deuba but to declare emergency throughout the kingdom and deploy the army. Nearly two weeks after the declaration of emergency, according to official reports, the army action is proving quite effective in quelling the Maoist insurgency. But, stray incidents in and around the capital keep on generating fears in the mind of the Kathmanduites. Since the Maoists with the limited resources cannot stand up to the highly equipped Royal Nepal Army for a long period unless their supplies are replenished by some alien forces, it is hoped the country will soon breathe a sigh of relief. Normalcy in the kingdom could return much earlier if the Maoists could pluck courage to lay down the arms in exchange of general amnesty. After all, they also are the sons and daughters of the same soil and can enjoy same rights and privileges as the rest of the countrymen if they chose not to listen to destructive counsels and abide by the laws of the country. The sooner they realize that they have selected wrong ways to achieve their objectives, the better for them and the country as well. They should never lose sight of the simple saying "when brothers fight, the villains profit".

The imposition of emergency, for howsoever a smaller period, should be avoided as it suspends the fundamental rights of the people. But, if the authority thinks it is unavoidable as has happened in Nepal, it must be put to best use so that the government is able to obtain maximum public cooperation. Our Prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, who seems to be the principal actor in the drama being enacted in the country at the moment, has been awarded an excellent opportunity to prove his worth and wipe away the obnoxious left-over of his previous innings. Since quelling the insurgency and restoring law and order has become the prime responsibility of the Royal Nepal Army, Prime minister Deuba can afford to focus his whole attention on toning up the administration. The Nepalese have strong apprehensions that the emergency powers might be misused and the country pushed further towards the brink of disaster. The Prime minister has, indeed, assured the opposition that the government will take all precautions to prevent any abuse of the emergency. Not only that, he should make the best possible effort to give good governance to the country, arrest corruption, punish the offenders and restore some semblance of confidence in the government. If his intentions are honest and if he really wants to serve the people and the country it is the best opportunity for him to start punitive action against all corrupt politicians who have looted the country, punish the unscrupulous businessmen who have looted the banks and book all those immoral bureaucrats who have looted the government treasury. He could not find a better opportunity to instil some discipline in the people and generate some respect for the leaders and the government. The Prime Minister must be well aware of his own capabilities to face the situation. It is not an easy time and he is confronting great challenges. The country is in great peril of losing the hard won democracy. At the verge of bankruptcy, the governments needs big funds for security operations. As such, the army operations must be short and most productive. The emergency must be lifted as early as possible. Otherwise, we might have to witness the return of Pauranic Bhashmasur. These are very tall orders. Can Deuba cope with them? ■

Madhav Kumar Rimal
Chief Editor & Publisher



Terror Strikes

The latest series of Maoist violence has forced the government to declare the state of emergency in the country (A State of Emergency SPOTLIGHT November 30). The government has done good by terming the Maoists as terrorists. Just as the government was showing signs of flexibility in its talks with the rebels, the latter single-handedly withdrew from the talks for no specific reason and launched heinous attacks against the security forces. Unfortunately, the coming days are going to be very sad and difficult for every patriotic Nepalese. Everybody is hoping that somehow the violence stops and peace returns to this mountain kingdom.

Kiran Thapa
Old Baneshwore

Car Bazaar

The cover story "Driving In A Buyer's Market" (SPOTLIGHT, November 23) provided a glimpse into the burgeoning car market in the country. Surely for a country this small, the number of models available is outstanding. It is indeed a buyer's market with the manufacturers trying to outdo each other in luring the consumer. The sleek models of cars running through the crowded city thoroughfares are testimony to that. Hopefully, the price of cars would come down considerably, allowing more people to enjoy the ride.

Krishna Shrestha
Bangemuda

Misplaced Priority

Though the cover story "Driving In a Buyer's Market" (SPOTLIGHT, November 23)

made for a good read, it was clearly out of place. At a time when the country is facing manifold economic, social and political problems, choosing such a story reflects misplaced priority. The percentage of Nepal's population that can afford to buy car is very small. The story did not deserve to be highlighted so much. There are better and more pressing issues of national concern than cars.

Sanjiv Bista
Hattisar

Affordable To Middle Class

It was only after the Indian joint venture cars started to come that the Nepalese middle class could afford the luxury of owning family vehicle ("Driving In a Buyer's Market", SPOTLIGHT, November 23). Earlier when there

were only expensive Japanese models available, only a handful of affluent people had cars. But now increasingly even the middle-class people are buying them. This is a very good development. The authorities should also allow Chinese cars into Nepal so that prices come down, making it possible for more Nepalis to buy them.

Shikhar Rai
Battisputali

Liberalization Gains

The growth in vehicle sales points to the rising middle-class population in the country ("Driving In a Buyer's Market", SPOTLIGHT, November 23). This is a good sign for the country's economic development. The expansion of the middle class suggests that the policy of economic liberalization adopted a decade ago is bearing fruits. If the positive results of this policy is widened and distrib-

uted evenly, the country can effectively deal with its persistent problem of poverty.

Rita Tamang
Kalimati

Trade Talks

The deadlock in the Nepal-India trade talks is taking an ominous turn, as less than a month remains for the treaty's renewal ("Coming Closer?", SPOTLIGHT November 9). The two countries should resolve their differences quickly to avoid any unwarranted delay. India needs to show magnanimity, although it has the right to voice its grievances. On the other hand, the Nepalese side needs to seriously take up genuine Indian grievances.

Hikmat KC
Bagbazar

CORRECTION: Please read as All China Federation of Industry & Commerce instead of what appeared inadvertently in the Page 3 of last issue (Nov. 30) of SPOTLIGHT. Error is regretted. — ED

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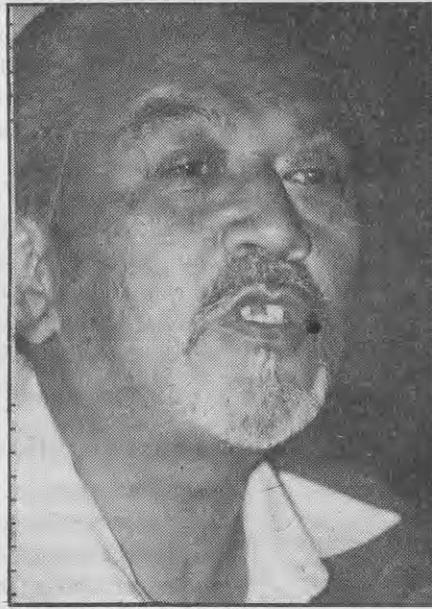
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China Concerned; Russia Condemns Maoist Action

Nepal's northern neighbor, China, is closely watching the situation in Nepal, agency reports said. Asked whether China would provide military assistance to Nepal, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhang Qiyue said: "China has always adhered to the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries. We believe the Nepalese government would properly handle its domestic issues." A statement issued by the Chinese embassy in Kathmandu said His Majesty the King and the Nepalese government have already adopted effective and contingency measures and the situation is under control. China also expressed hope and belief that Nepal can maintain peace, stability and development. "As a cordial and friendly neighbor of Nepal, China is very much concerned about the latest situation in Nepal," the statement said. Meanwhile, the Russian Federation has condemned terrorism and has expressed anxiety at the new round of violence. Resolutely condemning terrorism in principle, the Russian Federation supports the firm intentions of the Nepalese government aimed at securing sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country. In a statement, the Russian Foreign Ministry hoped that dialogue and national consensus will prevail in the kingdom, bloodshed will be stopped, and law and order will be restored. *Leading dailies report Nov. 30.*

Tuladhar Briefly Detained

A leading human rights activist and one of the facilitators in the government-Maoist talks, Padma Ratna Tuladhar, was briefly detained by police while he was about to board an Indian Airlines flight to New Delhi Wednesday afternoon, reports said. After detaining him for about one and half hours at the Hanumandhoka Police Office, Tuladhar was released without any clarification. Tuladhar, a heart patient, later left for New Delhi to undergo check-up and treatment at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences



Tuladhar

(AIIMS). Human rights activists have strongly condemned the detention of Tuladhar and called it an unwarranted provocative action. Officials said they did not want to detain Tuladhar and had taken him to the police office only to get some information. *Compiled from reports Nov. 29.*

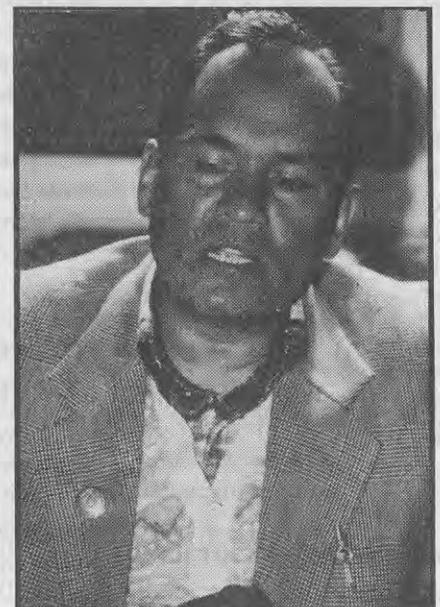
Over A Dozen Journalists Arrested

Security personnel have taken into custody more journalists and media workers said to be sympathetic to the underground Maoists from different parts of the country, a leading daily reported Friday. According to the report, police have arrested nearly a dozen people, including journalists and management of pro-Maoist 'Jana Sangharsha' daily in western town of Butwal Thursday. Those arrested include chairman of the board of directors of the daily Benu Ram Pradhan, director Iswor Gautam, managing director Ajay Man Shrestha, former chief editor Bal Krishna Chapagain, consulting editor Basanta Pokhrel, executive editor Sher Bahadur KC and reporter Jitendra GC. Similarly, in the eastern terai district of Siraha, police have taken into custody publisher Sitaram Saha and joint editor Paban Shrestha of 'Janak Awaj,' a local daily. In the mid-western district of

Surkhet, police have arrested editor Bishnu Khanal and executive editor Liladhar Gautam of 'Surkhet Post' weekly. They have also taken into custody four other persons in Surkhet, including Suresh Bhatta of the Patriotic Democratic Forum. Police have also arrested journalist and lawyer Baikuntha Dahal, boarding school operator Hari Rai and Ganesh Rai from eastern district of Udaypur. Earlier, police had taken into custody nine journalists and staff of pro-Maoist newspapers, including central committee member of the Federation of Nepalese Journalists and editor of 'Jana Disha' daily Om Sharma, in the capital Monday hours before a nationwide emergency was imposed. *Nepal Samacharpatra Nov. 30.*

Ordinance Proposes Life Sentence For Terrorists

Anyone found involved in acts of terrorism or even helping or harboring terrorists will be sentenced to life in prison, a government notice said Tuesday, quoting the anti-terrorism Ordinance issued by the government. "If a life or lives are lost due to the acts of terrorism then the people involved or those conspiring these acts would be imprisoned for life. Even if no life is lost such acts would still be punishable by life in



Khadka

prison," said the notice. As part of their sweeping powers during the nation-wide state of emergency, authorities would be able to detain anyone they suspect of involvement in acts of terrorism for 90 days without charges. "If the authority believes that there is a basis to stop an individual or group from performing acts of terrorism then security personnel can detain them for maximum of 90 days," said the notice. The notice adds that additional 90 days of detention can be added through approval of the Home Ministry. Authorities can make these arrests without warrants, put suspects under surveillance, freeze their bank accounts, and impound their passports. Even if the person suspected of being involved in terrorism is living outside the country, they would be charged in accordance with the local laws, the notice said. *Compiled from reports News 29.*

Uphold Humanitarian Laws: ICRC

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has reminded government authorities of their obligations under international humanitarian laws with the continuing counter insurgency operations, reports said. "We are afraid because of the situation, we still haven't had access to those who have been arrested, we are getting some information that leads us to believe the situation in the country is serious," Jean-Jacques Bovay, the head of the ICRC's delegation to Kathmandu was quoted as saying during a stopover at ICRC headquarters in Geneva. The ICRC has also handed over a medical kit to the Bheri zonal hospital in Nepalgunj to treat persons injured in the government-Maoist battle. *Compiled from reports Dec. 1.*

New Indian Envoy Arrives

The new Indian Ambassador to Nepal, I. P. Singh, arrived in the capital Saturday. He replaces Deb Mukherjee, who is retiring from the Indian Foreign Service. A former diplomat, Singh was with the foreign affairs cell of the ruling

Bharatiya Janata Party before his appointment. Mukherjee left Kathmandu Friday on completion of his tenure. The ADC to King Gyanendra and a protocol officer saw him off at the Tribhuvan International Airport. *Compiled from reports Dec. 2.*

One Killed, Three Injured In a Bomb Blast

In what seemed an act of terrorism, suspected Maoist activists exploded a bomb at a carpet showroom at Jawalakhel



Site of explosion

on Sunday evening, reports said. Chintamani Timilsina from Jhapa, an employee at the showroom, died while undergoing treatment at Patan hospital whereas three more people, including a seven-year-old boy and a woman, were injured in the blast. Earlier, the suspected Maoist activists hurled petrol bombs, also known as Molotov cocktail, at two government vehicles and targeted the house of a police officer in Kathmandu. Nobody was injured in those attacks. Police have beefed up security and intensified

checking throughout the capital. *Compiled from reports.*

Israeli Lawmakers Visit Nepal

A four member Israeli parliamentary delegation led by Deputy Speaker Nawaf Mazalha visited Kathmandu a few days back. In an open discussion with the Nepalese press the Israeli parliamentarians said that Israel values Nepal's friendship and always remembers with gratitude Nepal's friendship started more than

four decades back when Israel had few friends in Asia and none in South Asia. To a question that why relations were getting cooler, they said it was not so. Israel's feelings for Nepal can never cool. Asked whether Israel will sell arms to Nepal, they said that Israel had no objection to export arms to Nepal. While in Kathmandu the team had audience with the King and also met the Prime minister and other politicians. Israel's ambassador to Nepal Avraham Nir was also present on the occasion

Child Prostitution Rising

The problem of child prostitution is believed to be spreading all over the country, predominantly in the urban areas and along highways, said a survey conducted by the United Nations Economic and Social

Commission for Asia and the Pacific. It estimated that around 800 minor girls are engaged as sex workers in the Kathmandu Valley alone. The statistics were presented at a press briefing on the proceedings and outcomes of the recent South Asia Consultation for second World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children held in Dhaka. The South Asia Strategy adopted at the consultation will be presented at the Second World Congress in Yokohama (17-20 December). *Compiled from reports.* ■



King Gyanendra gives audience to visiting Deputy Speaker of Israeli Parliament Nawab Mazalha

SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND BUSINESS leaders from Nepal and China have stressed closer ties between the neighbors. Inaugurating the fifth meeting of Nepal-China non-government cooperation forum here Thursday, Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba said the government would ensure a peaceful environment for businesses to operate all over the country. President of the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry Ravi Bhakta Shrestha said Nepal's business community was looking forward to increasing exports from Nepal to China through the forum. Zhang Xuwu, executive vice chairman of All China Federation of Industry and Commerce (ACFIC) said the forum would be instrumental in promoting bilateral economic cooperation. According to officials, Nepal's export to China stood at Rs 514 million in fiscal 1999/2000, whereas imports from China amounted to Rs 12,530 million.

KING GYANENDRA HAS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH the Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal 1990 and with the advice and consent of the Council of Ministers, promulgated the Terrorist And Disruptive Activities (prevention and control) Ordinance 2001 "as it has become necessary to make necessary legal provisions to control terrorist and disruptive activities so as to provide security to the general public and ensure peace and order in the Kingdom of Nepal and as parliament is not in session." The Ordinance has clearly defined terror, terrorist and disruptive acts and crimes and has made provision for anyone residing abroad but indulging in crime in Nepal subject to punishment. Despite the state of emergency, expression of views, running of presses and publications, migration and operation of communication systems can take place as usual without, however, infringing the Terrorist and Destructive Crimes Control and Punishment Act and the constitution.

THE NEPALESE GOVERNMENT HAS DECLARED AS terrorists any individuals, institutions or groups directly or indirectly assisting the CPN (Maoist) group and supporting its activities. The decision was taken based after analysis of the

violence and killings perpetrated by the Maoists in different parts of the country as well as violent attacks on and arson at government buildings and private property, and in the context of the CPN (Maoist) Chairman Prachanda taking responsibility for such incidents, the Cabinet Secretariat said. The government has also accused the Maoists of instigating personnel of the Royal Nepalese Army and Nepal Police to rebellion.

NEPAL HAS URGED THE GOVERNMENT OF THE eastern Indian state of West Bengal to step up security in northern parts of the state to check cross border infiltration of Maoist insurgents hiding there. The Press Trust of India quoted Nepal's consul-general Yubaraj Bhusal as saying that the request was made during his meeting with state Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee in Kolkata Monday. "I have requested the chief minister to beef up security and not to allow Nepalese terrorists to operate from Siliguri," Bhusal said after meeting. Bhattacharjee gave assurances that security was already tightened in the area and (that he would) give a fresh look to security arrangements in north Bengal so that Nepalese Maoists could not operate from India, the consul general said. In view of the heightened security in Nepal, the Maoists might try to enter West Bengal to carry out their operations, the Nepalese official added.

THE GOVERNMENT HAS ASKED HEALTH PROFES-sionals to inform the authorities if anybody with bullet wounds approached them for treatment. Health Minister Sharat Singh Bhandari warned Friday that doctors working in government hospitals as well as in private institutions were liable to government action if they treated terrorists without the knowledge of security agencies. Those violating the regulation would be subject to action in accordance with the recently promulgated anti-terrorist Ordinance, he added. The government's warning has come at a time when reports say a huge number of Maoists have been injured or killed in the ongoing army operation.

THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT HAS AGREED TO provide a grant assistance of Rs. 228 million for the Community Environment Awareness Management Project. An agreement was signed here on Friday between the Finance Ministry and Canadian officials. According to officials, the project aims at integrating social and economic work areas along with fulfilling the required basic infrastructure. One of the objectives of the project is to bring about local-level management in building larger development projects.

THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT HAS AGREED TO EX-tend the Nepal-India Trade Treaty, which was to expire this week (December 5), by another three months. Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee conveyed his government's decision in a telephone call to Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba on Friday. However, Vajpayee said Indian industry was keen that certain provisions of the treaty should be modified, agency reports said. ■

“Don’t worry about my patriotism. I love my country as much as you do.”

Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba speaking to reporters, in Deshantar

* * *

“Don’t forget you are the elected prime minister of the nation. Stand firm, the party is behind you.”

Nepali Congress leaders reassuring Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, in Bimarsha

* * *

“When the Maoists started their war, the then-army chief [said] he needed a budget of Rs500 million-Rs600 million. But the government thought that the army had asked for too much and used the police to do the job.”

Sachit Sumshere Rana, former army chief, in Himal Khabarpatrika

* * *

“The Nepali Congress has constituted a committee in all 75 districts of the country to make sure that the common people are not adversely affected by the state of emergency.”

Arjun Narsingh K.C, spokesman of the ruling Nepali Congress, in Bimarsha

* * *

“The (SAARC) convention on terrorism has certain shortcomings; we are



trying to remove those.”

SAARC Secretary-General Nihal Rodrigo speaking to reporters, in Kantipur

* * *

“Everybody has their own area of work and everybody has their own imaginations. I work in the film industry, he is a political person. Besides, I have no time to spare.

Actress Karishma Manandhar, asked

whether she would help Maoist leader Prachanda, an admirer, to resolve the current crisis, in Himal Khabarpatrika

* * *

“Despite the imposition of emergency, we want the government to continue the democratic system. Over the long-term, the government will have to tackle the crisis through a package of programs.”

Bharat Mohan Adhikary, chief whip of the main opposition CPN-UML, in Bimarsha

* * *

“I am looking forward to the SAARC meeting, where India and Nepal will share a platform. India and Nepal are like a family and if there is a problem there is a solution too.”

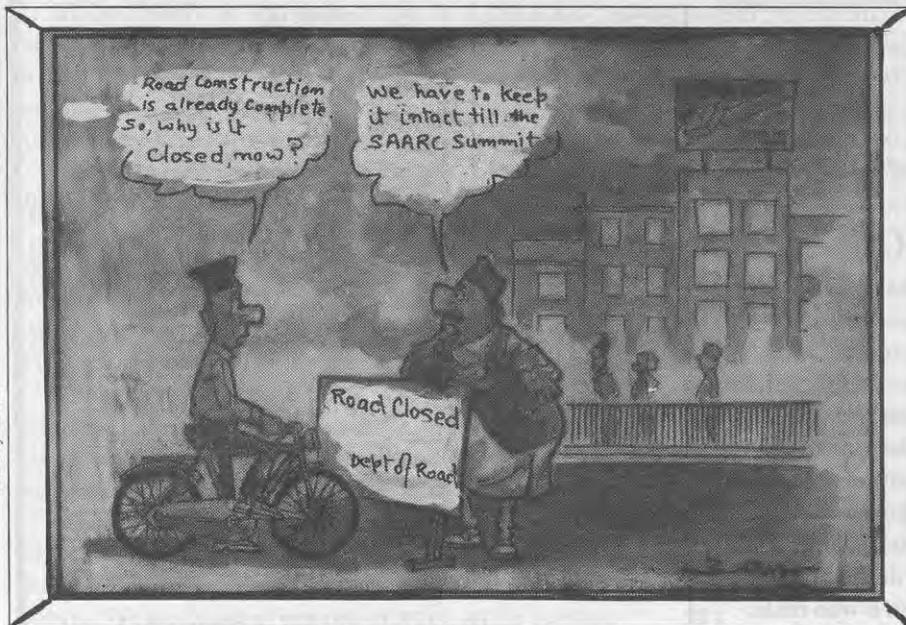
Actress Manisha Koirala speaking on Nepal-India relations, in The Times of India

* * *

“I have taken a great risk in releasing this picture (‘eMaya Garchoo Ma’) at a time when most directors are thinking twice about coming out with their productions.”

Director Jayendra Lama, in Himalaya Times.

* * *



Himalaya Times

Tactful Thapa

Rastriya Prajatantra Party president Surya Bahadur Thapa is one of the most accomplished players of contemporary Nepalese politics. He has earned this distinction by his ability to take the right decisions at the right time. Earlier this year, he sided with the CPN-UML in the comrades' effort to oust Nepali Congress strongman Girija Prasad Koirala from the prime minister's office. After the imposition of the state of emergency last month, Thapa decided to throw his weight fully behind the Nepali Congress



Thapa : Seasoned player

government. The political skills of Thapa, who has served as premier both during the partyless and multiparty systems, remain potent.

Rana's Record

One of the qualifications of Rukma Sumsher Rana, president of Nepal Olympic Committee, is that he is the son of late Nepali Congress leader Subarna Sumsher Rana. Rukma's family ties have helped him get all kinds of benefits from the ruling party. The government recently chose not to take any action against him even after the botched All Nepal Football As-



Rana : In focus

sociation election he was entrusted with overseeing. The International Olympic Committee went a step further by announcing its decision to award Rana for his contributions. Since when has dereliction become a virtue?

Critical Support

The CPN-UML is known for offering "critical support" to everything. Whether it is the Constitution of Kingdom of Nepal 1990 or which was drafted by a panel that included two of today's UML luminaries or other critical national issues, UML leaders have shown an adeptness in keeping things ambiguous. At a time when all foreign friends of Nepal have supported the government's decision to order a state of emergency, the UML discussed the move for two full days before endorsing it with critical reservations. When will UML leaders decide to get off the fence?

Happy Oli

CPN-UML leader K.P. Sharma Oli seemed to be the happiest man in town when his party's general secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal cut short his visit to the United States and Cuba after the imposition of the emergency. Oli's delight is understandable, since Nepal had deputed Amrit Kumar Bohara or who ranks

below Oli in the party hierarchy — as acting general secretary before leaving Kathmandu. Bohara's inauspicious innings at the party's top was an obvious source of



Oli : Delighted

satisfaction to Oli, who plans to run for general secretary during the next party convention.

Silent Kandel

Minister of State for Home Devendra Raj Kandel has chosen to remain tight-lipped following the imposition of the state of emergency. Until a few days ago, Kandel was going around the country making contradictory remarks on the resurgence of violence and government's effort to quell it. How long will Kandel keep quiet? Maybe as long as mentor Khum Bahadur Khadka — who also happens to be his boss at the Home Ministry — asks him to do so. ■

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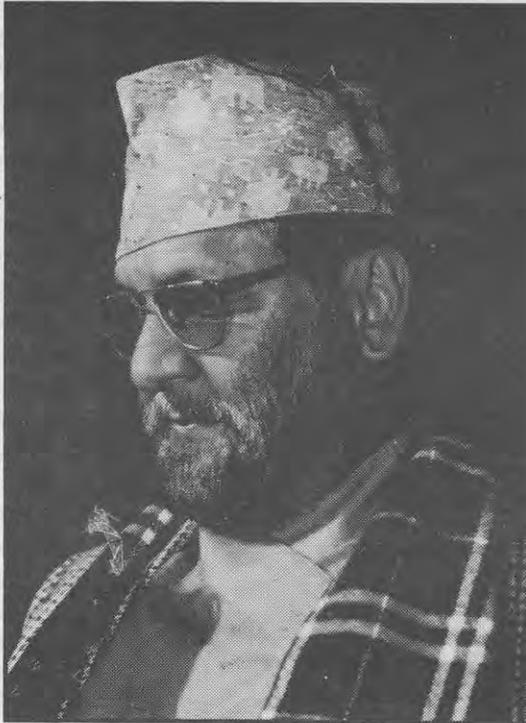
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'Security Is Far Better Now'

— DR. RAM SHARAN MAHAT

After representing Nepal at the United Nations General Assembly last month, Finance Minister **DR. RAM SHARAN MAHAT** left Kathmandu Monday to extend invitations for the 11th SAARC Summit to the heads of state/government of Sri Lanka, India and the Maldives. The former foreign minister spoke to **BHAGIRATH YOGI** at the Tribhuvan International Airport briefly. Excerpts:



Besides extending the invitation, what will you discuss with the outgoing SAARC chair, Sri Lanka?

This visit is mainly in preparation of the SAARC summit. Besides extending invitation, we will be discussing issues to be raised during the upcoming summit. Issues of bilateral and common interest may also be discussed.

Have SAARC members expressed concern about the state of emergency in Nepal?

[They know that] the state of emergency was necessary against terrorism and have supported the Nepal government's move. No SAARC member has taken it as an uncomfortable or unnatural event. In fact, from the point of view of law and order, the situation is far better now and it will not have any adverse impact on the forthcoming SAARC summit.

While in New Delhi, will you discuss the latest developments in Nepal?

When officials from two countries meet, naturally issues of bilateral interests are discussed. So, the present situation in Nepal, terrorist activities and emergency will certainly be discussed.

You have said that there will be financial constraints for development projects due to rising security expenditure. Will this issue be also discussed?

We are not going to discuss this issue with other SAARC countries. But we are discussing it within the country with major donors. We are aware of any adverse im-

pact that could hamper the development projects in Nepal while trying to fulfill our security obligations. So, we have been consulting with the donors within the country and there is no need to go on a visit [on this issue]. That is not the objective of the visit.

With only a month left for the SAARC summit, how are the preparations going on?

The preparations are in full swing. We had also made preparations earlier. Paperwork had been completed. Now we are updating, reviewing and revising them. Other physical preparations are also being undertaken. We could organize the summit even at a notice of 15 days. So, there isn't any difficulty in organizing the summit. ■

LIC Nepal Launches Its Operation

Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) Nepal Ltd., a joint venture between the Life Insurance Corporation of India and the Vishal Group of Nepal, launched its operations formally beginning Monday. Out of the capital base of Rs 250 million, the LIC India owns 55 percent stake in the new company while the Vishal Group owns 25 percent. The rest will be sold to general public. The Company has introduced two policies, namely Money Back and Term-Rider, to begin with. Inaugurating the Company amid a function, Minister of State for Finance, Bharat Kumar Shah, said the government had decided to open the life insurance sector to make it competitive and thereby benefit the people. LIC Nepal is the fourth life insurance company, which got operating license in August 2001. ■

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Discussion on family planning : Learning by experience

FAMILY PLANNING For The People

Indonesia has shown how an integrated health system based on community participation can successfully manage a country's population

By KESHAB POUDEL in Yogyakarta Province, Indonesia

For many, the sight was extraordinary: Muslim youths performing popular scenes from the Hindu epic Ramayana. Every day a group of youths perform the Ramayana Ballet at Prambaba Area of Yogyakarta province of Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim country.

Indonesians regard the Ramayana as one of their important legends. This may be the reason why even during the fasting month of Ramadan, Muslim youths were busy playing the roles of Rama, Laxman, Sinta (Sita), Prabhu Rahwana (Rawana), Hanuman and Janak. The influence of Sanskrit on Indonesia is not new, as the national language consists of many Sanskrit words.

Indonesians discuss matters concerning family planning (FP) and reproduc-

tive health (RH) with equal ease. Because of the people's abiding commitment and accommodative social attitudes, FP/RH programs have been successfully implemented across the country, including the Hindu-dominated province of Denpasar (Bali).

Janak's Mantili (Mithila) Kingdom and birthplace of Sita in Nepal, however, has a different story to tell. The country is grappling with the challenges presented by a rapidly expanding population.

The community's fervor in performing the Ramayana ballet provides an indication of how a liberal approach to FP/RH programs has worked in Indonesia over the decades. "We have been successful in carrying out FP and RH programs because the community accepts their importance in raising a quality family," said Dr. Jasmi Kamil, executive secretary of the International Training Program of the National Family Plan-

ning Coordination Board (BKKBN).

Hindus, Buddhists and Christians have been living in harmony with Indonesia's dominant Muslim population. Cultural and religious tolerance down to the local community has been one of the hallmarks of the nation, and one of the primary reasons for the success of community-based family planning endeavors.

Under a carefully planned campaign, Indonesians population policymakers have been able to instill a sense of ownership in the community. "We are not responsible for implementing the program. There are various institutions established to carry out the works, including religious, education, health, social welfare, non-governmental organizations and institutions. FP and RH are integrated with various institutions," said Dr. Kamil.

Indonesia, which is an archipelago made up of 13,500 island, has a population of 204.39 million representing many ethnic groups and languages. The national language is Bahasa Indonesian. Eighty-seven percent of Indonesians are Muslim. About 9.7 percent of the population is Christian, 1.1 percent Buddhist and 1.8 percent Hindu.

The tradition of religious and cultural harmony is reflected in the effective implementation of family planning programs in the grass-roots level. Only one percent of the male population uses contraceptives. It is the country's women who have led the movement to make FP and RH programs successful.

Like the Ramayana, the BKKBN is a household name in Indonesia. Initiated during the 30-year rule of president Suharto, who was deposed in a 1998 uprising, the BKKBN has firmly established its popularity among the people.

Nepal and Indonesia began FP and RH programs almost at the same time. But Nepal has not been able to meet its national target of reducing the population growth rate and improving RH services. "We have been successful because our leadership has been totally committed to the program," said Dr. Masri Mudaz, director of the BKKBN's Center

for International Training and Collaboration.

As a national coordinating body, the BKKBN is responsible for formulating and implementing FP/RH programs in Indonesia. The Suharto government launched the family planning policy 30 years ago when the country's population growth rate was alarmingly high. Suharto's commitment was responsible in large part for bringing Indonesia's population growth rate below 2 percent in 30 years.

As the BKKBN has implemented a vision for a prosperous and healthy family, people respect the workers of the organization. After the downfall of Suharto, the momentum of FP/RH programs gradually slowed. Since it is well accepted in the community level, the impact of the FP/RH campaign will remain undiminished.

A decentralized approach based on community participation throughout the phases of planning, implementation and evaluation has made the FP/RH initiative successful. According to the State of World Population 2001, the average population growth rate of Indonesia is 1.2 percent, compared to 2.3

percent in Nepal. The total fertility rate is 2.27 in Indonesia and 4.48 in Nepal. Birth with attendants is 56 in Indonesia and 9 in Nepal. Indonesia's literacy rate is more than 90 percent.

With support from United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), 11 Nepalis joined four Bangladeshis on an observation study tour on planning and managing a community-based national family planning and reproductive health program under a decentralized approach in Jakarta, Yogyakarta Province and Denpasar Bali. During the tour, the Nepalis and Bangladeshis observed sub-village, village, sub-district and district-level campaigns implemented in Yogyakarta province.

Nepal has been implementing the policy of decentralization for more than two decades, but it has not been able to achieve its targets. Nepal has experimented successfully with community participation in the forestry sector through a decentralized approach. The country's

tremendous success in mobilizing the local people in the preservation of forests has been acclaimed internationally. Nepal has shown that by making community members stake holders, the country can change the fate of development programs.

In Nepal's health sector, there are institutions working from the wards to the center, but there is a lack of mechanism for effective community participation. The government implements FP and RH programs without coordinating them with other components, including education. "We also have some very suc-

was 1.97. The prevalence rate of contraception based on IDHS 1994 for any method is 69.5 and 59.7 percent for modern method. At the national level, it was 54.7 for any method and 52.1 for modern method.

"We have been working to formulate a long-term population management program by encouraging the local community to participate," said Purshottam Prasad Tiwari, under-secretary and division chief of IEC, Ministry of Population and Environment.

The record-keeping process in Indo-



Hindu temple in Bali : Culture of harmony

cessful programs in the health sector. The problem with us is the lack of political commitment in the grass-roots level," said Tek Bahadur Dangi, senior public health administrator of the Family Health Division.

Indonesia's experience has demonstrated that FP and RH programs need to be integrated with other components in order to be successful. Yogyakarta has achieved important progress in the area of population management. According to the Indonesia Demographic Health Survey (IDHS) 1997, Total Fertility Rate of Yogyakarta is 1.70 percent while the national rate is 2.86. The province's population growth rate in 1990 was 0.58 percent while that of the nation as a whole

nesia has also played a significant role in monitoring various kinds of behaviors and reproductive health patterns of families. The integration of FP/RH programs to religion also has shown positive results. The importance of family planning and reproductive health is taught from very beginning, particularly to women.

"Recording, reporting, monitoring and evaluation are important components in implementing RH programs. We are also stressing the need to introduce such a mechanism," said Dr. Peden Pradhan, Assistant Representative of the UNFPA.

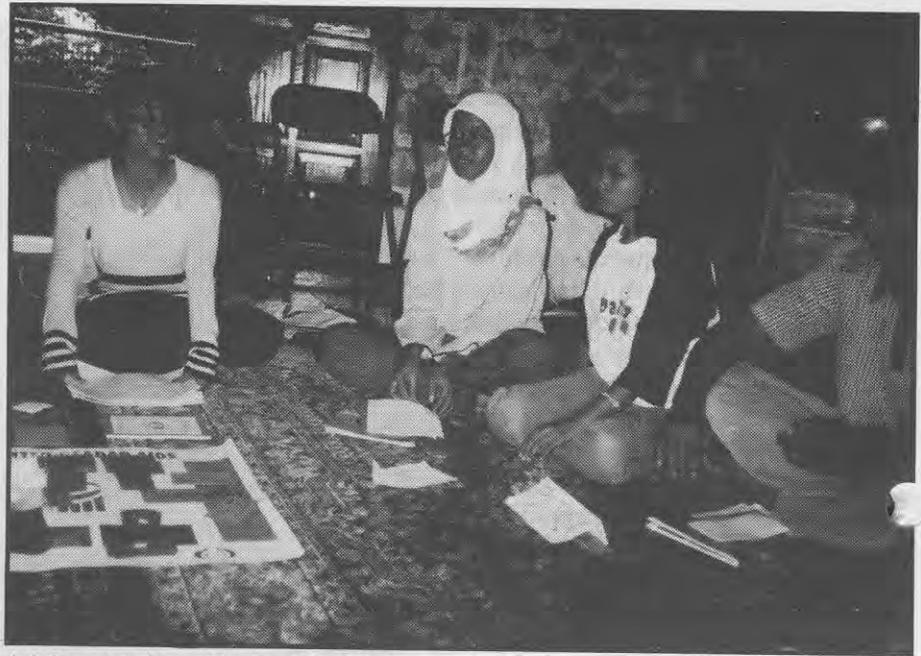
As the female literacy rate is fairly high in Java, there is a high prevalence of

use of temporary FP method to delay birth. As soon as a couple decides to marry, local institutions intervene in their life, activating various mechanisms.

An eligible couple needs to take a certificate from religious officials in the sub-district level before marriage. This is the place where family planning and health officials inform them of the importance of family planning in raising a quality family.

"We also have a system to monitor activities in the district level, but what is lacking is manpower to mobilize the community. I will introduce some ideas experimented in Indonesia," said Dr. Sagar Kumar Rajbhandari, District Health Officer of Salyan in western Nepal.

Village-level volunteers have played an important role in the execution of Indonesia's FP and RH programs. These volunteers are able to contribute effectively to community development as they come from the area they are serving. To facilitate interaction, groups of acceptors, usually comprising between 15 and 60 members, are formed. Group members are brought together for social and civic reasons. The group meets each month to discuss its members' family planning status. It is used to exert a form of peer pressure on the non-acceptor part



Adolescents in public health : High participation

of the community.

In each sub-district level, there is an integrated service post consisting of community midwife, youth group, mother-friendly movement and IEC. These institutions help to popularize family planning programs at the grass-roots level. Along with other programs, family income-generating projects initiated and maintained by acceptor groups are vital to motivating and

encouraging women.

"Nepal's family planning approach is based on a centralized concept, whereas Indonesia has followed a decentralized approach and has handed over ownership to the community," said Anita Rijal, director of the Women's Development Department. "We need to develop an approach for local-level social preparation and community involvement in an institutional manner."

Those who went on the observation tour accepted the importance of increasing the involvement of community volunteers. As Nepal has a large number of family community health volunteers, they can be mobilized in conducting more efficient outreach initiatives. The Nepalese participants of the observation tour agreed to the need to initiate family enumeration systems on a pilot basis and to establish post-clinic evaluation mechanism, activate health management committees at different levels for review and monitoring activities on a monthly basis.

As Nepal has direct experience of the centrality of a decentralized approach for local development, the Indonesian approach to FP/RH programs can easily be adopted in the country in order to manage its population. But who will take the lead? ■



Dancers of Bali : Rich heritage

SUPREME COURT Gaining Maturity

The apex court has demonstrated its institutional capability to deal with knotty constitutional problems

By KESHAB POUDEL

The Supreme Court has once again proved that it is mature and capable enough to deal with challenges and problems it confronts as the interpreter of the constitution. After two days of hearing, the country's apex court clarified the constitutional ambiguity on the role and limitations of the court in an unusual situation like a state of emergency.

The confusion on the authority of the court to hear and interpret the constitution appeared as soon as the emergency was declared. At the recommendation of the council of ministers, King Gyanendra ordered a state of emergency under Article 115 of the Constitution of Kingdom of Nepal 1990 on September 26. Under Article 115 (8), His Majesty also ordered the suspension of sub-clauses (a), (b), (d), and (e) of Clause 2 of Article 12, Clause (1) of Article 13(1) and Articles 15, 16, 17, 18, 22 and 23 of the constitution for the duration of the state of emergency.

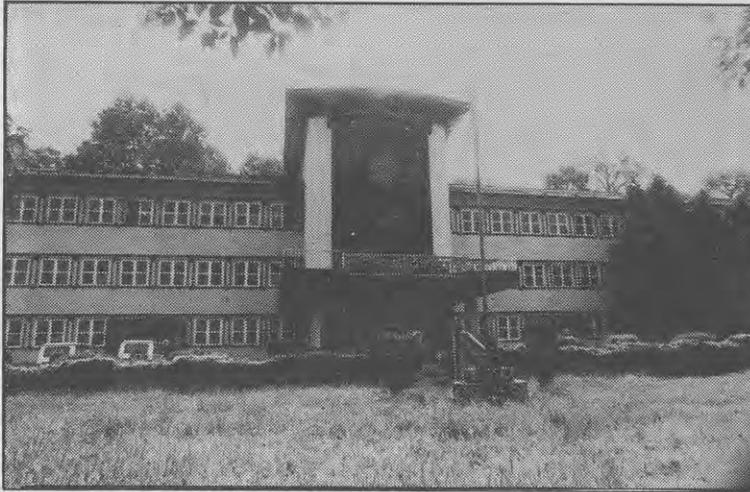
When confusion over the functioning of the constitution emerged, Chief Justice Keshav Prasad Upadhyaya put the issue in front of the full bench. After a two-day hearing, the court declared that it could exercise its extraordinary power endowed by the constitution under Article 88.

Nepal's Supreme Court made its own interpretation when a similar situation occurred in 1960, when a state of emergency was imposed. Under the then con-

stitution, the Supreme Court gave remedy to the press through its extraordinary jurisdiction.

"The apex court has finally proved that it is capable and efficient to deal with any confusion regarding its jurisdiction," said a senior lawyer. "This is not first time that the court has exercised its extraordinary power. In fact, it has a long practice of doing it," he added.

Appreciating the emergency and giving clear interpretation to the constitutional provision defining the ambit of the declaration of the state of emergency, the

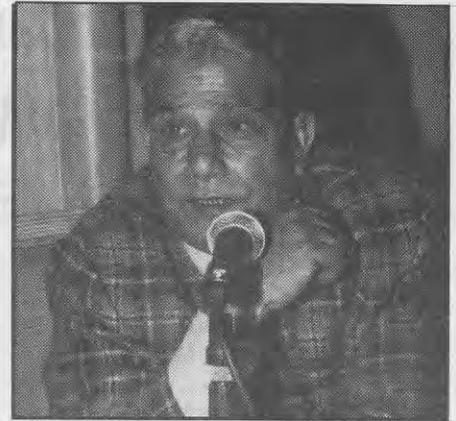


Supreme Court : Maturing institution

court finally decided to hear and give remedy on all pending cases. This decision has come as a welcome step for all petitioners waiting for justice.

The controversy arose when a section of lawyers argued that the court did not have the jurisdiction to hear pending and other cases as long as the state of emergency was in force. Opinion was divided in the apex court, which consists of 18 judges, as well.

Thanks to the initiative of Chief Justice Upadhyaya, a full bench interpreted



CJ Upadhyaya : Big responsibility

the extraordinary power of the apex court. As the Supreme Court retains its extraordinary power intact, no one questions its jurisdiction to hear pending and other cases.

Even Attorney-General Badri Bahadur Karki defended the apex court's ruling. "The executive has no intention to suspend the proceedings on pending cases

in the court. The declaration of emergency has not suspended pending cases. The court is free to deal with those cases. When the government feels it necessary to suspend any rights involved in the pending cases, it has to issue another order to that effect. Until this is done, the court's jurisdiction over pending cases could not be assumed or presumed to have been suspended," the attorney-general said.

The full bench, comprising Chief Justice Upadhyaya, judges Laxman P. Aryal, Kedar Nath Upadhyaya, Krishna Jung Rayamajhi and Govinda Bahadur Shrestha, declared that the court can hear pending and other cases by using its extraordinary power.

The interpretation of court brought a sigh of relief by retaining the rights of the individual even during extraordinary situations. The Supreme Court's decision has demonstrated that it has the ability to exercise its full power to protect the constitution. ■

STATE OF EMERGENCY

Hunting Down the Rebels

In the first week, government forces push the insurgents into their hideouts, but the battle may be far from over

By BHAGIRATH YOGI

In a statement on Monday, the Defense Ministry — the sole source of information — said the Royal Nepalese Army have been repulsing, one after the other, all attacks on security personnel and administrative units following the intensified military campaign against the Maoist 'terrorists.' The ministry said security personnel on Sunday effectively rendered unsuccessful the Maoists' attacks at the headquarters of Sindhupalchok and Sindhuli districts and a police post at Bhimphedi in Makwanpur district.

As the army intensifies its operation, dozens of rebels have been killed in different parts of the country. Security personnel have succeeded in recovering huge cache of arms, ammunitions, government jeeps, communication equipment and even cash looted by the Maoists during their raid on the army barrack in mid-western district of Dang last month. "The morale of the army and police is quite high and the operation might come to an end in the next six months," said Home Minister Khum Bahadur Khadka.

The Home Ministry said over 650 Maoist activists and supporters in eight different districts have surrendered before the local administration. Some of them have joined the main opposition, UML, in an apparent bid to protect themselves from the security forces. As the security personnel have launched an all-out battle to defeat the Maoists, the Communications Ministry has issued directives to the press and accelerated its 'info war' through the state-owned media.

Interestingly, throughout the first week of emergency, the rebels have neither been able to resist the army effectively nor launch a propaganda war. With newspapers sympathetic to them closed unofficially and pro-Maoist journalists arrested, the underground party may have few ways of giving their side of the story. Maoist chairman, Prachanda, in an interview to the on-line edition of the Sunday Times of India, however, put a brave

face and said the battle would go on. "As the government intensified preparations for a military offensive by procuring arms and ultra-modern military helicopters, we had no (other) alternative," said Prachanda.

Few would take the Maoist leader's statement at face value. Having walked out of the peace talks unilaterally and mounting assaults at key government offices, police and army barracks in the dead of the night, the underground outfit proved that it was never



A remote village : Waiting for normalcy to return

serious about finding a negotiated settlement to the six-year-old insurgency that has already claimed more than 2,000 lives.

"I have been betrayed," said Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba. He has vowed to bring the rebels to book. Much to the satisfaction of the Deuba government, major international powers, including the US, Russia, European Union, Japan, and immediate neighbors India and China have condemned the Maoist attacks on government forces and supported the government's decision to impose a state of emergency to fight the rebels.

In separate telephone conversations with King Gyanendra and Prime Minister Deuba last week, Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee supported the Nepal government's move. India has offered Nepal "whatever assistance is required" in its fight against Maoists, the Indian Foreign Ministry said. A foreign ministry spokesperson said in New Delhi that the Indian government has also

assured Nepal to "take every step" to seal the Indo-Nepal border so that the Maoists cannot flee to India across the common, open border.

For its part, the Chinese government believed that the Nepalese government would properly handle its domestic issues. A statement issued by the Chinese embassy in Kathmandu said His Majesty the King and the Nepalese government have already adopted effective and contingency measures, and the situation is under control. China also expressed hope and belief that Nepal can maintain peace, stability and development.

"A state of emergency is a constitutional right of any country for self-protection," said Ganesh Raj Sharma, an eminent constitutional lawyer. "(Due to its geographic position), no conflict in Nepal can remain limited within its boundaries. So the international community is concerned to see to it that no other spot like Afghanistan emerges in South Asia. That's why they are worried too. If those who declared the emergency did not exhibit a sense of utmost accountability, the country might fall into a grave crisis."

As the security forces launch both ground and aerial attacks against the armed Maoist guerrillas as part of their 'cordon and search' operation cutting their line of communications and bombarding their training camps in Rolpa, Ramechhap and Gorkha districts, among others, the Maoist rebels are forced to retreat. The Maoist guerrillas have tried to blow away repeater stations of Nepal Telecommunications Corporation and are also engaged in spreading sporadic violence in the capital. Suspected Maoist terrorists exploded bombs at the manufacturing plant of Bottlers Nepal Pvt. Ltd. at Balaju

and exploded a bomb at the private carpet showroom at Jawalakhel killing an innocent person and injuring three others, including a child and woman.

It will take some time to assess the adverse impact of the emergency on country's economy, say officials. Similarly, they also concede that there may be need for diverting resources from development programs to meet the security needs. As the security agencies need more hardware and logistics, the government has approached different countries for assistance. All this shows that the battle is not going to end immediately. Despite global opinion against terrorism and low level of weapons and manpower compared to government forces, it seems that the rebels want to engage the army for long by drawing them deep into their strongholds. For the common people, early return to normalcy has been top on the agenda while swapping their freedom temporarily to fight against the menace of terrorism. ■

NEPAL-INDIA TRADE TREATY Extended Coverage

There is some breathing space but the core issues still need to be resolved

By BHAGIRATH YOGI

Just five days before the expiry of the Nepal-India Trade Treaty, Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee telephoned his Nepalese counterpart, Sher Bahadur Deuba, and informed him that New Delhi had decided to extend the accord by three months (until March 5, 2002). Letters to this effect have also been exchanged.

Nepal's business community has felt relieved for the moment, but the extension was not something to rejoice at. "Instead, it has added to our agony," said a businessman. After India officially informed Nepal about its intention to review the treaty early this year, officials from both countries have sat for negotiations several times.

"Now we have narrowed down our differences on most of the issues and, hopefully, the treaty will be renewed within the period of extension," Purushottam Ojha, joint secretary at the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies told SPOTLIGHT Tuesday. He informed that secretary-level talks between the two countries were going to take place soon.

The two-day official-level talks in Kathmandu (on Nov. 3-4) had mainly zeroed in on topics including certificate of origin, value addition and export 'surge'. In August, India formally notified Nepal that it wanted to review certain provisions in the treaty, saying that surge in exports in about half a dozen items from Nepal to India had hurt its industries. The Nepalese side maintained that it would like to see the renewal of the treaty without hampering its spirit. The accord provides for duty-free access to Nepalese manufactured products in the Indian market, except those in the negative list (tobacco, liquor and perfumes).

Indian industries have been complaining about the issue of 'surge' in the export of five items, namely polyester yarn, vegetable ghee, copper wire, zinc oxide and galvanized iron pipes from Nepal to India. Indian officials had proposed that Nepal should have at least 50 percent local value addition prior to their export to India as was the case in 1991 treaty. The Confederation of Indian Industry and the

Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry had, however, agreed that 30 percent value addition by the Nepalese manufacturers would do the job.

Though the treaty has led to a quantum jump in Nepal's exports to her southern neighbor, Nepal still has a huge trade deficit with India. Last year, Nepal exported goods worth over Rs 27 billion to India whereas the kingdom imported goods worth nearly Rs 47 billion, leading to a trade deficit of nearly Rs 20 billion.

More than 44 percent of Nepal's total export is consumed by India, whereas little more than 35 percent of total Nepalese imports come from India. The five items objected by Indian industries constitute nearly 20 percent of Nepal's total exports to India.

"The very essence of the treaty is to promote Indian and foreign investment in Nepal, thereby accelerating the process of industrialization here," said Manoj Bharati, first secretary at the Indian embassy in Kathmandu. "But, unfortunately, the Nepalese media has failed to see the Indian point of view in the whole issue."

While the powerful Indian media has been raising the issue of Indian industries forcing their government to listen to them, the Nepalese media has neither the access nor the resources to lobby on behalf of the country's businesses.

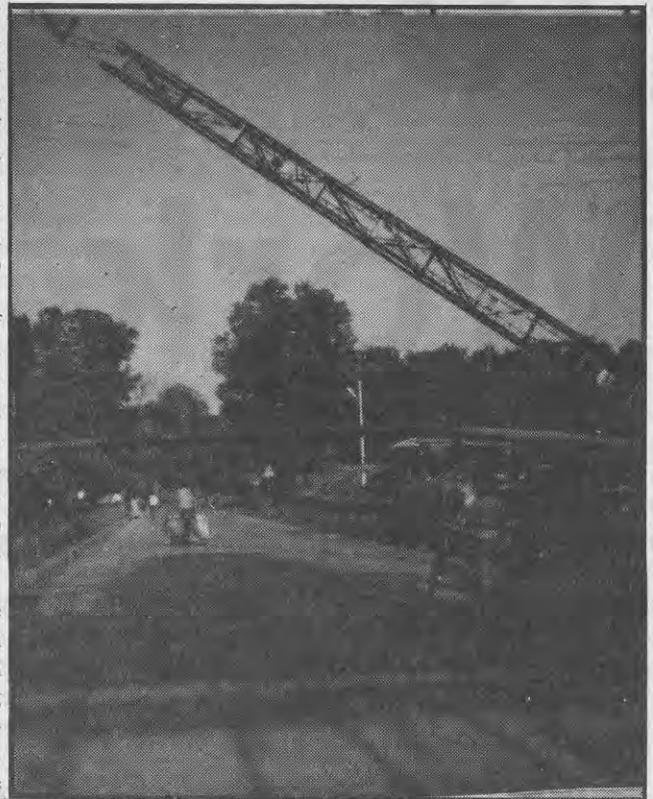
Moreover, the less-than-transparent parleys between the apex business chambers of the two countries leave behind little room for the media to present the story independently.

Perhaps it is not too late. "The extension of the treaty has at least given some breathing space to Nepal," said a leading captain of Nepalese industry. "Now, Nepal should go for

a media campaign in India to present its case, besides preparing well for the official-level negotiations."

During the talks, Nepalese officials have raised the issue of introduction of anti-dumping and luxury duties on a number of Nepalese products by different Indian states. But they have squarely failed to put their case through the Indian media.

Analysts say it would have been better had the negotiations concluded in time and treaty renewed before its expiry. The resultant confusion and uncertainty will not help either side. "There is waning desire for Nepal to be aligned to or integrated with the Indian economy. The global economy is considered a better policy



Nepal-India border : Anxiety looms large

option," said Madhukar SJB Rana, a noted management expert, in his article in a Kathmandu daily this week. "Neither has trade cooperation (between Nepal and India) been able to galvanize cooperation in other sectors, notably water resources, nor industrial manufacturers."

According to Rana, both Nepal and India should leave the treaty with its goals and articles unaltered for a further period of five years but negotiate proactively for mutual benefit over the protocol items to lay down a new vision of integrated trade and investment cooperation with a clear-cut strategic understanding over India's role in facilitating Nepal's dire need for industrialization. ■

CIVIL SERVICE Time To Work

With the imposition of the state of emergency, the common people have temporarily sacrificed their fundamental rights and freedoms in the hope of gaining a safe and prosperous future. The civil service, mired in disorder, sloth and inefficiency, needs to demonstrate the leadership and vision to bring substantial change to the country. The government has mobilized its security apparatus to restore public confidence and now the people want to see the civil service do its part of the job.

By KESHAB POUDEL

In normal times, most of the civil servants of district-level government offices in Kathmandu fail to observe the 9 A.M to 4 P.M schedule. The imposition of the state of emergency does not seem to have changed their ways.

Although the Special Police Depart-

ment has announced it would conduct spot inspections to ensure attendance at government offices, few civil servants seem to be worried. Nepal's civil service is virtually mired in disorder where a sense of accountability is the exception, rather than the rule.

"The Special Police Department cannot harm my career as long as I have political blessings," a gazetted officer

bragged on condition of anonymity. The maddening rush among government employees to seek political blessings has turned the civil service into a fossilized entity.

The state of emergency, which was imposed at the recommendation of the popularly elected government, aims to transform the lives of the people and the behavior of society. If the people feel that



Singh Durbar : Capable to deliver ?

such a drastic measure has failed to bring any perceptible change, the elected government could lose popularity. In this sense, Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba is on public trial. He has to drive the civil service towards translating his government's objectives into reality the people can experience.

"The government is making all-out efforts to mobilize the civil servants towards delivering services to the people effectively and efficiently," said Minister of Information and Communication Jaya Prakash Gupta, who is also the spokesman of the government. "As an accountable government, we know our limitations and our responsibilities," he added.

Improving Law and Order

As soon as King Gyanendra ordered the imposition of the state of emergency to quell the Maoist insurgency, the common people heaved a sigh of relief, hoping that the move would bring lasting peace and stability to the country. Although the people have had to sacrifice most of the fundamental rights and freedoms they have become accustomed to over the last 12 years, they have overwhelmingly supported the emergency order.

In keeping with public expectations, the Royal Nepalese Army ó the country's oldest professional institution ó has once again proved its ability to meet any kind of

threat to national security. The army, along with the police, is gradually restoring normalcy in various parts of the country. The restoration of law and order, however, will not be the only measure of success of the emergency order. There are many other components covering a wide range of fronts that will go on to establish whether the government's move was justified.

"The government may have to pass through different phases to prove the arguments it provided while announcing the state of emergency," said a constitutional analyst. "First, the prime minister has to put his announcement for ratification in parliament. The people will give a final decision on the emergency in the elections," he said.

"In a transparent and accountable system of governance, the head of government is responsible for his right and wrong decisions. If the people feel the prime minister's case is justified, they will give him their votes to form the next government."

As in other sectors, the prime minister is solely responsible for enhancing the performance of the civil service. If the administration is ineffective and incapable, it is the duty of the head of government to put it back on the right track.

"One cannot blame civil servants alone for inefficiency, as it is the political leader-

ship which has to give directions to the administration," said a former secretary to the government. "Had the civil service been treated professionally and allowed to work independently, it would have delivered better results," he added.

The country's security apparatus swung into action immediately after the emergency order was issued. *In the first 10 days* after the emergency proclamation was issued, security forces achieved tremendous successes in destroying the Maoists' capability, including training centers and networks, in various parts of the country. This has obviously restored the confidence of the people. The reports of mass surrender of insurgents from various parts of the country indicate that the Maoists are losing major ground.

Through sporadic attacks, however, the Maoists are trying to show their presence in the capital as well. Until the people come out more vigorously to isolate the insurgents, the government cannot restore law and order.

Despite the successes in the first round of the battle against terrorism, the task of reinforcing security and restoring confidence among the rural and urban population remains daunting. The psychological trauma inflicted by terrorism cannot be overcome overnight. After the completion of search-and-cordon operations, the security forces have to undertake the important task of rehabilitating the security apparatus and local bodies across the country, particularly in the mid-western and eastern regions.

An efficient civil service is a vital component of the national rehabilitation effort the security forces, especially the Royal Nepalese Army, have begun. Following the restoration of multiparty democracy, Nepal's civil service has faced one serious setback after the other. As a result, the bureaucracy has become a highly politicized and virtually non-functioning organization.

If the government wants to inject life into the civil service, the state of emergency can provide a useful opportunity to do so. Finance Minister Dr. Ram Sharan Mahat and Agriculture and Cooperatives Minister Mahesh Acharya have directed civil servants to demonstrate greater effi-

ciency in the days and weeks ahead. "The time has come for civil servants to show their efficiency and strength," said Dr. Mahat. That is an affirmation every minister and official should be repeating.

Over the last six years, the insurgents have terrorized the rural population by killing innocent people and disrupting everyday administrative functions. "One of the challenges in front of the Royal Nepalese Army is to inject a sense of security in the people," said Satchit Sumsher Rana, former chief of the Royal Nepalese Army.

That is where the civil service has to play its part. The government is considering a blueprint to reactivate the bureaucracy. "We are doing some homework for administrative reform and energizing the administrative machinery," said Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat, principal adviser to Prime Minister Deuba. "For the first time in many years, the people have felt the presence of the state. The government is

considering ways to push the bureaucracy into high gear," he added.

To be sure, the task of rehabilitating the local bodies and police stations in remote areas will face its own set of challenges. The Maoist insurgents have virtually destroyed local institutions and imposed their own style of governance. The withdrawal of police posts and stations paved the way for the insurgents to run large areas ruthlessly.

Although regaining control of these regions will be a mammoth job, the early signs are encouraging. "There was a tendency among officials and the police not to go to the villages. After the imposition of the emergency, that trend is gradually changing," said Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat.

Political Support

Although the imposition of emergency has suspended certain fundamental rights of the citizens, all major political parties

have backed the move, hoping that it would bring normalcy to the country. If the emergency lasts too long, however, the government may not be in a position to maintain such support.

The government has repeatedly stressed that the state of emergency is not directed against any particular ideology or political party. There is growing public acceptance that the move is aimed at improving the law-and-order situation. Although communist parties, including the main opposition CPN-UML, have expressed reservations on the state of emergency, broad public support compelled them to back the

government's decision.

"Although the government did not have an alternative to imposing the state of emergency, it is nevertheless difficult to justify the curtailing of the people's rights," said Dr. Minendra Rijal, a young economist of the ruling Nepali Congress. "A democratic government has to contest elections and it has to be able to justify each action it takes," he added.

While the government has been able to win the support of all sectors, including opposition parties, it needs to take very cautious steps in the days ahead to retain that support. "We are supporting the emergency because this is the only way to restore law and order in the country," said Dr. Prakash Chandra Lohani, vice-president of the Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP), the third largest group in parliament.

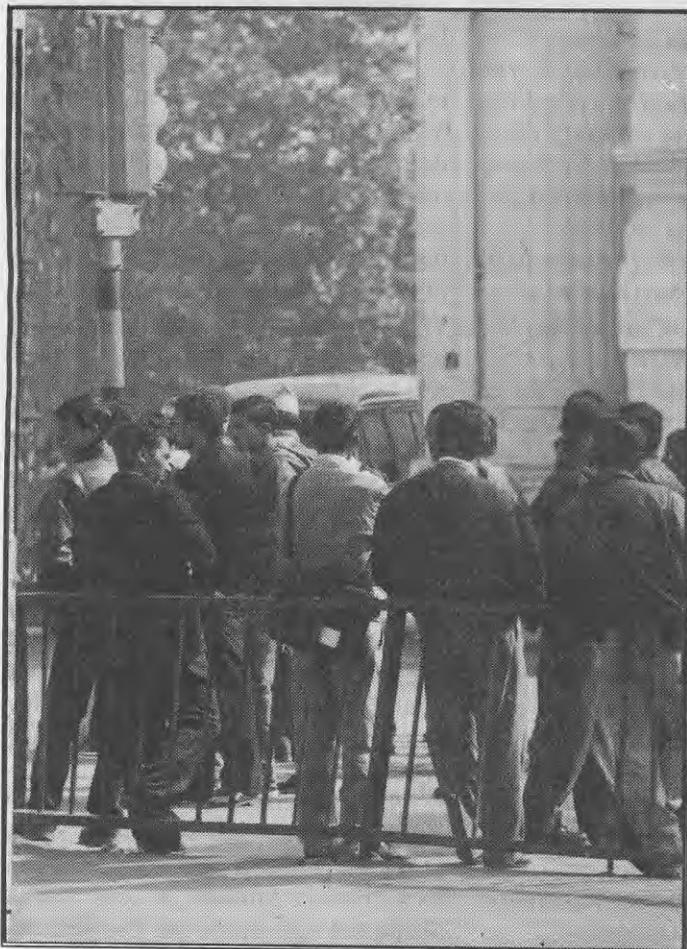
Apart from the ruling party, the RPP is the only political group that has given unqualified support to the emergency. In a cautiously drafted statement, the RPP also urged the government to uphold the rights of the people.

The main opposition CPN-UML has refrained from clearly backing the emergency order. "We have already supported the emergency, but we want to be sure that the ruling party does not misuse its new sweeping powers," said Bharat Mohan Adhikary, chief whip of the CPN-UML.

After Emergency

A state of emergency is a temporary measure that a democratic government eventually has to lift. Once that is done, the people can evaluate the performance of the government. The government will have to make efforts to ensure it continues to receive the opposition's support in the post-emergency rehabilitation work. It will have to develop an all-party consensus every step of the way. In view of Nepal's geo-strategic vulnerability, how the situation unfolds will also depend on the role and commitment of its two large neighbors.

After the emergency is lifted, the government would require the support of opposition parties, the civil service and the people to restore state institutions to their proper role. Although the opposition parties have backed the government's move and expressed their commitment to work with the people, it remains unclear how



People waiting outside Singh Durbar : High hopes

events will play out over time. In a significant boost for the government, Nepal's foreign friends, including its northern and southern neighbors, instantly backed the country's moves to restore normalcy.

"Facing an election after lifting the emergency will be very challenging task for a democratically elected government, as the prime minister would be exposed to criticism from the opposition for having curtailed civil rights," said a political analyst.

However, the imposition of a state of emergency is not always bad for political leaders. In many cases, such a move has also helped transform the image of politicians. "If the government exploits the opportunity and brings normalcy to the country, the popularity of leaders may soar and help them to win the elections," said another political analyst.

As civil society, political parties and citizens have thrown their weight behind the emergency order, the government needs to exercise caution while using the sweeping powers it has received. "The people have supported the emergency order in the hope that the government will provide security. It is now up to the government to show that it is really sincere about fulfilling the people's aspirations," said the political analyst.

Role of Civil Service

Whatever policies and programs the government introduces to rehabilitate local institutions, the civil service will play a key role in implementing them. If the civil service remains inefficient and non-functional, no program can be expected to bring results.

The role of the civil service is very important in enhancing the image of the government. If civil servants work efficiently to deliver the goods to the people, the popularity of the government will go up. It is the civil service leadership's responsibility to set the administration into motion.

"Nepal's civil service is direction-less because of over-politicization. There is virtually no tendency to work among a large number of the bureaucracy," said a former secretary on condition of anonymity. "The bureaucracy is particularly vulnerable to the pressures of political parties,



PM Deuba (second from right) with political leaders : Tough decisions to take

which want to fulfill their interests through the administrative machinery. Irrespective of party affiliation, politicians always have tried to weaken the bureaucracy. This is a major reason why our civil service has not been able to develop an independent identity."

The civil administration needs to be injected with a new spirit in order to revitalize a society that has carried the heavy burden of six years of violent insurgency. As the leader of a popularly elected government, Prime Minister Deuba eventually has to justify his stand that a declaration of a state of emergency was the only way out in the given circumstances. If administrative machinery fails to deliver the goods, the people will question the wisdom and utility of having gone for such a drastic measure.

"The state of emergency can be used to change the pattern of the administration by injecting a sense of discipline among civil servants," Prime Minister Deuba told reporters on Sunday. "The government is making efforts to bring quick relief to the people."

Without quick relief which would depend on the efficiency of the administration it would be very difficult for the government to explain to the people why they have been made temporarily cede their valuable rights.

The emergency should not be confined to matters of military or police operations. The whole administrative machinery should be mobilized to achieve the objectives the government has set. However, the general administration seems to be uninformed about the purposes of the declaration of emergency. This lack of awareness, which would impede the government's policies and programs, cannot be justified.

The sacrifices the citizens have made in foregoing their rights and freedoms must be compensated through efficient administration. Without this, the government and ruling party would ultimately find it very difficult to face the people.

The exercise of emergency powers is considered a harsh measure under any political system, since it ultimately results in the curtailment of fundamental rights of the citizens. Therefore, the state of emergency has to be short, swift and result-oriented.

The government has been making every effort to justify the proclamation of the state of emergency, but its claims will be accepted only if it meets its objectives. The people have supported the government's move to ensure security and promote the rule of law. How the state of emergency will drive civil servants to achieve these goals remains to be seen. ■



Organizers of the conference : Serious deliberations

YOUTH RISK BEHAVIORS Emerging Problem

A regional conference in Taipei focuses on the increasing risk behaviors among the youths of Asia

By SANJAYA DHAKAL in Taipei

With the decline in the birth and death rates, countries like Nepal, Pakistan and Bangladesh are experiencing a phenomenon called "youth bulge" (growing youth population), triggering profound demographic and social changes.

"There has been a dramatic shift towards later marriage leading to a wide gap between puberty and marriage, which, in turn, leads to a situation wherefrom flows many issues of risk-taking like smoking, drinking, drug abuse and pre-marital sex," said Peter Xenos, a population and health expert at the East West Center in Honolulu, at the conference held in Taipei from November 26-29.

The conference called "Asian Youth at Risk (AYAR)" held extensive discus-

sions on the results of large-scale international/regional research done in six countries — Nepal, Thailand, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Philippines and Indonesia. The study was based on household research.

"In Nepal, we had conducted a research last year called Nepal Adolescent and Young Adults (NAYA) Study where 9,000 young people between 14-22 years of age were interviewed in five urban centers and rural areas in eight districts," said Dr. Shyam Thapa, senior scientist at the Family Health International (FHI) and one of the co-authors of the study report.

With the burgeoning young population, the focus is now on how to decrease their tendency to take risks. "For planning purposes, each country must be aware of when its youth bulge will occur," said Xenos. Nepal experienced the

bulge first in 1988, with the onset of fertility decline.

There are 7.1 million Nepalis in 10-24 age group, representing 31 percent of the total population. They are estimated to grow to 12.6 million by 2030. Fifty-five percent of youths in the 15-19 age group and 44 percent of those between 20 and 24 years are literate. Two out of every five females between five and 19 years and one in every four in the 20-24 age group are illiterate (data taken from the report on schooling, marriage, work and child-bearing among the Nepalese youths by Dr. Thapa, L.B. Acharya and Dr. Ram Hari Aryal).

Dr. Ram Hari Aryal, joint secretary at the parliament secretariat (Population and Social Committee) presented a country statement on Nepal at the conference. "The youth population in the country is on the rise and there is a need to pay attention to their reproductive health rights," said Dr. Aryal, adding that the Nepalese government was also discussing this issue at the policy level.

Although the research findings have indicated that schooling reduces the tendency among the youths and adolescents to engage in risky behaviors, there is a stark need to develop separate programs to reach those out of schools, said Dr. Thapa.

More than 130 participants from 16 countries, including Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Jordan, Korea, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand, USA, Vietnam and Taiwan participated in the conference, sponsored by the East-West Center and Bureau of Health Promotion, Department of Health, Taiwan.

"We decided to host this conference because we believed that the issues of youth need immediate attention and that the issues can be better dealt if we joined hands," said Dr. Hui-Sheng Lin, director at the Bureau of Health Promotion (BHP), Taiwan. According to him, the launch of sex education in his country has started delivering results. "Almost 90 percent of our male youths and 70 percent of our female youths are exposed to pornographic materials so it is essential that we provide them with correct messages and

education.”

Seventy-five experts on adolescent behavior, policy-makers, youth program managers and NGO and government representatives were present in the conference.

Nearly a dozen research briefs on the youth issues of several countries were presented and extensively discussed at the conference. “The idea was to bring people from research fields, policy-making and media together to discuss the issues of risk-taking among Asian youths,” Dr. Charles Morrison, Director of East West Center said highlighting the significance of the conference.

The Washington-based Population



Nepalese youth : Are they aware of the risks?

Reference Bureau (PRB) sponsored the participation of journalists from five countries, including Nepal, at the conference. “We are concerned about the population issues worldwide — including the burgeoning youth population and subsequent challenges. We hope that the proper coverage by media would go a long way in addressing some of the issues,” said Mark Sherman of the PRB.

The conference concluded that there was a need for more extensive networking among the concerned agencies from different countries to deal with the issues more effectively in the days to come. ■

Some Findings from the AYAR Project

By risk-taking, behaviors such as smoking, drinking, drug-use and premarital sex are included. These behaviors are known to be associated with adverse health consequences as well as undesirable social and economic consequences

1. Risk-taking is common among Asian youth

Percentage of 15-19 year olds who ever smoked, drank or used drug

	Male	Female
Philippines	66%	31%
Thailand	73%	42%
Indonesia	76%	7%

2. Most risk-taking behavior is initiated between ages 15 and 25

3. Larger gender differences exist in the prevalence of smoking, drinking and drug-use

Male:Female ratios of smoking prevalence among 15-19 year olds

Indonesia	38:1
Thailand	17:1
Philippines	9:1
Taiwan	6:1
Nepal	3:1

4. The prevalence of premarital sex among male youth is high in societies where age at marriage is high like Thailand, Taiwan and the Philippines. The prevalence of premarital sex among female youth is low even in societies where age at marriage is high except in Taiwan where the age at marriage is very late.

5. The prevalence of condom use is surprisingly low among sexually active unmarried youth in Thailand, the Philippines and Taiwan. Only 30 percent of the sexually active single Filipino male age 15-24 used any contraceptive method at the most recent sexual intercourse, and only nine percent used condoms. Withdrawal was the most common contraceptive method used by sexually active single men in the Philippines.

6. Who are more likely to take risks?

- Youth with parents who have permissive attitudes on risk-taking
- Youth with close friends who are taking risks
- Youth who have left school
- Youth who have left parental home
- Youth who have own income
- Married youth

7. Who are less likely to take risks?

- Youth who have close relationships with parents
- Youth who are very religious
- Youth who plan to have college education

(Compiled by Minja Kim Choe, senior fellow at East-West Center, Hawaii)

AIDS

Clear And Present Danger

The government says some 2,000 Nepalis are suffering from AIDS, but independent organizations put that number as high as 40,000

By AKSHAY SHARMA

Rajiv Kafle, 29, has AIDS and speaks openly about it. "An AIDS/HIV patient doesn't grow horns in his head or a tail on his back. So why should I hide the fact that I have AIDS? Maybe I'm the first person in Nepal to come out in the open and say, 'I have AIDS'."

Earlier this year, the United Nations held a special session on AIDS to mobilize concerted international action to combat the disease. "I was a soldier. But I know of no enemy in war more insidious or vicious than AIDS, an enemy that possesses a clear and present danger to the world," US Secretary of the State Colin Powell said in an address to the UN session on July 15. "The war against AIDS has no front lines. We must wage it on every front. And only an integrated approach makes sense. An approach that emphasizes prevention and public education. But it must also include treatment, care for orphans measures to stop mother-to-child transmission, affordable drugs, delivery systems and infrastructure and medical training. And it must include research into vaccines and a cure."

World Aids Day was observed around the globe on Saturday, December 1. The US Agency for International Development organized a video satellite conference and discussion among experts in Shanghai, China, Bridgeport, Barbados and Washington DC. at American Centre at Gyaneshwor on November 29.

"Nepal is suffering from HIV/AIDS because we lack the needed infrastructure," Minister for Health Sharat Singh Bhandari said. "Poverty, lack of aware-

ness, illiteracy only compounds the problem."

Earlier this year, US President George W. Bush pledge \$200 million to jump-start a global fund to combat AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. Experts have welcomed the fund as a bold new private-public partnership to combat the killer diseases. "Only through sustained and focused international cooperation can we address the problems so grave and sufferings so great," President Bush said.

The United States is the leading donor to anti-AIDS programs in developing countries. President Bush's budget for next fiscal year seeks \$480 million for programs to combat AIDS, twice the amount allocated in the current fiscal year. The White House has also requested \$3.4 billion for AIDS research.

In the 14th century, the Bubonic plague killed one third of Europe's population. People did not understand what caused the pestilence or how it spread. So they blamed God for punishing them for their sins. AIDS has

emerged as the modern-day version of the Bubonic plague both in terms of the scale of its devastation and the sense of hopelessness it breeds.

"The best [developing countries] can do is try to slow new cases through preventive education and encouraging condom use. Figuring out how to save the infected millions remains an agonizing challenge," TIME magazine recently said in a story "Who Should Pick Up The Tab For The Third World?" The magazine added: "While access to antiretroviral would bring a medical miracle help, it would still provide more than a holding action. Only a vaccine that could actually stamp out the virus for a lasting cure — and that remains tragically elusive."

The National Centre for AIDS and STD Control (NCASC) says 2, 097



Street demonstration : Rallying against the disease

people have been infected with HIV and 533 have progressed to the AIDS stage. But other organizations say the figure could be as high as 40,000, a fact that stresses the urgency to deal with the problem on a war footing.

AIDS is affecting the population through all the usual routes. According to official figures, people visiting prostitutes have the highest rate of infection in Nepal. Next on high-risk list are prostitutes. The third largest infected subgroup are Intravenous Drug Users (IDU), a fast growing category.

According to Life-Saving and Life-Giving, there are an estimated 60,000 drug users in Nepal of which 30,000 are in Kathmandu Valley. About 15,000 are Intravenous Drug Users and 30 percent are infected with HIV/AIDS. While the IDUs are a target group for awareness campaigns, the focal point for officials is the practice of unsafe sex, says an expert.

"The geographical situation of Nepal and the needed interventions are different from other countries," said Dr Jack Chow, Assistant Secretary for Health and Science, Bureau of Oceans International Environmental and Scientific Affairs during the USAID program. "We need to combat the problem through global reforms. And the private sector has a vital role to play. AIDS is also an economic threat to the world."

The first recorded case of HIV/AIDS was in southern Africa in 1970 and Nepal saw its first case in 1988. Today there are 72 million people suffering from AIDS around the globe.

Department of Health Services Director-General Dr. B.D. Chataut says it takes up to six to 10 years for a patient to show the symptoms of the disease. "The extent of AIDS-related deaths is just unfolding in Nepal. If the country doesn't start preparing in time, we will have a big problem in the years ahead."

About 20 million people have died of AIDS around the world. Officials here say the disease has claimed 149 Nepalis. "Nepal has chosen 2002 as the year to combat AIDS. A vigorous pro-



AIDS patient : Poignant reflection

gram is to be implemented on a national scale by a committee headed by the prime minister," Minister Bhandari said.

Dr Shahi Sharma, director of the HIV/AIDS department of the Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital said, "There is no monitoring device available in the country to see if a person is affected by HIV/AIDS and the payload the virus is carrying in a patient."

Although there is no cure for the disease, drugs help in containing the spread of the disease in the immune system. But, Dr. Chataut said, "The medicine manufactured in the United States is very expensive. It costs around 80,000 rupees for a monthly dose and you have to take 12 pills per day."

Dr Sharma added: "When an HIV/AIDS patient comes to you, you cannot prescribe the medicine because there is none available in the market. This is a crime against humanity."

"Nine varieties of HIV/AIDS viruses have been found in other countries. But in Nepal, we have only identified one or two types of viruses," said Dr. Iswori Lal Shrestha.

"Silence Kills. Breaking the silence is a powerful way that people of all

levels of society can combat the disease. I do not minimize the courage it takes to come forward, to challenge the taboos and change tradition. But that kind of courage is needed or more people will die," US Secretary of State Powell said in his UN address earlier this year. "Opinion leaders from all walks of life must deliver the message that AIDS is real. That our enemy is the HIV virus not its victims. Those who carry HIV deserve compassion, not ostracism. That they deserve to be treated with dignity, not with disdain. All public officials must use their spotlight they are given to speak out and give AIDS a top priority."

Dr Gerald T. Keusch, a leading health expert, said at the USAID-sponsored videoconference: "Science plays a big part in combating this global threat. We need cooperation way down from the grass-roots levels. Cross-border issues also need to be addressed to combat the disease that knows no barriers."

For a country like Nepal, where victims and their family strongly avoid openly discussing the deadly disease, the courage of people like Kagle becomes a powerful weapon in the anti-AIDS battle. ■

'It's The Right Of The Govt To Defend Its People'

— MARK DOWDLE

MARK DOWDLE, *Defence Attache at the British Embassy in Kathmandu is leaving shortly after completing his assignment in Nepal. On the eve of his return, Dowdle shared his experiences in Nepal with SPOTLIGHT. Excerpts:*

How have you enjoyed your three years in Nepal?

My family and I have thoroughly enjoyed the time that we have spent as guests in your country. I think, exemplified by the many important visitors such as HRH Prince Philip, HRH Princess Anne, the Defence and Foreign Secretaries as well as a number of senior military officers who have visited Nepal, our bilateral relationship is stronger than ever. So a fantastic and very rewarding stay; we will miss our many Nepali friends.

But what about the current situation?

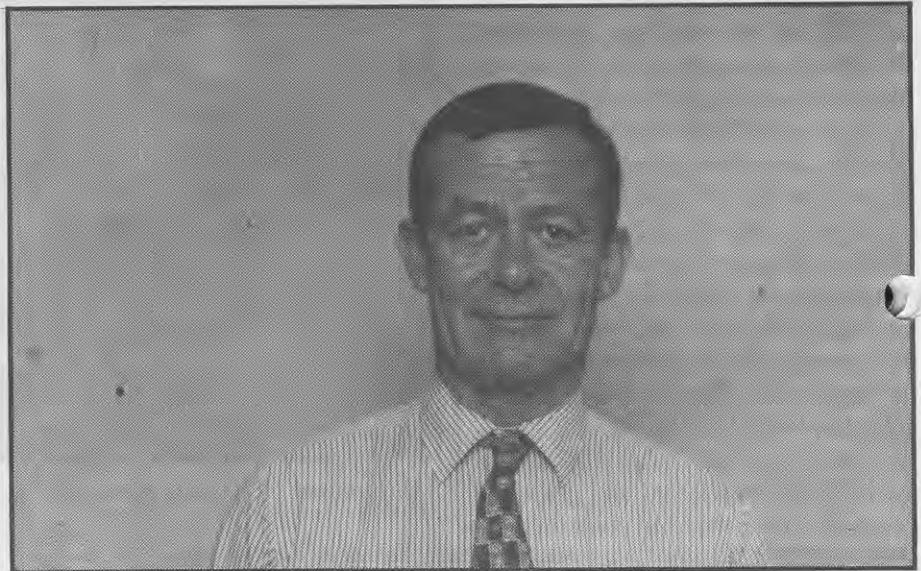
I think that there is a broad feeling of disappointment that the current security situation has deteriorated, particularly in the light of the genuine and positive negotiating stance of Prime Minister Deuba's government. But it is the legitimate right and indeed duty of a democratically elected government to defend its people and to maintain the rule of law.

What do you think about the Nepalese government's call for retired Gurkhas, particularly ex-British Gurkhas, to provide assistance during the current conflict?

That really is a matter for His Majesty's Government and the individuals concerned. Of course, those Gurkhas who retire from the British Army remain Nepalis throughout and after their service and it is a matter for them.

How do you think the ex-service-men have responded to your time in Nepal?

I think that that is really a question that you might like to ask them. There



have been quite a few significant changes over the last couple of years and perhaps I could cite a few and that is against the backdrop of responsibility for almost 26,000 service pensioners and 11,500 welfare pensioners and their families. We have introduced an excellent medical scheme, which benefits all our pensioners and their families, there is a much enhanced service pension and increased welfare pensions. We continue to build about eight schools a year and provide education, scholarships, vocational and employment training for over 1300 people. We have built an outstanding Drug Rehabilitation Centre in Dharan and, at our four Key Area Welfare Centres (Bagmati, Kaski, Dharan and Butwal) provided or are about to provide additional facilities for our pensioners particularly residential accommodation. I could go on. But the main point is that our pensioners in Nepal get an excellent deal (who else has an index-linked pension as a private soldier equivalent — of over NCRs 8,600 each month after only 15 years work?). Our serving soldiers get broadly the same deal as their British equivalents. In short, our support to our serving and retired servicemen is constant and they get an excellent

deal. So I think that the vast majority are content; in all walks of life there is always a vociferous minority that is not happy. But I think that the agenda of this minority inevitably revolves around self-interest. By the way, a team are to arrive shortly to examine whether there should be an uplift to the service pension and, with effect from 1 January the welfare pensioners will benefit from a 10 per cent increase.

Why your interest in Maiti Nepal?

I met Mrs Koirala and visited Maiti Nepal early in my stay here. The plight of the young girls who have been rescued from the flesh trade is appalling. British Gurkhas Nepal has tried to help in providing infrastructure improvements and money. They will continue to do so.

And your thoughts on leaving Nepal?

Sadness and I will miss my many Nepali friends. Concern over the current and unnecessary conflict and I hope that there is an early resolution. My best wishes to all our ex-servicemen and their families and, last but not least, a keen sense of looking forward to my next visit! ■

EXHIBITION

How Veterans Work

Sri Lankan artist Jayasiri Semage presents a canvas of many worlds

By AKSHAY SHARMA

An exhibition of paintings by veteran Sri Lankan artist Jayasiri Semage is on display at the Siddhartha Art Gallery at Babar Mahal. Dr Arzu Deuba, wife of Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, inaugurated the show, organized by the Sri Lankan Embassy and Siddhartha Art Gallery, on November 30.

Sri Lankan President Chandrika Bandarnaike Kumaratunga has described Semage as one of the most talented artists of her country. "He has effectively blended his creativity with the spirit of age-old Sri Lankan tradition and paintings to develop a style of his own and has created an unique image of his own," she said.

Connoisseurs agree. "His works are more versatile paintings of the day which depict a cross section of the Sri Lankan heritage," said Dutch critic W. J. E. Monthemius. "His works encompass many worlds and his horizons are unrestricted. His visions take in many fields. In brief, his life is one extensive work of art," said Edwin Ariyadasa, another critic.

Art was not what his parents had in mind for Semage. "My parents wanted me to be a doctor. But I went on to join Dharma Sokha College, in southern Sri Lanka, where there were art classes," he told SPOTLIGHT.

"I began my career as a mediaman. I worked as a cartoonist and did press layouts for the Sun Group of newspapers after I left school. I became the director of the art department before working as a free lancer."

He described his style as typical Sri Lankan with a modern touch. "I make huge pandals (special Sri Lankan art-

work) depicting Lord Buddha. Every year during Vaisakhi (Lord Buddha's birthday), I am given the task of erecting huge pandals."

Creating a pandal is a difficult job, he said. "The most important part is the color schemes. First, you have to see the location, design it and the things around it. It matters if you are doing it for a private company or the state or religious purposes.

"Then you must have carpenters,



Veteran's work : Terrific art

painters and you design the actual structure. Then you hang or fix the pandal to the coconut trees. The lighting comes next. Sometimes you have to create a halo around Lord Buddha's image illuminating it with bulbs."

Semage was the personal artist of the late president Ranasinghe Premadasa. "He set the trend of holding Gam-Udhava

(expos) across Sri Lanka every year. For 12 years, I have been erecting huge pandals, inspired by his request.

"Premadasa selected me to design the floors in the Temple Trees (the president's residence) and I still do that every year." Semage remembers creating a 60-foot pandal in Japan in 1991. "It took me two months to do that."

Asked what words of inspiration he had to offer young artists, Semage said: "It is good for an artist to begin with art that is teary and focus on the anatomy of things. Then you gradually understand the realistic aspect of art. That's what Pablo Picasso did."

Semage puts great emphasis on the value of hard work. "You can't be famous at once. You must have the ability to admire art, only then can you become an artist. Then you choose the field of art you are getting into."

Sri Lankan Ambassador Pamela J. Deen said: "Semage is an outstanding artist in Sri Lanka. He has won many awards and prizes. Recognizing his contribution in art, he was conferred with the national honor "Kala Suri" (Art Master) by the President of Sri Lanka in 1990. Beauty and happiness are the unique characteristics of his creation. Using subtle colors in harmony with the mixture of traditional motives and patterns, he bridges many worlds. For his creativeness and talent he has been named as the Sri Lanka's Millennium Artist."

Professor Chandima Wijebandara said: "His narrative fluency, virile contouring of forms by the swift and sure brush is very clear the use of colors by Semage is also expressive of his own art. The frequent use of subdued and subtle colors depicts a non-aggressive and peaceful spirit."

"Investing in creativity is the main objective of the gallery; this includes the promotion of regional awareness through the language of art. This exhibition makes a milestone in bridging cultural ties," Sangeeta Thapa of Siddhartha Art Gallery said. "This is the first time a Sri Lankan artist has come to our gallery." Semage's works will be on display until December 10. ■

BOOK

Conservation Critique

A leading environmentalist examines Nepal's challenges of environmental protection and sustainable development

By A CORRESPONDENT

Ensconced within Nepal's small landmass is a treasure trove of biodiversity. As the country moves ahead with serious efforts at modernization, some decisions have hampered the natural course of the environment. One of the major challenges of the country is to strike a balance between development and the environment. Experience has shown that sustainable development is impossible without preservation of the environment.

What is the environment all about?

Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development

By *Batu Krishna Upreti*

Published by *School of Environmental Management and Sustainable Development (SchEMS)*

Price Rs. 370 (Institutions) Rs.

200 (Students)

Pages: 242

It is a holistic issue of the earth ranging from the air to soil, forest and resources and atmosphere. There is a clear need to strike a balance between the utilization and exploitation of natural resources to achieve the goal of sustainable development.

Since the first United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Nepal has taken several steps to preserve the environment. By introducing a community forestry program, the country has witnessed mass participation of the people in forest preservation. Despite these efforts, one can see a very dismal situation in the areas of quality of air and water and garbage collection.

The government has taken some policy decisions to implement environmental and developmental programs. Following the restoration of multiparty democracy, the government has started to accord higher priority to the environmental sector.

There is a wealth of literature in the English language highlighting importance of environmental protection for sustainable development. However, few publications are available in Nepali. Batu Krishna Upreti, one of the well-known environmentalists of the country, has made a commendable effort in enriching the body of environmental literature in the national language.

As Nepal has been facing multidimensional environmental problems, including deforestation, water, air and sound pollution and problems of hazardous chemicals, the majority of the people are ignorant about them. Because of language problems, many students do not understand the basic issues involved. Upreti's book is particularly valuable for students as it facilitates easy comprehension of major environmental problems.

The problem of environmental degradation is very complicated, as one needs to understand various aspects of it. Issues related to the environment are interrelated. The depletion of forest

cover has a direct impact on watershed management and land erosion. Air and sound pollution disrupt human life and the environment cycle.

While elaborating the challenges before the country's environment, Upreti discusses the geographical and other conditions of Nepal, including the situation of energy, poverty alleviation, over population and major national environmental challenges.

The book is divided into six chapters dealing with various aspects of environmental problems. In the introductory chapter, the author explains the geological and geographical position of Nepal focusing on soil, land and water utilization. Upreti discusses major aspects of bio-diversity, greenhouse effect, forest and meteorology. He also analyzes the role of Nepal in the context of international environmental protection activities. Upreti discusses legal and policy aspects of conservation as well as institutionalized efforts toward this end.

For students and general readers alike, Upreti's book provides a wealth of information on the environmental problems and challenges of the country. A major strength is its ability to explain the implications of international conventions and conferences in preserving the global environment. ■

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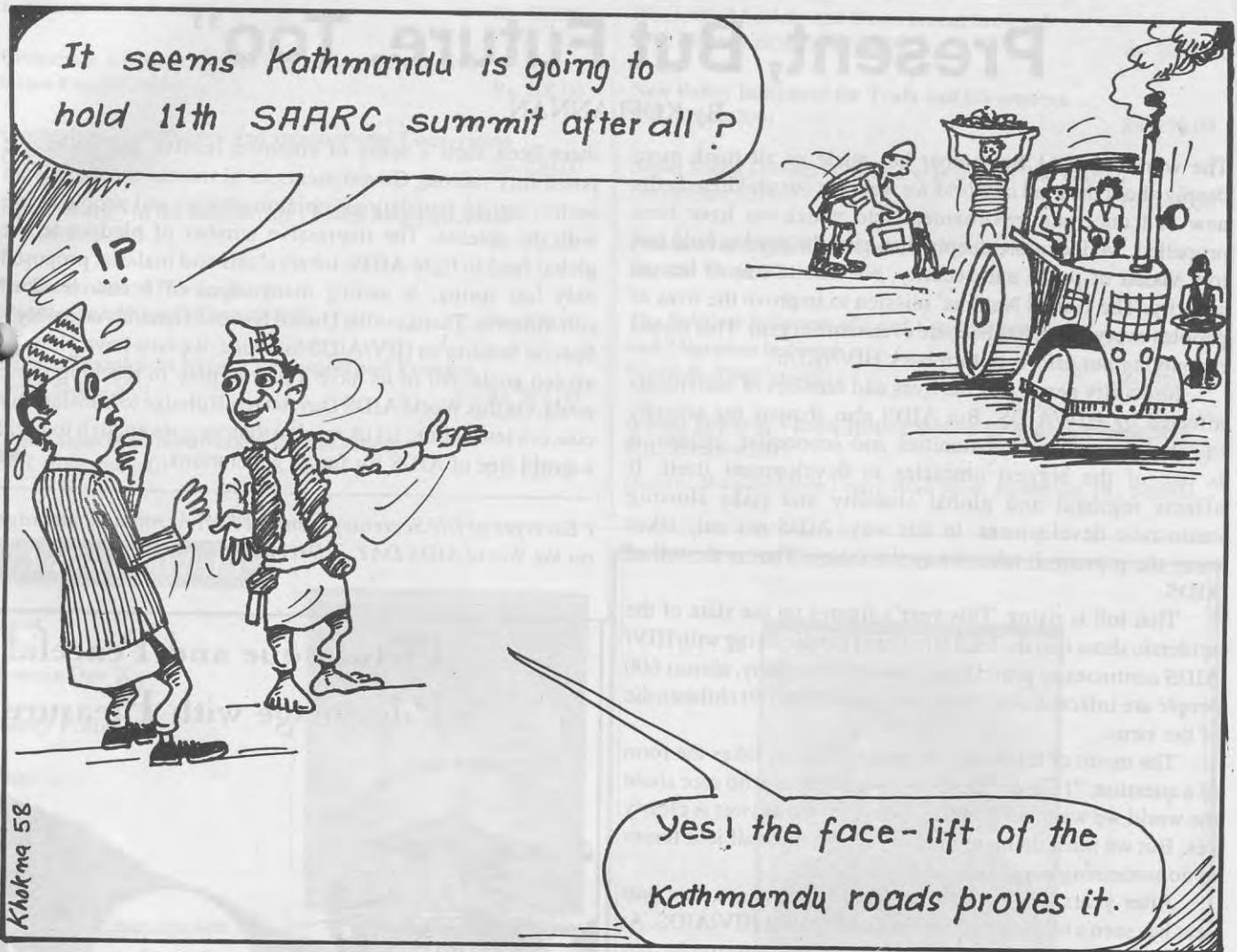
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Non A/C
Room

By M.S.KHOKNA



TRANSITION

LEFT: Dr. Ram Sharan Mahat, Finance Minister, for Sri Lanka, Maldives and India to give official invitation to the leaders of the countries to participate in the forthcoming 11th SAARC Summit in Kathmandu.

Mahesh Acharya, Minister for Agriculture and Cooperatives, for Bangladesh, Paki-

stan and Bhutan to give official invitation to the leaders of the countries to participate in the forthcoming 11th SAARC Summit in Kathmandu.

ARRIVED: Nawaf Mazalha, Deputy Speaker at the Israeli parliament Knesset, leading a six-member delegation, for three-day visit to Nepal, at the invitation of Speaker Taranath Rana Bhat.

RETURNED: Surya Nath

Upadhyaya, chief commissioner at the Commission for Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA), from Tokyo, Japan, after participating in an international seminar against corruption.

PRESENTED: Letters of Credence by the Japanese Ambassador to the Kingdom of Nepal Zenji Kaminaga, to His Majesty the King.

APPOINTED: Prof. Dr.

Madhav Bhattarai, as the Nayab Badaguruju, by His Majesty the King.

AWARDED: Swargadwari Ashram, with the Bharati Kharel Memorial Award and litterateur Sheela Panta, with the Bharati Kharel Memorial Byakhyan Award, by the Bharati Kharel Academy.

APPOINTED: Balmukunda Dev Pandey, as the chief editor of the Rajdhani daily. ■

"AIDS Not Only Takes Away The Present, But Future, Too"

By KOFI ANNAN

The world after 11 September has made us all think more deeply about the kind of world we want for our children. In the new and uncertain environment into which we have been propelled, we feel more deeply than ever the need to hold fast to a vision of peace and security, but also to one of human security. The United Nations' mission to improve the lives of peoples everywhere has become even more urgent. That means redoubling our efforts to turn back HIV/AIDS.

Insecurity permeates the lives and families of individuals affected by HIV/AIDS. But AIDS also shatters the security of whole societies, communities and economies. Indeed, it is one of the biggest obstacles to development itself. It affects regional and global stability and risks slowing democratic development. In this way, AIDS not only takes away the present. It takes away the future. That is the toll of AIDS.

That toll is rising. This year's figures on the state of the epidemic show that the total number of people living with HIV/AIDS continues to grow. Every hour of every day, almost 600 people are infected. And every hour, more than 60 children die of the virus.

The motto of this year's World AIDS Day takes the form of a question: "I Care... Do You?" For all of us who care about the world we want our children to live in, the answer is clearly yes. But we must do more than say it. We must all join forces to do something about it.

After years of slow and inadequate responses, this past year has seen a turning point in the fight against HIV/AIDS. At no time, in the two decades of dealing with this catastrophe, has

there been such a sense of common resolve and collective possibility - among Governments, civil society and the private sector; among foundations, opinion-makers and people living with the disease. The impressive number of pledges to the global fund to fight AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, proposed only last spring, is among many signs of a new level of commitment. Thanks to the United Nations General Assembly's Special Session on HIV/AIDS last June, we now have global agreed goals. All of us have a part to play in reaching those goals. On this World AIDS Day, let us all pledge to translate our concern into action; let us resolve that we care enough to build a world free of AIDS for future generations. ■

(Excerpts of UN Secretary General Kofi A. Annan's message on the World AIDS DAY, 1 December, 2001)

NEPAL: HIV/AIDS in Figures

Estimated new adult HIV infections per year: 5100

New adult infections per day: 14

AIDS related deaths per year: 3000

Estimated number of people living with HIV/AIDS end 2002: 36,000

Indirect economic loss per day: US\$ 25,733

Indirect economic loss 2000: US\$ 9,360,000

Epidemiological Figures

HIV seroprevalence among sex workers: 17.6%

HIV seroprevalence among injecting drug users: 50%

HIV seroprevalence among patients with sexually transmitted diseases: 6%

(Source: UNAIDS)

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Other Attractions:

- ✓ Restaurant
- ✓ Kiddies Games
- ✓ Souvenir Shop

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S.K. Shrestha/2001 Rs. 475.00

(Source : Himalayan Book Center, Bagh Bazar, Kathmandu, Ph : 242085)

Video (English)

Heist

Donnie Dar Ko

Harry Potter

Bandits

From Hell

Riding In Cars

Domestic Disturbance

Shallow Hai

Iron Monkey

Bones



Hindi

Deewanapan

Tera Mera Saath Rahen

Abhay

Yeh Zindagi Ka Safar

Moksha

Indian

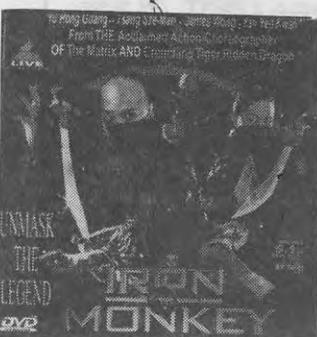
Arjun Deva

Ashoka

Rehna Hai Tere Dil Mai

Ajnabee

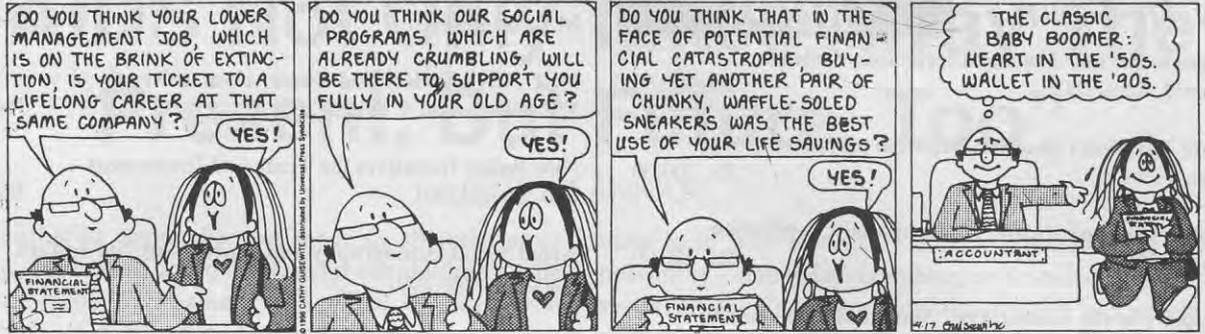
(Source : Super Star Video, New Road)



*“With faith man can
achieve anything,
faith is the foundation
for the realisation of God”*

— SATYA SAI BABA

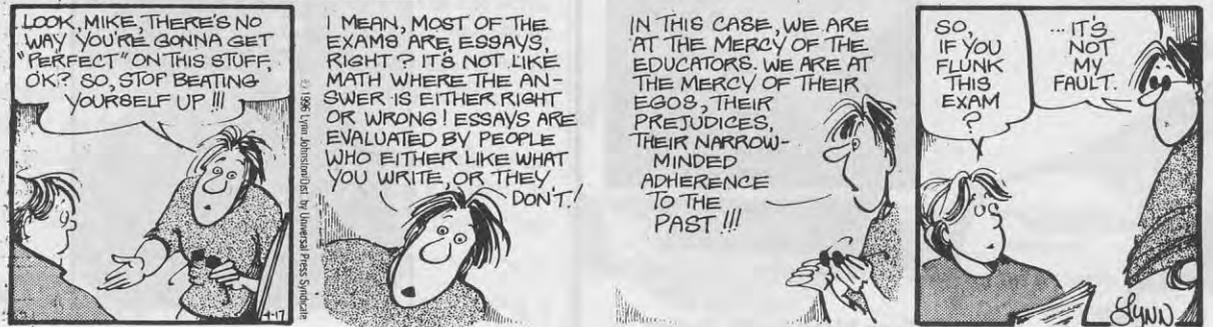
CATHY



MR. BOFFO



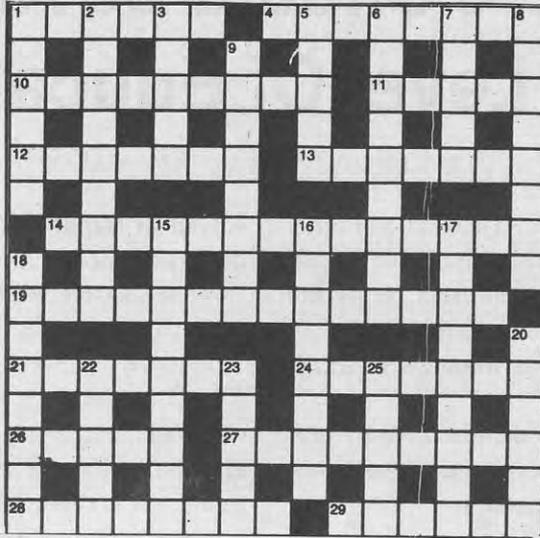
FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE



DOONESBURY



CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1. Come up and address officers in a court (6)
4. Double helping of food for dog (4-4)
10. Conflict settled by introduction of the horse (6,3)
11. Reject watch committee's brief (5)
12. Determined to come in to silence bagpipe (7)
13. Justification of barrier against the lower classes (7)
14. He argues against any addition to the calendar (6,8)
19. Result of canvasser's spontaneous expression? (6,8)
21. Order to dig around ñ put on hard hat (7)
24. Command to speak slowly (7)
26. Any number classically dressed in island (5)
27. No degrees at this newish university? (9)
28. Entering central part, monitor temperature in vessel (8)
29. Bishop's passion for old car (6)

DOWN

1. Fall down mutually held up, to some extent (6)
2. Is jubilant, sent out in high naval post (5,4)
3. Sort of card sharp (5)
5. Raced strenuously, but conserving energy (5)
6. Airy advance in dangerous battle-zone (4,5)
7. Be very busy with article, so likely to err? (5)
8. Willow shoot a bright color, like Keat's sedge? (8)
9. American shrub given fresh soak (8)
15. Would I clean out to prevent infection (9)
16. Sinks died, clam just before the end (8)
17. Heading London district, girl is getting tough (9)
18. Contemptible sort of fallacy (8)
20. Does he look lasciviously round church? (6)
22. Police district staff, men of junior status (5)
23. Leg of lamb with first of gravy given to me? (5)
25. Final adjustment made to river dance (5)

ACROSS : 1. Accost 4. Chow-chow 10. Trojan war 11. Remit 12. Musette 13. Defence 14. Devils advocate 19. Action painting 21. Homburg 24. Dictate 26. Tonga 27. Greenwich 28. Corvette 29. Bangor

DOWN : 1. Autumn 2. Crows nest 3. Smart 5. Hared 6. Warm front 7. Human 8. Withered 9. Sweet sop 15. Inoculate 16. Dwindles 17. Annealing 18. Pathetic 20. Lecher 22. Manor 23. Gigot 25. Conga

SOLUTION

BRIDGE

NORTH 4-16
 ♠ Q 7 6 2
 ♥ A K 3
 ♦ K J 5
 ♣ 6 4 3

WEST **EAST**
 ♠ — ♠ K 10 9 5
 ♥ 10 9 8 6 4 2 ♥ Q J 5
 ♦ 9 3 2 ♦ 7 6
 ♣ Q J 10 8 ♣ 9 7 5 2

SOUTH
 ♠ A J 8 4 3
 ♥ 7
 ♦ A Q 10 8 4
 ♣ A K

Vulnerable: Both
 Dealer: South

The bidding:
 South West North East
 1 ♠ Pass 3 ♠ Pass
 4 ♠* Pass 4 ♥* Pass
 5 ♦* Pass 5 ♥* Pass
 6 ♠ All pass
 *Controls

Opening lead: Club queen

"If all misfortunes were laid in one common heap whence everyone must take an equal portion, most people would be contented to take their own and depart."
 — SOCRATES

Believe it or not, we all get an equal share of bad trump breaks. Lucky players get theirs when playing a partscore; the unfortunate when playing a slam. Adequately forewarned, how would you play the trumps in today's spade slam?

In a typical game, South wins his club ace and is happy with what he sees. With no side-suit losers, he can focus on how best to play the trump suit.

An unsuspecting South will lead a heart to dummy's ace to take a trump finesse. His jack wins, but the slam doesn't. East must score two trump tricks, sending the slam one down.

The only danger threatening the slam is a nasty 4-0 trump break. If West has them all, South cannot prevail. However, if East has them, a safety play is available.

To succeed in today's layout, South should lead a low trump to dummy's queen at trick two. (Low to dummy's six will also work.) East wins his king, but South retains control, picking up East's 10-6-6-5 by repeated finesses. He crosses to dummy twice in the red suits to lead through East's trumps, limiting his losses to only one trump trick.

'Children Everywhere Should Be Able To Receive The Same Level Of Education'

—TOSHIKO ARIIZUMI

TOSHIKO ARIIZUMI is the president of the Ariizumi Corporation, Japan and a volunteer at the SAME Japan International — a group of Japanese nationals working to promote education and health in rural parts of the world. Ms. Ariizumi recently led a delegation of SAME volunteers to Nepal on an observation tour of education and health projects the group has been running in some villages of Mahottari district with the help of a Nepalese NGO, Women in Environment. Ariizumi spoke to SANJAYA DHAKAL about the projects. Excerpts:

Could you elaborate on the activities of your group?

SAME International consists of 5,000 Japanese and 5,000 foreign members. We are modeled after such organizations as UNESCO [the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization]. We feel that children everywhere should be able to receive the same level of education. For this purpose, we have been building SAME international schools. We have already built eight SAME schools in different villages of Mahottari district in Nepal. We have also built one community health center, as we were aware of the health needs of the people there.

How many other countries have you built such schools in?

We have built such schools only in Nepal. But we have been sending Japanese students to the United States,

Canada, England, Thailand and other countries. Likewise, we are also accepting several members from Nepal and elsewhere on exchange programs.

How do you manage your resources?

We manage the resources by ourselves. First, we advertise in local newspapers in Japan asking for donations.



"Many people are quite moved after reading about such nice projects. Many members even want to make their own schools. For example, the Koma Koko (koko in Japanese meaning senior high school) alumni people collected money and helped build SAME Nepal Koma Koko school."

Many people are quite moved after reading about such nice projects. Many members even want to make their own schools. For example, the Koma Koko (koko in Japanese meaning senior high school) alumni people collected money and helped build SAME Nepal Koma Koko school. Likewise, people from Yamanashi prefecture collected money by selling empty bottles gathered for seven years and helped build a junior high school in Nepal. People always want to be involved in such nice projects.

How long has the group been in-

volved in Nepal and what has been the experience so far?

The SAME group has been involved in Nepal for the last five years. The experience has been very, very good. All of our members were moved after we made a trip to our schools Mahottari. It's nice and exciting. We would like to continue this kind of help in the days to come.

How is the response of the local people?

It is totally wonderful. The people here are so nice. They have so pure eyes that we cannot forget them. Some of our members were so moved that they did not want to return home. For instance, Mr. Michihiko Yoda, one of our members, this time helped build one school called SAME Nepal Yoda school. He is a retired senior high school teacher and has promised to come back here as soon as possible and teach music to students here.

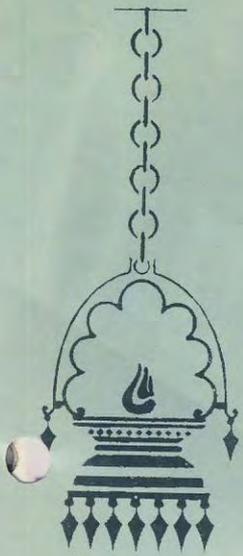
Why did the group choose to help Nepal?

We were advised to build such schools in countries like Nepal and Cambodia. But in Cambodia, other members had already built schools and hospitals, so we chose this country.

Are you going to continue your help here?

Sure. As students graduating from the SAME Nepal senior high schools would like to continue their education, we are planning to open colleges as well. ■

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