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## NEW SIGNS OF HOPE IN NEPAL

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THE DEMOCRATIC SELECTION of Nepal's new Prime Minister, Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba, and his initial success in humouring the 'Maoist' rebels prior to his assumption of office on Thursday has stirred new hopes in the Himalayan kingdom. The mass regicidal carnage in Kathmandu in early June and the intensification of the pent-up popular disenchantment with the previous Prime Minister, Mr. Girija Prasad Koirala, in that context had become a matter of national conscience. In the end, Mr. Koirala resigned in deference to the strong sentiments of the people. Although they did not rise in open revolt against him, they were deeply cognisant of the allegations of a corruption scandal under his regime as also his transparent inability to meet the increasingly violent challenge posed by the communist 'revolutionaries' and his conspicuously inept responses to the popular outrage over the royal tragedy. It is against the backdrop of such spiralling discontent in the economically poor kingdom that Mr. Koirala quit. No less significantly, a candidate sponsored by him lost to Mr. Deuba in the subsequent election within the ruling Nepali Congress for the post of Prime Minister. Mr. Deuba's earlier tenure at the helm of a fragile coalition Government was not an inspiring chapter in Nepal's democracy in the decade since the abolition of absolute monarchy. However, Mr. Koirala, who reigned for a cumulatively long period in the ambience of a struggling democracy, did not have much to show for his work, either.

Mr. Deuba has already had to contend with the compulsions of factional politics within his party which at present commands a majority in the House of Representatives. This accounts for the delay in his swearing-in by a few days and in the formation of what is the first outline of a Cabinet. However, his obvious advantage at this time, unlike during his previous innings as Prime Minister, is the political goodwill he has man-

aged to earn quickly over a critical issue. Now, the 'Maoist' group, which wages a "people's war" and clamours for a republican constitution, has not been blamed by a palace-ordained probe panel for the ghoulish massacre of King Birendra and others. Yet, the outlawed communist outfit is seen in Nepal as either a devil or a saviour. With the 'Maoist' rebel leader, Mr. Prachanda, readily accepting Mr. Deuba's appeal for a truce that could facilitate a negotiated settlement of the problems being projected during the "people's war", dramatic new possibilities are indicated.

Surely, Mr. Prachanda has only asked his guerrillas to stop offensive anti-state activities for the present to test the seriousness of the new Deuba administration. Mr. Prachanda does not also budge from his ideological position that the present uninspiring model of Nepalese democracy deserves to be violently overthrown, but he is willing to give Mr. Deuba's offer of negotiations a 'reasonable' chance. Irrespective of the inevitable questions about the external sources of inspiration for the Nepalese 'Maoists', the Himalayan kingdom has traditionally wanted to remain friendly with China as also India without being seen by either with suspicion. In recent years, New Delhi's concerns about Kathmandu's situational dilemmas have had much to do with India's painful belief that Pakistan has gained access to the Nepalese territory as a springboard for anti-India activities. The recent hijacking of an Indian Airlines plane in Kathmandu was only the most conspicuous example of these suspicions. In the West, Nepal is beginning to be seen as a soft conduit for regional destabilisation efforts by China or its "surrogate", Pakistan. The U.S. Assistant Secretary of State, Ms. Christina Rocca's current visit to Kathmandu with a message of support for Nepal's democracy is therefore important in the overall context of the kingdom's vulnerabilities.

THE HINDU

20 JUL 2001

# Deuba inducts 13 ministers

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

KATHMANDU, July 26. - Nepal's Premier Sher Bahadur Deuba formed a 13-member Cabinet this morning, including four ministers, who served under his predecessor, Mr Girija Prasad Koirala.

According to a notice from King Gyanendra's Principal Press Secretariat, Mr Ram Sharan Mahat gets the finance portfolio while agriculture and cooperatives will be under Mr Mahesh Acharya.

The Prime Minister has retained ministries, including defence, foreign affairs, royal palace and general adminis-

tration.

Among the other Cabinet members are Housing and Physical Planning Minister Chiranjibi Wagle, Local Development and Home Minister Khum Bahadur Khadka, Forest and Land Conservation Minister Gopal Man Shrestha, Water Resources Minister Bijaya Kumar Gachchheddar, Tourism and Civil Aviation Minister Bal Bahadur, Labour and Transport Management Minister Palten Gurung, Information and Communications Minister Jaya Prakash Gupta, Education Minister Amod Prasad Upadhyaya and Population and Environment

Minister Prem Lal Singh.

There are no ministers of state or assistant ministers. Those who were part of Mr Koirala's team - Dr Mahat, Mr Gurung, Mr Upadhyaya and Mr Acharya. The last two are considered very close to Mr Koirala.

## Maoists' links with Palace:

A committee appointed by the main opposition party, the Nepal Communist Party United Marxist-Leninist, to study the five-and-a-half-year-old Maoist insurgency says the Maoists and the Nepalese Royal Palace had "secret relations", a newspaper report said today, adds DPA.

THE STATESMAN

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# NEPAL CABINET SWORN IN

BY SUMAN PRADHAN

Kathmandu, July 26: Newly appointed Prime Minister of Nepal Sher Bahadur Deuba unveiled his 13-member Cabinet on Thursday, sending strong signals that the government would not pursue anti-corruption measures as vigorously as promised.

Mr Deuba appointed Khum Bahadur Khadka as the new home minister. Mr Khadka has also been given charge of the influential local development ministry. Mr Bijay Gachhaddar, a former minister, has been appointed the minister for water resources, as has Mr Chiranjeevi Wagle who has been given the

physical planning and construction ministry. Other notables include Bal Bahadur K.C. as the new minister for tourism, culture and civil aviation, Sharad Singh Bhandari as health minister and Jay Prakash Gupta as minister for information and communication. All these ministers have one thing in common: they have all been charged with corruption while serving in various previous Nepali Congress governments.

However, none of the charges have been proved. The unveiling of the Cabinet was greeted with scorn in several quarters. Many analysts seem to think, Mr Deuba is squandering whatever public goodwill he won by

declaring a ceasefire early this week in the government's battle against the Maoist rebels. "Mr Deuba should have taken more fresh people in the Cabinet," says Narayan Wagle, a veteran political journalist. "And he should also have realised that he will not gain public trust by taking in tainted colleagues." But analysts say, Mr Deuba was compelled to take the ministers due to the uneasy equation within his ruling Nepali Congress party.

Though he trounced his rival, party general secretary Sushil Koirala, in a parliamentary party vote to gain the Prime Ministership, Mr Deuba knows all too well that his detractors

are still strong within the party. Former Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, admittedly no fan of Mr Deuba's, has a strong following in the party and could cause trouble to the new Prime Minister. Realising this, Mr Deuba has included two ministers close with Mr Koirala, finance minister Dr Ram Sharan Mahat and agriculture minister (previously defence minister) Mahesh Acharya. However, general secretary Sushil Koirala's supporters have not joined the Cabinet, an ill omen for political stability. But by including the ministers who have been tainted Mr Deuba can count on their crucial support in time of need.

## Report links Maoists with royal palace

Kathmandu, July 26: A committee appointed by the main Opposition party, the Nepal Communist Party United Marxist-Leninist, to study the five-and-a-half-year-old Maoist insurgency says the Maoists and the Nepalese royal palace had "secret relations," a newspaper report said on Thursday.

The committee, headed by Parliament member Jhahnath Khanal, was formed a year ago and the report is under discussion in the UML standing committee, the daily *Himalaya Times* said. The Maoists began their insurgency in February 1996 seeking to replace the current parliamentary democracy and to abolish the monarchy. The newspaper quoted high-level sources within the UML as saying the party regards the Maoists as extreme leftists. (DPA)



SWEARING-IN CEREMONY: Nepal's new Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, 55 (left), is sworn in by King Gyanendra at the Narayanhity Royal Palace in Kathmandu on Thursday. (AP)

THE ASIAN AGE

# Maoists bomb Coke plant in Kathmandu

Keshav Pradhan

Nepal, Sunday, September 29

MAOISTS THIS morning struck in the heart of Nepal, defying the Army offensive launched since a state of emergency was declared in the kingdom on Tuesday.

Armed with rifles and pistols, the rebels detonated two bombs at a coal-coking plant at Balaha, only 20 minutes from the Palace by car. Set up in the Seventies, the plant was part of the industrial boom by a private firm in the 1970s.

Industrialists said the rebels asked the factory staff to leave the place before throwing the bombs, which went off at five-minute intervals. The washing section of the plant and some nearby buildings were damaged. No one was injured in the blasts.

Later, troops sealed off the area, part of an industrial state housing a number of factories owned by various firms. This is the first incident of Maoist attacks in this part of the kingdom since Emergency was proclaimed. Information

Minister Jayaprakash Prasad Gupta said some people had been arrested in connection with the blasts.

Two days ago, the Maoists tried to enter Kathmandu valley from the Dhulikhel side. They were driven back by security forces. The Army's biggest cantonment is located at Panchkhal, a proposed site for training UN peacekeepers. The place is close to Dhulikhel.

The attack on the plant appeared to have been organised by the Maoists, he said. The US, which asked them on Tuesday to lay down arms. The rebels' criticism of Washington got particularly strident early this month after the local media reported that Washington was planning to give helicopters to Nepal.

Last weekend, police found a bomb in a factory in Bheraha in central Nepal. The firm has an Indian connection. There is fear here that the rebels, who consider India an expansionist force, may also target Indian firms.

Defence secretary Padam Acharya said the army was succeeding in breaking Maoists' stronghold on western Nepal. "It appears they had consolidated their position over the past few years. It is because of this and the difficult terrain that we are using helicopters in our operations," he added.

At least 11 Maoists were shot dead yesterday by security forces at Tribhuvanpur in Dang. Curfew was reimposed in Salyan in western Nepal where the Army has carried out air and ground attacks since the imposition of Emergency.



The damaged Coke plant near Kathmandu.

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THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

SEP 29 1990

## POLITICS AND TERROR IN NEPAL

THE INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT seems to have encouraged the Nepalese Government to take a stern view of the Maoist rebels of the Himalayan kingdom at the present moment. With the U.S.-led 'campaign' against international terror dominating the global political discourse, the Nepalese authorities have hardly had to worry about defining terrorism at home in a sweeping manner that would cover the communist insurgents. To say this is not to belittle the troubles that Nepal's fragile democratic order and civil society have had to endure on account of the activities of the self-styled Maoists for several years now. Yet, the current international mood may explain why Nepal's latest moves against the Maoists appear to have been viewed quite positively by some major powers. In promulgating a state of emergency at this time, Nepal's monarch has followed the letter and spirit of the country's Constitution by acting on the advice of the Prime Minister, Mr. Sherbahadur Deuba, and his Council of Ministers. The emergency order has been rendered more effective by the exhaustive conceptualisation of terrorism in a parallel exercise. The latest Terrorism and Disruptive Activities Control and Punishment Ordinance leaves little to the imagination or the interpretative skills of the authorities. This does not damage Nepal's case for peace and stability at home. These new legal measures, if implemented with a measurable degree of empathy for the poor people's "causes", may in fact enhance the welfare-oriented course of politics in Nepal. For about a decade now, the kingdom has been struggling valiantly to sustain a people-friendly democracy in the context of the abolition of absolute monarchy as a revolutionary event of contemporary history.

For the first time since the Maoists began their campaign against the conventional-style

politics of Nepal's lively democracy, these anti-establishment forces are reported to have taken their 'war' directly into the camp of the country's army itself. This aspect, amplified by the conspicuously violent strikes against the symbols of authority at this time, is widely recognised as the immediate justification for not only the latest nationwide emergency but also the related anti-terror focus. The traditional concepts of anti-state subversion and threats to an established order have now been virtually equated with terrorism. While this will lend itself to a general debate that is germane to political science and the practice of statecraft, the Nepalese context is not without instances of civil disorder that subjects the people to hardship.

*Hi for Nepal*  
Official India has shown no hesitation while endorsing the steps that Mr. Deuba has now taken. It is arguable that the Nepalese Prime Minister deserves the benefit of the doubt because of his recent efforts to engage the Maoist rebels in a dialogue over the future of Nepal. Yet, New Delhi will be well advised to guard its own steps as it considers helping the Nepalese military forces in combating the kingdom's Maoists in their new identity as terrorists. India's geopolitical interest is to convert Nepal into a terror-free zone in every sense of the term. The suspected links between Nepal's communist extremists and the people's-war groups and others of their ilk in India, or for that matter China, constitute only one facet of the Himalayan kingdom's worries. Moreover, New Delhi wants to see that one or more powers 'hostile' to it cannot have an easy access to Nepal as a staging post for any anti-India terrorist activities such as the plane hijack at Kathmandu nearly two years ago. In all, however, prudence and political transparency must govern India's moves to help Nepal at this juncture.

THE HINDU

29 NOV 2001

# Anti-terror ordinance issued in Nepal

Himalayan  
Sr. Nepal  
SI-5

28/11

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

KATHMANDU, Nov. 28. — Nepal has issued an anti-terrorism ordinance that would imprison anyone found involved in acts of terrorism or even helping or harbouring terrorists. This follows the recent Maoists attacks in the country which have claimed more than 300 lives.

"People involved or those conspiring acts of terrorism should be imprisoned for life", a government notice, quoting the ordinance, said today. The anti-terrorism ordinance was issued following the state of emergency declared on Monday night, the notice said.

Police or authorities would be

able to detain anyone they suspect for 90 days without charging them, it said. The authorities would also be able to freeze a suspect's bank accounts and properties, suspend his passport and raid his house without a notice or a court order.

**Army foils bank attack:** Nepalese army chased Maoist rebels up treacherous mountain trails today and foiled a bid to bomb a bank, the defence ministry said, adds Reuters. Today was the second day of the offensive against the rebels.

The army fought gunbattles with the rebels in at least two remote districts. "A large quantity" of arms were recovered from the rebels who used don-

keys and ponies to ferry the weapons to their hideouts, an official said.

The weapons seized from the Salyan and Pyuthan districts in west Nepal had been looted from a military camp during the weekend.

A police officer said the rebels tried to bomb a bank in Dholaka town in central Nepal but were stopped by security forces. "There was a skirmish, a gunfight. One police officer was injured", he said.

The defence ministry said yesterday that armed forces were using helicopters and ground soldiers to crush the revolt aimed at toppling the monarchy and installing a Communist republic. It said the army

had inflicted heavy casualties on the Maoist rebels in the crackdown ordered by King Gyanendra on Monday.

The Prime Minister, Mr Sher Bahadur Deuba, in a broadcast on Monday, vowed to bring the rebels to justice and branded them terrorists.

King Gyanendra deployed the army on the government's advice.

He announced sweeping measures to curb free speech and announced new powers of detention.

Until this week, Nepal had avoided using the army for fear of upsetting the delicate balance between its constitutional monarchy set up in 1990 and its parliamentary democracy.

THE STATESMAN

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it should not suddenly burst onto an unsuspecting world.

## Himalayas of Nepal **Mao & Monarchy** 10

The recrudescence of Maoist violence in Nepal signifies another dangerous turn in the battle for supremacy between the political parties and the insurgents. At stake is not merely the future of elected authority but the very survival of multiparty democracy which has been increasingly assailed in the last 10 years. The predatory politics of the Maoists led by Pushpakamal Dahal alias Comrade Prachanda is, without doubt, a massive attempt to overawe the state. In their six-year rule of the gun, Maoist insurgents have claimed over 1,800 lives, displaced two prime ministers, terrorised vast sections of the populace, extorted huge amounts from governmental and non-governmental agencies, robbed banks, blown up vital public installations and established a parallel administration in nearly 40 of Nepal's 75 districts. However, if they have made democratic governance and development impossible, in no small measure this has been facilitated by the elected politicians. The venality, rampant corruption, criminal negligence of economic priorities, misuse of public office for private gains, unending circus of parliamentary games and failure of successive governments to attend to the provision of basic necessities and development have created widespread discontent. This, in turn, has served as fertile ground for the Maoists to swell their ranks and enlarge the appeal of their insurrectionary politics. In the current offensive, triggered by the breakdown of talks with the Sher Bahadur Deuba administration during a three-month truce, the Maoists have declared the formation of a parallel "revolutionary government" with its capital in western Nepal's Rolpa. This is a propagandist balloon calculated to rally more people to their cause and provoke civil war-like conditions.

However, the fact that the elected government of prime minister Deuba has not collapsed is no cause for complacency; nor should it detract from the urgency of meeting the threat posed by the Maoists. Much as it might seemingly militate against liberal values, the stark reality is that the Nepalese authorities have little choice but to declare an emergency in the disturbed districts and ask the king to deploy the army. All political parties appear to be one in this resolve but are worried about the palace exploiting the elected government's dependence on the army to rescue the country from the present crisis. The fear is that the king would once again emerge centrestage to eclipse the political process and thereby underscore the unworkability of democratic choices in the Himalayan kingdom. But the political class is confronted with a situation where any course of action could be suicidal: not requisitioning army deployment will mean leaving the field free for the Maoists; and an army out of the barracks might require elected authority to take a backseat. The situation calls for the monarchy and the political parties to make common cause without each trying to upstage the other. The parties have been united in rejecting the Maoist demand for abolishing the monarchy. This is in tune with Nepalese tradition, culture and sentiment where the king is an avatar of Vishnu. Moreover, in the past 10 years the palace has underwritten the democratic experiment and resisted the urge for political intervention. What is of utmost importance at this juncture is to safeguard Nepal's democracy regardless of its awesome flaws and the king would be well advised to endorse the critical common joint effort by parliament and the palace that is now needed.

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

# Emergency in Nepal to tackle Maoists

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

KATHMANDU, Nov. 26. — A state of emergency was today declared in Nepal, empowering the government to use the army against Maoists for the first time.

About 250 people, including 76 securitymen and government officials, were killed in a series of attacks by the Maoists across the country.

The emergency, declared by King Gyanendra through a proclamation following the Cabinet's recommendation, will be in force for three months. It can be extended by another six months after Parliament's approval. "His Majesty the King has, in accordance with the Constitution of Nepal, declared a state of emergency in respect of the whole of Kingdom of Nepal," a royal palace statement said. The King has also declared the Maoists as "terrorists", it said.

It said the step has been taken to "maintain law and order in the country following violence unleashed by Maoists." The proclamation would empower the government to use army for the first time against Maoists. The government had earlier desisted from taking such measure fear-



The Nepalese interior security minister, Mr Khum Bahadur Khadka, on his way to a meeting of the council of ministers in Kathmandu on Monday. — AP/PTI

ing that it would set off civil war. The ultras continued to be on rampage for the third day today, attacking army barracks, airport and government buildings in eastern part of the country.

In a major operation against the Maoists in Solukhumbu in eastern Nepal, more than 150 ultras were killed and 27 securitymen, including four officers of the Royal Nepal army, died in encounters with the ultras, a

home ministry source said. The senior district officer, Buddhi Sagar Tripathi, was also killed by the Maoists.

The minister of state for home, Mr Devendra Raj Kandel, however, confirmed only 50 deaths.

More than 1,500 Maoist rebels, attacked an airport at Faplu in Solukhumbu and the district administration office at Salleri around midnight yesterday.

The ultras, exploding bombs,

destroyed the district police office, land revenue office and other government buildings and looted cash and gold worth about Rs 12 lakh from the local branches of Rashtriya Banijya Bank and Agricultural Development Bank. They also attacked the army barrack in the district headquarter Salleri where security personnel successfully fought back the Maoist rebels.

**Consul-general meets Buddha:** Mr Yuba Raj Bhushal, Nepal's consul-general in Kolkata, today sought Mr Buddhadev Bhattacharya's help to prevent the Maoists from taking shelter in the state, adds SNS from Kolkata. After meeting the chief minister, Mr Bhushal said 1,850 people had died in Maoist attacks in Nepal since 1996. He urged Mr Bhattacharya to tighten security in the districts bordering Nepal. A secret meeting of the Maoist groups was held in Siliguri a couple of months ago.

**Night curfew:** Night curfew has been imposed on Dang in western Nepal where Maoists killed 11 soldiers and nine policemen on Friday, adds UNI. Security has been tightened in Dang, Syangja, Solokhumbu, Surkhet and other areas following the Maoist attacks.

THE STATESMAN

27 NOV 2001



King Gyanendra suspends some fundamental rights, empowers Government to use army against Maoists

# Emergency clamped in Nepal

Keshav Pradhan  
Kathmandu, November 26

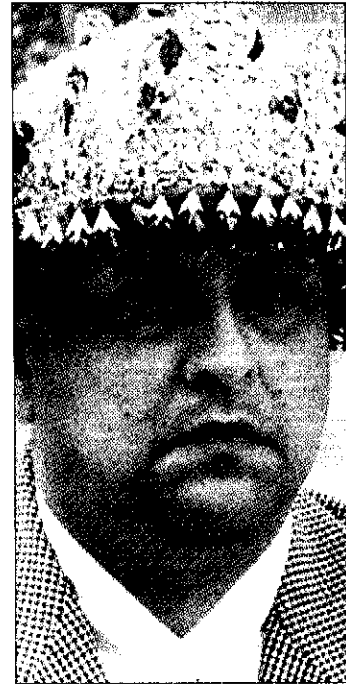
KING GYANENDRA this evening proclaimed a state of Emergency in Nepal as the country slipped deeper into anarchy, with at least 230 people reported killed in a nightlong gun battle between Government troops and Maoist insurgents in the eastern district of Solokhumbhu. The King also suspended some fundamental rights and empowered the Government to use the Army to maintain law and order.

At least 42 Army and police personnel had died in Maoists attacks on Friday and Saturday.

Earlier, the Sher Bahadur Deuba Cabinet had recommended the promulgation of Emergency to the King, who was enthroned on July 4 after his elder brother the late King Birendra's assassination.

The royal proclamation said, "Emergency has been imposed in view of the threat posed to the Kingdom's sovereignty, integration and security." It also suspended a number of constitutional rights, including freedom of statement, right to assemble peacefully and without arms, press and publication rights, right to move throughout the Kingdom, right against preventive detention, right to information, right to property, right to privacy and right to constitutional remedy, barring habeas corpus and treatment of the detainee.

In another Ordinance, the Government branded the Maoists ter-



KING GYANENDRA

rorists and made persons linked to them punishable. However, it tried to appease mainstream Opposition parties, whose support is essential to get Parliament's ratification for the Ordinances, by sparing the freedom to form unions and associations.

Despite this, mainline Communist parties continued to oppose Emergency. The major Opposition Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist Leninist) standing committee and spokesman

Pradeep Nepal remarked, "Emergency is no solution to the problem. We'll come out with a formal reaction after our legal cell studies the provisions of the proclamation." UML general secretary and leader of the Opposition Madhav Kumar Nepal is returning here tomorrow, cutting short his visit to Cuba.

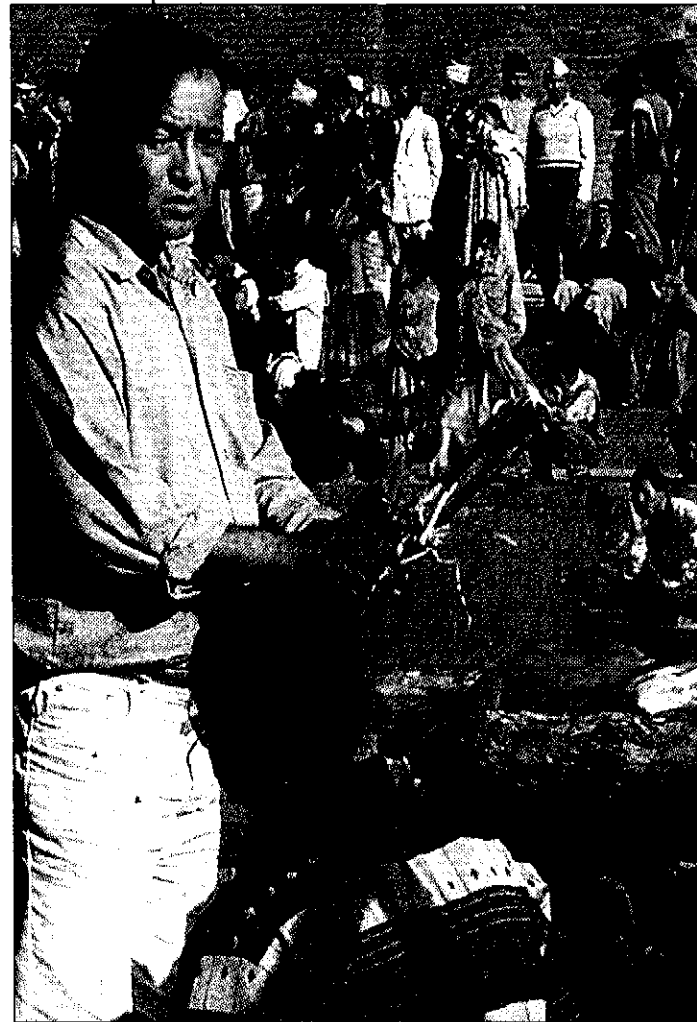
Another party, the Communist Party of Nepal (Marxist Leninist), said the Government should use strict laws instead of imposing Emergency. It said, "We want the Maoists and the Government to settle the problem through negotiation."

Most Opposition parties fear that Emergency could pose a threat to the country's hard-earned but fragile democracy, as excessive powers to the Army would strengthen the King's hands.

An eight-hour curfew was imposed from 9 PM in Dang where 25 Army and police personnel had died on Friday.

Emergency would be in force for three months and could be extended for three more months after Parliament's approval, a Palace spokesman said.

The King's proclamation imposing Emergency followed a recommendation by the Nepalese Cabinet after a series of attacks by Maoist rebels over the past three days that killed nearly 76 security personnel and Government officials. More than 150 Maoists have died so far in operations carried out by security personnel.



A relative lights the pyre of a soldier killed in battle against Maoists. The army struck back by killing over 200 rebels on Monday.

## Fallout in India: Bengal, Bihar, UP borders put on high alert

HT Correspondent  
Kolkata, November 26

ALL STATES bordering Nepal have been asked to beef up security along the international border and step up vigil on organisations here affiliated to the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoists).

The Union Government, it is learnt, has requested Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal and Sikkim to monitor movements along the international border following the mayhem by Maoist terrorists in Nepal. This comes in the wake of a formal request by Nepal to India for help in thwarting any attempt by the terrorists to escape into this country.

Nepal is likely to launch massive counter-insurgency operations against the Maoists. The planned onslaught, feels Nepal, could drive the Maoists to seek refuge in India.

Nepal also wants India to keep a stricter vigil on two organisations—the Akhil Bharatiya Nepali Ekta Samaj (ABNES) and the All India Nepali Students' Association—that are reportedly linked to the CPN(M). Though these two organisations deny

links with the Maoists in Nepal, Indian intelligence and security agencies have enough evidence to conclusively prove the links.

The Jalpaiguri district police are keeping a strict watch on the Akhil Bharatiya Nepali Ekta Samaj (ABNES) for their alleged links with the Maoist rebels in Nepal. The district police recently had information that the Maoists had entered into a tie-up with Ulfa and the KLO.

The police had been tipped off by the State IB about the movement of the Maoist rebels in the district. "ABNES was active in Darjeeling district. But we have information that they are spreading their network in Jalpaiguri also", SN Gupta, SP, Jalpaiguri, told *Hindustan Times*.

The central Intelligence wings have alerted the district police of Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling against possible infiltration by the Nepal Maoists into the State. The district police are in touch with the Assam police for information about the movement of ULEA activists in the district.

Akhil Bharatiya Nepali Ekta Samaj was established in 1991 by Baburam Bhattarai, a senior Maoist leader at present, during his days at Delhi's Jawaharlal

Nehru University (JNU). According to Intelligence sources, activists of the Samaj and the Association have entrenched themselves in many areas of North Bengal, particularly the Darjeeling Hills and Dooars.

They are also suspected to have infiltrated into Sikkim. "We have information that many of them have been trained in Maoist camps in Nepal's Ilam and Tapleganj districts bordering Darjeeling and Sikkim respectively. From there, they have sneaked into India and are trying to indoctrinate the youth here," said a senior intelligence officer.

Meanwhile, Nepal's Consul General here met Chief Minister Buddhadev Bhattacharjee today and requested him to step up security along the border with Nepal. He also requested the Chief Minister to take necessary steps to ensure that the Maoist terrorists, who are believed to have taken shelter in North Bengal, do not launch attacks into Nepal from here.

Bhattacharjee assured the Nepalese envoy that proper steps would be taken and the terrorists would be denied safe havens in the State.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

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27 NOV 2001

Guerrillas set up parallel Government, capture 2 districts and kill 38 securitymen

# Maoists paint Nepal red

Keshav Pradhan  
Kathmandu, November 24

ANNOUNCING THE formation of a "National Revolutionary Government", Nepalese Maoists last night seized control of two district headquarters, overran Army and police posts, attacked an airport and looted financial institutions across the kingdom.

At least 14 soldiers and 24 policemen were killed in the strikes in 12 districts.

King Gyannedra summoned Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba this morning to enquire about the situation that threatens to put the Prime Minister's future and the upcoming 11th Saarc summit in jeopardy.

Deuba called emergency meetings of the Defence Council and the Cabinet and met various political leaders. The mainstream Communist parties urged the Maoists to return to talks.

Deuba took over from GP Koirala in July on grounds that the latter had failed to contain the six-year-old Maoist rebellion for a republican state. Koirala had ousted KP Bhattarai over the same issue in March 2000.

The attacks come barely three days after Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) chief Pushpakamal Dahal expressed his dissatisfaction at the current negotiations with the Government. He also hit out at India and the US.

The two sides met thrice since August after announcing a ceasefire days after Deuba

assumed charge on July 23.

The Maoists yesterday announced the formation of a 37-member "People's Revolutionary Government" headed by Baburam Bhattarai, their No 2 man. Earlier, they formed parallel Governments in nearly 40 of the kingdom's 75 districts and called a nationwide bandh on December 7.

The soldiers were killed when the rebels tried to capture Dang district, the native place of Home Minister Khum Bahadur Khadka, who had vowed stern action against the Maoists on Thursday if they resumed violence.

Officials said 10 policemen died and 13 others were injured in Dang. A major, a DSP and the chief district officer were abducted. The raiders left with Rs 6 crore and nearly 40 prisoners.

The insurgents also gunned down 14 policemen in Syangja and overran a prison, setting the inmates free. They looted about Rs 15 crore from a bank.

At Surkhet, the rebels blew up a private helicopter used to ferry foodstuff to remote villages close to China. Two other private choppers were partially damaged.

A police reinforcement from Pokhara was ambushed on its way to Syangja where the Maoists looted guns from security posts. Looting of arms was reported also from Dang and Morang. The insurgents blasted a number of roads to prevent passage of security personnel and those injured.



Royal Nepal Armymen carry an injured soldier flown down from Syangja district to Kathmandu.

They raided several police posts, civil administration centers, banks, revenue and customs offices and took out torchlit processions in some districts bordering Tibet and the Indian States of Sikkim, West Bengal, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.

Talks between the Government and the underground Maoists collapsed last week over the question of abolishing monarchy, a demand opposed by

all mainstream parties. According to information, Deuba has called back Chief of Army Staff Gen. Prajwal Shumsher Jang Bahadur Rana, who is in Germany on an official tour.

The Government held an all-party meet this evening and is under pressure to announce a state of Emergency and declare the Maoists a terrorist outfit.

The country's Defence Ministry in a statement sought peo-

ple's "help" to resist the rebellion. It said the Maoist violence would threaten the kingdom's sovereignty and democracy.

The all-party meeting urged the Prime Minister to safeguard law and order by any means, including deployment of the Army. A decision on this is likely after tomorrow's meeting of the ruling Nepali Congress, which is pressing for 'terrorist' tag on the Maoists.



## NORTH BENGAL ALERT

JOLTED BY the sudden strikes in Nepal, intelligence agencies in North Bengal on Saturday urged the district police to step up vigil along India's border with the Himalayan kingdom and monitor movement of men and vehicles. At least 38 securitymen, including 14 Royal Nepal Army personnel, were killed in Nepal yesterday when Maoist guerrillas struck. Even the BSF has been ordered to intensify vigil along the porous border stretch, known in North Bengal as the "Chicken Neck". Security around the Bagdora airport has also been beefed up, and patrolling intensified along the Indo-Bhutanese border.

The Maoist attacks, according to the agencies, may spark an exodus from the eastern districts of Nepal into India. Security agencies have been told to be particularly vigilant in view of recent findings that some Maoist leaders came down to Siliguri and held a meeting. The agencies are trying find out if the attacks in Nepal were preceded by similar meetings in the plains.

HTC, Siliguri

# Nepal Army strikes back

## Troops use helicopters to attack Maoist bases ● Rebels retaliate

Keshav Pradhan  
Kathmandu, November 27

A DAY AFTER Maoists in Nepal unleashed a wave of violence in the districts, troops, armed with a royal proclamation, launched ground and air attacks on rebel positions in Rolpa, headquarters of the insurgents' parallel government, and other extremist strongholds in western Nepal.

Quoting defence sources, Radio Nepal said Armymen fired from helicopters and land at extremists holed up in Rolpa, Dolpa, Pyuthan and Dang (all in mountainous western Nepal) as well other places. But it did not specify the number of fatalities on the rebel side.

The Army claimed it had foiled Maoist attacks last night on its camps at Rukum, Rolpa, Salyan and Syangja. One rebel was wounded; another was taken into custody.

Independent sources said columns of Army personnel were moving forward to lay siege to Maoist positions. Curfew was imposed in Dang and Syangja to facilitate troops movement.

Rolpa is politically important, but the Army is zeroing in on the rebel seat of power also because most arms and ammunition looted from the Dang armoury on Friday are said to be hidden there. The rebels took away 99 SLRs, a number of machineguns and a huge cache of ammunition.

Defying the Army action, the rebels fired gunshots and organised small, torch-lit processions in parts of Rolpa and surrounding areas. At Gokule in Darchula, the Maoists overran a police post and looted guns after killing four policemen. They also hurled petrol bombs at two vehicles this evening near Bhakta-

pur in the Kathmandu valley.

With the international community out in his support, Prime Minister Sher Bahdur Deuba is likely to intensify military operations. The US, in a statement, asked the Maoists to "lay down arms and pursue their goals peacefully." After the September 11 attacks in New York and Washington, the rebels had publicly described the US as "the mother of world terrorism."

Maoist chief Pushpakamal Dahal attacked the US again last week after the local media reported possibilities of Washington giving Kathmandu helicopters to counter the Maoists.

India's condemnation of the Maoists too came as a shot in the arm for the PM. In his address to the nation, Deuba threatened stern action against all who supported the rebels from "within and outside the Kingdom".

Kathmandu suspects many key Maoist leaders are operating from India.

The Maoist mouthpieces, *Jan Disha* and *Janadesh*, did not hit the stands today. An employee of *Mulyankan*, another pro-rebel magazine, was taken into custody. Also arrested were some leaders of the CPN (Maoist)'s peasants', workers' and women's wings. The Army asked the media to publish news only after obtaining its clearance.

Meanwhile, a communication from Kathmandu told Delhi that every effort was under way to ensure timely holding of the Saarc summit.



Troops putting up sandbag bunkers outside a office in Kathmandu on Tuesday. Security has been tightened in the city after the Maoist attacks.

Related reports on Page 10

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

23 NOV 2001

## CHECKING MAOISTS

side Short-term emergency may help 28/11

THE resurgence of Maoist violence in Nepal is intended to be a message loud and clear: that they cannot be treated lightly. Its extent, however, is surprising. In three days the Maoists struck in 12 districts, killing about 300, including 120 soldiers, policemen and officials and formed a 37-member "People's Revolutionary government". The sudden turn of event is regrettable, as much was expected from the dialogue the rebels and government were holding since Sher Bahadur Deuba took over from GP Koirala in July and the ceasefire declared in August. What has drawn Maoist ire is the government's refusal to meet their demand for a new constitution — however preposterous this may sound at a time when democracy in the Himalayan kingdom has just begun to take root. The Maoists displayed some flexibility when they dropped demands for the monarchy's abolition and the setting up of a republican state. It was a clever move, as they belatedly realised that pursuance of a hardline would be detrimental to their cause since most Nepalese, particularly in the villages, still worshipped the king. *Himalayan S.*

The Maoist threat began in February 1996 and spread fast. They were said to be in full control of at least 25 districts as successive coalition governments were unable to check their influence. The rebels claim that most of the 1,800 killed so far were Maoists. The Deuba government was left with little option but to risk the declaration of emergency. But it is to be hoped the army's deployment will be shortlived; its prolonged use is likely to be counter-productive. Besides, committing the army to a long drawn out operation would be taxing for a government that is attempting to improve the living standard of the predominantly rural population. The army was used before to free some taken hostage by the rebels and to that extent its presence was justified. One good point about the Maoists is that they have often given the impression of settling issues through negotiation. This should not be ignored. Their anti-India attitude is well known. What Delhi must ensure is that Maoists get no help from "friends" in India.

THE STRAITS

29 NOV 2001

# Maoists eye Siliguri corridor to realise 'Greater Nepal' dream

Arindam Sarkar  
Kolkata, November 27

THREE HUNDRED Maoists sneaked into North Bengal through the Siliguri corridor on Sunday, a day after the insurgents unleashed a bloodbath in Nepal killing 12 soldiers and 24 policemen in 12 districts. Their goal: creation of a Greater Nepal including parts of Darjeeling, Siliguri, Sikkim and the Dooars.

"The Maoists, facing pressure from the security forces in their

country, are in search of safe havens in Siliguri and Darjeeling. In the last couple of days they have contacted several outfits, including the KLO, Ufa, Jamaat and ISI agents operating in North Bengal," said a military Intelligence (MI) officer.

"They have not yet set up any permanent camp though. "We can't rule out their presence in Ufa and KLO camps along the Bangladesh border. The Maoists, active in East Nepal, especially in the districts of Jhapa and

Ilam, are now fanning out in North Bengal, parts of Sikkim and Kathiwar in Bihar. We have information that they are armed with SLRs, 12 bore rifles, carbines and crude explosives. Militant outfits operating here are giving them money and arms," said an Intelligence officer.

The Maoists, IB and MI officers say, have opened a Darjeeling-Sikkim unit in Siliguri. At a secret meeting held early this month they resolved to launch an armed revolution and sought

support from political outfits such as SJSS, CPI(ML), ABNES, MCC (Bihar and Jharkhand) and the KPP for the "liberation" of Darjeeling, Sikkim and Dooars.

The Maoists, to garner support for their movement in North Bengal, are contacting disgruntled politicians of the GNLF, ex-servicemen and petty contractors. "They are especially looking for those who are unemployed and wooing them with money. The Maoists are also playing the ethnic card and pro-

viding support to those who have been politically marginalised," said an Intelligence officer.

The MI and the Home Ministry Intelligence branch have identified Siliguri, Naksalbari, Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Kurseong, Cooch Behar (Maoists here are supported by the KPP and the KLO) and Binaguri as flashpoints in this region. "We have information that they have already established links with KPP, KLO, GLO, the Ufa and the NSCN(IM). This was revealed in

a recent raid on a GLO hideout in Tin Katara, Kalimpong," said an Intelligence officer.

But, why are the army and the paramilitary sitting tight?

"The Armed Forces Special Power Act does not operate here. The police have to deal with the Maoists. We are just spectators. Moreover, the Maoists have not yet set up a permanent camp and it's very difficult to spot them in a crowd," said an army officer stationed in Siliguri.

(To be concluded)

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

28 NOV 2001

# Nepal's talks with Maoists on thin ice

FROM DAMAKANT JAYSHI

Kathmandu, Nov. 21: Further talks between the government and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) came under a cloud today after the chairman of the rebel outfit said the three-round-old dialogue has lost relevance.

In a signed statement issued today, the chairman, Prachanda, also threatened to resume their armed struggle, suspended since July 23, a day after Sher Bahadur Deuba became Prime Minister. But he stopped short of saying that the rebels were pulling out of the talks.

However, the government interpreted Prachanda's statement as equal to that of withdrawing from the talks. "I am surprised and shocked at his statement," Deuba said. "I honestly urge him to sit for the fourth round of dialogue and not to jeopardise it."

The Prime Minister also added it was the duty of the Maoists to ensure that a bloodbath does not recur. The Maoists have been waging an armed "people's war" since 1996.

Deuba, who has taken several bold moves recently to appease the Maoists, accused the outfit of irresponsibility. "After agreeing for the fourth round of talks, it is irresponsible and dishonest on the part of the Maoists to say that the talks have failed," he said, emphasising that a dialogue is essential for finding a peaceful solution to the five-year standoff.

However, interpreting Prachanda's statement as one issued under pressure from Ram Bahadur Thapa, also known as Comrade Badal, the main military strategist of the Maoists. Badal and his men are reportedly sore with the top leadership for holding talks with the government and the

statement, the observers say, is aimed at curbing dissent within the party.

Prachanda's statement stated: "We want to make it clear that the imperialist and reactionary forces have made it impossible to find a political solution to the problem through the talks." This situation has ended the relevance of the ceasefire, the chairman said. "We have no alternative but to continue our struggle against imperialist forces."

The Maoists, before the third round of dialogue on November 13, had dropped their key demand of turning Nepal into a republic. However, they have been insisting on the other two demands — formation of an interim government and holding of elections for a constituent assembly. Many in the ruling and Opposition parties believe this is a ploy of the Maoists to achieve their goal of a republic.

THE TELEGRAPH

22 NOV 2001

Visits by the Bhutanese Crown Prince, ministers and bureaucrats have helped open a new chapter in relations with India, especially in the matter of people to people exchanges

# UNRAVELLING BHUTAN

**I**F there is any country in the South Asian region with which India has a problem-free relationship, it is Bhutan, locally known as Druk-yul, and also called the Kingdom of the Thunder Dragon. This reality has emerged not only because of geographical closeness but because both countries have been making persistent efforts to take care of each other's sensitivity.

Article 2 of the India-Bhutan Friendship Treaty of 1949 — which is seen by many as compromising Bhutan's sovereignty — remains only an issue for those who wish to spoil the relationship. Signed on 8 August 1949 in Darjeeling, it says: "The Government of India undertakes to exercise no interference in the internal administration of Bhutan. On its part, the government of Bhutan agrees to be guided by the advice of the government of India in regard to external relations".

Bhutan has always been cautious — except for some jarring notes in the late 1970s — to ensure that bilateral ties become stronger through visits by its leaders and officials. Recently three Bhutanese personalities — Crown Prince Dasho Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuk, Foreign Minister Lyonpo Jigmi Yoser Thinley and foreign Secretary Dasho Ugyen Tshering — visited India and discussed a variety of issues.

It was not for nothing that the 21-year-old heir apparent Prince Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuk chose India for his 12-day visit in August, his first official visit to any country. He met President KR Narayanan, external affairs minister Jaswant Singh, minister of state in the ministry of external affairs Omar Farooq, foreign secretary Chokila Iyer, and Congress president and leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Sonia Gandhi. Besides, the Crown Prince met people from

*The author is Hon. Director, South Asian Studies Foundation, New Delhi.*

various walks of life. He also interacted with the Director of the Defence College.

Outside the capital, New Delhi, Prince Wangchuk visited various parts of South India and the Indian Military Academy at Dehra Dun. He also had lunch with the governor of the newly-created Indian state of Uttaranchal.

Being groomed to become

By **PARMANAND**

substantially, voluntarily and transparently. The Bhutanese foreign minister, Lyonpo Jigmi Y Thinley, was on an official visit to India between 15 and 22 October. He occupies a place of great significance inasmuch as he enjoys the highest credibility in present-day Bhutanese elec-

standing and appreciation of how each piece of artistic creation draws inspiration from the serene quality of life in Bhutan with its strong Buddhist tradition and its rich natural environment.

Lyonpo Jigmi Thinley described the exhibition as a timely event to present Bhutan and its cultural manifes-

bases in Bhutan, have agreed to close their camps and leave Bhutan, Thinley averred.

Thinley addressed a couple of academic sessions in New Delhi explaining Bhutan's foreign policy and the state of Bhutan-India ties today. A jarring note, though, was struck when instead of being received by the Dean of a well-known School at a New Delhi University, he was received by his PA. Nevertheless, the visit had a very positive and mutually beneficial impact on the bilateral ties. Indeed, through the art exhibition at New Delhi and Kolkata, a new chapter has been added to the people-to-people relations between Bhutan and India.

The Bhutanese foreign secretary, Dasho Ugyen Tshering, paid a week's visit to India during 25 October — 1 November. His visit's purpose was to discuss various issues related to the launching of the 9th Five Year Plan of the mountain kingdom to be launched in 2002. Tshering led a delegation of experts from his country, and met Planning commission Deputy Chairman KC Pant.

On his return to Thimphu after his talks in New Delhi, Dasho Tshering said that India's assistance to Bhutan's development programme was making a significant impact on the well-being of the Bhutanese people. During his talks with the Indian delegation led by joint secretary (North), Meera Shankar, the Bhutanese foreign secretary expressed Bhutan's appreciation for the important role played by India in the Kingdom's development efforts.

The Indian and Bhutanese delegations reviewed the Indian government's assistance to the present 8th Five-Year Plan, looking at the disbursement of funds in the plan's final year.

In connection with the 9th Plan, the meeting looked at Bhutan's preparations and priorities for the Plan, including the Indian Government's assistance in the health, education, roads, and power sectors.

**If there is any country in the South Asian region with which India has a problem-free relationship, It is Bhutan**



the 5th King of the Wangchuck dynasty — which was established in 1907 — Prince Jigme Khesar Namgyel has been dealing with several responsibilities at home. Apart from being the Governor of Tongsa — an honorific title for every Crown Prince in the mountain kingdom — he is the patron of the Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Royal Society for the Protection of Nature, the Bhutan Scouts Association, the Bhutan Archery Federation, and the National Shooting Federation.

Having schooled initially at Yangchenphug High School, Thimphu, he has been educated at Cushing Academy, Massachusetts (USA), Wheaton College, Massachusetts (USA) and Magdalen College, Oxford University (UK). He has been trained in various aspects of economics, ecology, psychology, biology, history, mathematics, literature, Japanese and Indian history and management.

Ever since the second-half of 1998, the Bhutanese monarchy is becoming more constitutional. In 1998, the present incumbent and the fourth Wangchuck King, His Majesty King Jigme Singye Wangchuk (enthroned 1972) gave up his powers

toral politics. When the unicameral legislature of the Kingdom — the Tshogdu (National Assembly) — elected Lyonpos (ministers) on 1 July 1998, Jigmi Y Thinley got the highest number of votes: 136.

The recently concluded visit of the Bhutanese foreign minister was important for non-political and non-diplomatic reasons, too. On 17 October, Jigmi Thinley along with Indian minister of state for cultural affairs, Maneka Gandhi, inaugurated Bhutan's exhibition at the National Museum, New Delhi, entitled "The Living Religious and Cultural Traditions of Bhutan". It was a significant step in bringing the two geographically, politically, diplomatically and economically close friends closer on the cultural plane. While inaugurating the exhibition, Maneka Gandhi said: "It was a rare glimpse into a heritage that has been able to preserve its intrinsic qualities in its purest form". India, she stressed, should consider it a privilege to be hosting such an exhibition since there had been only a few exhibitions on Bhutan on this scale held in the world so far. She asserted that the exhibition would lead to an under-

tations to the people of India. The foreign minister stated that the exhibition would unravel the enigma surrounding Bhutan in the eyes of the outside world at large and its immediate neighbours. Thinley added that Bhutan was taking appropriate measures to ensure that its values were not consigned to history books and objects in museums.

The Bhutanese Lyonpo paid tribute to the culture of trust, friendship and cooperation that had made Bhutan-India relations worthy of emulation. He said that the exhibition should be recognised equally as a celebration of the "indissoluble ties of fraternity and cooperation" between the people of Bhutan and India.

The foreign minister also used the opportunity to meet his Indian counterpart Jaswant Singh, and home minister LK Advani. In an interview Jigmi Thinley emphasised that Bhutan would not allow its soil to be used by insurgents operating in India's north-eastern states, and it has already served them an ultimatum to leave the country. Four of the nine militant groups operating in the north-east, with their

## MAOISTS RELENT

Breather for Nepal's monarchy & government

NEPAL'S royal house and government can breathe freely now that the Maoists have decided to scrap their demand for a republican state and the monarchy's abolition. The change of mood could have resulted from Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba's careful handling of the Maoist problem. Talks are on to end insurgency which has so far killed 1,800. The Maoists first showed up in February 1996 in the throes of a situation born of economic deprivation. Once these issues are addressed they will have no reason to cry revolution. But this demands fast development activities. People in the rural areas have a high regard for their monarch. King Gyanendra Bir Bikram Shah's only son, the 30-year-old Paras, is now heir apparent. He might well have been proclaimed Crown Prince on the day the King was crowned on 4 June but the new monarch deviated from age-old-tradition because of strong public resentment against Paras, who is said to be something of a bully and was involved in road accidents. The palace announcement of Paras' elevation — made on Dussehra day — was cleverly articulated to leave the people with little time to react. It now seems to have been accepted as a *fait accompli*.

No one expects Paras to transform overnight into a paragon of virtue but he cannot be unaware of his new responsibilities. His wayward habits may have been accepted in an ordinary prince, but now that a quirk of fate has catapulted him to be king-in-waiting, he must build himself a respectable public profile, particularly in the villages. With the Maoists no longer opposing the monarchy, he must learn from his uncle and late King Birendra who, as Crown Prince, endeared himself to rural folk by visiting their villages on foot, at times incognito, to gain insight into their needs and problems.

THE STATESMAN

17 NOV 2001



## Nepal PM forms new Cabinet

**KATHMANDU, OCT. 18.** The Nepalese Prime Minister, Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba, today formed a new 41-member Cabinet by reshuffling his 13-member Cabinet, according to a notice of the Principal Press Secretariat of His Majesty the King.

There are 18 Union Ministers, 16 Ministers of State and seven Assistant Ministers in the new Cabinet. Two women members — one Minister of State and one Assistant Minister — also feature in the Cabinet.

The Prime Minister has retained the portfolios of Royal Palace Affairs, Foreign Affairs and Defence. All the Ministers of his previous Cabinet have retained their portfolios.

Mr. Chiranjibi Wagle has been allotted Works and Physical Planning portfolio. Mr. Khum Bahadur Khadka and Dr. Ram Sharan Mahat have been given the portfolios of Home and Finance respectively. Mr. Purna Bahadur Khadka is the Minister for Industry, Commerce and Supplies while Mr. Rajendra Kharel is heading the Women, Social Welfare and Children Min-

istry. General Administration has been allocated to Mr. Khem Raj Bhatta Mayalu and Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs to Mr. Narendra Bikram Nembang. — UNI

Change in value systems needed

**ST. PETERSBURG, OCT. 18.** The Science and Technology Minister, Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi, today said that current environmental problems, particularly climate changes in the wake of technological advancement could not be solved by a further overdose of technology but by changing value systems and evolving an alternative approach towards globalisation.

Delivering an address at the conferment of diploma for the honorary membership of the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences here, Dr. Joshi said there was a need to go into the root cause of the factors responsible for climate change. — PTI

THE HINDU

19 OCT 2001

# Maoists free 34 more cops

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

KATHMANDU, Oct. 6. — The underground Maoists have released 34 policemen abducted from Holeri and Rukumkot police posts, according to the officials.

The policemen were handed over to the representatives of the International Red Cross and local journalists amidst separate functions held in Rukum district.

The Maoists had kidnapped 26 policemen from Rukumkot police post on 1 April and eight from Holeri post in Rolpa on 12 July, 2001.

The Maoists had abducted a total of 188 persons including 71 police personnel from various parts of the country and they have so far released 56 policemen and a former MP of the ruling Nepali Congress.

More than 1,750 persons have been killed in the Maoists insurgency, which began in 1996. The government and the Maoists are to hold third round of talks next week

THE STATESMAN

7 OCT 2002

# Nepal Maoists gear up for 'ultimate' battle

NIRAJ LAMA  
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

BIRTAMORE (Nepal), Sept. 15. - A rural town in the eastern border district of Jhapa. The Maoists held a public meeting in the district yesterday, their first since the ceasefire and talks with the Nepal government began.

As the talks continue at Bardia in Nepal, the Maoists here are focussed on the "worst case scenario."

Both the ultras and their supporters seem convinced that nothing is going to come out of the talks. The next battle will be "ultimate", said an "area squad leader". "Training of new guerrillas will continue in remote hills," he said.

That the guards were still up, at least on the part of the Maoist guerrillas, (the police was no where to be seen at or near the venue), was indicated by the ultras' refusal to divulge their full names. Nor were addresses being given. Weapons were not visible, but the meeting venue was awash with red flags and "revolutionary songs" blare over loud-speakers.

Pasang, donning the trade-mark battle-fatigue cap of a Maoist guerrilla, said the purpose of the meeting was to apprise the public about the talks with the government. He would not entertain any further questions.

Kara (37), member of the "Maoists-avy", was more forthcoming. Kara, who ran a small shop before joining the movement two years ago, asserted that "only the Nepal Communist Par-



The Maoist chief negotiator, Mr Krishna Bahadur Mohara (right), with another representative at Kathmandu airport on Saturday. -AP/PTI

ty (Maoist) could bring true freedom and democracy to the masses". "The reactionary forces who have kept our people in poverty must be demolished," he said. Kara's three brothers are also in the movement.

The crowd on the ground were mainly from agrarian families. Women and school children turned out in large numbers. Members of the Bal-sena (children's wing) and village-militia with red head-bands were busy controlling the crowd. Every time a speaker offered tal-salam, the crowd clapped in applause.

Among the guests was an "angry" Miss Laxmi Nipuni. The 22-year-old leader of a Maoist student organisation from Illam, was freed last week after 20

## GOVT PLEA TO REBELS

KATHMANDU, Sept. 15. - The government today urged Maoist rebels to halt all forcible activities and postpone the mass meeting scheduled for 21 September. The second round of talks between the government and the Maoist groups were held in Bardiya, western Nepal.

The Nepalese minister for housing and physical planning, Mr Chiranjibi Wagle, said: "The Maoists have put forward their agenda and we have agreed on some points and some are being implemented by the government. But we disagreed on some points." He did not elaborate the points which were disagreed by the government side but it's clear that the Maoists have been demanding the formation of interim government, promulgation of new Constitution and Republican state. - UNI

myself belong to that category. Together, through this movement, we hope to be free," he said.

Indeed the polemics of the speakers are beyond the understanding of the poor masses. But whenever the Opposition parties are derided and rights of the poor championed, the applause is spontaneous.

Mr Chettri admitted that people earlier bore a fear towards the Maoists. "Now, we know better. It is only the wrong-doers, who are scared."

# Keep going on the road to peace

It has been a long season of sorrow — and fear — in Kathmandu. The June 1 massacre of King Birendra and most of his family at Narayanhity Palace, was followed by the death of yet another royal, Princess Preksha, in a helicopter crash and now the Maoist mayhem. The state of emergency, which King Gyanendra declared in the wake of the Maoist onslaught, gagging the press, curtailing civil rights and virtually stopping all political activity, seems an apt symbol of a nation living under the shadow of dark premonitions.

Ingenious parallels have been drawn between the September 11 terrorist strikes in the United States of America, which triggered the war in Afghanistan, and the Maoist strikes in remote Solokhumbu district at the foot of Mount Everest that finally forced the king to order counter-offensives by the Royal Nepal Army.

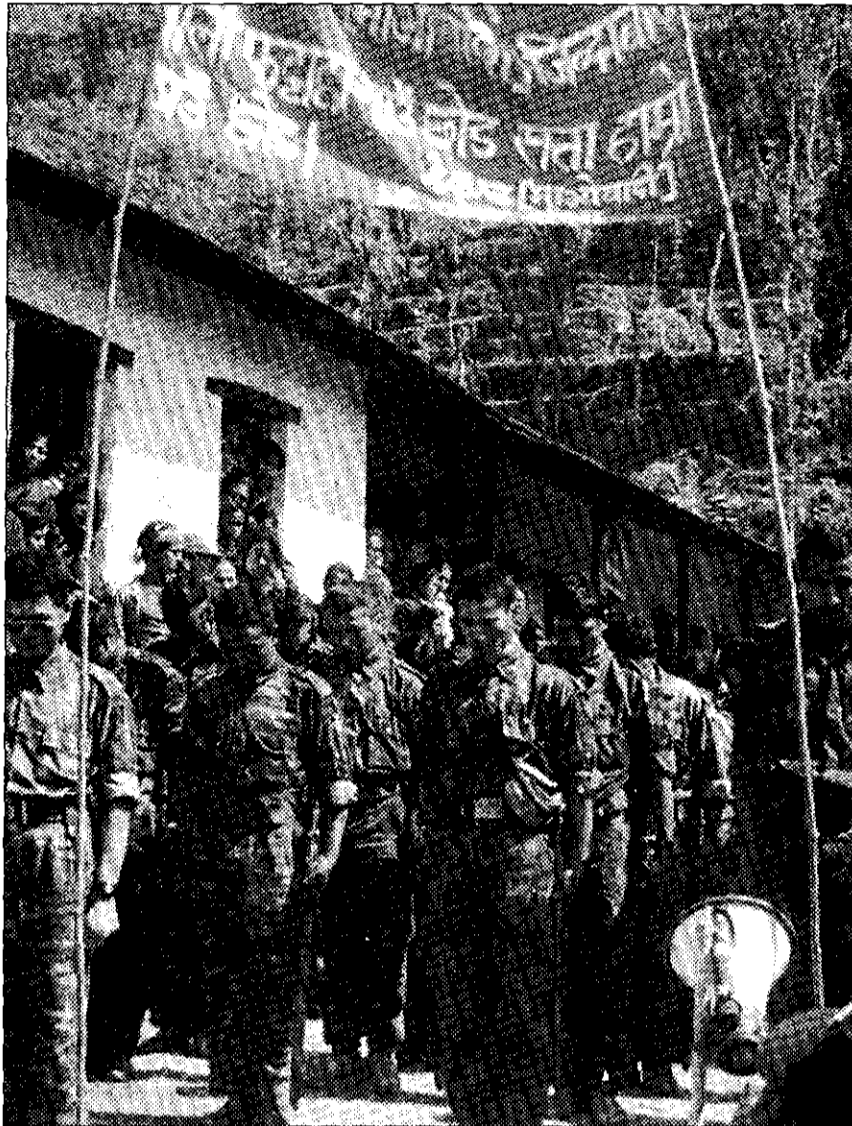
The Nepalese prime minister, Sher Bahadur Deuba, called the Maoists terrorists, obviously to send a message to world powers busy fighting terrorism. As US marines and US allies raid cave after cave in the mountains around Kandahar and Jalalabad in search of Osama bin Laden and his comrades in terror, helicopter gunships strafe forested mountains in western Nepal to hunt down Maoist leader, Pushpa Kamal Dahal *alias* Prachanda, his military chief, Ram Bahadur Thapa, and party ideologue, Baburam Bhattarai. And one has the same daily diet of claims of military successes and killing of key leaders, which, to use the phrase familiarized by the media coverage of the Afghan war, cannot be "independently verified."

Yet, the tension between the Maoists and the monarch seemed to be easing, raising hopes that the kingdom's tryst with tragedy would give way to happier times. The Maoists, who questioned the legitimacy of King Gyanendra's accession to the throne, not only had three rounds of discussions with the government but indicated their willingness to drop the old demand for the abolition of the monarchy if the king and his government agreed to dissolve the present parliament and form a constituent assembly to draft a new constitution. It looked as if managing the Maoists would literally be King Gyanendra's crowning glory — for himself and for his country.

But instead of a breakthrough came a bitter and bloody breakdown. Several theories are now circulating in Kathmandu as to why the Maoists suddenly walked out of the talks and mounted attacks on the police and the army on an unprecedented scale. It is the result, says one theory, of a rift between the political and the military leadership of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoists). But, in times of crises, when information is as foggy as the mountainscape surrounding the city, Kathmandu always re-invents itself as the valley of rumours and conspiracy theories. Pick your favourite rumour/theory of the day, the city and its rulers seem to be telling scribes and others trying to see things through the mist.

It is unsurprising therefore to find theorists spinning yarns in Nepal about India's seen and unseen roles in the

**Ashis Chakrabarti argues that though Nepal has little option now but to use the military against the Maoists, talks with the rebels must continue**



Fighting back

kingdom's battle against the Maoists. No country would like to see a neighbour plagued by instability because of extremist violence. India's concerns with the developments in Nepal, with which it has a 1,751 kilometre, mostly porous, border, are understandable. The concerns have bilateral as well as regional aspects because of unsettled issues involving China and Pakistan.

As in several other countries in India's neighbourhood, anti-India rhetoric is the staple of political activism in Nepal, particularly with its many communist parties. The Maoists' tirades against Indian "expansionism" are only a shade less raucous than those of the CPN (Unified Marxist-Leninist), the biggest communist group when it is out of power. Kathmandu's streets reverber-

ated with anti-India slogans over the hijacking of an Indian Airlines flight to Kandahar in 1999. Rumours of Bollywood hero Hrithik Roshan's "derogatory" remarks about the Nepalese sparked looting of Indian-owned shops and a ban on Indian movies in Kathmandu before the whole controversy turned out to be another fake. When the royals were massacred, the Maoists were quick to see an Indian plot, aided and abetted by Washington, to eliminate "anti-India" King Birendra. As he ascended the throne, India-baiters were revelling in circulating stories about King Gyanendra's "pro-Chinese" sympathies.

Yet, the Nepal Maoists have long been a concern for India for their activities and links, not only in areas bordering Nepal but also elsewhere. It is no secret

that the Nepal rebels maintain liaisons with rebel outfits in India like the People's War Group and the Maoist Communist Centre. The CPN(Maoists) was one of the two foreign communist parties — the other was from Turkey — that sent "fraternal" delegations to the second party congress of the PWG held secretly last March in the jungles near Dandakaranya in Orissa.

There are credible reports that the PWG's People's Guerrilla Army, raised last December, exchange arms and training with the Maoists in Nepal who are believed to be also aiding a new Maoist outfit which is trying to garner strength in Darjeeling and Sikkim. The CPN(Maoists) is one of the nine founding members of the recently formed — and grandiosely named — Co-ordination Committee of Maoist Parties and Organisations in South Asia. The launch happened in India with extremist groups from Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka, along with those from India, attending it.

While India may have very valid concerns about the Maoist threat in its neighbourhood, the battle has to be fought by Nepal. The king, the Nepalese army and the government seem to have now passed the stage of weighing options and consequences of an all-out fightback. By all counts, there were differences between King Birendra, the top brass of the army and the political parties about whether the army should be used to deal with what was seen essentially as a political problem. Even King Gyanendra is said to have been in favour of a negotiated settlement. But the Maoists have now limited the immediate options, forcing the government to take recourse to extreme measures. It was not only the attacks on police and army outposts in Solokhumbu that got the government in a state of panic. The king and the prime minister could no longer afford to consider soft options after the Maoists declared a "parallel government" throughout the country a couple of days before their offensive. They had been running such administrations in some western districts for more than a year. But declaring such a government across the country was a challenge King Gyanendra and Deuba could not countenance.

Yet this cannot be the end of talks. Former prime minister and leader of the CPN(UML), Madhav Kumar Nepal, has said that he would try to mediate with the Maoists "through the media" and persuade the rebels to return to talks. It is generally known in Kathmandu that Madhav Nepal and other leaders of his party have more than media contacts with the Maoists. They had once opposed the government's plans to use the army against their extremist fellow-travellers.

The Maoists may not love the monarch, but they have no love lost for parliamentary democracy either. Failures of elected governments over the past 10 years have strengthened Maoist propaganda and swelled their ranks. Both Madhav Nepal's party and the Nepali Congress have to do better to stop frustrated youths and the impoverished masses from joining the insurgents.

**‘The Maoists may not love the monarch, but they have no love lost for parliamentary democracy either. Failures of elected governments over the past 10 years have strengthened Maoist propaganda’**

THE TELEGRAPH

## ***Nepal government, Maoists hold second round of talks***

**Kathmandu, Sept. 13:** Senior government ministers and Maoist guerrilla leaders held a second round of peace talks on Thursday to end the five and half-year-old insurgency, information minister Jayaprakash Gupta said. A team of government ministers and senior members of the ruling Nepali Congress Party met the Maoist leaders in a jungle resort at Bardia, 500 km west of capital Kathmandu.

"The government is hopeful that the talks will lead to a positive direction in resolving the issue," Mr Gupta said as the meeting began amid heavy security. "The Maoists are expected to put forward their demands and the government will then decide on the next move."

In July, Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba had declared a ceasefire with the rebels and invited them for talks. The guerrillas, who are fighting to end constitutional monarchy in Nepal, responded by halting attacks on the police. (AP)

THE ASIAN AGE

14 SEP 2001

# India, palace aiding Maoists, says Koirala

Keshav Pradhan  
Kathmandu, September 7

FORMER NEPALESE Prime Minister and ruling Nepali Congress chief G P Koirala has charged India and the royal palace with assisting Maoist insurgents.

This comes close on the heels of similar allegations by Communist Party of Nepal—Unified Marxist Leninist (UML) general secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal. Koirala, who is often accused of being pro-India, surprised many as he hit out at India and the palace at a photo exhibition on the life and times of B P Koirala, his elder brother and Nepal's first elected Prime Minister here on Thursday.

The 78-year-old leader alleged, "Maoists have got shelter from India and patronage from the palace." He wondered

how India had failed to detect the presence of the Maoists on its soil.

Koirala claimed that he had earlier raised the issue of Maoists with Indian leaders. Kathmandu maintains that the rebels have forged links with India's People's War Group, the Maoist Coordination Committee and the United Liberation Front of Assam.

Koirala had stepped down in July after his party charged him with corruption and failure to contain the Maoist insurgency.

He raked up the issue of alleged non-cooperation by the Royal Nepalese Army that is believed to be the immediate reason behind his resignation. He alleged that the palace did not allow his government to use the Army against the Maoists.

The Army is fiercely loyal to the King—its supreme command-

er—though the elected government has the right to deploy it. In a recent press interview, King Gyanendra said the Army could not work in Holer (where 73 policemen were held captive by the rebels in July) because of lack of planning.

Last week, the UML general secretary had accused the palace, India and the NC of promoting the Maoists. Interestingly, he made the allegation after he, along with leaders of five other mainstream Communist parties, secretly met Maoist chief Pushpakamal Dahal, alias Prachand, in the north Bengal town of Siliguri on August 16.

Notwithstanding the preparations for the second round of talks with the Maoists to be held early next week, the Government threatened action if the rebels did not stop extortion and intimidation of citizens.

# WHITHER NEPAL? - I

## Serious Domestic Problems Confront Deuba

By PARMANAND

**F**IFTYFIVE-YEAR-OLD Sher Bahadur Deuba took over as the 11th Prime Minister of Nepal on 26 July though he was elected leader of the Nepali Congress Parliamentary Party on 22 July, and was appointed to the post by the Nepali Constitutional Monarch, His Majesty King Gyanendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev, the same day. The delay was attributed particularly to astrological calculations — for which Third World politicians seem to have a penchant, and Nepali politicians appear ahead of others. But perhaps a more serious reason for the delay was the intra-party politics of the governing NC.

Making 77-year-old Girija Prasad Koirala leave Bulwater — the official residence of the Prime Minister — might not have been very difficult under the existing political and socio-economic circumstances, but dealing with him is not likely to be easy for the new incumbent. He remains the biggest mass leader of the NC and its elected president. Over the years, he has shown a remarkable grip over the organisation endearing himself to a very vast segment of the party workers. Indeed, he has constantly remained an organisation man since the 1970s.

He might have received a political jolt owing to the desertion of some loyalists. Non-fulfilment of political ambitions of several NC habitual dissidents might, observers feel, see many people back in the Koirala fold.

### PROWESS

The Nepal Communist Party (Maoist) and its People's War are on the priority list of Sher Bahadur Deuba, who is not new either to the Singh Durbar — where the Prime Minister's office is located — or Bulwater. Incidentally, Deuba was the kingdom's Prime Minister between 12 September 1995 and 12 March 1997.

13 February 1996 is believed to be the date of the beginning of Maoist activities under the leadership of Pushpa Kamal Dahal alias Prachanda and Baburam Bhattarai. On that day mobs of unidentified people raided police checkposts at Holari in Rolpa district, Athbiskot in Rukum district and Sindhuligadhi in Sindhuli district, and looted explosives and other weapons. The same day, a mob of about 300 people attacked the office of Small Farmers Development Project at Chyangli in Gorkha district, and set fire to documents and furniture.

Quite significantly, on 11 February 1996, then Prime Minister Deuba was leaving for India for a week's state visit. There he signed the Mahakal Treaty with his Indian counterpart PV Narasimha Rao. People like Baburam Bhattarai and Prachanda had been opposing new treaties with India, and demanding the abrogation of earlier ones. As such, the Deuba visit to India — which was

obviously announced much in advance — provided the Maoists an opportunity to strike. It gave them an opportunity to, inter alia, criticise Indian "expansionism" and "hegemonism". On 4 February 1996, Baburam Bhattarai handed over a memorandum containing 40 demands — which included the abrogation of the 1991 Tanakpur Treaty signed between Koirala and Rao, abolition of the special privileges of the

question of citizenship certificate has become very sensitive. He stated that all governments have tried to solve it in their own fashion, but all have failed. Singh stressed that the consistent stand of the NSP has been that only a constitutional amendment could solve the problem. It would require a two-thirds majority in Parliament and all parties, including the UML and the RPP, would have to cooperate.

Meanwhile, he says, some 30 lakh genuine Nepalis continue to suffer. In a significant development Bihar Pradesh Congress Committee president, Shakeel Ahmed, on 30 July, took serious exception to the withdrawal of Nepali citizenship to 30,000 people of Indian origin and urged the Centre's immediate intervention in the matter. Ahmed said it was a matter of serious concern that 30,000 people of Indian extraction spread over 20 districts of the Terai region ceased to be Nepali citizens following a Nepal Supreme Court verdict. He said it has created a sense of uncertainty among Nepali citizens of Indian origin.

Unarguably, the kingdom's deteriorating economy would be another serious problem claiming the Deuba government's attention. Thanks to the activities of the Maoists and violence resulting in the loss of some 1,800 lives of policemen and civilians so far, hijacking of an Indian Airlines aircraft and the Hrithik Roshan controversy, mixed with growing corruption, the kingdom's economy has gone from bad to worse. Unemployment and underemployment, on the other hand, have grown disturbingly.

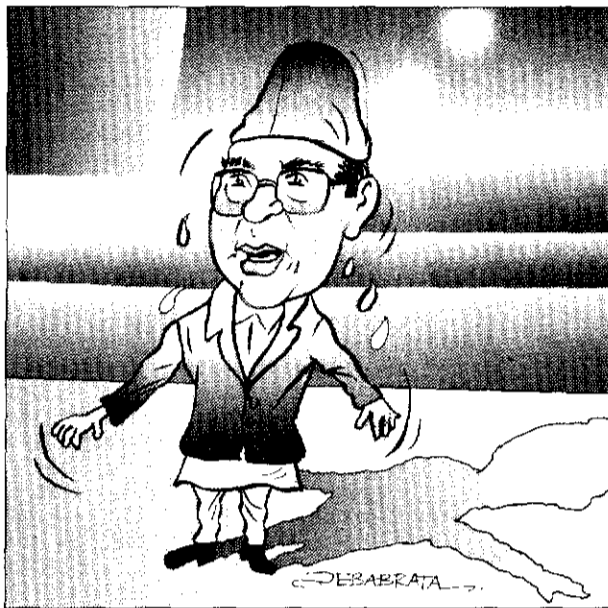
### NO HOMEWORK

Whereas the tourism industry has suffered because of the problems on the law and order front, the 2001-2001 budget presented by finance minister Ram Sharan Mahat talks, inter alia, about the programme of Destination Nepal 2002, to be launched with the participation of the private sector. The budget also says that the year 2003 will be celebrated as Export Year.

The RPP leader and an expert on financial affairs, Prakash Chandra Lohani, has said that there is doubt about the budget's implementation. It is not reform-oriented. UML leader and former finance minister Bharat Mohan Adhikari has said that the budget has "failed to address the grave economic situation".

NPF leader Pari Thapa has regretted that the budget "cannot increase the pace of development". NSP leader Hridayesh Tripathi said: "The budget has been presented without doing necessary homework, as there is no concrete programme in the agriculture sector". He said: "Without solving the problem of the agriculture sector poverty alleviation is impossible". One has to watch how the Deuba government tackles the problems confronting the kingdom.

(To be concluded)



king and the royal family, and a new republican constitution prepared by the elected representatives of the people — to then Prime Minister Deuba.

On 30 November 1999, His Majesty's Government under the prime ministership of Nepali Congress leader KP Bhattarai formed a six-member high-level committee under the convenership of Deuba to hold discussions with the main opposition parties and distinguished persons "on the situation ensuing from the terrorist activities being carried out for the past few years in the name of Maoist people's war".

On 7 November 2000, the Deuba Committee submitted its report to Prime Minister GP Koirala. The report held the Maoist problem as a political problem arising from the country's socio-economic structure and urged the government to find a solution to the problem of violence and murder by holding talks with Maoists. The report suggested that the security apparatus be strengthened to give the feeling of security to the people. The report had stressed that dialogue "can be an immediate solution".

Now in power, Deuba has to show his prowess. The Maoists, too, have to be more pragmatic and accommodative. Circumstances have ensured that they don't have to talk to GP Koirala or his nominee. One hopes that the existing peaceful state of affairs — having arisen out of the ceasefire declaration of Pachanda — would become permanent.

### SCARE

The problems of the people of the Terai (plains) — particularly those of the Madheshis (the people of Indian extraction) — remain far from solved. The most important of these problems is that of grant of citizenship certificates to very many of them, who were born in Nepal and have been living there for generations. Gajendra Narayan Singh, President of the Nepal Sadbhavana Party — which has been articulating the interests of the Madheshis — said in an interview that the

The author is Hon. Director, South Asian Studies Foundation, New Delhi.

# WHITHER NEPAL?-II

## Need For Practical Approach In Ties With India

**T**HE new Deuba government has also to prove its mettle in foreign affairs. As a landlocked, small and underdeveloped country, Nepal's international interactions are restricted to India and China. Of course, over the years, Nepal has also acquired a place in the world community. Nepal will be hosting the 11th summit of the heads of state or government of the seven members of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation — if and when it is held. The 11th summit of the Saarc heads of state or government was slated to be held in Kathmandu in December 1999. India stressed its postponement owing to political changes in Pakistan in October that year — which saw General Pervez Musharraf taking over as the country's chief executive.

The new Deuba government has also to focus its attention on the problem of the Bhutanese refugees living in seven camps in eastern Nepal. Identification of the refugees is being held by the joint verification team, containing Nepali and Bhutanese officials.

### BILATERAL TIES

The president of the Bhutanese Refugee Repatriation Committee and secretaries of the seven refugee camps in Jhapa and Morang jointly appealed on 18 July for additional teams to speedily complete the verification process. It is hoped that the meeting of the foreign ministers of the two kingdoms in New York will help solve the problem. Otherwise, the two Himalayan states seem to be moving closer — forgetting the setbacks of in the past.

Nepal's ties with India, though, is bound to remain of utmost importance. Landlocked Nepal is surrounded by India in the east, west and south and, as such, the mountain kingdom is also, at times, alluded to as an India-locked state. KV Rajan, during his tenure as India's ambassador to Nepal till June 2000, would refer to Nepal as an "India-linked" state — showing the sophistication of Indian diplomacy and the core state's accommodative spirit.

This, though, does not imply that everything is hunky-dory in Indo-Nepal ties. The secretary-level bilateral meetings on trade between the two countries held in August in Kathmandu ended without any concrete result. Indeed, the two states are so close on social, religious, cultural and even economic fronts that attempts at institutionalisation of bilateral ties often give rise to complexities.

It needs to be stressed that two countries have been, some time, holding talks at

By **PARMANAND**

various levels in Kathmandu and New Delhi to ensure the smooth renewal of the trade treaty which is due to expire on 2 December this year. The two states signed a renewable trade treaty in New Delhi on 6 December 1991 for a period of five years. In fact, the non-renewal of the trade and transit treaties in 1989 by India had created almost a cold war situation between India and Nepal. Ironically, this

ling down in office, makes India his first foreign destination. In any case, Deuba will be meeting Vajpayee on the sidelines of the Saarc summit in Kathmandu in December. Much before that, the Indian external affairs minister Jaswant Singh will visit Nepal. These visits, it should be hoped, would help solve various problems.

On 12 February 1996, the Mahakali Treaty was initially signed by Deuba and Narasimha Rao in New Delhi. Under it, the 6,400 MW Pancheshwar Hydel Power Project is to be set up jointly by Nepal and India at the cost of Rs 20,000 crores on an equal sharing basis. Despite India's best intentions, the treaty is yet to become a reality. The two governments would do well to sort out various problems and ensure that a very useful channel of economic cooperation is fully utilised. Nepal is aware of the mutually beneficial ties between another South Asian mountain kingdom, Bhutan, and India owing to bilateral cooperation in power generation.



contributed to the establishment of competitive multiparty democracy in Nepal in 1990. On 3 December 1996, the commerce secretaries of India and Nepal, Tejendra Khanna and Mohan Dev Pant, exchanged letters in Kathmandu, renewing the Indo-Nepal Treaty of Trade and the Agreement on Cooperation for the Control of Unauthorised Trade, with certain amendments.

It is well known that Nepal's economy depends substantially on that of India. There is also little doubt that India has always tried to be accommodative on the trade front with Nepal. In any case, India cannot afford to damage its economy by default. Nepal will do well not to make the on-going talks on renewal of the trade treaty a prestige or political issue. The scene in 1989 was different from the present one. Maoists are waiting for an opportunity to take on democratic forces in Nepal and India simultaneously.

### PRAGMATISM

The two South Asian states will have to be transparent and accommodative on the 1950 Treaty of Peace and Friendship. Playing to the gallery should not continue indefinitely. India should not have any problem about its security — if various security clauses are removed or if the treaty is abrogated altogether. In any case, the treaty does not have any provision for amendment. Any new treaty of peace and friendship would have a great deal of difficulty in getting endorsed by parliament. Both countries should, therefore, adopt a practical approach.

It is against this backdrop that Deuba will visit India. Traditionally, every Nepalese Prime Minister, soon after sett-

### FOREIGN POLICY

Because of the geo-strategic location of China — in particular because of the Tibetan Autonomous Region and its incorporation in the PRC in 1950 — Nepal has to be constantly watchful about its ties with the former. The two Asian states established diplomatic ties in 1956. Ties with China, it needs to be stressed, were not established during the reign of King Tribhuvan (1911-55), who was indebted to India for his emancipation from the clutches of the Ranas. King Mahendra (1955-72) utilised diplomatic ties with the PRC to his advantage both internally and externally: internally, by getting support from various Communist groups to his undemocratic Panchayat polity and, externally, by keeping India on diplomatic tenterhooks.

Deuba will be visiting — traditionally, the Nepali Prime Minister visits the PRC immediately after his visit to India — China soon. He had paid a six-day official visit to the PRC in 1996. Fortunately, the two states do not have any substantial problem between them. China, though, has been complaining to Nepal about the lowering of the level of bilateral trade. Nepal has not been oblivious of this.

Deuba's skill in foreign affairs will thus be put to test in a variety of ways. He has to face a sensitive domestic press and opposition parties. Of course, they give Deuba more concessions in comparison to Koirala. There is no point in being over-optimistic, but it can certainly be hoped that Deuba would give a good account of himself.

(Concluded)

THE STATESMAN

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