

# Pro-Maoist strike shuts down Nepal schools

*(1-3) 12/9/02*

**Kathmandu, Dec. 9 (Reuters):** About half-a-million Nepali children stayed home today as schools and colleges in Kathmandu shut down due to a strike called by a pro-Maoist student group demanding private schools be nationalised.

Schools and colleges said they would remain shut at least till Friday, but are hoping that the government will reach a compromise with the students' union by then.

"The shutdown...hit nearly 500,000 students," an education ministry official told Reuters.

The All Nepal National Independent Students' Union (Revolutionary), which is affiliated to Maoist rebels, is calling on the government to make secondary education free in addition to ending private schooling.

Education is now free only until the primary level, which is up to the fifth grade.

"We want an end to commercialisation of education," the union said in a statement.

Schools and colleges in the Kathmandu valley, including the capital, remained closed out of fear, since the student group has previously attacked those who defy its strike calls, school teachers said. "We cannot risk being attacked and have asked children not to come to school," Dil Chandra Bhandari, a teacher at a private school in Kathmandu, told Reuters.

Half of Nepal's students study at private schools because of perceptions that public schools do not provide quality education. The students' union is also demanding that the government increase spending on education, which has been allocated barely 17 per cent of impoverished Nepal's annual budget of \$1.2 billion for the year to mid-July 2003.

The union also wants the government to withdraw a declaration calling it "terrorist", a term the authorities have been using for the Maoist rebels and their activists since last year.

The Maoist rebels have been fighting for six years to abolish the country's constitutional monarchy and install a one-party communist republic.

THE TELEGRAPH

10 DEC 2002

## King's Cross

Two months after his October 4 take-over, king Gyanendra's drive to consolidate his position is coming under increasing challenge from disparate political forces in Nepal who are striving to make common cause. Although these very parties had earlier endangered democracy and created conditions for the palace to snuff it out, recent developments suggest that the potential threat to the monarchy is the most serious in recent history. When king Gyanendra dismissed the elected government of Sher Bahadur Deuba and scotched the parliamentary elections due this year, there was little sympathy for the politicians who had made a mess of the multi-party experiment. The political parties were already discredited, given their record of corruption, maladministration and neglect of both governance and development. The king was only cashing in on popular discontent. Therefore, it was assumed that elections, as declared, would be held after a year, by which time the political parties would be chastened and the Maoists tamed. But, in the aftermath of the revival of absolute monarchy, the king's actions have raised fears that the suspension of democracy may be prolonged.

Such a course is fraught with risks, for, instead of strengthening the monarchy, it may lead to further destabilisation of the institution. There are signs of this happening, and not only because the Maoists are continuing with their campaign of violence. In fact, Maoist violence serves as a useful alibi and there has long been a suspicion that the monarchy and the Maoists share a common distrust of multi-party democracy. The interim administration of Lokendra Bahadur Chand has extended the olive branch to the rebels but so far the Maoist leadership has not responded formally to the offer of talks. On a different track, mainstream parties are joining forces and have warned that the future of the monarchy would be in danger if the king does not set up a democratic government. The Nepali Congress (NC) and the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist), the kingdom's two biggest parties, have been opposed to the Maoist demand for a republic. Now even NC president G P Koirala does not rule out a similar demand if the king fails to "correct his errors". In the circumstances, king Gyanendra should confine himself within the parameters of the 1990 constitution, if only to safeguard the monarchy, which has endured as the main pillar of stability shored up by the multi-party system.

4 DEC 2002

# Koirala challenges ouster of Deuba govt

*Handwritten: 27/11*

**Kathmandu, Nov. 26 (PTI):** Former Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala today challenged the sacking of the Sher Bahadur Deuba government by King Gyanendra and urged him to return power to the people.

Calling the October 4 royal takeover of the government as "unconstitutional", Koirala asked the king to follow the path of democracy chosen by King Birendra.

"King Birendra had handed sovereign power to the people, whereas the present king has taken over all the executive powers," he said at a rally organised by the Nepal Students' Union, student wing of the Nepali Congress.

He also urged the youth to launch a struggle for democracy at the massive rally held amidst heavy deployment of security forces and fears over his arrest.

Nepali Congress central working committee member Krishna Prasad Sitaula said the king's proclamation on October 4 has put a question mark on the fundamental principle of the constitution that sovereign power lies with the people.

"The king's personal ambition and craze for power might be harmful for the institution of monarchy in the long run," he warned adding that the monarch should rectify the mistakes and hand over power to the people.

Nepali Congress spokesman Arjun Narsingh said the king's action has taken back the people's sovereign power established through the 1990 people's movement.

Criticising the formation of

the caretaker government headed by Lokendra Bahadur Chand, he said the team of "technicians" cannot solve the political problems plaguing the country.

Koirala also said the crisis in the Himalayan nation cannot be solved without resolving the Maoist issue. The party was ready to make necessary changes in the constitution to bring the rebels into the mainstream, he said.

However, Koirala said there cannot be any compromise on multi-party democracy and constitutional monarchy, the fundamental principles of the constitution. He rejected the Maoist demand to hold election for the constituent Assembly to draft a new constitution.

"The Maoist problem can only be solved within the parliament. Therefore, there is no option but to revive the parliament which was dissolved in May," he said. The former Prime Minister urged a broader democratic alliance with all political parties that believe in parliamentary democracy.

## US travel warning

The state department urged Americans yesterday to defer non-essential travel to Nepal because of a written threat from Maoist rebels to attack American diplomats.

The warning, issued by the US embassy in New Delhi, says a statement by the Maoists on November 15 takes responsibility for the kidnapping and killing of two Nepalese security guards employed by the US embassy in Kathmandu. "Included in the

press release are threats of further violence against any party or diplomatic communities working against the Maoists," the department said. "This includes the American diplomatic mission."

The warning by the Maoists restated their policy of not attacking foreign tourists. Even so, the repeated threats against American diplomats suggest that any American could be in danger, particularly those travelling outside the capital.

It was unclear what prompted the Maoist threat. The Bush administration asked Congress in June to provide \$20 million in aid to the Nepalese government to help it defeat the Maoists.

# King defies parties, expands Nepal team

DEEPAK THAPA

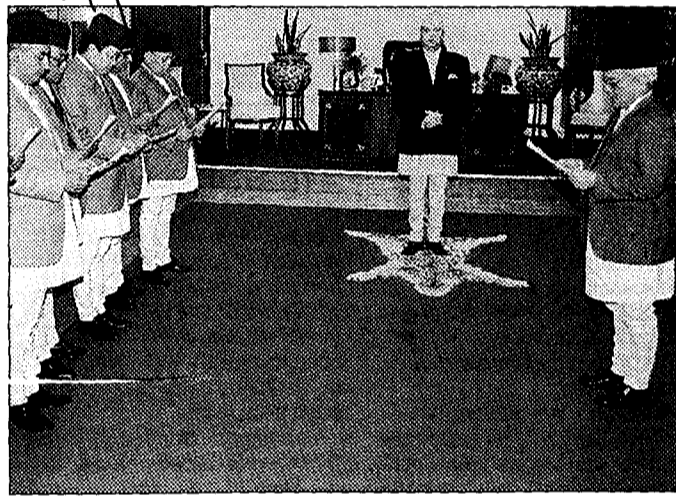
**Kathmandu, Nov. 18:** In a move that can be construed as a slap in the face of the major political parties, King Gyanendra expanded the Lokendra Bahadur Chand Cabinet.

The new development comes after efforts to involve the Nepali Congress and the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) in the month-old government failed.

A few days ago, the king had met former Prime Minister and president of the Nepali Congress, Girija Prasad Koirala, and K.P. Oli, number two in the CPN (UML). In his meeting with Gyanendra, Koirala had reiterated his party's stand that the lower house of parliament, the House of Representatives, dissolved in May, be reinstated.

Oli, on the other hand, had expressed the view that the king was ready to work with the political parties. He had even suggested joining the government should the executive powers held by the king since the October 4 dismissal of Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba be handed back to the Cabinet.

However, the general secretary of the CPN (UML), Madhav Kumar Nepal, who was out of the country during Oli's meeting with the king, has stated his party would only support the government from the outside



Newly-appointed ministers are sworn in at the Royal Palace in Kathmandu. (AFP)

even if executive authority is restored.

The new faces in the Cabinet includes a staunch royalist—who significantly comes in as the number three in the government below the Prime Minister and the deputy Prime Minister — a couple of former Nepali Congress and CPN (UML) members each, businessmen, a medical doctor and an engineer. However, the line-up of 22 ministers and assistant ministers still has only one woman.

Maoist rebels continued their spree of bomb blasts in the capital. Today, another bomb went off in the house of a businessman on the outskirts of the city. The day before, they had set off an explosion at a sub-station belonging to the National Electricity Authority and at a private boarding school. No one was killed or injured in the incidents.

The government said yesterday it was trying to hold peace

talks with Maoist rebels aimed at ending a six-year-old revolt despite recent deadly raids in the west of the Himalayan kingdom.

"I am confident that the meeting would begin very soon," Gore Bahadur Khapangi, minister for Women, Children and Social Welfare, said. He gave no date.

He said the government was making serious efforts to contact the rebels. "They must make written proposals for talks with their demands," he said.

Thousands of Maoist rebels fighting to topple the constitutional monarchy last Thursday stormed remote towns, Jumla and Gorkha in west Nepal. At least 140 people were killed in the fighting.

This was the latest in a series of attacks on government installations.

Both Chand and the rebels say they are keen for talks but have fixed no date.

— William Cowper

## Peace-meal Proposal

The state of near civil war in Nepal with the monarchy unable to check the unrelenting Maoist offensive is an SOS that those interested in peace in the Himalayan kingdom cannot ignore. Friends of Nepal would agree that the situation appears irretrievably grim as things stand today. Ironically, the latest Maoist strike in two districts of western Nepal, which left at least 150 dead, came the very day the rebels accepted the government's offer for a dialogue with a promise of "serious and sincere" efforts; indeed the palace-appointed government — which had thrice reiterated its willingness to talk to the insurgents — had welcomed the Maoist move for a dialogue. The palace chose not to make an issue of the three-point agenda put forth by the Maoists: a round-table conference with all political forces, formation of an interim government and election of a constituent assembly. Although these were accompanied by the threat of renewed strikes if the demands were not met, the development gave rise to hopes of a ceasefire as a prelude to a timetable for talks. That the Maoists belied this promise by striking at this critical moment is an unmistakable signal that the present attempts at peace have all but bombed.

Clearly, the problem has become too big for the authorities in Nepal to tackle. Like in Sri Lanka, where Norway entered as a broker to persuade all parties to take the initiative for peace, Nepal too probably needs the healing touch provided by external brokers. Norway's peace venture in Sri Lanka did not gather momentum till the international community, especially Washington, threw its weight behind the moves. In Nepal too any headway towards ending the insurgency appears unlikely without Washington's tacit help. However, New Delhi, which has been giving all assistance to Kathmandu for combating "Maoist terrorism" will do well not to get embroiled any further in this conflict. For, that would be courting another fiasco like the IPKF mission to Sri Lanka. That does not, however, preclude the government of India from initiating a proposal for a credible international broker, with SAARC, Europe and the United States supporting such facilitation. This is of utmost importance and should be done without delay before mischievous elements move in and further vitiate the situation in Nepal.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

18 NOV 2002

# 12 killed in Nepal clashes

GOPALSHARMA

**Kathmandu, Nov. 14** (Agencies): At least 12 people, mostly Maoist rebels, have been killed in violence in Nepal in the past 24 hours, officials said today.

Two people were killed and 20 injured in eastern Nepal today when a bus they were in ran over a landmine believed to have been planted by Maoist rebels, police said. The attack followed a three-day national general strike ending yesterday, called by the rebels who are fighting to set up a Communist republic in the Himalayan kingdom.

More than 7,100 people have died in the six-year revolt.

Police said many of the injured were in a critical condition in hospital after the blast, which occurred on a bridge at Halhale, 200 km east of Kathmandu.

The bus was bound for the capital from the town of Charikot.

It was not immediately known how many people were in the bus. "It (the mine) went off as the first bus after the strike was



**A soldier checks a motorcycle in Kathmandu on the last day of a three-day strike called by Maoist rebels in Nepal. (AFP)**

crossing the bridge," the police official said. The defence ministry said soldiers gunned down nine guerrillas in gunbattles late yesterday in west Nepal, a Maoist stronghold.

A civilian was killed by the guerrillas during another battle with soldiers in the west on the same day. The rebels called the

strike, which shut schools, shops and businesses, to protest against King Gyanendra's sacking of Nepal's elected government in a row over the timing of elections.

The sacking plunged the revolt-racked kingdom, still recovering from last year's massacre of most of the royal family by a

drunken crown prince, into a new crisis.

## Journalist released

The editor of a small newspaper who was arrested for accusing a police official of taking bribes was released on bail today.

Home minister Dharma Bahadur Thapa said Tikaram Rai, editor of the *Aparanha* daily, was released after paying 500 rupees (\$7) bail.

He was arrested on Tuesday under Nepal's Public Offence Act, after his newspaper published an article alleging that police official Basanta Kuwar had taken bribes for issuing drivers' licenses. Kuwar said the article was an attempt at character assassination.

Nepal has no laws against libel or defamation. The Public Offence Act is used for cases of criminal assault. "We were able to free Rai this morning after convincing the police officials that they could not hold him in custody," said Taranath Dahal, president of the Federation of Nepalese Journalists.

# Crisis in Chand govt deepens

Press Trust of India

KATHMANDU, Nov. 11. — The troubles facing the one-month-old government led by Mr Lokendra Bahadur Chand deepened today with the second largest party CPN-UML deciding against joining his caretaker ministry.

"The party would not join a government which has no executive powers and is unconstitutional," a UML statement after its standing committee meeting said.

The largest party the Nepali Congress has already decided that it would not participate in the Chand cabinet demanding rectification of "unconstitutional errors" by the government.

Mr Chand who is yet to garner the support of parties has not succeeded in giving formal shape to a cabinet of his own, even one month after its formation.

Following the refusal of two largest parties to join the cabinet, the prime minister today discussed with the King's cabinet, strategy to be adopted

to resolve the present political crisis.

The meeting also discussed matters relating to holding peace talks with the Maos, cabinet expansion and taking further security measures in view of the growing Maoist violence, according to the party sources.

**Strike:** Life was disrupted in several parts of Nepal on the first day of the three-day general strike today called by Maoists even as security forces shot dead 30 rebels in a fresh offensive against the rebels.

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THE STATESMAN

# Strike shuts down Nepal

**Kathmandu, Nov. 11 (Reuters):** Nepal shut down today on the first day of a three-day general strike called by Maoist rebels to protest against King Gyanendra's dismissal of the country's elected government last month.

The strike came as a government official said soldiers shot dead at least 10 guerrillas in a gunbattle in Baglung district, 350 km west of Kathmandu.

Shops, schools and businesses in the Nepali capital, gateway for thousands of western visitors to the Himalayas, were closed as soldiers with automatic rifles guarded deserted streets. "There has been a total shutdown in the main business district," said Kathmandu resident Triratna Manandhar. "There is a heavy presence of security personnel around the main market but no tension."

In some parts of the city, bands of children played football or cricket on deserted streets.

Almost all public transport was off the roads but some taxis were plying the streets with their number plates covered and charging more than double the

normal fare. Special coaches with banners marked "Tourists" ferried visitors to and from the airport as international flights operated normally, hotel and airport officials said.

Strike calls by the rebels, who have a presence in all parts of the kingdom but are particularly strong in rural areas, are normally heeded because people fear revenge attacks.

In the latest violence, a government official said soldiers killed at least 10 rebels after the guerrillas ambushed a security patrol at Khara, a rebel stronghold in Baglung district.

"At least 10 Maoists were killed today in a gunbattle after rebels fired at soldiers from forests following the ambush," he told Reuters, adding two soldiers were wounded in the clash. There was no comment from the Maoists. Independent Kantipur radio said the Maoists killed three people in east Nepal late yesterday but gave no details.

The rebels have been waging an increasingly deadly revolt to install a Communist republic to replace the constitutional

monarchy. The government says more than 7,100 people have been killed since the revolt began in 1996. Residents reached by telephone in the cities of Biratnagar in east Nepal and Bhairahawa and Nepalgunj in the west said life there was also disrupted by the strike.

King Gyanendra assumed executive power in October after firing Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, who wanted to delay national elections. The elections were set for this week but Deuba sought a delay because of rebel threats to sabotage them.

Gyanendra named a strong royal supporter, Lokendra Bahadur Chand, as interim Prime Minister. Chand has pledged early elections but no date has been set to end the latest political crisis to rack Nepal which is still recovering from last year's massacre of most of the royal family by a drunken crown prince. The insurgency has racked the impoverished nation's aid-dependent economy. It has crippled tourism, a key source of income, and scared away investors.

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# NEPAL TODAY

## The State Of Multi-Party Democracy

*Himalayas on trials*

By PARMANAND

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If Sher Bahadur Deuba had proved to be "incompetent" as Prime Minister, Lokendra Bahadur Chand does not have any record of a competent administrator as head of government in the history of the kingdom of Nepal. Deuba, 56, was removed as Prime Minister by the constitutional monarch and head of state, King Gyanendra Bir Bikram Shahdeva, 55, on 4 October under Article 127 of the Constitution promulgated on 9 November 1990. The Article says: "If any difficulty arises in bringing the Constitution into force, His Majesty may issue necessary orders to remove these difficulties. The orders so issued shall be placed in Parliament".

### Insurgency

Earlier, on 3 October, Deuba, who had assumed office on 22 July last year, had requested the King to get the nationwide election — slated to be held in six phases between 13 November and 10 January — to the Pratinidhi Sabha, the lower and popular house of the bicameral Nepali Parliament postponed for a year. Postponement of parliamentary election was recommended to the King by the Deuba Cabinet after all political parties in the now dissolved Pratinidhi Sabha had requested the government to do so in view of the growing Maoist insurgency throughout the kingdom.

Quite significantly, for the first time, the Royal Nepalese Army — which has been fighting the Maoist rebels in the countryside — admitted on 1 October that the rebels are a formidable fighting force and the operations could drag on for quite some time. RNA spokesman Deepak Gurung admitted quite candidly that the Maoists have "not lost their strength". The chief of the kingdom's police, Pradip Shamsher Jung Bahadur Rana, had also adopted similar line and had recommended postponement of the scheduled polls.

Lokendra Bahadur Chand, 63, may not have proved to be a good administrator during his earlier three tenures — 1983-86, 1990 and 1997 — but he has been among the least controversial Nepalese politicians. Besides being close to the palace, he has also been regarded as extremely honest. During the post-1990 multi-party democracy phase, he has been a leader of the erstwhile Panchas (associated with the partyless panchayat system during 1962-90), the Rashtriya Prajatantra Party. His splinter party, RPP (Chand), could not do well and had eventually to merge with the RPP (Thapa) making the party a unified RPP.

After being appointed Prime Minister by King Gyanendra on 11 October (after a week of political

confabulations, when the King also assumed all executive powers), Chand now heads a nine-member ministry. The interim ministry comprises seven cabinet ministers and two assistant ministers. For the present, only two political parties — the RPP and the Terai-centric, Nepal Sadbhawana Party — have joined the ministry. In his 4 October address to the nation, King Gyanendra had sought to form an all-party

ministry, and Gopal Dalit, a leader of the backward community.

For the present, only Sher Bahadur Deuba's party, the Nepali Congress (Prajatantrik), has publicly refused to join the ministry. The Nepali Congress, presided by former Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, and the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) under the general secretaryship of former Deputy Prime Minister Madhava



interim government. The interim ministry comprises non-party and non-political elements as well.

Badri Prasad Mandal, 60, who represented the Nepal Sadbhawana Party from Morang 7 constituency in the dissolved Pratinidhi Sabha, has been appointed deputy prime minister with the portfolios of agriculture, cooperative and local administration. He is president of the NSP, and had been assistant minister, state minister and minister during the panchayat days. It is for the first time that a Madheshi (term used for the people of Indian extraction generally living in the Terai) has been given this position. In an exclusive personal interview, Mandal said that there was a tremendous "utsah" (enthusiasm) and "umang" (gusto) among the Madheshis over his appointment.

### Portfolios

Narendra Bikram Shah, 62, foreign minister in the interim ministry, has the experience of being the kingdom's foreign secretary as also its permanent representative at the UN and ambassador in the USSR, Bolivia and Argentina. Upendra Prasad Devkota, 47, a renowned neurosurgeon, is the health minister under Chand. Badri Prasad Shrestha, 70, a noted economist, has been appointed finance minister. DB Thapa has been allocated the home portfolio in the new ministry. Gore Bahadur Khapangi, who had been spearheading a movement for the welfare of the tribal people, has been appointed minister for social welfare. Two assistant ministers are: Anuradha Koirala, the only woman in the

formation of the Chand ministry, though they condemned the assumption of the executive powers by King Gyanendra on 4 October. In any case, Chand's is not an all-party ministry.

However, the insurgents, in a symbolic act in Kathmandu, on 12 October, chose to destroy a statue of King Mahendra, the late father of the present King, who had, on 15 December 1960, dismissed the first-ever elected government of the Nepali Congress headed by BP Koirala. One person was killed in the blast and 10 were injured.

### Priority

Significantly, on 12 October itself, Prime Minister Chand said he was open to talks with Maoist rebels to end the six-and-a-half-year insurgency. Chand said: "We'll try to hold a dialogue with the Maoists in order to bring peace". He stressed that his first priority would be to end the violence that has ravaged much of the kingdom. Chand stated that the government's top priority "will be to maintain law and order and good governance and control the Maoists' terrorism".

In a tone different from that of his predecessor, Deuba, Chand said: "We want to have peace and security ... we're keeping the doors open for a dialogue with the Maoists". Remarkably, Chand did not mention any condition for dialogue. The Maoists' response is yet to be known. His Majesty's government and the Nepal Communist Party (Maoist) had held three rounds of talks between 30 August and 13 November last year. Though nothing concrete was achieved during these talks, a positive and congenial atmosphere was created. Both sides had agreed to hold the fourth round of talks soon. The Maoists, however, restarted their violent and terrorist activities on the night of 23 November and even formed a revolutionary government to administer the kingdom. His Majesty's government responded by imposing an emergency in the whole of Nepal on 26 November.

Nepal today is in a truly unenviable situation on the economic plane. Its landlocked nature, increasing violence and consequent and increasing insecurity have all conspired to damage its economy. Quite naturally, tourism has suffered. The state of unemployment is also disturbing. Investors have either withdrawn or are thinking of doing so. Though the inflation rate has remained in the range of three to four per cent, it is hardly a consolation in view of other highly negative factors.

Foreign exchange reserves stand only at \$1.4 billion, and the per capita income makes it one of the poorest countries of the world. And all this despite substantial aid from the international community including India. One hopes the Chand ministry is able to achieve the objectives set by the King.

# 16 Maoists shot, blasts rock Kathmandu

Press Trust of India

KATHMANDU, Oct. 27. — Two people were injured in bomb blasts here even as sixteen Maoists were killed in separate encounters with security forces in Nepal, defence ministry sources said today.

Nine rebels were killed along the border of Rupandehi and Nawalparasi districts while four were killed on the border between Dadeldhura and Baitadi districts.

In separate encounters, two Maoists were killed in Pyuthan district and one in Ramechhap district, the ministry said.

Two people were injured when a bomb exploded at the government-run Dairy Development Corporation building at Lainchaur in Kathmandu today, a police official said.

The dairy building was slightly damaged by the explosion which occurred around 3:p.m..

Another bomb exploded in the Employees Provident Fund building near the Saarc secretariat at Tridevi Marg in Kathmandu.

The blast damaged a public toilet at the building and window panes of the adjoining Himalayan Bank office, police said. The Maoists are suspected to be involved in the two blasts.

In another development, life was paralysed in eastern Nepal's Terai districts including Morang, Sunsari and Jhapa districts in response to a general strike called by the Maoists.

However, the strike had little effect in West Nepal. Nepalgunj market remained opened despite the strike call, Kantipur FM radio reported.

THE STATESMAN

4 / 10 / 2002

# DEMOCRACY IN RETREAT

5/8 2/20 Freedom's Song Out Of Tune In Nepal

By JB LAMA

Multi-party democracy in Nepal is in temporary retreat. The country's elder statesmen are tired; those that follow them display a pomposity that blinkers wisdom. Instead of building upon hard-earned freedom from decades of panchayati raj, veteran Nepali Congress chief Girija Prasad Koirala and the younger ruling party supremo Sher Bahadur Deuba saw fit to square off among themselves, forcing King Gyanendra to intervene. He sacked acting Prime Minister Deuba and assumed control for seven days before installing an interim government under Article 127 of the Constitution which states that "if any difficulty arises in connection with the implementation of this Constitution his Majesty may issue necessary Orders to remove such difficulty and such Orders shall be laid before Parliament".

## Sick with repetition

Which poses the question: since there is no Parliament, who is to ratify the King's orders?

In Nepal, history's muse must be either sick with repetition or bored to the point of disinterest. In December 1961, King Gyanendra's father King Mahendra usurped power by dissolving the country's first elected parliament, imprisoned then Prime Minister Bisheswar Prasad Koirala, suspended sections of the Constitution that came into effect on 30 June 1959, banned all political parties and himself formed a government by introducing the panchayat system. Among those arrested were Nepali Congress supreme leader Ganesh Man Singh and Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, then speaker of the lower House of Parliament.

What prompted this royal coup was amply summed up in the following which still rings true: "Hopes that the first elected government would be able to give the country stability and march on the path of progress have been dashed. As a direct result of misuse of authority, multiplying corruption, creating misunderstanding and a weakening of the administrative machinery, the Cabinet has proved itself totally incapable of maintaining law and order." Nothing has changed since then.

In 1990, the Nepali Congress-Communist combine revolt that

lasted nearly two months forced King Birendra to accept a multi-party democratic system. Bhattarai headed an interim ministry and oversaw a smooth transition of power to the elected government led by GP Koirala after the first general elections in May 1991. Before his death, Koirala collectively entrusted the task of nurturing the Nepali Congress to Ganesh Man Singh, Bhattarai and his brother GP Koirala, but the party

created by Maoist depredations was beyond the control of a lame duck Prime Minister.

Deuba did undermine the Maoist potential from the very beginning. It was during his earlier tenure in 1996 that the Maoists struck first in a remote village, killing six people. This was passed off as an isolated incident. Last May, Deuba should have known better when he recommended a fresh poll; no way would it be



was never a cohesive entity with each one pulling it in different directions. In a way, GP Koirala's reluctance to hand over power to the younger generation is largely responsible for the disaffection. Which substantiates why few regret the June split in the NC.

## Winning minds and hearts

Deuba (related to the royal family by marriage) least expected King Gyanendra to give him the sack when he recommended postponement of the November poll by six months to "avoid bloodshed". He suggested the formation of an all-party interim government, which could hold talks with the Maoists. His recommendations followed the consensus reached at an all-party meeting, which authorised him to go into the legal and constitutional aspects of delaying the poll. Curiously, this came after days of the Election Commission's announcement of a six-phase poll. It could not have come to such a conclusion unless it was satisfied with security arrangements. King Gyanendra obviously took a decision after carefully observing that the explosive situation

possible to end Maoist violence in just six months. They are in control of nearly 40 of the 75 districts and well organised and equipped. Not only did Deuba refuse to reopen talks, he was determined to exterminate the rebels as was evident from his visits to foreign countries, including India, to seek help and material assistance. The nearly three-fold increase in the death toll in the ten months the country was under Emergency should have convinced Deuba of there being no alternative to a peaceful settlement. King Gyanendra is also on record as having said that there is no military solution and the government will have to meet the challenge by "winning minds and hearts".

The appointment of an interim government under pro-palace Rashtriya Prajatantra Party leader Lokendra Bahadur Chand has come as some relief but political parties have fired the first shot by refusing to be part of his brief. The Chand government's objective is to announce an election date after creating an atmosphere fit for free and fair election by initiating talks

with the Maoists, but none of the council members who include a doctor and a social worker seems capable of negotiating a settlement. In which case, the Maoists' reported desire for a roundtable conference with the King and all parties deserves consideration, making a unilateral ceasefire the need of the hour.

Experts feel there is no constitutional provision for an all-party government and also that the dissolved parliament automatically stands reactivated if elections cannot be held within six months of its dissolution. Besides, there is no provision for extending the election date. Koirala favoured restoration of Parliament and requested the King to consult the apex court for its views on Deuba's recommendations. Reviving Parliament would have been an ideal solution since it would have saved the country the expense of a mid-term poll but this again would amount to defying the Supreme Court ruling, which upheld the dissolution.

## Political consensus needed

In such a piquant situation it would have been advisable for King Gyanendra to consult the Supreme Court. In 1995, his brother King Birendra disbanded parliament and announced a fresh poll on the recommendation of Communist Prime Minister Man Mohan Adhikary, who alleged that Parliament was hampering his government.

The King referred the matter to the Supreme Court which ruled that "the dissolution of the House of Representatives without considering possibilities of an alternative government was unconstitutional and illegal" and ordered a restoration to the earlier position. In any event, there is little possibility of any single party emerging with a working majority. The only way out in the given situation seems to be consensus politics.

It goes to King Gyanendra's credit that he decried a volatile situation arising from the royal massacre in June last year. Therefore, if the Constitution must be protected to retain the fruits of freedom, it bodes ill for Nepal's administrators to question the King. He can do no wrong. Adversely, he could, in the absence of consensus, reinstitute the same system which would result in a return to ways no democracy worth its creed could stomach.

The author, who was on the staff of The Statesman for 42 years, contributes regularly.

# Nepal PM ready to hold talks with Maoists

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High Nepal ✓

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

KATHMANDU, Oct. 12. — Nepal Prime Minister Mr Lokendra Bahadur Chand today said he was open to talks with Maoist rebels to end the six-year insurgency.

"We'll try to hold dialogue with the Maoists in order to bring peace," Mr Chand said. But his first priority would be to end the violence that has ravaged much of the country. "The government's top priority will be to maintain law and order and good governance and control the Maoists' terrorism," Mr Chand said.

"We want to have peace and security... we're keeping the doors open for dial-



**King Gyanendra**

ogue with the Maoists." His tone marks a change from his predecessor, Mr Sher Bahadur Deuba, who had vowed not to hold talks with the Maoists till they laid down arms and gave up demands for abolition of the monarchy. Mr Deuba had

accused the Maoists of breaking a truce with his government last November.

King Gyanendra sacked Mr Deuba on 4 October, declaring him "incompetent," and assumed power for a week before appointing Mr Chand, a staunch royalist, as Prime Minister. King Gyanendra's move has infuriated leaders of the dissolved Parliament who demanded that the King select ministers only from among them.

## **Nepal blast kills one**

A bomb exploded in a busy street in the capital this morning, killing one person and injuring 10 and destroying the statue of former king Mahendra, PTI adds

# Gyanendra appoints Chand to head new government in Nepal

By Suman Pradhan  
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Kathmandu:** A day before Nepal shuts down for five days for the Dashain festival (Puja holidays), King Gyanendra appointed a new government and immediately assigned it with improving the law and order situation and holding fresh elections.

However, the king has not fixed a date for the elections, raising many eyebrows here. The king's move comes exactly a week after he sacked an elected government and assumed all executive powers himself.

In a brief statement issued on Friday, the Royal Palace press secretariat in Kathmandu said that King Gyanendra has appointed Lokendra Bahadur Chand to lead the government. Mr Chand heads a nine-member council of ministers which includes seven full

ministers and two junior ministers.

The appointment of Mr Chand, a poet in his spare time, was widely expected on Friday. A leader of the rightist Rashtriya Prajatantra Party (RPP), Mr Chand has been Nepal's PM several times before, the last time in 1997 when he headed a coalition government. He is known to be close to the Palace and has served as PM even during the days of absolute monarchy prior to 1990.

Nepal adopted multi-party parliamentary democracy and constitutional monarchy after a people's movement in April 1990 curtailed the powers of the absolute monarch. When he seized power last week, King Gyanendra turned the clock back, say many analysts here.

Meanwhile, new Prime Minister Chand clearly knows his priorities. "The first priority of my government will be to improve the security situation in the country and hold general elec-

tions," Mr Chand told reporters immediately after his appointment was made public.

Asked if he would talk with the Maoist rebels who are waging a seven-year violent campaign for a republican state, Mr Chand said, "I will try to build a conducive environment for talks with the Maoists."

Mr Chand's appointment, though expected, has nevertheless shocked Nepal's political parties who have already termed King Gyanendra's sacking of the elected government and assuming executive powers as "undemocratic and unconstitutional".

Six major political parties banded together to demand a joint-meeting with the king and ask for a new government comprising of all the six parties. But



King Gyanendra



Lokendra Chand

King Gyanendra rejected the demand on Friday, meeting the parties separately and choosing a Prime Minister and ministers of his liking.

Aside from Mr Chand, who is a member of the RPP, and newly appointed Deputy Prime Minister Badri Prasad Mandal of the Nepal Sadbhavana Party (NSP), no other political parties are represented in the new government. The rest of the cabinet members have been chosen from academia, business sector or the social service sector and are not affiliated with any political party.

The new government includes a well-known women's and children's rights campaigner Anuradha Koirala who has been appointed a junior minister for

women and social welfare. Nepal's former representative to the UN, Narendra Bikram Shah, as the new foreign minister. Badri Prasad Shrestha, an economist, is the new finance minister.

Nepal's two large political parties, the Nepali Congress and the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist Leninist) are not represented in the government. A Congress leader said on condition of anonymity that the formation of the new government "is not a good sign".

"It shows the king is not serious," said this leader. "We will wait and watch how the situation develops over the next few days." The communists also refused to react immediately saying they would give a statement after a meeting of their party.

King Gyanendra angered almost all of Nepal's political parties on October 4 when he sacked the government of ex-

Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba and took control of this Himalayan nation. Mr Deuba, who had dissolved Parliament last May and had set fresh elections for November 13, had on October 3 recommended the monarch to postpone elections by a year due to escalating Maoist violence. The king had accused Deuba of "incompetence" for not being able to hold the polls on time.

Political analysts here say, today's government appointment will only help to widen the rift between the political parties and the monarchy.

"The king's appointment shows that he found no one clean enough from the political parties to lead the government," says political commentator Narayan Wagle. "All the supposedly clean politicians belong to the pre-

democracy days. That is the king's message, and does not help to bridge the divide between him and the parties."

# Nepali Cong urges King to form interim govt soon

Kathmandu, October 10

WITH THE King's deadline for naming a new Prime Minister well past, a major political party today urged the monarch to form an interim government and return all the executive powers to the new administration.

"The party has urged the King to form an interim government under Article 128 (2) of the constitution and return all the executive power to the new ministry as per the constitution," the Nepali Congress said today after a meeting of its central working committee.

Calling upon the King to "rectify" his unconstitutional move of sacking an elected government, the Congress reiterated its demand for reviving the dissolved house as the "only way constitutional way" to resolve the present political crisis.

The meeting chaired by party president GP Koirala also appealed to King Gyanendra to convene a meeting of major political parties to discuss the present crises and take a decision "acceptable to all political parties represented in the dissolved house," CWC member Ramchandra Poudyal said after the meeting.

It is for the first time in the kingdom's 12-year Parliamentary history that there is no PM for a week. The king assumed all executive powers when he dismissed SB Deuba's government last Friday with a promise to form a new government in five days.

PTI

11 OCT 2002

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

# Nepal parties back king

1-3  
8/10  
Y.P. RAJESH

**Kathmandu, Oct. 7 (Reuters):** Nepal's main political parties said today they were prepared to cooperate with King Gyanendra on forming an interim government to ensure an early return to constitutional rule in the Himalayan kingdom.

But the parties, who played down talk of a confrontation with the king over his decision to sack the Prime Minister and temporarily take over running the country, insisted on respect for the 1990 Constitution that ushered in multi-party democracy.

The king, who came to the throne after the murder of his brother in a palace massacre in June 2001, sacked Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba on Friday after Deuba asked him to postpone a November 13 general election for a year because of rebel threats.

It was the first time a king had assumed direct power since parliamentary democracy replaced absolute monarchy in 1990.

In Kathmandu, a small home-made bomb exploded in a shopping mall while political parties held a second round of discussions at a house a few miles away.

The bomb, placed in a toilet in the mall in the heart of Kathmandu, did not cause any casualties or damage.

Kathmandu has been hit by a string of small explosions since the end of a state of emergency on August 28 against Maoist rebels who are fighting to overthrow Nepal's constitutional monarchy.

During the political party meeting, officials said senior leaders would seek a collective audience with the king to discuss ways out of Nepal's latest political crisis and clarifications about the nature of an interim government.

"We have decided the interim government should be formed in consultation with and with the participation of all six political parties (represented in the dissolved Parliament)," Madhav Kumar Nepal, general secretary of the Communist Party of Nepal, told reporters after the second round of political discussions.

Earlier, Nepali Congress spokesman Arjun Narasingh said the party would "cooperate with his majesty if the process goes in accordance with the Constitution".

"We want an interim arrangement and power should go to the interim government."

The Nepali Congress was the largest party in a Parliament dissolved in May against the backdrop of a bloody Maoist revolt against the monarchy.

8 OCT 2002

THE TELEGRAPH

# King's Compulsions

Who is to blame for the eclipse of democracy in Nepal? Partly it is the Maoists who have held the Himalayan kingdom to ransom for the past six years. More than 5,000 lives have been lost in the insurgency. A third of the country is effectively under their control. They have repeatedly demonstrated their ability to strike at a time and place of their choosing. But the democratic system could still have been safeguarded had Nepal's political class summoned the nerve to squarely address the most lethal threat to the kingdom's integrity. It failed to do so. It was bad enough that the squabbling among the politicians debilitated the system. Inept governance, corruption and an unwillingness to attend to pressing economic and social problems brought it to the verge of collapse. A constitutional breakdown has indeed been on the cards for the past six months. In May, prime minister Deuba sought the support of parliament to extend the state of emergency in order to bring the Maoist insurgents to heel. His own party, the ruling Nepali Congress led by rival G P Koirala, refused to endorse his request. Deuba went ahead to dissolve parliament and announced fresh elections, a move that eventually led to a split in the party.

One question, however, remained unanswered: Would the elections be held within the stipulated period of six months following dissolution? That possibility seemed more and more remote as the Maoists multiplied their attacks throughout the kingdom and threatened candidates and voters with death. Deuba's calculations had gone awry. When he meekly sought the postponement of elections, King Gyanendra agreed, but only to give the prime minister the boot. Acting under Article 127 of the constitution, the monarch temporarily assumed all executive powers, asked the political parties to help him form an interim government, enumerated its priorities and assured his subjects that he remained committed to multi-party democracy. All well-wishers of Nepal will doubtless realise that the only way the kingdom can pull back from the abyss of anarchy is for the constitutional monarchy and the mainstream political parties to act in tandem. It is hence necessary that the two pillars work together to ensure a swift return to democratic rule. Meanwhile, New Delhi needs to understand the compulsions that led King Gyanendra, a monarch known for his modern outlook and pragmatism, to act in the manner he did and to help him and the interim government in every way it can to restore normality in the kingdom.

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8/10

## FACING DUAL CHALLENGES

Hi Sri  
Nepal

KING GYANENDRA OF Nepal has placed the future of democracy in his country in jeopardy by assuming executive power himself. This decision is turning out to be more controversial than the other measures that he took simultaneously to dismiss the caretaker Prime Minister, Sher Bahadur Deuba, and his Cabinet and to postpone parliamentary elections by one year. The postponement of the elections, scheduled for November this year, need not be considered the kind of anti-democracy move that it normally should have been since all major political parties had jointly made a recommendation to this effect. So too the dismissal of Mr. Deuba's caretaker Cabinet since it has apparently been wrought on the basis of the same ambiguity in relevant constitutional clauses as the decision to postpone the elections was. In taking over the executive power, the Nepalese monarch would appear to have acted directly against the spirit of the 1990 constitutional revolution by which authority was vested in the people. Although King Gyanendra has invited suggestions for forming a Cabinet composed of people who are not going to contest parliamentary elections, the main feature of this interim arrangement to come is that it will be a nominated body. Neither does it seem likely that such a Cabinet will be in place anytime soon since the Navarathri celebrations have begun and Nepal will be virtually closed for a fortnight.

Last week's decision by the major parties, endorsed by Mr. Deuba, to recommend that elections be postponed did reveal the weakness and incompetence of the democratic forces in Nepal. They have so far been unable to demonstrate the maturity and sense of mutual respect that would have enabled them to further the cause of democracy even as they pursued their separate agendas. The necessity for Nepal's democratic forces to be more accommodative

towards each other was obvious enough considering that the country's political system was still in the process of transition. It was all the more urgent when the country is in the grip of a six-year-old Maoist-inspired insurgency that almost amounts to a civil war. Nepal's political classes have not been able to address the causes underlying the insurgency while they have sometimes been guilty of egging on the security forces to react to violent developments in an ad hoc manner. All major political parties have criticised the King's decision and are preparing to register their protest. They would, however, be well-advised to confine the expression of their resentment to reasonable limits at least till they can form a clearer appraisal of the King's agenda. A confrontation between the monarch and the political forces is something that Nepal does not need as it tries to tackle the Maoist insurgency in all its dimensions.

It is as well that the Government of India has taken a cautious approach in regard to the developments in Nepal. In too many instances have political movements in the other countries of South Asia dragged India into the internal dissensions of their own countries irrespective of whether their allegations were warranted or not. While India does have a very justifiable need to take a deep interest in developments afflicting its neighbours, it must never be forgotten that New Delhi's attentions too often are treated like the proverbial kiss of death. But, despite whatever spin political forces in Nepal may give to the recent developments, it is not India that has the primary responsibility to resolve the problems. It is for Nepal's political forces to get their act together and deal with the dual challenges posed by a monarchy that might not have altogether shed its interventionist urges and by an insurgent movement that does not have any great respect for democracy either.

# His Majesty's right

But dialogue is still Nepal's best option

The political situation in Nepal had reached such a stage that King Gyanendra was left with little option but to enforce Article 127 of the Constitution which states that "if any difficulty arises in connection with the implementation of this Constitution, His Majesty may issue Orders to remove such difficulty and such Orders shall be laid before Parliament". The snap-poll, the first phase of which was to begin on 13 November, has been deferred by a year. The King has rightly dismissed Sher Bahadur Deuba's caretaker government; the political vacuum will have to be filled by an interim arrangement comprising all parties. Who will head this temporary unit is not clear but GP Koirala's Nepali Congress is not likely to work under Deuba's breakaway Nepali Congress (Democratic), or vice-versa. Koirala wanted parliament restored — a sensible suggestion which would have saved the country the expense of a fresh election — but it was too late because the six-month period within which it was to be reinstated had already expired. One wonders at the logic behind conducting a snap-poll next year when the general election is due in any case in May 2003.

The growing Maoist threat forced poll postponement. In the ten months Nepal was under Emergency, more than 3,500 people were killed, compared to 1,500 in six years. More deaths are reported daily. One doubts whether the army, even with the assistance of some countries, will, in the next 12 months, be able to flush out the rebels to prepare the ground for a free and fair election. The determination with which the Maoists play on the administration's failure to uplift village life would suggest a lengthy confrontation. And Kathmandu's continued use of force to quell its own people can only invite more trouble. It is still not too late for dialogue and both sides must hang up the gloves for the sake of the country's future.

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7/10

# Two Nepal Ministers under house arrest

Hi 87a

**KATHMANDU, OCT. 6.** Nepal's anti-corruption body has ordered the house arrest of two former Cabinet Ministers suspected of taking kickbacks and making illegal deals, police said today.

The Commission for Investigation of Abuse of Authority issued the order yesterday against Chiranjivi Wagle, Minister for Physical Planning in Nepal's recently-dismissed Cabinet, and Jaya Prakash Gupta, former Information and Communications Minister.

Officers have been stationed at their houses since last night, police officer, Rajendra Bhandari, said. The two were removed from their ministerial positions on Friday when King Gyanendra sacked the Prime Minister, Sher Bahadur Deuba, and disbanded the Cabinet for failing to hold elections as scheduled in November.

Meanwhile, the leader of Nepal's Maoist rebels, Pushpa Kamal Dahal, alias Prachand, criticised the sacking of the Prime Minister, saying it was a move to thwart democracy.

"The dismissal of the Prime Minister, the entire Cabinet and assuming the executive powers to maintain law and order by the King is the final blow against the achievements of the 1990 people's movement," he said in a statement faxed to newspapers here yesterday.

## King to hand over power

A palace official said today that King Gyanendra would relinquish power to an interim Government and he had no plans to rule Nepal, a palace official said today.

The dismissal of Mr. Deuba triggered a political turmoil in the impoverished Himalayan nation which is battling a Maoist insurgency and trying to heal the scars of last year's palace massacre which brought Gyanendra to the throne.



**A soldier stands guard at the Royal Palace gate in Kathmandu on Sunday, as supporters of King Gyanendra light candles to celebrate the sacking of the Prime Minister, Sher Bahadur Deuba. —AP**

Nepal's main political parties were wrangling over ways out of the crisis but the capital was calm, with traffic normal and shops and businesses reopening after Saturday's weekly holiday. Facing few options, Mr. Deuba rallied for support from across the country's political spectrum today. "I did what all other political parties wanted me to do and now they must support me," Mr. Deuba said, addressing supporters at his

residence. He continued to insist that his ouster was unconstitutional. He would not say what his next move would be, but Nepal's constitution has no provision for challenging the King's decision in court.

Meanwhile, a meeting of all the seven political parties in the dissolved Parliament to discuss a joint strategy on the constitutional crisis, as well as to launch a protest action, was cancelled today.

7 OCT 2002

THE HINDU

# Deuba's alliance hope fades

DEEPAK THAPA

**Kathmandu, Oct. 6:** Two days after King Gyanendra sacked Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba and assumed executive powers, political parties are still trying to chart out a common strategy.

The parties are yet to decide on how to respond to the king's call to recommend within five days names of "persons who have clean images and who will not be participating in the forthcoming general elections" to be part of a new government.

The king's Friday night proclamation had said that such a government would hold the elections postponed by him during the day. The all-party meeting called for today has been put off till tomorrow. Deuba's hopes for a grand alliance in his support, however, seems to have become dimmer. There are indications that the political parties will try to reach some compromise with the king on the shape of the future government.

King Gyanendra met president of the Nepali Congress, Girija Prasad Koirala, and the general secretary of the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) during the day. But the contents of the meeting have not been made public. Speculation is rife about who will head the new government but nothing has become clear.

Two of the ministers in the outgoing Cabinet, who had been summoned by the Commission for Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA) to answer charges of corruption, have been placed under police surveillance and told not to leave the Kathmandu Valley. This includes, Chiranjivi Wagle, the vice-president of the Nepali Congress (Democratic) led by Sher Bahadur Deuba.

In another significant move, the government ordered people who have been using vehicles belonging to the government and semi-government institutions to return them within two days or

face action. This is aimed at politicians who have refused to surrender the vehicles they borrowed while in office.

There have been reports of the king's action being welcomed by various organisations, and processions in his support were taken out in many parts of Nepal. There were also demonstrations against the king, mainly by affiliates of the CPN (UML), the largest communist party.

The largest-circulation daily, *Kantipur*, commented in a front-page editorial that the people would be disinclined to back political parties if they protested and that the political parties are to blame for the present situation.

It, however, warned that groups active in the pre-democratic era before 1990 should not assume their time has come again since it would prove counter-productive to both the monarchy and democracy.

## 'Not a coup'

King Gyanendra will hand power to an interim administration this week and has no plans to rule the world's only Hindu kingdom himself, a palace official told Reuters on condition of anonymity. "His Majesty has to form a new government. He has no intention of keeping executive power with himself. It is not a coup," he said.

"The timeframe for the new government has been set," the official said. "The ball is now in the court of the political parties."



Gyanendra

THE TELEGRAPH

17 OCT 2002

# Deuba rallies support for faceoff

**DEEPAK THAPA**

**Kathmandu, Oct. 5:** A day after he was sacked as Nepal's Prime Minister, Sher Bahadur Deuba today slammed King Gyanendra's move as "unconstitutional and undemocratic".

"An elected Prime Minister can only be replaced by the parliament," Deuba said.

Sources, however, said Deuba knew the dismissal was coming as he was asked to step down earlier in the day, but had refused. Today, he sought support from other parties in what is increasingly looking like a showdown with the monarchy.

"According to the wishes of the political parties, I recommended the postponement of election," Deuba said after an informal discussion with leaders of the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) and the Nepal Sadbhavana Party. "Now they should stand behind me."

Deuba's ouster came a day after he recommended postponing parliamentary elections by more than a year. In a nationally televised address, the king announced he was relieving Deuba "owing to his incompetence to conduct the general elections on the stipulated date".

The king put off the November polls, which Deuba had ordered when he dissolved the lower House on May 22. He further announced that a new government would be formed within five days consisting of "persons who have clean images and who will not be participating in the forthcoming general elections".

Deuba had dissolved the parliament following differences within the ruling Nepali Congress over extending the state of emergency to combat the Maoist insurgency. The dissolution led to a vertical split in the country's oldest political party, with Deuba forming a separate outfit. Despite widespread reservations, the government had proclaimed it would be able to hold elections for a new parliament.

But after two devastating attacks by the Maoists in early September on army and police installations, many parties, including the main opposition, CPN (UM-L), which was counting on benefiting from the division in the Nepali Congress, began voicing concerns about the viability of holding elections.

Events precipitated after an all-party meeting on September 29 gave a mandate to the Prime Minister to either defer the election or reinstate the parliament.

THE TELEGRAPH

1 5 OCT 2002

# Surprised Deuba refuses to budge

## AGENCIES

KATHMANDU | OCTOBER 5

**O**USTED Nepal Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba was slated to meet members of his Nepali Congress (Democratic) party later today to plan strategy following his dismissal by King Gyanendra yesterday.

Deuba, who had sought a year's postponement of the elections because of the mounting rebel violence, said he was astonished by his sacking and told Zee News late

on Friday: "Our decision to seek a postponement of the elections was based on a demand from all political parties."

"The people of Nepal want democracy and I feel they won't be happy with this decision," he said. "We will call a meeting of all political parties to discuss our future moves."

Nepal's political parties slammed the king's sacking of Deuba as unconstitutional and called emergency meetings to discuss the move. The centrist Nepali Congress Party, from which Deuba

power. The main opposition Communist Unified Marxist Leninist (UML) Party also had a meeting planned.

The king said he had assumed control of the country temporarily, but set no time frame for new elections. He said he had assumed executive power "for the time being" the first time since Nepal opted for parliamentary democracy in 1991.

Gyanendra also said he had abolished Deuba's council of ministers. The king said he was acting under a constitutional provision that allows him to intervene in the

event of constitutional difficulties. He said Deuba's bid to postpone elections had created an "uneasy situation and a constitutional problem". Gyanendra said the new interim government would be responsible for maintaining order and conducting elections.

He called on political parties to suggest people who were not contesting the elections to form an interim government. Deuba dissolved the Parliament in May, 18 months ahead of schedule after a row over an extension of emergency rule which gave soldiers sweeping powers to crush the rebels.



split in June in a row over extending emergency rule to crush a deadly Maoist revolt, was also due to meet to discuss King Gyanendra's move to fire Deuba, delay elections and assume executive

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# Parties seethe at Deuba ouster

SUDIPTA CHANDA  
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

KAKARVITTA (Eastern Nepal), Oct. 5. — The dismissal of the caretaker Nepalese government led by Mr Sher Bahadur Deuba by King Gyanendra yesterday has turned political activists in the Eastern Nepalese town of Kakarvitta, that borders West Bengal, "uneasy". Though common people may seem "unconcerned" at the development, the political circle has taken serious exception to it. "It is a constitutional crisis," said Mr Ram Chandra Upreti, senior leader of the Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxist Leninist.

"The constitution of our nation does not allow the King to take over executive powers. The move is bound to set a bad precedence," he said.

Leaders of the rest of the political parties who had elected representatives in the country's 205-seat Pratinidhi Sabha, are equally "disturbed" with the development.

The political circle is looking forward to the proposed all-party meet in Kathmandu scheduled for today. The King has assured to put up a new government within the next five days. But political leaders are sceptical.

"The issue could take a dangerous turn if the new gov-



A rally in support of King Gyanendra in Kathmandu on Saturday. — AFP

ernment is not in place within the next few days," is the collective opinion of the Nepali Congress, Rashtriya Prajatantra Party, Nepal Sadbhavna Party and Left organisations.

"We are waiting for our national leaders to send instructions," they all say. The political groups are apprehensive about the proposed elections.

"Deuba government had

proposed elections on 13 November but failed to live up to their promise, which ultimately brought down its downfall. Whether the King, or the new government he has assured to put up, can hold the polls in a reasonable time is what remains to be seen."

"The worrying factor is what happens if the King fails to set up a new government. The Nepalese want a multi-

party democracy and have decided to cast their votes despite the anti-election campaign by the Maoists."

Though the political circle is agog with speculation, the common man seemed more interested in planning the forthcoming festival days.

"We want the polls only to have stability in the country," said a transport operator. "But now we are looking forward to is the Pujas."

## 'It's unconstitutional'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

KATHMANDU, Oct. 5. — Hours after Nepal's King Gyanendra stunned the nation by dismissing him from the prime ministry, Mr Sher Bahadur Deuba today said his "surprise" ouster was "unconstitutional", as the Royal move triggered sharp reaction from political parties which termed it as "shocking". "I am surprised. As far as I have understood, the King cannot remove me as per the Constitution," Mr Deuba said.

Nepalese politics took a dramatic turn last night when the King in a televised address announced the sacking of Mr Deuba and dissolution of his Cabinet. Mr Deuba had asked the King to postpone the 13 November polls because of Maoist insurgency.

**India reaction:** India adopted a cautious approach on the political developments in Nepal and

hoped that the crisis would end soon, SNS adds from New Delhi. India hopes that the "present crisis will be resolved soon within the framework of constitutional processes, paving the way for elections at the earliest and installation of a democratically-elected government in the interest of peace, stability and development in Nepal," external affairs ministry spokesperson Ms Nirupama Rao told reporters.

She said it was unfortunate that elections in Nepal had to be put off. "The present crisis, the origins of which are well known has been developing over some time. Last week the Nepalese political parties came to the conclusion that elections could not be held in the present circumstances and would have to be deferred."



Mr Deuba speaks to supporters. — AFP

## Nepal King sacks Deuba, assumes

power 40-1  
5/10

**KATMANDU, (NEPAL), OCT. 4.** Nepal's King Gyanendra said on Friday he had fired the Prime Minister, Sher Bahadur Deuba, disbanded Deuba's Cabinet and temporarily assumed executive powers.

The announcement, made over state-run Radio Nepal, came a day after Deuba had asked the King — Nepal's constitutional figurehead — to postpone November's parliamentary elections by one year due to concerns about attacks by Maoist rebels. In his radio speech, the Nepalese king said he had dismissed Deuba and his cabinet for failing to hold elections on schedule.

This is the first time the king has fired an elected government and its leader since a multiparty political system replaced absolute monarchy in the Himalayan kingdom in 1990. The Prime Minister on Thursday had asked the king to postpone the election because of fears that Maoist rebels would cause violence during the polls. — AP

5 OCT 2002



Nepal king assumes executive powers 'for the time being'

# Deuba sacked, polls put off

**Kathmandu, Oct. 4** (Reuters): Nepal's King Gyanendra today sacked Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, abolished his council of ministers and indefinitely put off national elections that were set for November.

The king, in a nationally televised address, said he was assuming executive powers "for the time being".

He called on political parties to suggest people to form a new interim government to run the Himalayan country until elections were eventually held.

"We have released Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, who has been incapable to conduct elections as scheduled earlier, from his post," Gyanendra said in the local Nepali language. "The council of ministers has been abolished. The elections set for November 13 have been put

off." The king's move followed a recommendation by Deuba's Cabinet yesterday to delay elections by a year due to mounting Maoist violence that has killed more than 5,000 people, mostly guerrillas, in a six-year revolt. More than 3,000 people have been killed since peace talks broke down last November.

The Maoists have been waging an increasingly deadly battle to overthrow the constitutional monarchy and install a communist republic in Nepal.

Deuba dissolved the parliament in May and ordered elections for November, 18 months ahead of schedule, amid a row over the extension of a state of



King Gyanendra

emergency giving sweeping powers to soldiers to crush the revolt.

According to the Nepal Constitution, the king can intervene whenever there is a constitutional crisis in the country.

Gyanendra now has two options in front of him. He can either appoint a Prime Minister of a national government or recall the old parliament and ask it to elect a Prime Minister.

There are three possible candidates for the Prime Minister's post. From the democratic tradition the likely candidate is G. P. Koirala who does not get along with the king.

The other two candidates, Lo-

kendra Bahadur Chand and Surya Bahadur Thapa, are from the non-democratic tradition.

India has made it clear that it would not like to meddle in Nepal's internal affairs. However, it would prefer a Prime Minister from the democratic tradition.

Maoist rebels fighting for one-party communist rule in the world's only Hindu kingdom have said they would derail the elections and had announced a three-day nationwide shutdown during the first round of voting in November.

The Election Commission said last week voting would be held over six phases and two months so security forces could move across the mountainous country to protect voters and candidates.

# Deuba forms new party

29/9  
Press Trust of India

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KATHMANDU, Sept. 23. — Nepal's caretaker Prime Minister Mr Sher Bahadur Deuba today formed a new political party after a vertical split in the ruling National Congress over re-imposition of emergency in the country.

"The new party registered as Nepali Congress (Democratic) at the Election Commission five days ahead of the general election," home minister Mr Khum Bahadur Khadka said.

Mr Khadka, who is also the general secretary of the new party, said its election symbol will be the 'comb', though this has not yet been finalised by the commission.

The EC had earlier rejected its claim for a 'four-star' symbol saying it would remain with Nepali Congress (Koirala).

The new party will contest all the 205 seats for the forthcoming parliamentary polls scheduled for 13 November, Mr Khadka said.

The party is organising a two-day workers meet in from 30 September to chalk out the future strategy as well as to discuss the election manifesto.

About possible unity between the two factions of the Nepali Congress, Mr Khadka said: "There is no such possibility. I am not against party unity but it all depends on the move by both the sides. It is up to Mr Deuba and former premier Mr GP Koirala to decide on the matter".

29 559 2002

THE PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

# Deuba in the deep

5-6-79 But he asked for it

Acting Nepalese Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba finds himself in a hole of his own digging. With the three-member election commission proclaiming GP Koirala as the legitimate president of the ruling Nepali Congress, Deuba loyalists have been prevented from using the party symbol and flag in the 13 November snap poll. Deuba precipitated the issue in May when, unable to garner support from his parliamentarians for extension of the Emergency by another six months, he recommended that the King dissolve the house and call fresh elections without so much as consulting the party, for which he was suspended by Koirala for three years. Undeterred, a national convention called by Deuba supporters not only rescinded the suspension order but also elected him president of the NC, a move Koirala loyalists described as "illegal". However, the Supreme Court upholding the Prime Minister's prerogative to dissolve parliament came as a morale booster for him. The election commission verdict merely formalises the June split in the party. Since there is little likelihood of the two feuding groups sinking their differences for the sake of the country's welfare, Deuba and company may have to either float a new party or contest as Independents. And the odds point to the Opposition Communists coming to power in the mid-term poll.

The imposition of Emergency last November was justified to some extent because of the unchecked depredations by the Maoists. But support for the repressive measure is lacking since more than 2,500 have been killed in the past ten months and bloodshed continues. With the Emergency having lapsed, the Maoist leaders are reportedly ready for talks but the Deuba administration demands their surrender of arms as a precondition. Wiser counsel would suggest that brokering an immediate ceasefire is the more desirable alternative.

# Maoist army shatters calm by killing 49 policemen

*Handwritten: Nepal, 16*  
Kathmandu, Sept. 8 (Reuters): More than one thousand Maoist rebels, fighting to topple Nepal's constitutional monarchy, attacked a police post in the east of the country and killed 49 police officers, a government minister said today.

The rebels attacked the post with automatic rifles in Sindhuli district, 90 miles east of Kathmandu, late yesterday, officials said. There were 73 policemen at the post at the time.

"Forty nine police personnel were killed and two are still missing after the overnight gunbattle," said junior home minister Devendra Raj Kandel, on his return from the scene of the attack.

The raid, the latest in a wave of rebel attacks on government installations, is the deadliest since emergency rule, imposed in November and extended two times, ended on August 28.

A senior government offi-

cial said the government was considering reimposing emergency rule because of the attack. Emergency rule gives sweeping search and detention powers to soldiers to help them counter the rebels.

Kandel said that the policemen who were wounded in the more than five hours of battle had been airlifted and brought to a hospital in Kathmandu.

He said bodies of two Maoist rebels killed in the gunbattle

were also recovered from the scene. "The terrorists might have suffered more casualties as local villagers saw them carrying many dead or wounded while fleeing," Kandel said.

The communist rebels have been fighting to set up a one party communist republic in the world's only Hindu kingdom since 1996.

Inspired by the revolutionary ideas of the late Chinese communist leader Mao Zedong,

they have vowed to bring down what they say is a corrupt, feudalistic political system.

Kandel said the latest attack took place late yesterday when the rebels suddenly emerged from the forests and sprayed bullets on the policemen at the security post.

The rebels used automatic rifles in the fighting while the police had only old and outdated weapons, he added.

"Some policemen who had

surrendered after they had exhausted their ammunition were shot dead by the guerrillas," he said.

Communication links which had broken down after the gunbattle had been restored after reinforcements reached the site and cleared road blocks put up by the rebels along the approach to the police post, officials said. Remote police posts in the Himalayan foothills have been a favourite target for the insur-

gents, particularly in the west of the country, but they have also stepped up raids in the east since late last year.

The government imposed emergency rule after the rebels walked out of talks in November and launched a series of bloody raids. Key political parties are opposed to any extension of the emergency in the run-up to parliamentary elections set to begin on November 13.

# Options open in Nepal wooing game

PRANAY SHARMA

**New Delhi, Aug. 16:** India has invited Madhav Nepal, the leader of the Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist-Leninist), for high-level discussions in what appears to be New Delhi's attempts to position itself with emerging forces in the Himalayan kingdom. Madhav is widely believed to be the next Prime Minister if his party emerges as the single largest entity in Parliament after the November general elections.

But India is simultaneously not foreclosing its options with other political figures in Nepal. Foreign minister Yashwant Sinha will be leaving for Kathmandu next week to hold high-level discussions with the Nepalese leadership, during which he will meet with King Gyanendra, Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, Nepali Congress leader Girija Prasad Koirala and senior leaders of other major political parties.

Sinha will be leaving for Kathmandu to participate in the two-day Saarc foreign minister's meeting beginning on August 21. He will stay on till August 23 for a series of bilateral meetings with the Nepalese leadership before leaving for Dhaka the next day for a similar bilateral exercise with the Bangladesh National Party of Begum Khaleda Zia.

Over the past two days, Madhav has met deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani, foreign minister Yashwant Sinha, Congress president Sonia Gandhi and other senior leaders. There is a strong possibility that Madhav's party might emerge as the single largest party in the Nepalese parliament with serious differences surfacing in the ruling Nepali Congress between Deuba and Koirala. Madhav would then be the most obvious

choice for Prime Minister.

During his talks with the Indian leadership, Madhav was assured that India did not have any favourites in Kathmandu and would accord the same cordiality to whichever party came to power. This would be Sinha's underlying message when he meets senior Nepalese leaders in Kathmandu.

The foreign minister's visit is part of his exercise to build strong relations with India's immediate neighbours. Sinha will clearly signal that New Delhi wants continuity in its relationship with Kathmandu, with special emphasis on helping Nepal combat the Maoist rebellion.

India is concerned about the Maoist violence in Nepal and the consequent political instability. Over the past two years, both sides have shown greater sensitivity to each other's concerns and have tried to help solve bilateral problems.

There has been no major violence in Nepal since May and its army seems to have finally made a dent in Maoist strongholds. The Nepalese intelligentsia's disenchantment with the Maoists has also contributed to isolating the rebels.

At the political level, the cracks in the ruling Nepali Congress is cause for concern for India that has always believed Nepal's stability depended on the two pillars of constitutional monarchy and multiparty democracy. The Nepalese economy, which had been growing at a steady five per cent rate till a few years, has slumped to nearly one per cent in the past few months. The reasons are a considerable drop in tourist traffic and the adverse impact of the US economic slowdown on Nepal's exports.

However, tourist traffic from India has shown a 30 per cent increase in the same period.

17 AUG 2002

THE TELEGRAPH

# BHUTAN'S NEIGHBOURS

## Cooperation With India, Boundary Dispute With China

By PARMANAND

*Himalayas  
Bhutan*

**B**hutan has been in the news because of some significant developments in its relations with the two Asian giants, India and the People's Republic of China. Maintaining its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity and assuming a genuine international status, while being sandwiched between two powerful Asian states, has been a proof of diplomatic skill in social, political and economic affairs.

While Bhutan-India ties are based on the Treaty of Friendship on 8 August 1949 in Darjeeling, relations between the two South Asian states have in fact transcended the treaty arrangements, thanks to the understanding between the two. Neither India nor Bhutan appears to be taking the other for granted; both appear to be quite conscious of each other's needs.

### Problems

It was not for nothing that India's external affairs minister Mr Yashwant Sinha chose Bhutan as the third country to visit in his new capacity — almost immediately after visiting Sri Lanka and Maldives. The three-day visit to Thimphu will go a long way in strengthening the bilateral ties. It also helped in clarifying to each other various problems that confront both. Quite significantly, Sinha had a two-hour audience with His Majesty King Jigme Singye Wangchuck. Though the King has begun giving up more and more of his powers to ministers and officials — in fact, giving up his role as the head of government — in 1998, his influence has not declined.

King Jigme, 46, has retained his interest in the kingdom's foreign affairs. He has been very careful, consistent and meticulous about maintaining cordial, constructive and fruitful relation with India ever since he ascended the throne in 1972 at the age of 16. Not that misunderstanding never occurred but they have a travelled long distance in strengthening friendship, and Bhutan is convinced of beneficial economic ties with India.

The Indian minister also chose to meet Lyonpo Khandu Wangchuck, Prime Minister of Bhutan, Lyonpo Jigmi Y Thinley, foreign minister and Lyonpo Yeshey Zimba, finance minister. Quite naturally, the problem of Indian terrorists' camps in Bhutan figured in the talks. The United Liberation Front of Asom has been maintaining its camps in the kingdom for quite some time. Though the ULFA entered into an agreement with the Bhutanese home minister, Lyonpo Thinley Gyamtsho, on dismantling its camps, only four of the nine camps have reportedly been dismantled. Their presence is seen as a

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threat to both countries. Significantly, the just concluded 80th session of the kingdom's unicameral legislature Tshogdu (National Assembly) has requested the Royal Bhutanese government to hold one more round of talks with the ULFA to ensure their exit from the kingdom.

The Chukha Hydroelectric Project with a capacity of 365 MW is a shining example of Bhutan-India cooperation. Besides, the 60 MW Kurichu Project has just been completed. And the 1020 MW Thala Hydropower Project is nearing completion. In fact, many feel that this model of hydropower economic cooperation should be adopted by Nepal. The

ties with China, but of late various interactions between them have increased. Ironically, though, the increase in interactions, to a very great extent, is due to the ongoing border-demarkation talks, of which 15 rounds have taken place. And the talks do not appear to have been beneficial to Bhutan so far. Bhutan and China signed an "agreement on maintenance of peace and tranquillity in Bhutan-China border areas" during the 12th round of bilateral talks in Beijing on 8 December 1998.

In Article I of this agreement, China "reiterates its position to fully respect the independence, sovereignty and territorial



Indo-Nepal Mahakali Treaty signed in 1996 has not moved in a desirable way. Sinha will be visiting Nepal soon.

Significantly, India has gifted to Bhutan a cement plant, called the Penden Cement Authority, located at Pugli in the Samtse district. The plant has increased its capacity tremendously. India's help in various plans — Bhutan has by now completed eight five-year plans and is in the midst of its ninth five-year plan — is well appreciated by the Bhutanese.

### Diplomatic ties

During the Sinha visit, the two sides discussed the international war against terror, issues of poverty alleviation and development. India's worries about Pak-sponsored cross-border terrorism and the overall situation in the region also figured in the talks Sinha had with King Jigme, the Bhutanese foreign minister and other leaders and officials.

The Indian foreign minister's Bhutan visit will be followed by visits of other leaders to each other's countries.

Bhutan does not have any diplomatic

concern over the encroachment into Bhutanese pasture land by herdsmen from Tibet and Tawang. The Chimis urged the Royal government to work towards an early resolution of the border issue, for Bhutan could not afford to lose valuable pasture land and resources, they stressed. In fact, members complained about grazing of yaks by Tibetan across the border, destruction of border pillars by the people of Tawang, and looting of valuable hardwood timber. Some members, indeed, feared the possibility of "illegal constructions" by the Tibetans inside Bhutan.

Foreign minister Lyonpo Jigmi Thinley briefed the National Assembly on the progress of the Bhutan-China border talks. He reminded the Tshogdu that the boundary discussions were important for a small country surrounded by two large neighbours. He stressed that the talks between Bhutan and China thus far had been held in a "frank and friendly" atmosphere. With the 18th round of talks slated to be held in October in Beijing, the Lyonpo said the talks had always been held according to the Tshogdu's directives.

### Disputes

Thinley said that the Chinese claimed to have documentary evidence on the ownership of the disputed tracts of land. When Bhutan asked the Chinese to be generous, they said that as a nation which shared its borders with many countries, they could not afford to be generous with one particular neighbour. The foreign minister also stated that the Chinese government had identified three objectives: to understand each other's interests and come to a decision that would best benefit both countries; to trust each other and; to seek solutions that had long-term benefits.

Intervening in the debate, His Majesty King Jigme Singye Wangchuck informed the members that the issue of the mule track and house construction by the Tibetans and Chinese people in Pasamlum, which took place in 1999, had been solved. There has been no further activities in the area since then.

The King explained that there were basically four disputed areas between Bhutan and China. Starting from Doklam in the west the border goes along the ridges from Gamothen to Batangla, Sinchela, and down to the Amó Chhu. The disputed area in Doklam covered 89 square kilometres.

Overall, the prospects of an early resolution of the boundary demarcation problem do not appear bright. Bhutan has learnt to live with the problem. Some analysts feel that unless Bhutan agrees to establish diplomatic ties with China, the problem will not be solved. But China's relations with other neighbours do not prove that either, rhetoric notwithstanding.

# ~~Ducking democracy~~

~~8/2~~ Nepal headed from bad to worse ~~STAN~~  
~~218~~

The Nepal Supreme Court verdict upholding the dissolution of Parliament in May is a morale booster for caretaker Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba. What could possibly have influenced the 11-member jury is the present fluid political situation and realisation that a negative decision could throw the country into a deeper crisis. The ruling, however, conforms to the 1994 apex court arguments that a majority government has the prerogative to dissolve Parliament if no other party is capable of forming an alternative government. Deuba recommended dissolution and a snap poll after he failed to garner the required support to extend Emergency rule till November — for which he was expelled from the Nepali Congress for three years. The party has already split with Deuba supporters electing him president. The rival groups are unlikely to sink their differences and the question is which of the two will contest the mid-term poll in November as the real NC.

Deuba's ego may have been salvaged but the country will have to pay dearly since the elections are being held 18 months before schedule. That a poor country like Nepal has already held two general elections and a mid-term poll in less than 12 years is a telling commentary on the working of multi-party democracy. Frequent changes in government have put on hold any meaningful development plans and there is no guarantee the ensuing poll will clear the mess. The Maoists who are fighting for a republic and are said to be running a parallel administration in most of the 75 districts will endeavour to make polling anything but peaceful. More's the pity then, because Nepal will slide from bad to worse.

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Ruling clears way for elections

# Nepal court backs Deuba

**GOPAL SHARMA**

**Kathmandu, Aug. 6** (Reuters): Nepal's Supreme Court rejected today a clutch of petitions seeking to reinstate the Himalayan kingdom's parliament in a ruling that cleared the way for fresh elections later this year.

The country's parliament was dissolved last May and early elections ordered after Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba failed to win the support of the ruling Nepali Congress party to extend emergency rule to battle an increasingly violent Maoist revolt.

Elections will be held on November 13, a year-and-a-half ahead of schedule. King Gyanendra has asked Deuba to remain as caretaker Prime Minister until the vote is held.

The court ruling was in response to a string of writs filed by more than 60 former deputies who said Deuba's move to dissolve parliament while the country was under emergency rule was unconstitutional.

"The Prime Minister has the prerogative to dissolve the House of Representatives," said Keshav Prasad Upadhyaya, chief justice of Nepal in his judgment.

"The constitution does not prevent the Prime Minister from dissolving the House of Representatives even during this state



**Sher Bahadur Deuba**

of emergency." Nepal has had a string of revolving-door governments as new coalitions have formed.

This election will be the fourth since 1991 in a country where Maoists rebels are fighting to replace the constitutional monarchy with a one-party Communist republic.

Reinstatement of the 205-member parliament would have meant fresh political instability, since the ruling party lost its majority after it split in the row over the dissolution.

1 7 2002



# India urges Bhutan to broker truce

OUR CORRESPONDENT

Guwahati, Aug. 5: India today requested its tiny neighbour Bhutan to undertake the gargantuan task of convincing leaders of the Ulfa and the National Democratic Front of Boroland, which still have camps in the Himalayan kingdom, to come to the negotiation table.

Highly-placed sources quoted external affairs minister Yashwant Sinha as saying at a meeting with King Jigme Singye Wangchuk in Thimphu that Bhutan should maintain "pressure" on the outlawed militant outfits and, at the same time, convince their leaders to sit for talks with Delhi.

Sinha's visit to the Himalayan kingdom, his first outside the country since being given the external affairs portfolio, ends tomorrow.

The Bhutan Assembly had recently requested the king to convene one more round of talks with the Ulfa leadership and ask them to "peacefully" leave the kingdom. In the event of the meeting ending in a stalemate, the assembly recommended a military operation to evict the militants.

Declaring that Bhutan would not allow its territory to be misused against India, the king assured Sinha of steps to close down more Ulfa and NDFB camps in the jungles bordering Assam.

"Both sides agreed to constantly remain in touch with a view to prevent militants of the

Northeast from operating from camps in Bhutan," an intelligence source said, quoting a report received from the external affairs ministry.

In June 2001, the Ulfa had assured the Bhutanese government that it would close down four of its camps by the end of the year. The outfit was supposed to hold another round of discussions later on the issue of closing down the remaining hideouts.

Intelligence sources said a couple of developments in the recent past had a bearing on Sinha's visit to the Himalayan kingdom.

During the last session of the National Assembly, Bhutan's legislators had discussed the kingdom's militancy-related problems over two days. They even debated whether the country should seek China's help in driving out militants of the Ulfa, the NDFB and the Kamtapur Liberation Organisation.

## Orissa Cabinet

The 29-month-old Naveen Patnaik ministry in Orissa will be expanded tomorrow, official sources said here today. This would be the first expansion since Patnaik assumed charge in March 2000, heading a 25-member BJD-BJP coalition ministry, reports PTI.

Subsequently, the strength of the ministry had come down to 21 following dismissal of three ministers — two from Patnaik's own party and one from the BJP. One Biju Janata Dal minister had passed away recently.

# Nepal Adrift

## Constitutional Crisis Looms Large

By Dileep Padgaonkar

**Kathmandu:** With every passing day, Nepal inches closer to the edge of an abyss. Though the security situation has improved slightly, it continues to be bleak. A third of the country is under the control of the Maoist insurgents. Elsewhere they are capable of striking at will. A few months ago the army was brought in to crush them. It was expected to finish the task within a few weeks. This has turned out to be a vain hope. The Maoists have attacked security forces time and again to expose their vulnerability.

Eventually the forces will get the better of them. Part of the reason for this optimism is the change in public perceptions. Until a year ago, large sections of the Kathmandu elite, disgusted with corrupt and ineffective politicians and bureaucrats, appeared to see the Maoists in a favourable light. But today they are perceived to be a bunch of murderous criminals who are hell-bent, as one analyst put it, on dragging the kingdom back to 'hour zero'.

Optimism is also in order since the government's drive against the terrorists has received strong support from the international community. After 9/11, help began to flow from the United States, Britain and the European Union. Nepal's giant neighbours, India and China, sided with the government as well. India, aware of the ramifications of the insurgency on its side of the porous border, has offered military equipment and training. In response to Kathmandu's request, it has rounded up Nepali citizens who have allegedly been in cahoots with the terrorists and sent them back home. More assistance along these and other lines is on the cards.

Meanwhile, at the very start of king Gyanendra's official visit to China, the Chinese leadership reiterated its utter contempt for the anti-state activities of these "revolutionaries" who have usurped the name of chairman Mao Zedong. Equally significant, unlike in the past, Beijing has not made a single adverse remark about the growing Indo-Nepal cooperation to combat the insurgents. The Maoists have thus been pushed on the defensive.

But their capacity for mischief must not be underrated. They can be trusted to exploit the divisions within the country's political establishment. Prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuba's decision to extend the state of emergency by another three months — taken on the basis of an assessment provided by the security forces — wasn't acceptable to party president Girija Prasad Koirala. He preferred a dialogue with the Maoists, something that he had opposed when the suggestion had earlier been mooted by Mr Deuba. The prime minister then went ahead to dissolve parliament and announced fresh

elections for November.

This triggered a process of expulsions and counter-expulsions. The fate of the NC is now sealed. Given its dismal performance in office, it would have suffered heavy reverses in an election even if it had remained in one piece. A split NC will lead to the ruination of both factions. The beneficiary can only be the official Communist Party. This prospect is alarming for with the party in power it will become even more difficult for Nepal to attract sorely needed foreign investment. The latest economic survey shows that at 0.8 per cent, the rate of growth has been the lowest in 18 years. Per capita income has declined from \$240 to \$224 within a single fiscal year.

But between now and November the political landscape could change quite beyond recognition. The election commission is biding its time to decide which faction of the NC will inherit the name, flag and symbol of the party. Its decision is bound to alter the equation of forces between Mr Deuba and Mr Koirala. Meanwhile, the supreme court is deliberating on petitions seeking the reinstatement of parliament. Should that happen, the equation of forces will also undergo a change, to Mr Deuba's detriment.

The key question though is whether it would be possible to hold free and fair elections at all. Few voters are likely to turn up at the polling booths in districts controlled by the Maoists. They have threatened to abduct the first 40 voters who line up at the booths anywhere in the country. Moreover, it is the army

which will have to ensure security at the polling stations. The losers are certain to hurl the charge of rigging, a charge that is bound to spread disaffection across the ranks of the armed forces.

But if the elections are not held on schedule, Nepal will face an unprecedented constitutional crisis. The 1990 constitution does not contain a provision to postpone the polls. Thus far king Gyanendra has acted strictly within the ambit of his responsibilities as a constitutional monarch. But he will be constrained to ensure the continuation of the state through other means in case the elections do not take place in November.

Right now no political party is prepared, at least for the record, to entertain that prospect. But sooner rather than later the parties must begin to imagine an interim arrangement which can implement a precise agenda: To back the army's drive against the Maoist insurgency and remove the infirmities in the present constitution and thus prepare the grounds to hold elections in an atmosphere free of fear and intimidation as swiftly as possible. This is admittedly a tall order. But the alternative would be Nepal's descent into either anarchy or authoritarianism or, worse still, into both.

### IN BRIEF

- The Maoists are losing support but their capacity for mischief cannot be underrated
- Despite political divisions, parties must prepare the grounds for free elections

# Bodo rebels mow down 9 Adivasis

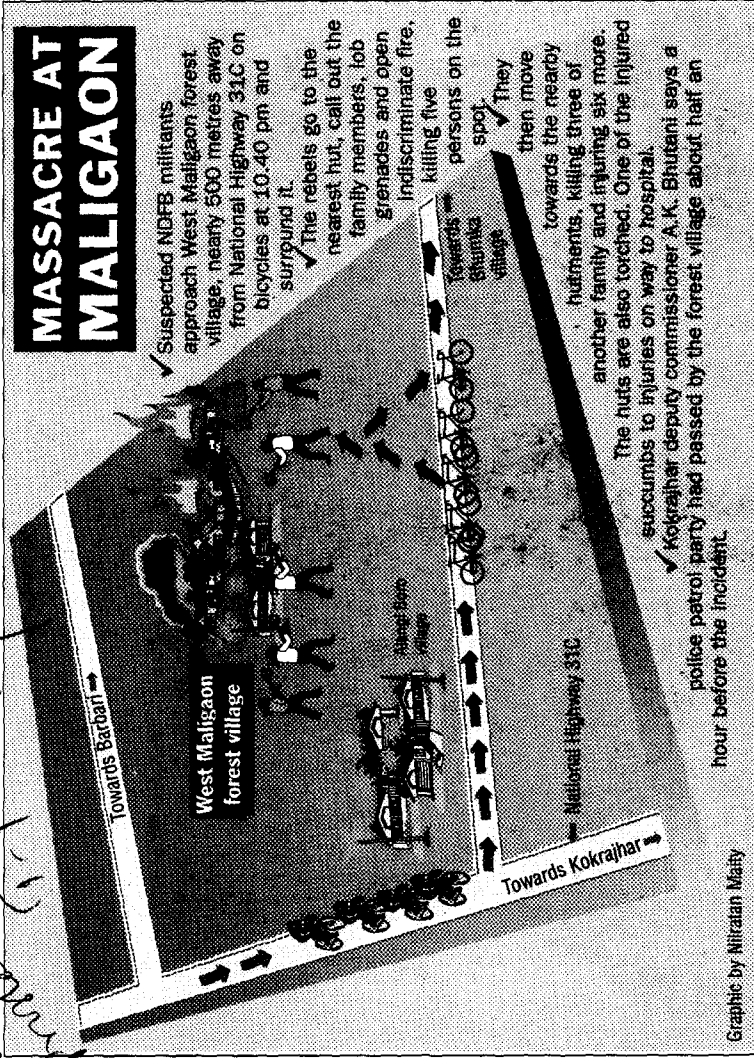
FROM P. BRAHMA  
CHOUDHURY

West Maligaon (Kokrajhar), July 15: In a replay of the violence that Assam's Bodo-dominated belt has become familiar with, militants of the National Democratic Front of Boroland (NDFB) last night killed nine Adivasis and injured five in this tiny forest village, about 20 km from Kokrajhar town.

The rebels set fire to several huts at the village after indiscriminately firing on the villagers. Eight persons were killed on the spot, while one succumbed to injuries on the way to hospital. The victims include a seven-year-old girl and five women. The injured are undergoing treatment at Kokrajhar civil hospital.

Kokrajhar deputy commissioner A.K. Bhutani told The Telegraph at the site of the massacre that the militants, in casual attire, came to the village at around 10.40 pm and called the villagers out of their homes. "They first gunned down four of a family and set fire to their house. The militants then went to nearby huts and opened fire indiscriminately, killing four more persons and injuring six. One of the injured died on way to hospital," he said.

The ethnic riots in 1996 had claimed over 1,000 lives and left most Adivasi villagers homeless.



highway. Bhutani said a police patrol had passed by about half-an-hour before the militants struck.

Director-general of police Hare Krishna Deka has been camping in Kokrajhar town to oversee the combing operations launched by the police following the carnage.

Security agencies see the attack as an attempt by the NDFB to sabotage the state government's rehabilitation programme for the 1.8 lakh victims of the 1996 ethnic riots between the Bodos and the Adivasis. The programme is scheduled to get under way on Wednesday.

Chief minister Tarun Gogoi today asked state relief and rehabilitation minister Mithius Tudu and ministers of state Rockybul Hussain and Etuwa Munda to visit West Maligaon tomorrow.

Suspected NDFB militants had abducted three members of a Guwahati-based consultancy firm from near Gelephu, a border town of Bhutan, on July 10. Security forces have yet to find any clue to their whereabouts. Ripan Musahari, one of the 11 people detained for interrogation, died in police custody late on Saturday night.

His family members have accused the police of torturing him to death. The police have, however, attributed Musahari's death to "poor health".

identified as Fulmoni Kisku (25), Fatra Hasda (32), Malbo Hembram (30), Fulmoni Hasda (40), Rajde Murmoo (39), Rupu Hasda (45), Suraj Murmoo (19), Soniram Hasda (23) and Niko Hasda (7).

The village is located on the Alangi-Bhumka road and just 500 meters from the national

militants came to the village on bicycles. "They left their cycles on the approach road and mounted the attack. Our huts caught fire when they lobbed grenades." The deputy commissioner, however, said that no physical evidence of grenade explosions had been found.

The slain villagers have been

Some of these Adivasis had returned to this "recognised forest village" two years back after staying in makeshift camps at Bismuri under Kokrajhar police station for over four years. There are 100-odd huts in the village.

Babul Marandi, one of those who were injured in the NDFB attack last night, said that the

# Bhutan looks to China for flushout

FROM OUR  
CORRESPONDENT

Guwahati, July 5: In a move certain to raise the hackles of New Delhi, Bhutan's elected representatives are debating whether the Himalayan kingdom should seek China's help in driving out militants of the Ulfa, the National Democratic Front of Boroland (NDFB) and the Kamtapur Liberation Organisation (KLO) from its territory.

Participating in a marathon debate on the issue, a section of members of the National Assembly said considering the gravity of the threat to the country's security, Bhutan might have to "look for support in the north".

The proceedings of the two-day Assembly debate, which ended yesterday, were reported in the Internet edition of the kingdom's official newspaper.

*Kuensel*. If we cannot depend on the friend in the south, it may be necessary to also look for support in the north," one of the *chimis* (members of the National Assembly) said without directly naming China.

Though the suggestion did not find mention in the three resolutions adopted at the end of the debate, it is bound to have an impact on New Delhi's strategy to tackle militants operating from Bhutan.

During the debate, *chimis* of three provinces — Thimphu, Chukha and Haa — hinted that India could be complicating matters for Bhutan. "The Ulfa first infiltrated Bhutan. Then it was the Bodos. Now it is the KLO. Next year, it might be another group. It has raised suspicion (of more trouble) in our people," *Kuensel* quoted the member from Chukha as saying.

4 JUL 2002

# Blast rocks Nepal PM's party office

REUTERS

KATHMANDU, JULY 5

A BOMB blast rocked the new political party office of Nepali Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba in the capital, Kathmandu, on Friday, but there were no serious injuries, police said.

"Ten people have received minor injuries. No one has died," a police official said, adding that no group had claimed responsibility.

The capital has suffered a string of bombings this year blamed on Maoist rebels waging a violent campaign to topple the monarchy and establish a one-party communist republic. The bomb went off in an office belonging to a splinter faction of the ruling Nepali Congress party in a residential area of Kathmandu.

"A bomb was planted on the ground floor in a hall and has damaged the building," junior Home Minister Devendra Raj Kandel said. The office was set



A policeman inspects the damage after the blast on Friday. Reuters

up by Deuba who is locked in a bitter feud with his predecessor, Girija Prasad Koirala, that has split the Nepali Congress. Deuba was not in the office when the blast took place.

Deuba disbanded Parliament in May and called elections after some party members refused to support a move to extend emergency rule in the country.

6 JUL 2002

The Bhutan King's renunciation of powers is based on the trust he enjoys from the people and the march towards democracy and decentralisation of political powers since the early fifties

# DEMOCRATISED MONARCHY

ON 2 June Bhutan, locally known as Druk-yul, celebrated the 28th anniversary of the coronation of His Majesty Druk Gyalpo Jigme Singye Wangchuck. The fourth Wangchuck King of Bhutan, he has not only remained on the throne for the longest period, but has also ensured tremendous progress in every sphere. Indeed, in 1998, he abandoned his position of the head of government.

And yet because of the role played by him that the Bhutanese people look to him for leadership and enlightenment. On his part, the 46-year-old monarch maintains a low profile but watches things as minutely as possible. He insists that political changes and economic development in Bhutan are a continuous process. Not less significantly, the King's renunciation of his powers, one after another, is not because of any pressure within or without the political system, but because of the growing trust in his people.

None of the dissenting groups based in Nepal — and at times visible in India — has ever demanded the abolition of monarchy, as is being done today by the Maoists in Nepal. This is due mainly to balanced economic development. It is a different matter that politicised ethnicity is playing some role in Bhutan too.

On 10 June 1998 King Jigme Singye Wangchuck issued to the Speaker of the Tshogdu (unicameral National Assembly) an unprecedented Kasho (Royal edict) to ensure that the legislature elected the members of the Council of Ministers (Lhengyel Shungtshog). The 76th session of the Tshogdu was to commence soon and the Druk Gyalpo wanted that very session to elect various Lyonpos (ministers). Quite expectedly, there was a great deal of debate on the King's Kasho because it, inter alia, had made clear that henceforth the King would not chair that body's meetings. But

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the King's determination not to yield finally made the members veer round to his wish.

With great hesitation, the Tshogdu, in July 1998, elected six ministers, who had earlier been functioning as secretaries in various departments of the Royal Bhutanese Government. Based, to a great extent, on the pattern of the Swiss political system, the council of ministers' chairmanship has been rotating annually. The cri-

**Bhutan's ties with India are an example of how the big and the small can be of great use to each other**

terion of precedence is the votes polled by various Lyonpos. So far four Lyonpos — Jigmi Yozer Thinley, Sangay Ngedup, Yeshey Zimba and Khandu Wangchuk — have presided over the council's meetings, and the fifth — Kinzang Dorji — will be taking over as the chairman soon. The sixth — Thinley Gyamtsho, home minister — may not get the opportunity to preside over the body, for the Lyonpos were elected for five years only.

The Thrizin or the chairman is also referred to as the kingdom's Prime Minister. The office of the Prime Minister had existed in the form of "Lonchen" and two Dorji brothers — Jigmie Dorji (1958-64) and Lhendup Dorji (1964-65) who were brothers-in-law of King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck — had occupied that post. King Jigme Singye Wangchuck insists that the arrangement was only symbolic and cosmetic, whereas under the present dispensation the King keeps completely aloof from the affairs of the council of ministers.

King Jigme Singye Wangchuck not only preaches but always tries to ensure the practice of decentralisation of political and decision-making powers in the king-

dom. The King stresses: "It made me happy and proud that Bhutan was finally ready for democratic rule which had been initiated with the establishment of district development committees in 1981, and village development committees in 1991". Clarifying his view on Monarchy, he says: "I have always believed that monarchy

is not the best form of government for it depends entirely on the ability and qualities of one individual by virtue of birth rather than merit".

True, Bhutan has not held any party-based or for that matter universal adult franchise-based elections so far, but its march towards democracy and decentralisation has not been in doubt since the early 50s. The number of the elected officials in the kingdom is increasing. In neighbouring Nepal, several questions are surfacing about the King's proactive role in the political system — not so in Bhutan.

Like Britain, New Zealand, Israel, Oman and Saudi Arabia, Bhutan has no codified constitution. But it is on the way to abandoning this distinction. A 39-member Constitution Drafting Committee, under the chief justice of the Supreme Court, Dasho Sonam Tobgye, has almost completed the first draft of the Constitution — which is to be placed before the forthcoming 80th session of the Tshogdu.

Bhutan has made great economic strides over the years through the planning system. It has quite successfully completed eight five-

year plans and is soon going to launch the Ninth Five-Year Plan (2002-07). Participation in the decision-making process is highly valued and one member from every household is able to ventilate the family's aspirations at the block level.

The Kingdom's per capita income has reached \$645 — probably highest in the

source, the kingdom always tries to ensure the protection of its forest cover. The contribution of the Chhukha Hydro Power Corporation in generating power and very significantly enriching the kingdom's economy is immense. It is a grand example of cooperation between a small (Bhutan) and a giant (India) neighbour to their mutual benefit.

Bhutan is giving a good account of itself on the external affairs front. True, the refugees' problem in Nepal's camps remains to be resolved but Nepal's political instability is very largely responsible. In any case, the verification exercise of the inhabitants of one camp has been completed, without any dispute between Bhutan and Nepal.

Despite 15 rounds of boundary talks with the People's Republic of China since 1984, Bhutan has not been able to resolve the border demarcation problem but the talks have gone on. China tries to put pressure on Bhutan to establish diplomatic ties; the latter has been trying to evade it. Amidst all this, the two countries signed in Beijing on 8 December 1998 an agreement on "Maintenance of Peace and Tranquillity in Bhutan-China Border Areas".

Based on mutual trust and economic cooperation Bhutan's ties with India are an example of how the big and the small can be of great use to each other. Bhutan's increasing interactions with China have not disturbed India. Bhutan, like India's other neighbours, have never played the China card. On its part, India has always been careful about the small country's sensitivity. Lyonpo Dago Tshering, Bhutan's Ambassador to India, rightly says that strengthening ties between Bhutan and India make other South Asian states think about the importance of bilateral ties. One reason for King Jigme Singye Wangchuck having not paid a state visit to India for such a long time is that there is no problem between the two South Asian states today.



# Everyone begins to look like a Maoist

FROM DEEPAK THAPA

Kathmandu, June 25: Where the motor road ends at Sulichaur, a

foot-trail strikes out northward along the Lungri Khola.



This path is a lifeline for the upper parts of Rolpa and Rukum districts — names that have become synonymous with the Maoists' People's Liberation Army.

But for all its significance as a major supply route, there is hardly anybody walking on the road. The only indication of life is a mule train tethered outside the town limits.

The villages along the way seem equally deserted though the fields are well cultivated. The few people one sees working in the fields are well past their prime while the houses are tended by children.

The absence of the young is very striking in Rolpa. The youths, people say, have all left to escape forced enrollment into the Maoist army and also because of regular harassment from security forces.

Thus, one cannot help but suspect that the few able-bodied young men and women striding

along could be Maoist fighters on their way home or their unit.

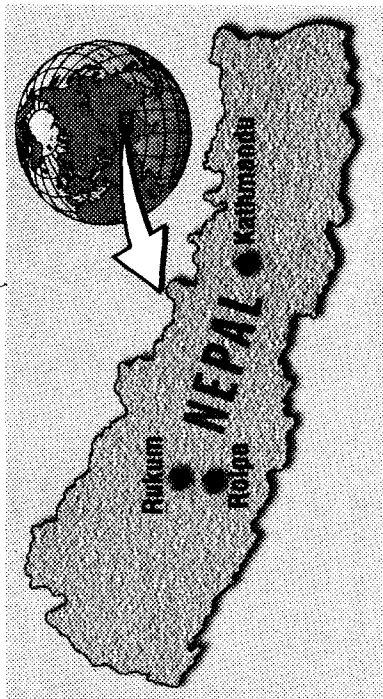
One also begins to get an idea why there are reports of so many innocent people getting killed by the security forces. In the classic guerilla setting that Rolpa is, every villager begins to look like a Maoist.

Walking throughout the day, there is only one cheerful-looking young man we come across. He has time to pause and ask where we are from. His handshake is firm — we've been told this is a trademark Maoist clasp. But his Bahun (hill Brahmin) features show he is an outsider in this region that is predominantly Magar, the largest Tibetan-Burman ethnic group in Nepal. The man is a teacher on his way to the district headquarters.

It is a pleasant surprise to learn that despite the emergency and the fighting that flares up now and then, schools are still running. In fact, apart from a rather irregular postal service, these schools are the state's only link to the villages nestled deep inside Maoist territory.

We spend the night with schoolteachers in Pobang village, Gam, two valleys further to the west.

Gam is the site where the army suffered a major setback in



Soon a crowd has gathered around us and people begin to talk. There has been no government for the past three years, they rue. The Maoists carry out all administrative work such as collection of land revenue and land transfers.

A local shopkeeper is back after a three-year stint in Malaysia as an electrician. Wrong timing to open a shop, he agrees — he has nothing much to sell.

We are lucky to find a pensioner from the irrigation department of Himachal Pradesh who is willing to talk. Kumbha Singh Pun tells us how development was slowly reaching the remote parts of Rolpa, but everything has now come to a halt.

Pun recalls how the distance he had to walk to go to India had

gradually shortened over time as the roads penetrated deeper into the hills.

He also tells us that the talks between the government and the Maoist leaders last year had raised a lot of hopes.

The Maoists went around assuring people that the worst was over. But after the resumption of hostilities in November, the hopes died out.

The people have no illusions about the elections scheduled for November. It might be held in Libang, but in villages, people will be too scared of the Maoists to vote. Unless, of course, the army comes out and forces people into the booths.

However, the people choose to remain silent on the Maoists. Not much is said against them. Just a hint here and there, but it is clear they are holding back and we do not press them. The general consensus is that no matter who gains ascendancy in the fighting, the talks should bring peace.

When the conversation is over, the people strain their ears to catch the sound of gunfire beyond the high mountain that towers over us.

We can't hear a thing, just as in Kathmandu we could not hear the cries of desperation ringing through these beautiful mountains of Rolpa.

# CRISIS IN NEPAL

## A Period Of Uncertainty

By PARMANAND

Nepal is moving fast in the direction of political uncertainty and complexity. The more the situation appears to be easing, the more complicated it becomes. A state of emergency is in place, albeit without any parliamentary approval. The Pratinidhi Sabha stands dissolved, and slated to go to the polls on 13 November. But the question is, will the kingdom go to the polls 18 months ahead of the scheduled date — or will the Pratinidhi Sabha be revived by the Supreme Court?

In any case, on 6 June the Supreme Court of the Himalayan kingdom issued a show-cause notice to the government on petitions challenging the dissolution of the Pratinidhi Sabha and the call for mid-term polls by Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba. The apex court has ordered the government to furnish the replies through the Attorney General's Office on separate pleas filed by 56 Nepali Congress MPs, five of the small Left parties and a lawyer on 5 June. Three lawyers had filed a petition on 24 May. All the petitions urge the Supreme Court to reinstate the House with a view to forming an alternative government.

### Before its term

All eyes are now focused on the Supreme Court. This is not the first time the Nepali Pratinidhi Sabha has been dissolved before the completion of its full term. On 11 July 1994, the then constitutional monarch, King Birendra Bir Bikram Shahdeva, had dissolved the lower house on the recommendation of the then Prime Minister, Girija Prasad Koirala. The House would have normally existed till May 1996.

On 13 June 1996, King Birendra dissolved the Pratinidhi Sabha on the recommendation of the then Prime Minister, Manmohan Adhikari, who was heading a minority ministry. The House should have normally continued to be in existence till November 1999. On 26 July 1994, four persons filed a writ petition in the Supreme Court challenging the dissolution of the House and requesting for its reinstatement. After several hearings, the Supreme Court rejected the writ petition and upheld the dissolution.

On 19 June 1995, Lokendra Bahadur Chand, leader of the Rashtriya Prajatantra Party and a former Prime Minister, filed a writ petition in the Supreme Court praying that the recommendation of the Prime Minister, Manmohan Adhikari, for the dissolution of the Pratinidhi Sabha be invalidated on the ground that it violated the spirit and

ideals of the 1990 Constitution. On 20 June 1995, President of the Nepal Sadbhavana Party, Gajendra Narayan Singh, filed an identical petition. Indeed, in all, seven petitions came to be filed for the same purpose. On 16 July, the Supreme Court began hearing on the seven petitions. On 28 August 1995, the 11-member special bench by a majority of 8-3 declared the dissolution

The latest dissolution of the Pratinidhi Sabha on 22 May is bound to generate a great deal of debate. The role of the Supreme Court will also remain a matter of serious debate and discussion. Various developments have brought into sharp focus the conflict between government formation and governance in the real sense.

Various questions are being asked



of the House as unconstitutional and accordingly reinstated the House of Representatives. The actions of Prime Minister Adhikari and King Birendra were annulled by the Supreme Court. In a way, this was the beginning of a new era.

### Later decisions

These episodes had a significant bearing on King Birendra's subsequent decisions. When on 8 January 1998, the then Prime Minister, Surya Bahadur Thapa, recommended the dissolution of the House and a fresh election, King Birendra did not accept that immediately. Instead, he referred the matter to the Supreme Court for its opinion under Article 88(5) of the 1990 Constitution.

On 4 February 1998, the Supreme Court gave its verdict in favour of a special session of the House — a request for which had been made by 96 MPs. In a very significant way, King Birendra had made a very conscious effort to play the role of a true constitutional monarch. By this act, he had endeared himself to Nepalese politicians.

about the future role of King Gyanendra Bir Bikram Shahdeva, who ascended the throne on 4 June last year following the assassination of his brother King Birendra and death of his nephew King Dipendra. The failure in governance on the part of the democratic forces and the challenges thrown by the Maoists have heightened the debate.

Though only one year has passed since King Gyanendra assumed the throne, various political elements have called for a more assertive role by him. Unlike his late brother, King Gyanendra has been giving more interviews to the media. Close on the heels of his first visit to the Maoist-infested hills of western Nepal and the Army chief's criticism of the politicians' role in combating anti-Maoist campaign, several leaders have called for a more assertive role for the King.

Senior Rashtriya Prajatantra Party leader Parshu Narayan Chaudhary — who was education minister in the BP Koirala ministry (1959-60) and general secretary of the Nepali Congress (1960-68) — said recently that there "is total chaos everywhere, only the King can put the country on the track".

Chaudhary, 74, along with a few RPP leaders — including former home minister Padma Sundar Lawati — called for the King's initiative to break the deadlock. On his part, in the beginning of May, King Gyanendra donated Rs 2 million to help civilian victims of the Maoist conflict and the families of soldiers killed in action since November. This did enhance his popularity to some extent.

Against the backdrop of these developments, inter-party and intra-party developments are giving different signals. Technically speaking, Deuba no longer remains a member of the NC. Though his ministers have not been expelled from the party, they have defied the order of the party president Girija Prasad Koirala. Deuba is trying to oust Koirala from the party presidency. Former Prime Minister and NC president Krishna Prasad Bhattarai is trying to effect a rapprochement between the two. But currently his health does not permit him to play a very vital role.

It is difficult to say what would be the nature, structure and character of the NC which will face the 13 November parliamentary polls — should that be held in the first place.

### Parting of ways

There are analysts who feel that some sort of understanding would emerge between Deuba and Koirala. Others feel that their parting of ways is final. Many straws in the wind indicate that Koirala is trying to ensure the revival of the House and once again become the kingdom's Prime Minister — for the record fifth time since 1991.

Nepal's economy is not in a position to bear the burden of frequent nationwide elections at short intervals. Its foreign exchange reserves are not in good shape. Tourism — a very significant component of the kingdom's economy — is not contributing substantially to the kingdom's economic health. The Nepal Tourism Board quoted the number of tourists visiting Nepal this year to be 70,063 compared to 103,875 during the same period in 2001. This state of affairs exists despite the concessions offered. The safety and security problem looms large in the minds of tourists.

Obviously, the investors do not find the overall milieu appropriate. Many have withdrawn; others are thinking of doing so. Maoist insurgents have attacked and damaged various installations. The government seems to be having an upper hand in its endeavour to crush the Maoist insurgents. But many innocent people are losing their lives. Prime Minister Deuba himself confesses that curbing terrorism will take time.

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



# Terrorism pause for Nepal democracy

FROM BHARAT BHUSHAN

Kathmandu, June 20: Nepal had to first deal with "terrorism" and only then with political instability, Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba said about the political turmoil resulting from his decision to dissolve Parliament.

Even in Nepal, after September 11, "terrorism" appears to have become a convenient mantra to sanctify the controversial acts of the government. It is being used to justify the dissolution of Parliament, though it still had two more years to run of its normal term.

This has resulted in a vertical split in Nepal's oldest democratic party, the 56-year old Nepali

Congress. Bypassing Parliament, an Ordinance extending the six-month-old state of emergency has been issued by the King — ensuring the continuation of suspension of civil liberties, restraining the press, banning political activity and allowing a free hand to the army against the Maoists.

The Emergency Ordinance would have to be ratified by Parliament after three months. However, that option does not exist as there is no Parliament. It was dissolved by the Prime Minister as he was not sure whether it would have ratified even the last extension of the emergency.

Deuba has promised a general election in November, hoping that the Maoist insurgency

would be over by then. However, no one is too sure of events unfolding in this way.

At a time when political activity is not permitted, there is no legal recourse to the excesses of the state, the press is restricted and a state of emergency has been declared, how would elections be held? "During the elections, there would be no emergency," Deuba said.

He insisted that he would hold elections on time. What if the insurgency does not end by then? "I don't know. We have a tradition of elections in phases — but that is up to the election commission," Deuba said. He claimed that the election would be "a referendum on the desire for peace and non-violence".

that he is with democracy."

Asked whether the Maoist insurgency was not only a law and order problem but a political one also, demanding a political solution, Deuba recalled that he had tried to negotiate with the Maoists unsuccessfully. After three rounds of talks, the Maoists had walked out.

"Who is to say that if we enter into a dialogue (again), they might not again (use the opportunity to) re-strengthen their position, regroup their cadres, re-establish their chain of command and attack again? Can we afford to be attacked again?" Deuba asked.

The Prime Minister said India was helping Nepal tackle the Maoist insurgency by pro-

viding vehicles, arms and training to its security forces. India, he said, had also arrested some Nepali Maoists and handed them over.

He denied the suggestion that the Maoists were getting sanctuary in India, saying, "they may be hiding in India and illegally smuggling arms and ammunition".

Deuba agreed that while the entire international community was behind Nepal in dealing with the Maoist issue, that was not the case within the country. "Even my own party is not supporting me. What can I do?" he asked. So, what indeed was he going to do? "That is why I had to dissolve Parliament. I had to go for polls as a referendum," he said.

THE TELEGRAPH

21 JUN 2009

# Deuba elected Nepali Congress chief

**Kathmandu:** Nepal's ruling party on Wednesday elected caretaker Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba to be its new president, consolidating his power within the strife-torn organisation.



Deuba

Deuba was elected uncontested by a national convention of the Nepali Congress (NC) held in Kathmandu, officials said.

On Tuesday the NC threw out former president Girija Prasad Koirala, after he expelled Deuba from the party in May for three years in protest at his recommenda-

tion to King Gyanendra to dissolve Parliament and call early elections.

The convention also overturned the expulsion order on 56-year-old Deuba.

"We are very delighted that we have been able to choose Deuba as the Nepali Congress party president," said deputy home minister Devendra Raj Kandel.

Koirala has made no public comment on his removal as party president, but had earlier said the convention, which was called by Deuba, was "illegal" because it was called by an expelled member of the party.

Chakra Prasad Bastola, former foreign minister and supporter of Koirala, alleged on Tuesday that some of

those attending the convention were not official delegates. "Many of the participants are false and this was done without honouring the party constitution and norms," he said.

But minister of state for physical planning and technology, Bal Bahadur Balayar, refuted the charge.

"The election of Deuba is legal and constitutional since there are enough delegates here," he said.

The elections are due to be held on November 13. The NC currently has 113 seats in the 205-member lower house of Parliament. Any split in the party would be likely to benefit the main opposition Nepal Communist Party-United Marxist and Leninist (NCP-

UML), which has 69 MPs.

Gyanendra dissolved Parliament on Deuba's advice on May 22 as it looked set to reject an extension of emergency rule imposed in November to combat Maoist insurgency. The King later unilaterally extended the special measures for three months.

The rift between Koirala and Deuba is deeply personal, with each accusing the other of failing to take strong action against the Maoists.

Deuba took over from Koirala in July 2001 pledging to end the rebellion peacefully, but the Maoists broke a ceasefire with his government in November, prompting the King to deploy the army against the guerrillas for the first time. AFP

THE TIMES OF INDIA

20 JUN 2002

# Deuba retained, Koirala removed

Press Trust of India

KATHMANDU, June 18. — Political crisis in Nepal deepened today as the ruling Nepali Congress overturned an order expelling caretaker Prime Minister Mr Sher Bahadur Deuba from the party and decided to remove his arch-rival Mr Girija Prasad Koirala from the post of party president.

The party, at its 10th general convention called by Mr Deuba, agreed to scrap Mr Koirala's decision to expel Mr Deuba for three years for recommending dissolution of parliament and declaration of elections in November. The convention, which began yesterday, accepted a proposal to remove Mr Koirala from the post of party president, party central working committee member and minister for

construction and physical planning, Mr Chiranjivi Wagle said, and added the new president will be elected tomorrow. A three-member election commission headed by Mr Basanta Kumar Gurung was also announced.

Mr Koirala has, however, said the convention was "illegal" as Mr Deuba, who was expelled, had no right to call the meeting.

The developments threaten to split Nepal's oldest political party. Prominent party leaders including former deputy prime minister Mr Ramchandra Poudyal and Speaker of the House of Representatives, Mr Taranath Ranabhat, kept away from the meeting. They were among the leaders who tried to broker a reconciliation between Mr Deuba and Mr Koirala.

The Deuba faction claimed 824 of 1,465 general convention members attended the meet.

THE STATESMAN

19 JUN 2002

# China pledges help to Nepal

*0 G B* *10/6* *10/8* *10/10*  
**Kathmandu, June 9 (Reuters):** A senior leader of Nepal's ruling Nepali Congress party said today that China has promised to help the impoverished Himalayan nation fight Maoist rebels seeking to topple the constitutional monarchy.

"They (the Chinese) have promised to provide all the possible help in the fight against the terrorists," Girija Prasad Koirala, president of the Nepali Congress, told reporters after a week-long visit to Beijing.

His statement came as the state-run news agency, Rastriya Samachar Samiti, reported troops had killed 17 Maoist guerrillas in weekend gun battles across Nepal which has been under a state of emergency since last November when rebels walked out of peace talks and launched a wave of bloody attacks.

Koirala did not specify what type of assistance China had promised to give Nepal to help crush the Maoist rebels who draw their inspiration from Chinese revolutionary leader Mao Zedong and are trying to set up a one-party communist republic.

Political analysts say the Maoist rebels and China have nothing in common as Beijing is seen by the guerrillas as having deviated from Mao's teachings by adopting capitalist practices. Last month, Nepali Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba visited Washington during which US President George W. Bush pledged \$20 million in support for the Nepalese forces.

Nepali army officers have said they need everything from boots and bullets to helicopters to win the battle against the Maoists. India is already providing Nepali troops with military hardware such as helicopters.

1 0 JUN 2002

THE TELEGRAPH

# SC questions House dissolution by Deuba

**Kathmandu, June 6** (Reuters): Nepal's Supreme Court asked Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba today to explain the dissolution of parliament after 61 former deputies challenged the move in court, the latest twist in the country's political crisis.

The members of the disbanded legislature, 56 of them from the ruling Nepali Congress party, said the move was unconstitutional during a state of emergency.

Deuba had asked Nepal's King Gyanendra to disband parliament last month after his Nepali Congress party refused to back his plan to extend emer-

gency rule to tackle an increasingly bloody Maoist revolt.

Nepal imposed emergency rule, which gives sweeping powers to the military, after the Maoists walked out of peace talks with the government and resumed their six-year revolt to overthrow the constitutional monarchy.

"The Prime Minister has been asked to furnish his written replies before June 19 when the hearing on the writ petitions will start," court spokesman Durga Dawadi said.

The former deputies who have challenged the dissolution said the term of the parliament

could be extended for a period of one year if necessary during a state of emergency.

"But it is not proper to dissolve the House and hold early elections when there is a state of emergency in the country," Shankar Prasad Pandey, a Nepali Congress member seeking the restoration of the legislature said. Apart from the 56 Nepali Congress members, the legal challenge was backed by members of smaller parties.

Parliament was dissolved days before emergency rule was due to run out on May 24. Deuba also called fresh elections for November 13. In response, the Nepali Congress party expelled Deuba from their ranks. Constitutional experts said there was no precedent of a dissolution of parliament during emergency rule.

In 1995, the Supreme Court overturned a similar decision when a minority communist government faced certain defeat in a no-confidence vote.

In 1994, the court approved the dissolution of parliament when the government was defeated in a parliamentary vote by dissidents from the then ruling Nepali Congress.

## Deuba moots new party

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PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

KATHMANDU, June 1. — Crisis within the Nepali Congress furthered deepened with Prime Minister Mr Sher Bahadur Deuba hinting at floating a new outfit. "I've deep affection for the party, for which I have served for such a long time, but after the expulsion I cannot contest the election as an independent candidate. I need a party at least to contest the elections," Mr Deuba said here yesterday.

Meanwhile, efforts are on within the Nepali Congress to withdraw the action taken against Mr Deuba and placate him by promoting some of his men in the rank and file of the party. But the present stalemate is unlikely to be resolved until next week as party president Mr Girija Prasad Koirala is leaving for Beijing tonight.

**Photo exhibition on Birendra:** Thousands of Nepalese queued under the hot sun today to see a photo exhibition dedicated to their popular King Birendra, exactly one year after he was murdered by his own son.

Keeping cool with hats, umbrellas and hand-held bamboo fans, people waited patiently to view the 166 photographs taken by the king's personal physician.

# Party expels Deuba for three years

Press Trust of India

KATHMANDU, May 26. — Nepalese Prime Minister Mr Sher Bahadur Deuba was today expelled from his party by its disciplinary committee for three years for dissolving the Parliament without consulting the party.

The party asked "all the ministers belonging to the Nepali Congress to quit the ministry as the government headed by Mr Deuba is no longer a Nepali Congress government," the party's deputy general secretary Mr Govinda Raj Joshi said. Mr Deuba will continue to stay on as caretaker Prime Minister until the elections. Mr Joshi also ruled out the possibility of a split in the party even after Mr Deuba's expulsion from membership of the party. He said the party will contest elections as "it is a democratic

party and believes in elections. But the election must be free and fair and security must be provided for the voters." He said the party president Mr GP Koirala had asked Mr Deuba's council of ministers to resign or face expulsion.

However, the minister for tourism, civil aviation and culture, Mr Bal Bahadur KC, said: "It was a wrong decision of the party. This will invite misfortune for the party, democracy and the country."

**Maoists denounce Deuba:** Nepal's Maoist rebel leader Puspa Kamal Dahal, alias Prachand, today criticised the decision by caretaker prime minister Mr Deuba to extend the emergency.

"Political parties had protested against the extension of the state of emergency and desired talks between the government and the Maoists to resolve the country's problems," the Maoist chairman said in a statement.

THE STATESMAN

27 MAY 2002

# Deuba running out of options

FROM BHARAT BHUSHAN

**New Delhi, May 25:** After being suspended from the Nepali Congress by his arch-rival and party president Girija Prasad Koirala, the Nepali Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba may have no option except to split the Nepali Congress or to form a new political party.

Deuba enjoys majority support in the parliamentary party while Koirala reigns supreme in the Central Working Committee (CWC), the apex decision making body of the party.

The only leaders who can prevent the Nepali Congress from breaking up are — Girija Prasad Koirala, who is opposed to Deuba; Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, who patronises Deuba; and Khumbahadur Khadka, home minister in the present government. They comprise the old-guard which has consistently fought against the royalist and conservative forces and are unlikely to do anything that would strengthen these forces in Nepal again.

Observers of the Nepali political scene, however, believe that Deuba may opt for forming a new party instead of splitting the Nepali Congress. Either way, politics in this tiny Himalayan kingdom will get acutely polarised between the conservative and the democratic forces.

Deuba's suspension has brought to a head the long brewing conflict between the government and the party. The primary issue of conflict is: Who takes policy decisions — the party or the government? The party believes that policy decisions must be cleared by it. Deuba clearly does not think so — at least not any longer.

The conflict between Deuba and the party leadership is both personal and ideological. Personal, because Koirala, the party president, had to make way for Deuba as Prime Minister under humiliating circumstances. He would like to rehabilitate himself.

Deuba is seen by the supporters of Koirala as someone lacking in political wisdom and unable to carry not only his own party but also the other political parties with him. They, of course, see Koirala possessing both these qualities.

However, the conflict between Deuba and the Nepali Congress is also ideological. Prime Minister Deuba is in favour of extending the state of internal emergency in the country. But his own party leadership is opposed to giving a virtually unaccountable role to the army over an extended period of time. Under the provisions of the internal emergency, civil liberties are suspended and the army's actions in tackling the Maoist insurgency cannot be legally questioned.

Already a belief is gaining ground that the Royal Nepalese Army, not being well trained in anti-insurgency operations, has been killing a number of innocents merely on the suspicion of their being Maoist sympathisers.

The Nepali Congress also claims that a number of its active cadres in the hinterland are being eliminated by the army under the guise of anti-insurgency operations. The party would, therefore, like to make the army accountable by restoring civil liberties.

The Palace and the Royal Nepalese Army are arguably the

two most conservative forces in Nepali society. Nepal's fledgling democracy has been suspicious of both — and not without reason. Together they have subverted democracy in Nepal in the past not once but twice.

Another extension of the emergency provisions, many in Nepali Congress believe, would lead to the strengthening of these forces of conservatism at the cost of democracy. They, therefore, believe that by extending the state of internal emergency, Deuba is playing into the hands of the Palace and the army.

Deuba, after having got King Gyanendra to dissolve Parliament, has called for elections in November. His critics see in this another pointer to the compromises that they allege he is making with the Palace and the army. The November elections, if they are held at all, they think, would require Deuba taking the help of the army. Otherwise, his opponents believe, Deuba cannot hope to win.

Deuba's detractors also have a plan to counter the Maoist insurgency but under a newly enacted law. The very Parliament which Deuba has helped dissolve had for the first time passed a law called "Aatank-kari Evam Vidhvansatmak Niyantaran Ain (Terrorism and Disruptive Activities Control Act)". Koirala and his supporters argue that the army action against the Maoists should now be carried out under this new law. This would help restore civil liberties and make army action accountable.

Girija Prasad Koirala, whatever his faults, has always been a reluctant supporter of the emergency. It is true that when he was

the Prime Minister, he had also wanted the army to go into action against the Maoists. He managed to get the army out of the barracks but could not get it to act. The army wanted a state of emergency declared before it went into action. Koirala, who did not want to give the army a free run refused. Eventually, he had to resign over a massive Maoist attack at Houlleri in Rukum district where the army's role remained questionable.

However, the party reluctantly supported the emergency for three months last November. But this was after three rounds of talks had been held with the Maoists and after they had walked out of the talks without giving any reason. Later, when the emergency was sought to be extended, for another three months, Deuba went to the party and compelled the party leadership to appeal to the Opposition to support the extension. This time around, however, he did not even bother to consult the party.

Today, Deuba agrees with his national security secretariat that not extending the state of emergency would put the army at a disadvantage. He believes that the back of the Maoists has already been broken and the army needs to conduct the anti-insurgency operations without having to look over its shoulder.

The party leadership, however, is veering around to the view that this is not a law and order problem and that a dialogue with the Maoists is essential.

Unfortunately, however, the ideological debate within the Nepali Congress has got lost behind what are perceived to be the irreconcilable ambitions of its leaders.

THE TELEGRAPH

26 MAY 2002



# 33 ministers back Deuba

Agencies

KATHMANDU, May 24. — Affirming their faith in Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, 33 Nepal ministers today backed their leader's decision to recommend dissolution of the country's parliament. In a joint statement, the ministers asked the ruling Nepali Congress party president to withdraw disciplinary action initiated against Mr Deuba. "We are one with the Prime Minister at this crucial moment," their statement said.

Nepali Congress yesterday suspended Mr Deuba from ordi-

nary membership of the party for his decision to extend emergency and dissolving parliament without consulting the party. This was followed by resignations of three ministers loyal to party president Mr Girija Prasad Koirala.

Today, the 33 ministers, including home minister Mr Khum Bahadur Khadka, minister for information and communication Mr Jayprakash Prasad Gupta, and minister for housing and physical planning Mr Chirinjivi Wagle, expressed their full support to Mr Deuba. As the party has directed the government to withdraw the motion to

extend emergency rule by six months, the government had no option but go for fresh polls to protect the life and property of people and maintain national security, they said.

King Gyanendra, on Mr Deuba's advice, disbanded the 205-seat parliament on Wednesday as it seemed set to reject a six-month extension of emergency rule, and called new elections on 13 November. The ministers' move today deepens Nepal's political crisis at a time its army is battling Maoist rebels. The emergency lapses tomorrow, without a two-thirds vote of the parliament to extend it.

THE STATESMAN

25 MAY 2002

# Nepali Congress suspends PM Deuba

## Crisis deepens as ruling party president asks all ministers to resign

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**Keshav Pradhan**  
*Kathmandu, May 23*

THE RULING Nepali Congress (NC) on Thursday suspended Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba from the party for asking King Gyanendra to disband Parliament. It also gave him three days to explain why he defied the party's directives on the withdrawal of a motion seeking an extension of the Emergency.

Congress president GP Koirala directed all members of the Deuba ministry to resign from their posts in three days.

This was the second time that the party has taken disciplinary action against any sitting Prime Minister in the parliamentary history of Nepal.

In 1961, former president

of Nepali Congress B P Koirala expelled his eldest brother, then Prime Minister Matrika Prasad Koirala, from the party's ordinary membership.

NC spokesperson said the party was considering the idea of appealing to the Supreme Court against the prerogative exercised by Deuba to dissolve the House of representatives.

In 1995, when Manmohan Adhikari was the Prime Minister of the minority Government of Nepal Communist Party (UML), Deuba filed a case against his move to dissolve parliament and the Supreme Court in a historic verdict had reinstated Parliament.

The Supreme Court said the prime minister could not dissolve Parliament so long as there is the possibility of forming an alternative Government from within Parliament. Nepali Congress party president Girija Prasad Koirala has in a statement asked all the members of the Deuba Cab-

inet to tender their resignations within three days saying that the recent actions of the Prime Minister were against the party's decision. The dissolution of the House by the Prime Minister in the name of going for a fresh mandate was ill-mentioned and has brought serious crisis, he said. The prime minister's decision was part of a series of conspiracies hatched against the country and democracy, the statement said. He has also called unity among all the political parties, which are dedicated to the country and democracy.

The political crisis in trouble-torn Nepal deepened further as three Cabinet ministers on Thursday revolted against Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba over the dissolution

of Parliament. Opposing the disbanding of Parliament as "a threat to democracy," Finance Minister Ramsharan Mahat, Education Minister Amod Upadhyaya and Social and Child Welfare Minister Rajendra Kharel submitted their resignations to King Gyanendra.

They alleged that Deuba did not consult them when he asked the King to dissolve the 205-member Pratinidhi Sabha (Lower House) on late Wednesday evening. Upadhyaya complained.

There is a possibility of more ministers quitting the Government. Angry at Deuba's decision to seek the dissolution of Parliament, the ruling Nepali Congress is contemplating his expulsion from the party. Leaders

loyal to Congress president G P Koirala, who has near-total control over the party, began discussions on the issue. Army and police patrolling was intensified here in view of the volatile situation. Deuba asked the King to disband Parliament and declare snap polls on November 13 following differences with the Congress over the extension of the Emergency imposed six months ago to contain the Maoist insurgency.

Deuba said, "The Emergency was necessary to give continuity to Army operations against the Maoists and to protect the Constitution and rights of the people." In stark contrast, Koirala loyalists and Communist ministers feared that it would ultimately make the Army powerful.



**Sher Bahadur Deuba**  
*Incurring party wrath*

# King dissolves Nepal House

Keshav Pradhan  
Kathmandu, May 22

KING GYANENDRA on late Wednesday dissolved the Nepalese Parliament and ordered mid-term elections on November 13. The move followed Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba recommending dissolution of the House. The King asked Deuba to continue in office till the elections.

Earlier in the day, the ruling Nepali Congress directed Deuba to withdraw his motion in Parliament seeking an extension of the Emergency by another six months. The move comes amid differences within the Congress basically over the role of the Royal Nepalese Army (RNA) during the Emergency. Congress leaders loyal to party president GP Koirala alleged that Deuba decided to extend the Emergency at the Army's behest and without the party's approval.

This, they feared, will ultimately put the kingdom's fledgling democracy in jeopardy.

23/5  
The Army on Tuesday clarified that it did not exert any pressure on the Government to prolong the Emergency that comes to an end on May 25.

Information minister Jay Prakash Prasad Gupta also offered a similar clarification after the Government registered the motion last week. The motion, which is supposed to come up for discussion on Thursday, needs the sanction of two-third MPs of the 205-member Parliament. The Emergency was imposed on November 26 to contain the Maoist insurgency.

The Congress mounted pressure on Deuba on Tuesday, giving him 24 hours to justify the proposed extension of the Emergency.

Twenty-three of the 30 members present at its central committee meeting called for withdrawal of the motion, even though Deuba strongly defended his action.

The 112-member Congress parliamentary party will take a final decision later tonight. Out



**Sher Bahadur Deuba**  
*Stumped*

of total 36 members of the Cabinet working Committee, six were absent during the meeting and seven, including Deuba, have written note of dissent in the minute book.

Finance Minister Ram Sharan Mahat, former deputy prime minister Ramchandra Poudyal and Minister for Housing and Physical Planning Chiranjibi Wagle were among the CWC members who differed with the party's decision to withdraw the motion.

Deuba said, "The decision to extend the emergency rule was not against the party's policy and the opposition parties also gave a green signal in favour of the extension."

# Maoists talks offer spurned

**Keshav Pradhan**  
Kathmandu, May 18

SPURNING THE Maoists' talks offer, the Nepal Government has called a session of Parliament on May 23 to extend the Emergency to continue its military campaign against the Communist insurgency.

The Emergency, imposed on November 26 last after the rebels unilaterally broke a three-month ceasefire, ends on May 25. The Government has to obtain the support of two-thirds members of the House to extend it further.

The decision to summon Parliament was taken after Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba held an all-party meeting on

Friday. On Wednesday, Maoist chief Pushpakamal Dahal had expressed his willingness to resume dialogue with the Government.

The fate of the emergency depends much on the support of the Opposition because the ruling Nepali Congress (NC) has just 112 representatives in the 205-member House. The strength of four mainstream Communist parties, who have so far opposed the extension of the Emergency, is 76.

Not only this, NC president and former Prime Minister G P Koirala has also expressed reservations about continuing the Emergency.

Against this backdrop, the presence of heads of the Royal

Nepalese Army, civil and police wings and the intelligence department at the all-party was significant.

They stressed the need for continuing the Emergency to rid the kingdom of the insurgency. Pro-Deuba NC leaders said the Opposition's response was positive, even though Communists and Koirala loyalists took exception to the Prime Minister's decision to seek support for the Emergency in front of Army and police chiefs.

The Prime Minister, who returned last week from a tour of the US and UK, faced fierce domestic criticism over his move to seek foreign assistance to contain the Maoists' insurgency.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

NEW DELHI

19 MAY 2002

NEPAL is facing the biggest crisis in its history, its government's authority never so flagrantly challenged as is being done now. While it is acceptable that several countries are faced with insurgency in one form or another, the situation in the royal Himalayan kingdom is truly alarming because the Maoist insurgents were able to bring down the elected government of Girija Prasad Koirala.

Maoist leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal (alias Prachanda) and his second in command Baburam Bhattarai claimed a great political victory by saying the Koirala administration had to go under conditions dictated by them. They have prophesied many more such victories and say Nepal will ultimately have no choice but to accept a government foisted by them. Definitely an ill omen.

Bringing down a government in this fashion is only possible with the help of a major external power, and in Nepal's instance the finger points to China. Ideologically, the Maoists have close links with China and it is apparent that both are working in tandem.

Would China be interested in establishing the same pattern of relationship with Nepal as it has done with Myanmar? It's an angle worth exploring. China would gain a lot by having a series of surveillance-cum-monitoring cells along the Indo-Nepalese border, cells similar to the ones in the Coco Islands and the Mergui Peninsula of Myanmar. Beijing might not insist on a quasi-military arrangement in Kathmandu as is in vogue at Yangon, but on a governing body that would be more than cooperative apropos China's demands in Asia's geo-political realm.

The Maoists could be a convenient go-between. Prachanda's hold — read that as the spread of his cult — has become so all pervasive that current Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba visited India as well as the USA with a one-point "red alert" priority: urgent measures for combating the ongoing scourge of terrorism in his country.

India has its own interests to main-

tain — unless stability prevails in Nepal, this country's long-standing trade and business with its Himalayan neighbour will suffer immeasurably. In fact, the descent to trade-related inter-action has already begun. At a recent discussion I had with Nepal's Consul General in Kolkata, it was highlighted that stabilisation was *sine qua non* for industrial development.

Mr Deuba fully realises that even high value joint ventures with India, like the Pancheswar Power Project, will find itself in the doldrums unless a semblance of peace is brought about in his homeland. As things stand, peace can only be ensured by military action. Mr Deuba also made it a point to meet West Bengal's chief minister in Kolkata in the context of the Siliguri Corridor. This strategic neck, which is like a geographical fulcrum in this vital region and which is accessible to five countries, has virtually transformed itself into a two-way terrorist haven covering North-east India, North Bengal, North Bihar and Nepal. Bangladesh, Bhutan and China "look on".

India is already providing Nepal with military succour to include weapons systems, vehicles, assorted war equipment and specialised training in counter-insurgency. Nepal's regular army, however, is more ceremonial in nature — and for good reason, too — although it is well professionalised and has been giving a worthy account of itself in

the field. India can detail the commander. The UNPF will take on the Maoists and break the back of the insurgency movement.

However, the matter should not end there. Kathmandu must go deep in to the aspect of assuaging the grievances of the villagers and distant hill folk who have fallen prey to the Maoists solely because Kathmandu has never bothered to see beyond itself. With some 45-odd districts out of the total 75 being under Maoist control, the Nepal government has to aggressively tackle its mounting socio-economic disorders. Prolonged neglect in this regard has resulted in citizens willy-nilly joining Prachanda's outfit which has cashed in on their plight. Mr Deuba should ask the UN to help out with planned development programmes for his country and implement these on a war footing.

The average Nepali is basically a disciplined person, courtesy the nation's army lineage. It is only when a disciplined person comes up against a permanent blank wall as he harries himself for his rightful dues that he undergoes a psychological change and turns anti-establishment. And this is precisely what insurgent groups want. Nepal presents a fitting sample of this scene.

The Maoists have lately offered a unilateral ceasefire. This typifies the usual tactics followed by terrorist groups the world over when under unmanageable pressure from security forces. Mr Deuba has rightly rejected this offer, treating it as a gimmick. The Maoists have suffered substantial casualties and need some breathing space to regroup and consolidate. On earlier occasions, too, they have held their fire thus, and restarted their actions at an opportune moment. Nepal's security forces should not give them any respite.

Mr Deuba is no stranger to the Prime Minister's chair and he knows exactly what the stakes are. Hopefully he will do the right thing. His countrymen expect him to do so.

(The author is a retired Lieutenant-Colonel of the Indian Army.)

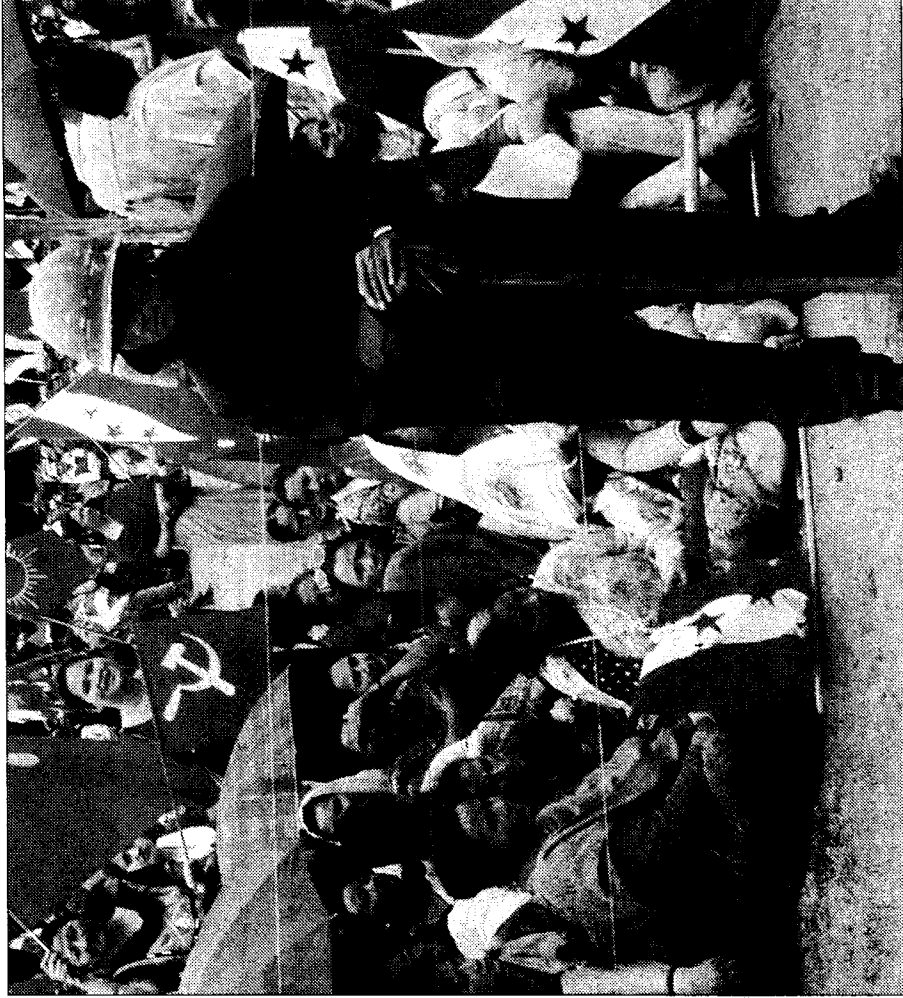
# Kathmandu can't go it alone

fighting the Maoists.

Nepal's police force is hopelessly outnumbered and outgunned on all fronts by the insurgents. The terrain too offers excellent scope for guerrilla warfare wherein the initiative can remain with the guerrillas if intelligently exploited by them, as is plainly manifest. The input of resources into Nepal from other nations — the USA has sanctioned \$20 million — is not a constraint. What is of the moment is how to reorient this input into an effective anti-terrorism modus.

It is unlikely that Kathmandu would be able to neutralise the Maoists on its own. It desperately requires largescale deployment of security forces with adequate multiplier quotient. This quantum and composition is well beyond Kathmandu's inherent capacity. Mr Deuba should forthwith ask the United Nations to organise a special meeting to discuss Nepal's crisis and arrange for a UN Protection Force to be deployed at the soonest. It is likely that such a request would get a favourable response in view of the universal drive against terrorism. India would then be in a position to provide a large military contingent comprising two army divisions along with a support element each from the Army Air Corps and the Indian Air Force. Some naval commandos trained in river warfare would also be in order. Contingents from Saar members could emulate India so that a composite UNPF under a unified command can take

Sher Bahadur Deuba has his work cut out. No stranger to the Prime Minister's chair, he knows exactly what the stakes are. Hopefully, says JK DUTT, he will do the right thing



Women activists of seven political parties participating in an anti-Maoist public meeting in Kathmandu. — AFP.

# Nepal seeks truce proof

FROM GOPAL SHARMA

**Kathmandu, May 10** (Reuters): Nepal insisted today there could be no peace talks with Maoist rebels until they laid down their arms, but said it was seeking

proof that their unilateral declaration of a month-long ceasefire was genuine. "The government is trying to find out whether the ceasefire offer is sincere and authentic," said physical planning minister Chiranjibi Wazle, who

led the government team in peace talks that collapsed last year.

But for peace talks to resume to settle the six-year revolt, the rebels "must provide a credible basis to show their sincerity and for this must lay down their arms", he said. However, a senior Maoist leader denied that the guerrilla group had announced plans for a one-month ceasefire, the BBC reported today.

The BBC's Hindi-language service quoted Dina Nath Sharma, who sits on the Maoist's top decision-making committee, as calling the report of the ceasefire "a conspiracy hatched by the Nepali government to confuse the struggling masses".

The rebels announced yesterday a month-long ceasefire from May 15 in an e-mail to the media after authorities said they had killed hundreds of guerrillas in a massive blitz and the US pledged military aid to the government. The e-mail bore the name of rebel commander Prachanda which translates as "the awesome one" and while its origin could not be verified, the rebels have used e-mail to communicate in the past.

However, a political analyst in Kathmandu, who closely follows leftist and Maoist movements in Nepal cast doubt on the authenticity of the email.

"I have learned from reliable sources that the Maoist party has not sent any statement about a ceasefire so far," Shyam Shrestha, also editor of Nepali monthly news magazine *Mullyankan*, said.

Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, on a visit to the US, said yesterday the rebels could not be trusted.

Speaking from New York, he said talks to end the revolt could start if the Maoists, fighting to topple the impoverished kingdom's constitutional monarchy, agreed to renounce violence.

# Maoists hit back, kill 104 securitymen

Press Trust of India

KATHMANDU, May 8. — After losing nearly 600 of their men in five days of military offensive, Maoist rebels in Nepal retaliated in a big way overnight targeting army posts and patrol killing over 104 security personnel, including soldiers.

Twenty rebels were also killed, official sources said.

Over 500 heavily armed guerrillas struck a joint army-police base late last night in the remote Gam village in Rolpa district killing over 100 personnel, police sources said.

Reinforcements were sent immediately and a defence ministry statement said security forces were engaged in a fierce exchange of fire with the Maoists till late this afternoon.

It said the terrorists attacked the base around 11 p.m. with automatic weapons looted earlier from army barracks.

Out of 200 army and police personnel deployed in the area, the sources said more than half were killed and whereabouts of others were still not known as the communication with the district remained cut off. Some Maoists are also reported to

## Prevent unlawful killings: Amnesty

LONDON, May 8. — While acknowledging the grave threat to law and order posed by Maoists in Nepal, Amnesty International has called for an independent investigation into reports that more than 500 rebels have been killed by security forces at Lisne Lek in Rolpa district since 3 May.

"Amnesty International is concerned that the figures of people killed, as provided by the ministry of defence suggest that international standards which require the security forces to respect the right to life and refrain from using lethal force unless absolutely necessary have not been respected," the global human rights watchdog said in a statement here last night.

"There could be more killings as the security forces' operation is continuing and several hundred Maoists are reportedly being surrounded," Amnesty said. — PTI

have been killed during the encounter, the sources added.

"Communication with the Centre has been broken. We are awaiting detailed reports," a police officer said.

Twenty Maoist rebels, including two women, were killed in another encounter in Chainpur, 400 km east of Kathmandu, the sources said.

The encounter took place when the Maoists attacked a police post in which four police personnel were also killed and 15 injured. The army later regained control of the post, the statement said.

It said security forces foiled an

attempt by the rebels to destroy an army-police base in the area.

Over 500 Maoist ultras were killed in last week's military operation in Lisne Lek in Rolpa.

Acting Prime Minister Mr Chirinjivi Wagle today reviewed the present security situation at a top-level meeting in the capital, a defence ministry official said.

The meeting attended by senior ministers, army chief, inspector general of police and senior officials of National Investigation Department and Armed Police Forces evaluated the anti-terror operations conducted by the joint security forces.

# Nepal rebels bury peace hopes with their dead

CATHERINE PHILIP  
THE TIMES, LONDON

51-11 515  
Maoist toll rises to 440

SATBARIYA (Nepal), May 4. — When the Maoists rebels descended on the police garrison in the dead of night, they brought grave-diggers with them. As the rebels peppered the garrison with gunfire, the diggers set to work in the muddy riverbed, carving out a shallow grave ready for the bodies of their comrades.

As each rebel fell, shot by the panic-stricken policemen inside, another would drag the body to the waiting grave. Then he, too, would join the battle. "Every time one was killed, another would run up in his place and pick up the weapon he had dropped and fight," one policeman said. "They kept coming, wave after wave."

Almost 100 rebels died that night before the police ran out of ammunition. Then the remaining rebels stormed the garrison, executed the officers and melted back into the countryside bearing a cache of looted weapons, ready for the next raid.

The attack, one of a string of assaults on security forces last month, suggested that far from being deterred by the new military offensive against them, the Maoist rebels are growing more dar-

KATHMANDU, May 4. — Continuing their offensive against the Maoists, security forces killed 350 rebels in western Nepal taking the toll in two days of operations in Lisen and Boktan districts to 440 even as it lost one of its personnel in the operations, the defence ministry said today. Security forces also arrested two terrorists during the period.

The Nepalese Prime Minister has ruled out any talks with the rebels unless they surrender along with their arms.

Meanwhile, the USA has said it had no plans to set up a military base in Nepal with a view to counter Chinese influence in the region.

Nepal and Bihar have set up a joint team at their border to prevent the movement of Maoist rebels and anti-Indian militants between the two countries, officials said today.

— Agencies

ing by the day and show no sign of running out of soldiers willing to give up their lives for the cause.

The Nepalese government still insists the rebels can be defeated and this week rejected an offer of peace talks, answering the offer with two incursions into rebel territory in which it was claimed more than 130 rebels were killed.

Mr Sher Bahadur Deuba, the Nepalese Prime Minister, is due in Washington on Tuesday to seek \$20 million in military aid to fund the offensive. But many believe that the government may be digging its own grave by refusing to negotiate.

The Maoists are notorious-

ly secretive and have been known to decapitate fallen comrades and carry the heads back to their mountain hideouts to avoid identification. This week, villagers in the west discovered a bag containing 40 decomposing heads that the government claimed were the casualties of factional fighting between the rebels. But analysts believe they are more likely to be remains from another rebel assault.

Nepalese fighters are respected worldwide for their bravery, but even they will admit the Maoists are a formidable force despite a limited supply of looted weapons.

THE STATESMAN



# Nepal rejects talks, 90 rebels killed

**Kathmandu, May 3** (Reuters): Nepal Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba today rejected an offer to resume peace talks with Maoist insurgents after troops killed 90 rebels in fierce overnight assaults in the west of the Himalayan kingdom.

The death toll is the highest in more than two weeks since some 250 rebels were believed killed in a crackdown against the Maoists who are fighting to topple the monarchy and establish communist rule.

"There cannot be any talks

with the Maoists until they lay down their arms," Deuba said at a public function in Kathmandu.

The rebels said yesterday they were ready for talks to try to end their six-year rebellion following calls by mainstream political parties.

The rebels, repeating earlier offers to talk, had said they were "ready to take any step" that could lead towards a dialogue but did not specifically mention giving up arms.

They walked out of talks and

broke a truce in November, prompting a state of emergency and the deployment of the army.

A defence ministry statement said 50 rebels were killed when security forces overran two rebel training centres and hideouts in Rolpa district, 450 km west of Kathmandu, late yesterday.

Another 40 insurgents were gunned down in Doti, 550 km west of Kathmandu, in the overnight crackdown.

Two soldiers were also killed in the fighting in Rolpa, the statement said.

"Among those killed are the so-called area commander, platoon commander, guerrillas and trainers of terrorist organisations," the statement said.

"Soldiers also recovered rifles, bombs, explosives and material used in landmines, training

materials as well as foodgrains." Nepal's junior interior minister had earlier said at least 51 people had died.

The conflict has cost over 3,700 lives, wrecked Nepal's aid-dependent economy and crippled tourism in the scenic mountainous nation, the birthplace of Buddha and home to Mount Everest and scores of the world's tallest peaks.

The bloody conflict has threatened the stability of the country's multi-party democracy.

Nepal is also still recovering from last year's palace massacre in which Crown Prince Dipendra shot dead his father, King Birendra, and most other members of the royal family before killing himself.

A Maoist revolt launched six years ago to topple the Hindu

monarchy in Nepal has claimed the lives of at least 85 children, a child rights group said.

The Child Workers in Nepal Concerned Centre said in a report 24 girls and 61 boys were among those killed during the conflict. "In all 41 children were killed in landmines while the rest were caught in different actions by the Maoist rebels or security forces," a study conducted by the group said.

US President George W. Bush and Nepal's Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba will meet in Washington on May 7 for talks expected to focus on Nepal's fight against a Maoist rebellion, the White House said. Nepal has been talking with the US about possible assistance, including weapons, money and training. US military officers are in Nepal assessing the situation.

THE TELEGRAPH

4 MAY 2002

4 MAY 2002

## 23 Maoists killed in Nepal

KATHMANDU, April 7. Stepping up anti-terrorist operations, Nepalese security forces shot dead 23 Maoists, including a woman, in fresh encounters across the country while five army personnel, including a major, were killed when their vehicle ran over an underground bomb planted by the rebels, the defence ministry said today.

A major and four other army personnel were killed yesterday in the Kothiaghat forest of Bardia district when a patrolling vehicle carrying some army men ran over an underground bomb planted by the Maoists, a defence ministry official said, adding some people also received injuries in the incident.

Security forces shot dead 13 Maoists involved in planting underground bombs in the Kothiaghat forest area yesterday. — PTI

THE STATESMAN

# Maoist strike cripples Nepal

Press Trust of India

KATHMANDU, April 23. — A Maoist-enforced general strike brought life in Nepal to a virtual standstill today, defying government's warnings against the shutdown.

On the first day of the five-day nationwide strike to pressure the government into talks, most of the schools, colleges and shops were closed while very few buses and cars plied on the roads throughout the country.

As the government had vowed to prevent the strike, its offices and some business establishments were open.

Capital Kathmandu, where normal life was disrupted, remained quiet with police and army patrolling the streets and government buildings.

Few shops did normal business in the suburbs where some public transport services, taxis, two-wheelers and tourist buses were seen plying.

At the Tribhuvan International Airport, international flights operated normally under heavy presence of security personnel but the shutdown affected the domestic flight service, an airport official said.

A taxi driver said cabs operating on Kathmandu's streets were hiding their number plates.

"We have covered the number plates to avoid being future targets of the Maoist rebels," he told PTI.

The government has offered compensation to the transport entrepreneurs in case of any damage caused to their vehicles.

"We have provided tight security to the people and we hope the

effect of the strike will be lessened from tomorrow," minister of state for home Mr Devendra Raj Kandel said.

He said the overall situation in the country was normal as no major incident occurred.

Government said security forces have the order to shoot at sight anyone trying to enforce the strike or anyone involved in any disruptive acts.

According to reports, the strike had less effect on western towns of Pokhara, Gorkha and Nepalgunj. In Mahendranaga and Dhangadi, shops remained partially open while transport services were disrupted.

Maoists have destroyed power stations in Kailali, Dailekh and Dang districts.

Crossfiring was reported in Gajuri of Dhading district this morning but there was no report

of any casualty.

On the eve of their strike, the Maoists attacked the village house of Minister of State for Tourism and Civil Aviation Mr Sarvadhan Rai in Khotang district but no one was injured.

The government yesterday said security forces killed 14 rebels across the country in separate operations.

The president of the outlawed Maoist Party, Prachanda, in a statement faxed to some newspapers, said the 23-27 April nationwide strike has been called out of compulsion to protest against the "atrocities" of the state.

"The agitation launched by the party will not end unless a political solution to the problem is reached," said the statement, adding that the rebels were ready for a positive political solution to the problem.

2 APR 2002

THE STATESMAN

# King's party to leave Deuba without subjects

FROM BHARAT BHUSHAN

**New Delhi, May 28:** The Prime Minister of Nepal, Sher Bahadur Deuba, may well emerge the loser in the ongoing power struggle in the country. If he persists with trying to form a "king's party", this could be the end of an important chapter in his political career.

The cadre of the Nepali Congress, it is becoming increasingly clear, is likely to stay with the party president, Girija Prasad Koirala. While 35 out of the 75 district presidents of the party have already issued statements of support for Koirala, the number is expected to go up to 60 in the coming days.

The various front organisations of the party — among the students, youth, workers, farmers and women — have already

come out in favour of Koirala.

A meeting of Nepali Congress MPs of the dissolved Parliament, former party candidates for Parliament who had lost in the last General Election and other opinion leaders of the party had been called by Koirala last afternoon. They unanimously urged him to take action against the 33 ministers of the Deuba Cabinet who have not yet tendered their resignation. Only three ministers of the Cabinet out of a total of 36 have resigned protesting the dissolution of Parliament.

All indications, therefore, are that the party structure and the cadre will remain with Koirala. Only his ministers will stay with Deuba for the time being. Nepali political observers believe that Deuba will reconstitute his caretaker Cabinet to bring in special-

ists and technocrats. Those ministers who are left out by him at the time of the Cabinet reshuffle are also expected to make their way back to the Nepali Congress.

One of the founders of the Nepali Congress and a former Prime Minister, Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, is trying for reconciliation. Referred to as the grand old man of the Nepali Congress, Kishunji, as he is popularly known, would find it impossible to continue backing Deuba if it means abandoning the party. Many in Nepal believe that Deuba would have gone his separate way on Sunday itself when he was expelled from the party. It was Bhattarai who asked him to wait for a week.

When Koirala went to meet Bhattarai last weekend, according to Nepali Congress insiders, he made it clear that there was

no question of revoking the action against Deuba.

"We have fought for democracy for 57 years and now Sher Bahadur wants to end democracy. We have taken a policy stand against his actions and if that means separation from you also, I would be very sorry to see that happen," Koirala is believed to have told his comrade of half a century.

Some other reconciliation attempts are also being made. Ramchandra Paudel, a member of the Central Working Committee of the party and Khumbahadur Khadka, the home minister, have floated a formula to bring the party together. They want the expulsion order against Deuba revoked, the entire Cabinet to tender its resignation and a three-member committee comprising Girija Prasad

Koirala, Krishna Prasad Bhattarai and Sher Bahadur Deuba to help nominate a new caretaker Cabinet.

As of now there are no takers for the Paudel-Khadka proposal — not even Deuba. Paudel himself is widely expected to join the caretaker government of Deuba as the deputy Prime Minister. And Khadka is on record saying that if there is no compromise a split will be forced on the Deuba supporters. The new party is apparently to be called the Social Democratic Party.

If there is no compromise, there is unlikely to be any love lost between Deuba and the party where he is not seen to enjoy any grass-roots support. Sher Bahadur Deuba came into the Nepali Congress through student politics.

During the most crucial

phase of struggle in the recent history of the Nepali Congress, in the years 1986 to 1990 when the pro-democracy movement was engaging the monarchist forces on the streets, Deuba was in London.

The leadership and activists which the struggle for democracy in Nepal threw up, do not have any sympathy for Deuba. Nepalis have a predilection for believing conspiracy theories and Deuba's detractors, not surprisingly, see the hand of the Palace in the present crisis.

Thus one of Deuba's detractors said, "His wife Aarzu Deuba comes from the former ruling clan of the Ranas. She is the first cousin of King Gyanendra's wife. There should be no doubt in anyone's mind that if he now forms a party of his own, it will be close to the Palace."

# As revolt grows, Nepal fears for its democracy

By CELIA W. DUGGER

SATBARIYA (Nepal): The bodies of the Maoist rebels were still scattered across parched lentil fields and behind a stand of sissau trees, almost a week after thousands of their comrades swarmed a police garrison here on a moonless night.

"When one Maoist was killed, another came forward," said Deepak Hamal, a young policeman who survived the battle in mid-April. "They were there to kill or to die." Almost a hundred Maoists fell before the survivors overran the garrison, when the constables ran out of ammunition. After the battle the rebels melted back into the countryside.

The horror of the bodies faces contorted in grimaces of death has seeped into life here, merging with a stain of violence that has spread over the last year in this tiny Hindu kingdom encircled by India and China.

A spindly boy in rags wandering across the fields said he was afraid that the ghosts of the dead would return to haunt him. He could have been speaking for all of Nepal. Last June the crown prince massacred his father and mother, the king and queen, and most of the royal family in a fusillade of gunfire.

In recent months the Maoist rebellion, inspired by the Shining Path guerrillas of Peru and led by two college-educated, upper caste Brahmins, has spiralled in intensity in this nation of stark poverty and beauty, where the snowy Himalayas tower majestically over pitiful scenes of hunger and want.

The rebels carried out surprise attacks in late November in many of the country's 75 districts, bringing a shocking end to a four-month cease-fire and three rounds of peace talks. They also went after the army for the first time, drawing it into the conflict.

The killing has intensified ever since.



Soldiers keep vigil in a Kathmandu street after security was strengthened across the Himalyan kingdom due to a sudden spurt in violence by Maoist rebels.

The police estimate that 3,600 people have died since the Maoists declared a "people's war" in February 1996.

Half of those deaths have been in the four-and-half months since a state of emergency was declared, suspending civil liberties in this young democracy, just 12 years into its incarnation as a constitutional monarchy.

The 50,000-member Royal Nepal Army, a largely ceremonial force that occasionally took part in United Nations peacekeeping missions, joined the battle against the Maoists on November 26. The widespread hope in Kathmandu that the army would quickly crush the rebellion has proved empty.

The ruthless tactics used by both the

rebels and the security forces have become more widespread, say victims and human rights researchers.

Amnesty International and Nepalese human rights groups have documented what they call a pattern of abuses by security forces that include the execution and torture of people suspected of being Maoists. The rights groups accuse the Maoists of gruesome violations as well, including executions of dozens of schoolteachers who refused to submit to extortion demands and the torture and murder of suspected informants and political opponents with large, curved knives.

Resham Prasad Panta, 52, a poor farmer who lives a four-hour trek from

the nearest road in the Gorka district, said Maoists dragged him from his dinner one recent night, accused him of being an informer and shattered his shin with a large boulder. More Maoists then brutally beat his frail, underfed wife, Sita, 48. Both lay in a hospital here.

"We are simple people," said Mrs Panta, tears streaming down her face. "We have nothing for or against anyone. Both sides pressure us. The Maoists say you must be informing the police. The police say you must be sheltering the Maoists. We are squeezed."

The Maoist influence has spread to most areas of the country, with deaths related to the insurgency in 60 of the 75 districts. Last year the Maoists set up "people's government's" in 22 districts.

When the Nepalese won their long struggle for democracy in 1990, the Maoists were in the mainstream, part of a Communist alliance with a small number of parliamentary seats. But in 1994 the election commission barred the alliance from taking part, an act the courts later ruled illegal. Maoist leaders were brutally beaten by the police.

In 1995, Pushpa Kamal Dahal and Baburam Bhattarai formed the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), and the next year it issued 40 demands, including abolition of the monarchy, radical land reform and a raft of policies that it said would liberate the people.

When the Maoists did not get their way, they went to war. The two leaders are believed by the government to be living underground in India. The group has financed itself by robbing banks and extorting money from landlords, teachers and business people. Members have armed themselves by looting automatic rifles and rocket launchers, among other weapons, from security forces. (NYT News Service)

AP

TUESDAY, MARCH 26, 2002

## CROSS-BORDER BONHOMIE WITH NEPAL

THE NEW LINKAGES that India and Nepal seem to be seeking at this stage are related to the latest global perspectives on the need to tame political terrorism of all forms and manifestations. However, it will be naive on the part of either country to assume that they might face no significant hurdles as they seek to enhance their cross-border bonhomie to unprecedented levels of cooperation. A much-publicised outcome of the latest visit to India by the Nepalese Prime Minister, Sher Bahadur Deuba, is New Delhi's offer to help Kathmandu face the ongoing insurgency by the self-styled Maoist rebels of the Himalayan kingdom. Closely connected to India's initiative of this magnitude is New Delhi's expectation that Kathmandu will reciprocate in a big way. Mr. Deuba seems to have been left in no doubt about New Delhi's desire to see him address its concerns about the misuse of Nepalese territory and hospitality by some forces inimical to India's national interest. New Delhi appears satisfied that the Nepalese leader has shown himself to be sensitive to its concerns about the Himalayan kingdom's suspected vulnerability to penetration by some anti-India forces. However, if India and Nepal are not keen to debate this issue openly in the public domain, the reason obviously has much to do with their own foreign policy compulsions.

The Nepalese have traditionally tried to exercise a high degree of strategic autonomy consistent with their perception of having to coexist comfortably with their giant neighbours — India and China. Now, India's equation with Nepal in the new global context of an anti-terror "campaign" will not at all be divorced from Kathmandu's enduring relationship of mutual benefit with Beijing. This should be of no surprise, given that China too is an active campaigner against the globalised politics of terror. However, an entirely new element of candour is beginning to influence, if not also define, the strategic scope of the Indo-Nepalese interactions at this juncture. The

candid exchanges seem related to New Delhi's strong views about the Pakistani intelligence establishment's alleged ability to access Nepal (not its Government) to foment anti-India trouble. It is in this unconcealed context that New Delhi's new move to help Nepal roll back its Maoist revolt will be seen on the wider international scene. The relevant question at stake is not whether the armed Nepalese guerillas derive inspiration and support from the residual Maoist elements in China or from the "people's war" groups in India or indeed from both. Of greater interest to the international community will be the reality that Nepal has not been able to control its Maoist problems despite its own recent promulgation of a state of emergency. India's new offer to Nepal remains largely undefined, but it is obvious that the political aim is to help enhance the kingdom's sense of security. New Delhi's gesture of this kind is a sequel to Washington's expressions of support for Nepal's own war against terrorism within its borders. Inevitably, therefore, India's neighbours will tend to evaluate its latest diplomacy of incremental goodwill towards Nepal in this overall situation of the kingdom's new visibility as a terror-infested area of concern to the U.S. and others.

India's ties with Nepal cannot be circumscribed by strategic and security issues of common interest, whatever might be their new weightage in the bilateral sphere. Not surprisingly, Mr. Deuba has conspicuously sought to turn the spotlight on the prospects of enlarged economic cooperation with India. Of much direct relevance is the recent bilateral accord on intensifying trade linkages over the next five years. While some specifics have certainly figured during Mr. Deuba's visit to India at this time, New Delhi cannot afford to brush aside Kathmandu's desire to work for more equitable exchanges in the economic sphere. It is also in India's interest to be accommodative in this manner across its "porous" border with Nepal.

THE HINDU

26 MAR 2002

# 62 Maoists killed by Army in Nepal

Keshav Pradhan  
Kathmandu, March 17

NEPALESE SECURITY forces this morning claimed to have killed at least 62 Maoist insurgents in Rolpa, the seat of the parallel Communist "government."

Six other rebels were shot dead in Kanchanpur and Baglung districts in western Nepal yesterday.

The Defence Ministry said 62 rebels died when Army and police personnel carried out a joint raid and destroyed a Maoist arms training camp at Gunchal in Rolpa district, more than 500 km west of here.

The ministry claimed the dead included both the instructors and trainees. There were no casualties among the security forces. A huge quantity of arms, ammunition and training material were seized from the site.

Efforts are underway to identify the instructors. Kathmandu has been claiming of late that India's outlawed People's War Group is involved in training Nepalese Maoists. This issue may come up for discussion when Prime Minister Sher Ba-

hadur Deuba visits India next week to seek support for Nepal's military campaign against the Communist rebels. Deuba will meet Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and West Bengal Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharya during his tour which begins on March 20.

Nepal suspects that the rebels have been using West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar both as shelters and conduits for arms supply. A lot of importance is being attached to the raid as it was in Rolpa district where the Maoists had set up a parallel government in November last year.

It was again in Rolpa that they had first launched their "people's war" aimed at establishing a republican government in February 1996. Furthermore, the raid takes place barely three days after Maoist chief Pushpakamal Dahal, aka Prachand, showed his willingness to resume negotiations with the Government.

The negotiations broke down in November last year over the rebels' demand for a Constituent Assembly and a republican Government.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

10 March 2002

# CRISIS IN NEPAL-II

## World Community Provides Moral And Material Support

By PARMANAND

On the international front, Nepal is getting support and cooperation - moral, material and strategic - from all possible quarters. Quite expectedly, the Maoist insurgency has won Nepal worldwide sympathy.

Nepal's southern, eastern and western neighbour, India, has, indeed gone the whole hog to help it in this hour of crisis. India's ambassador, Dr Indu Prakash Singh, said in an interview in Kathmandu that "we are providing Nepal with whatever material support they are asking for". He underlines that a "new warmth and closeness has developed between the NDA government in New Delhi and the Nepali government. There is no misunderstanding of any kind".

Speaking at Patna on 27 February, Indian defence minister George Fernandes stated that military assistance had been provided to Nepal to contain the Maoist insurgency but denied that there were any Indian troops on Nepalese soil. Fernandes, of course, declined to specify the nature of military assistance. Kathmandu, in turn, said that it would give all help to combat cross-border terrorism from its territory.

### Indian cooperation

The renewal of the trade treaty between Nepal and India — which was due to expire on 5 December and which had been extended for another three months by mutual agreement — is yet another signal of these two states removing, or at least diluting, their misunderstanding in the changed milieu.

The trade treaty will expire on 5 March 2002. In its modified form, it takes care of some of the Indian concerns. Significantly, the basic framework and structure of the treaty remain unchanged, but it does address the concerns of the Indian industry over the inflow of third country goods and surge in imports of certain commodities.

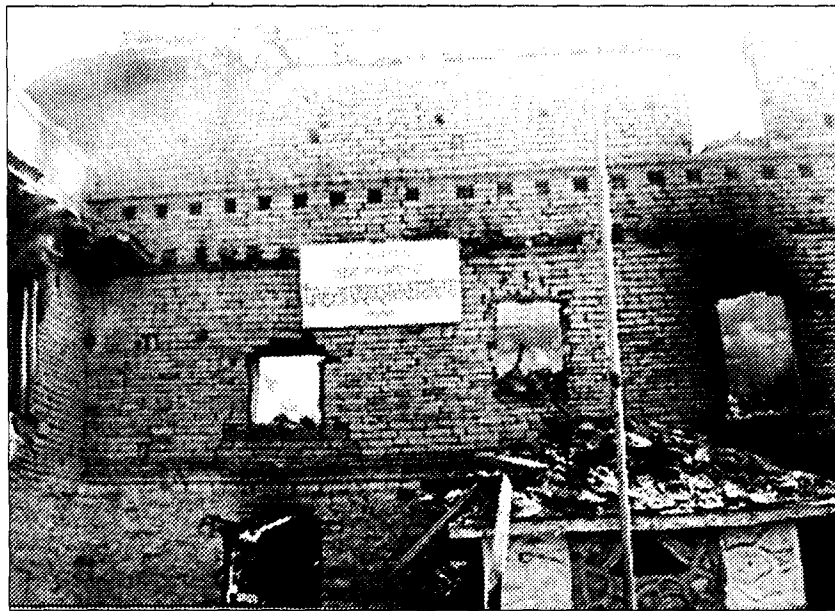
The 1996 agreement had not defined manufacturing and value addition. The renewed version contains a safeguard clause permitting appropriate measures for remedy in sync with global norms should there be a surge of imports of certain commodities. Official sources stated that the safeguard has specially been incorporated in the spheres of imports of sensitive commodities like vanaspati, acrylic yarn, copper products and zinc oxide. Besides, duty-free impor-

ts would be allowed up to a certain ceiling and any import above the ceiling would be applicable for duty under most-favoured nation status.

In a significant development, in a bid to keep a check on the unhindered growth of madrasas, Nepal has decided to regulate the functioning as well as financing of madrasas on its soil — especially in border areas. India drew Nepal's

demands of changing or updating the bilateral peace and friendship treaty of 1950, India has tried to be as accommodative as possible. Probably, India has given Nepal the liberty of getting the treaty abrogated altogether. The ball is now in Nepal's court.

The USA is providing \$200 million to the cash-strapped Nepal government to help the latter fight against Maoist terro-



attention to various aspects of subversive activities such as circulation of fake currency notes, transmission of RDX and other activities inimical to both countries.

### US involvement

On the other hand, India, agreeing to a request from Nepal, has decided as an interim measure to relax the rule of school children travelling to the Himalayan kingdom, if accompanied by their parents. It was also decided to allow the use of school certificates or school identity cards to children if they travel with their parents to Nepal. The two countries also decided to constitute an expert group which would look into further relaxation in identity documents. Yet another expert group formed by the two countries would look into the possibility of regulating movement of people across the border. Regarding Nepal's frequent

attacks, according to the largest circulated daily, Kantipur. The daily said the US will provide the amount in the first phase of long-term support to Nepal and the money would mainly be used to buy defence equipment.

The Nepalese army is expected to buy fixed-wheel helicopters, short take-off and landing Twin Otter planes, night vision devices, night vision helicopters, vehicles and communication equipment. The decision to provide aid was taken after the US ambassador to Nepal, Michael F Malinowski, visited Achham district. Chief of army staff General Prajwal Shamsheer Jung Bahadur Rana, significantly, had accompanied the US Ambassador on the tour. The US appears interested in getting fully involved in quelling the Maoists, whom Malinowski compared to organisations like Al-Qaida in Afghanistan and Shining Path in Peru.

He also said the Maoists were not very different from the Taliban.

Significantly, a high-level US delegation of security experts is arriving in Nepal to help the army draw up fresh strategies to fight against terrorists, a government source said in Kathmandu. The International Development Association of the World Bank and the International Fund for Agriculture Development have agreed to provide more than \$427 million in credit and technical grant assistance to Nepal for telecommunication reforms and poverty alleviation — something badly needed at this juncture.

### Positive results

The Chinese, too, are not lagging behind in helping Nepal in the crisis situation. The country's ambassador to Nepal, Wu Cong Yong, said in Kathmandu recently that China would neither support nor provide shelter to Nepalese Maoists. He added: "Maoists have taken the name of the late Chinese leader, Mao Zedong, but there is no link of the Chinese government with the Maoists". He said Nepal-China relations were "running smoothly" and underlined China's interest in increasing investment in Nepal. Calling for an "investor-friendly" atmosphere, the ambassador felt that "laws and regulations should be chalked out to protect the rights of investors".

With a view to facilitating the flow between Nepal and China, the two governments have agreed to build a one-km ropeway between Kodari in Sinhuwalchowk district of Nepal and Khasa in Tibet. Apparently, the People's Republic of China is not doing anything to hamper India's friendship with Nepal. The various components of the Nepalese government also gave a good account of themselves during the eleventh SAARC summit of the heads of state or government in Kathmandu in January this year. Not only did the law and order remain under control despite the Maoists' threats but the ancient city of Kathmandu (or Kantipur) also wears a better look nowadays. One hopes that with its own determination and the help from the international community, Nepal would eventually overcome the crisis. But the international community needs to ensure that there is sufficient economic development in the kingdom lest the Maoists are not viewed as redeemers.

(Concluded)

16 MAR 2002

VIA AIR MAIL



# CRISIS IN NEPAL-I

## Poor Administration Gives Rise To Uncertainty

By PARMANAND

504 15/3

The large-scale massacre in Sanfebagar and Mangalseh in the Achham district of western Nepal on 17 February by the Nepal Communist Party (Maoist), in which more than 140 people, mostly army personnel, policemen, and government officials lost their lives, was unprecedented in the history of the so-called People's War in Nepal. Political analysts in Nepal are also baffled by the timing. The lower house, the Pratinidhi Sabha, was to begin discussion on the approval of the emergency proclamation (under Article 115 of the Nepali Constitution) of 26 November. There were apprehensions that the main opposition party, the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) would either put hurdles or try to bargain with the Sher Bahadur Deuba government.

### Favourable to Maoists

The UML has emerged as a formidable opposition party because of the unconditional return of leaders and cadres of the Communist Party of Nepal (Marxist-Leninist) to its fold on 15 February. There had never been any love lost between the UML and the Maoists. Yet the emerging political scenario seemed to be immensely favourable to the terrorist Maoists.

Yet another favourable situation created for the Maoists was the statement of a former chief of Army Staff, General (Retd) Satchit Shamsheer Jung Bahadur Rana, that if Parliament failed to endorse the emergency proclamation by 21 February, the army would have to return to the barracks. Though no provision of the Constitution suggests this, there seemed to be many takers for this statement.

Worse, the ruling Nepali Congress, divided against itself, seemed to be resenting another favourable scene for the Maoists. While the NC president, 77-year-old Girija Prasad Koirala, is still clamouring for his Brihat Prajatantrik Morcha comprising all democratic parties in the kingdom, the 55-year-old Prime Minister seems determined to establish his supremacy in the NC. It is a different matter that in this tug of war the law and order situation is deteriorating fast.

It was the sixth anniversary of the Maoists. They knew that the Pratinidhi Sabha would discuss the issue of the emergency and they should not lose their importance at that point of time. They also knew that the strength of the army and the police was not sufficient in Achham despite several requests made by the local administration for more troops. Intelligence agencies, indeed, had informed the government in Kathmandu that

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the Maoists were going to do something disastrous. In the event, the Maoists chose Achham to prove their strength.

The Pratinidhi Sabha on 18 February witnessed noisy scenes. Members, cutting across party lines, did not allow Home Minister Khum Bahadur Khadka to make a statement and was mishandled by agitated MPs. Almost a similar scene was enacted in the Upper House, the Rashtriya Sabha. But by then Khadka had

after 17 February.

The Pratinidhi Sabha on 21 February approved it by 194 votes in its favour — much more than the requirement of a two-thirds majority. Out of the total strength of 205 in the House, only seven members of small parties voted against. Quite expectedly, a beaming Deuba said that the morale of the security forces would go up.

The existing political scenario leaves



become wiser and didn't insist on making a statement. Both Houses were adjourned by their respective presiding officers creating a great deal of uncertainty. Members from the Achham district in both Houses blamed the Prime Minister and the home minister for not acting on the intelligence reports in time.

### Support for Deuba

When, after a long gap, Prime Minister Deuba came to make a statement in Parliament, it was brief and the response to MPs' charges was inadequate. Deuba did not take more than 10 minutes. In the event, MPs like Lilamani Pokhrel from the United People's Front, Navraj Subedi of the National People's Front, Ram Bahadur Bista of the Nepali Congress from Achham, Pashupati Shamsheer Jung Bahadur Rana of the Rashtriya Prajatantra Party and Mrigendra Kumar Singh Yadav of the Nepal Sadbhavana Party showed their debating skills.

Whatever might have been said earlier about the Emergency proclamation, there was little confusion about its fate

several questions unanswered. How long will the Deuba government last? It is rightly said that by tradition, temperament and even training many Nepali Congressmen are the most effective destabilisers of their own governments. And what happens when the government perse remains a non-performer and ineffective?

Former foreign minister 55-year-old Chakra Prasad Bastola said in an interview that there was total absence of civil authority in the kingdom. He feels that the war against the Maoists will be a protracted one; the army and the emergency cannot be used indefinitely.

And all this is happening when, he emphasises, Deuba has a staff of 80 whereas former Prime Ministers GP Koirala and KP Bhattarai could do with a staff of about 30. Bastola, the first Nepali Ambassador to India in the post-multi party democracy phase, feels that the leadership has no strategy to deal with the different situation.

The Rashtriya Sabha member and former district Congress Committee president of Terai's Siraha, 56-year-old Amiya

Kumar Yadav says that despite all efforts GP Koirala could not solve the Maoist problem because he could not get proper cooperation inside the NC. He insists that when Koirala described Maoists as terrorists many did not agree, but finally they had to be so described. Yadav feels that no Prime Minister had received the cooperation that Deuba has. He is sure about the "Brihat Ekta" arrangement finding a solution to the existing problem.

### The economy

Maoists, it is true, are overwhelmingly terrorists, but politicians of all hues - of course, in varying degrees and sotto voce — agree that they have over the years created a base for themselves. Constitutional changes appear unavoidable but their shape and extent cannot be predicted. Inevitably, cosmetic changes will not suffice.

Many feel a Constituent Assembly may be the answer — none of the five constitutions in Nepal's history was drafted by a constituent assembly. But noted Nepali political scientist and former ambassador to India, Professor Lok Raj Baral, feels that it will make the situation more complicated.

Intra-party politics of the NC is going to be of utmost importance. If Girija Babu seems determined to remove the government by doing something novel, Deuba does not seem to be friendless inside the party, inside Parliament and even outside the country. Deuba, interestingly, is well known for winning friends. The two NC veterans would be under a test.

Not surprisingly, bad politics and bad administration, creating political uncertainty and instability, have told on the kingdom's economy. Fiftyone-year-old economist and finance minister Dr Ram Sharan Mahat admits that the present economic situation is "an exception and a little difficult" inasmuch as the last decade was "productive".

He states that violent activities affecting the kingdom and even resulting in a massacre in the royal palace have created this situation. He admits that revenue collection has gone down, security expenditure has increased and development activities have slowed down.

But, Mahat insists, there is a brighter side too. Despite the negative factors, the fundamentals are sound: foreign exchange reserves stand at \$1.4 billion and the inflation rate stands at three per cent. Besides, fiscal deficit is manageable. The finance minister feels that the kingdom would tide over the economic crisis sooner rather than later.

(To be concluded)

55-12  
29/2

# 37 Maoists killed as bandh cripples Nepal

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE, AFP

KATHMANDU/KAKARIVITTA, Feb 23 — The second day of the nationwide strike called by Maoist rebels virtually closed down Kathmandu today even as 37 Maoist rebels were killed in clashes with security forces in western Nepal last night.

"The rebels were killed in action by security personnel in the Kalikot, Achham and Surkhet districts," a defence ministry official said. A large cache of arms and ammunition were recovered.

The capital's streets were deserted and shops remained closed today in the strike called to mark the sixth anniversary of the launch of the Maoists "people's war" on 13 February, 1996.

Security forces patrolled the streets in armoured cars fearing further attacks by the guerrillas.

Deputy home minister Mr Devendra Raj Kandel said there had been no reports of further attacks overnight.

Even in eastern part of the country where Maoists may not have consolidated its base

yet, the strike was both spontaneous and total.

The fear of the rebels was palpable at Kakarvitta in this region, as people on the streets refused to talk. A security man along the Indo-Nepal border seemed disillusioned, "these killings will kill the country".

All night and day services from this part of the country, have been suspended and bus operators were reluctant to take chances. "The police can't save themselves, how can they save us?" said a tour operator.

A district official of Jhapa district, identified the Boungdangi area as the point through which rebels have crossed over to India in the past.

He said though no additional forces have been deployed in this area, they are maintaining a strict vigil along the border.

He had information that some Maoists had been trained by militant outfits of north Bengal, but refused to divulge whether the training was still going on.

He appeared satisfied with the security arrangement India had made along the border areas.

THE STATESMAN

1996 FEB 23

# Nepal links PWG to Maoist attacks

Keshav Pradhan  
Kathmandu, February 23

NEPAL, REELING under the recent spate of Maoist attacks on its security establishments, now suspects involvement of Indian extremists, especially the People's War Group, in such operations.

A senior Nepalese official on Saturday said, "We are verifying reports about the presence of non-Nepalese during the February 16 Maoist raids in Achham district. This has again made us look into the Maoist links with Indian radicals more thoroughly." Over 125 Royal Nepalese Army and police had died in the attack.

Quoting eyewitness accounts, the official said, "There were at least ten people who were tall and dark and did not speak Nepali or any dialect spoken in western Nepal." He added, "It is this group who especially handled sophisticated weapons and kept on firing at Army helicopters carrying reinforcements."

Kathmandu has become increasingly suspicious of the

PWG and the Maoist Coordination Committee ever since the Nepalese rebels set up the Coordination Committee of Maoist Parties and Organisations in South Asia early last year.

What has made Nepal more nervous are recent reports in the Indian media about the two outfits providing the Nepal Maoists explosives stolen from coal mines in Bengal. Earlier, there were reports about the presence of Indian radicals in western Nepal's Rukum district in November when the Nepalese Maoist decided to set up a revolutionary government and a People's Liberation Army.

Indian officials said, "Delhi has already taken a number of steps to help Nepal fight the insurgency." It has tightened security along the 1800-km border by posting over 10,000 Special Security Bureau personnel. Besides, giving special training to Nepalese security personnel, it has supplied two helicopters and several truckloads of weapons for counter-insurgency operations.

Another factor that is worry-



SHER BAHADUR DEUBA

ing the Sher Bahadur Deuba Government is the quick fall of the Army stationed in Achham. The Opposition tried to pin the Government down on this issue in Parliament even though defence officials claimed that the insurgents were many times more in number and used modern weapons, including rocket launchers, stolen from the Dang barracks on November 23.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

24 FEB 2002

# 44 killed in Nepal Maoist raids

HT Correspondent  
Kathmandu, February 22

HOURS AFTER Nepalese parliament endorsed the Emergency on Thursday evening, Maoists carried out a series of raids on police and army posts, killing 34 policemen. Ten civilians were burnt alive as the rebels threw two petrol bombs at a night bus in a central district and bombed a truck in western Nepal.

The insurgents carried out blasts across the kingdom to enforce a two-day general strike that began today against the Emergency. Kathmandu was almost paralysed, despite constant patrolling by soldiers and policemen. There were simultaneous raids on three police and Army posts in Salyan district.

The rebels set ablaze a bus in central Nepal's Chitwan district. It was carrying at least 40 people. Some passengers jumped out of the windows. But a child and four adults were burnt alive. An official in Chitwan said some of the injured were Indians.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

## **Nepal emergency extended by <sup>HPL</sup> three months <sup>27</sup>**

**Keshav Pradhan**  
Kathmandu, February 21

NEPAL'S BELEAGUERED Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba on Thursday got a temporary reprieve as its Parliament endorsed his proposal to extend the state of Emergency by three months.

Deuba had promulgated the Emergency through an ordinance on November 26 last to contain the Maoist insurgency.

Deuba could obtain the support of the two-thirds members only after he promised a number of constitutional and socio-economic reforms as demanded by the major Opposition Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist Leninist (UML).

Altogether 194 members belonging to the ruling Nepali Congress, the UML, the Rashtriya Prajatantra Party and the Nepal Sadbhavna Party voted in favour of the proposal.

Those who opposed it were seven members belonging to three radical Left parties- the Samyukta Jan Morcha, the Rashtriya Jan Morcha and the Nepal Mazdoor Kisan Party. While the Speaker did not cast his vote, MPs were absent. Earlier, UML general secretary Madhav Nepal said, "We don't think the Emergency can lead us to any solution."

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

22 FEB 2002

## Devalued Dubya

Britney Spears' pop anthem has not yet become George 'Dubya' Bush's theme song. But it may not be long before bands stop striking up 'Hail to the Chief' and start playing 'Oops! I did it again' to herald the arrival of the man with the runaway tongue. President Bush was back at his unwitting best in Tokyo recently, as foreign exchange traders learned the hard way that it doesn't pay to put your money where Dubya's mouth is. Addressing a news conference, he mentioned having discussed the devaluation issue with Japanese premier Junichiro Koizumi. This statement caused pandemonium in the forex markets — was Japan about to devalue the yen? The dollar rose to 132.80 against the yen, before someone figured out that president Bush was referring to deflation, whereupon the greenback dropped back to 132.62. The forex faux pas was, of course, just the latest in a series of gaffes, many of which have been painstakingly chronicled in *The Bush Dyslexicon*, written by media ecology professor Mark Crispin Miller. Much has been made of Bushisms like 'smoking them out', and 'crusade against terror', but to be fair, the worst he can be accused of in these cases is insensitivity. One can even put down his statement that "the legislature's job is to write law. It is the executive branch's job to interpret law" to simple ignorance of the political process — strange though that may be in a career politician. Unless of course, he's doing some wishful thinking, out loud. But it's surely time to start getting worried when the world's most powerful man defines trustworthiness as "when you say you're going to do something and don't do it". Also, wise words like "I will have a foreign-handed foreign policy" or "More and more of our imports come from overseas" don't reflect too well on the education imparted in America's foremost institutions like Andover, Yale and Harvard, where Dubya spent his formative years. There have been suggestions that president Bush may be dyslexic, but then so was Winston Churchill. And it's hard to imagine the orator who stirringly promised "blood, sweat and tears" saying, a la Bush, "One of the common denominators I have found is that expectations rise above that which is expected". Still, many Bush acolytes bristle at suggestions that he should be renamed 'Duh-bya' or 'Dumbya'. They say he has proved to be a singularly effective leader at a time of crisis, and a few malapropisms should not be held against him. Indeed, as president Bush himself once pointed out, people 'misunderestimate' him at their own peril.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

22 FEB 2002

# Deuba out on a limb

SR  
Hi Sr. Nepal  
Continuity under a Maoist cloud

The killing of 134 people, including 129 security force personnel, by Maoists in Nepal suggests that the Sher Bahadur Deuba government is losing control over law and order in remote rebel-ridden Acham district. It has again been caught off-guard, as on 24 November when the Maoists ran amok and forced it to declare an emergency. What should cause Deuba worry is that the latest outrage takes place in a district that is said to have a large concentration of troops. The Prime Minister's position is shaky. He has to ratify an Ordinance imposing a three-month Emergency in the next few days. Communist parliamentarians opposed to the declaration are determined to block the extension of emergency, as are some members of the Nepali Congress, which is not a cohesive entity at the top. Both former Prime Ministers KP Bhattarai and GP Koirala were forced to resign when they failed to contain the Maoist menace.

There was high expectations that Deuba was the man for the job since he headed the high-level commission appointed by the Bhattarai government which held talks with rebel leaders after they responded to calls for negotiations. That it made little progress during Koirala's term resulted from a lack of support. Incidentally, it was during Deuba's tenure as Prime Minister that the Maoists first struck in February 1996. There is no alternative to dialogue but Deuba has ruled out further talks after the rebels broke away from the peace process last August and took to violence. His precondition that they surrender their weapons before talks makes no sense these days since there is no dearth of arms in bazaars. If parliamentarians fail to get their act together fast, Nepal's multi-party democracy is in danger.

THE STATESMAN

22 FEB 2002

REBELS LOSE 100 CADRE IN COUNTER-OFFENSIVE

# Nepal Maoists kill 134

## Agencies

KATHMANDU, Feb. 17. — In their deadliest strike in Nepal, Maoists killed 134 people, including 129 security personnel, in two assaults overnight. They lost more than 100 of their cadre in the counter-offensive.

The violence ended immediate prospects of peace in the Himalayan kingdom.

Launching surprise attacks on government buildings, Maoists set some of them on fire in Mangalsen, the Achham district headquarters, 750 km from here. The nearby Sanphebagar airport was set ablaze, resulting in the death of some policemen.

The defence ministry said 57 soldiers of the Royal Nepalese Army guarding the headquarters, 72 police personnel, four government officials and

one civilian were killed. Chief district officer, Mr Mohan Singh Khatri, intelligence officer, Mr Lokrai Upreti and his wife, and a post office staff were among the killed.

The rebels attacked Lalbandi police post in Sarlahi district in the eastern Terai region, adjoining India.

They destroyed the police post and looted arms and communication sets.

The attack was the first of its kind since the Maoists launched insurgency operations in 1996.

The guerrillas used weapons looted from the Dang army barracks three months ago to carry out the attack in Achham. Giving details of the attack, official sources here said that government forces launched a counter-offensive and fought a pitched battle with the Maoists

after midnight that continued till this morning.

An official release said that police reinforcement rushed to Mangalsen was delayed due to bad weather and mountainous terrain.

It added there could be major casualties on the rebel side as their bodies were seen being taken by their fellow cadre. Sources estimated the rebels' casualties as nearly 200.

The government had declared an emergency on 26 November and ordered the army to join the fight against the rebels after they ended a four-month-long ceasefire and resumed attacks on government targets.

The overnight attack came at a time when Prime Minister, Mr Sher Bahadur Deuba, is seeking support from the opposition parties to endorse the emergency and extend it for

another three months.

Mr Deuba met his Cabinet in an emergency meeting today as he prepared to seek extension of the emergency and parliament's clearance to continue the deployment of the army against the rebels.

The army said it had killed nearly 500 guerrillas and arrested another 1,400 during the emergency.

Officials said nearly 200 government soldiers and police officers had lost their lives to contain the insurgency.

The Maoists, led by Prachanda (real name Pushpa Kamal Dahal), want to abolish the country's constitutional monarchy.

They have called a nationwide general strike on Friday and Saturday to commemorate the sixth anniversary of their insurgency campaign.

THE STATESMAN

18 FEB 2002



# Nepal boosts funds to combat Maoists

By Kosmos Biswokarma

KATHMANDU: The Nepalese fight against the Maoist insurgency is turning into an expensive affair with the government being forced to allocate an extra Nepali Rs 3 billion to the Royal Nepal Army.

The finance ministry and the Royal Nepal Army have already agreed to spend another Rs 3 billion apart from the allocated budget this fiscal year, *The Kathmandu Post* daily reported on Friday.

The expenditures in security operations since the imposition of emergency last November has already exceeded the planned budget, forcing the government to cut down on the development budget.

The additional amount is to be used in meeting expenses after the announcement of the state of emergency and to procure arms, ammunition and helicopters for the army, the report said.

Nepal had imposed emergency after an upsurge in Maoist violence which led to some 450 deaths. The six-year-old insurgency has already claimed 2,500 lives. Since the emergency, India has provided two Chetak helicopters through grants

while the government has purchased two MI-17 choppers from Russia.

The finance ministry had initially planned to provide Rs 3 billion for the next five-year period to modernise the Nepal army. But the imposition of emergency and the mobilisation of the army to quell Maoist guerrillas have prompted the government to inject the money immediately.

Security agencies have been demanding Rs 5 billion from the government to meet soaring security expenses. This is an extra demand besides the regular budget of Rs 10.3 billion earmarked for security agencies in the current fiscal year, which ends in June.

The government has already cut down 25 per cent of development expenditures due mainly to lesser collection of revenue and rising security expenses.

It has cut the budget to village development committees by 50 per cent, constituency development fund by 25 per cent and budget to municipalities, sub-metropolis and metropolis by 10 per cent. This would affect about 50 per cent development projects throughout the country. (IANS)

THE TIMES OF INDIA

THE TIMES OF INDIA

# Maoists put Deuba Govt in a spot

Keshav Pradhan  
Kathmandu, February 6

THE ESCALATION of violence by underground Maoists has put the six-month-old Sher Bahadur Deuba Government in a tight spot.

Prior to this, K P Bhattarai (Deuba's mentor) and G P Koirala had stepped down as Prime Minister following widespread criticism for their failure to contain the Communist rebellion.

Lately, the Maoists, in an apparent bid to mark the seventh anniversary of their uprising that falls on February 13, have attacked several security posts and Government establishments, including an airport. Over 60 people, including 16 security personnel, have died since last week.

Adding more to Deuba's discomfiture, the rebels have now shifted their focus to Kathmandu and surrounding areas where bombs planted by them are detected almost every day.

The worsening situation has given Koirala a chance to hit back at Deuba who had ousted him unceremoniously in July.

The former Prime Minister today defended his move to form an alliance of democratic forces to tackle the Maoist problem at a meeting of the Nepali Congress working committee.

This is despite the fact that

supporters of Deuba and Bhattarai had earlier dismissed it as an attempt to seize power through the back door. The committee will meet here again tomorrow.

The growing disenchantment of mainstream Communists, who are in a majority in the Upper House, with Deuba may help Koirala intensify his campaign. Earlier, the Left had backed Deuba in his fight against Koirala for Prime Ministership.

The Communist Party of Nepal-Marxist Leninist (ML), which is set to merge with the major Opposition Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist Leninist (UML) later this month, yesterday decided to oppose further extension of the emergency.

A senior ML leader said, "Deuba had become Prime Minister by promising to solve the Maoist issue through dialogue and not with the help of the emergency."

This indicates that Deuba will find it difficult to obtain the Parliament's approval for the emergency that was promulgated through an ordinance for three months on November 26.

The spring session of Parliament begins on February 10. Yesterday, 13 parties, including 10 Left organisations, jointly met Deuba to seek partial relaxation of the emergency and restoration of press freedom.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

FEB 2000

# Nepal Maoists kill 16 cops

**Keshav Pradhan**  
*Kathmandu, February 5*

MAOIST INSURGENTS raided a security post and killed 16 policemen in the eastern district of Kavrepalanchok early today.

The attack, biggest since the promulgation of the Emergency on November 26, comes about a week before the seventh anniversary of the Maoists' armed struggle for a republican State.

Government officials said the rebels raided the Bhakundebsi post, 110 km east of here, around 1 am. Seven of them died when

the police fired in retaliation.

The rebels usually step up their activities around February 13, the day they launched their rebellion six years ago.

Since last week, the insurgents have attacked Lukla Airport at the base of Mount Everest, a power plant and a police post in eastern Nepal.

Security forces have detected several bombs planted by the militants here, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur in the Kathmandu valley. Some of these were wrapped in cloth and had anti-Government

slogans scribbled on them.

Though the Royal Nepalese Army has been able to give tough resistance to the Maoists in their strongholds in western Nepal, it hasn't caught a single prominent rebel leader so far.

Despite this, the Government and the Opposition haven't yet reached an agreement on extending the emergency promulgated through an Ordinance for three months.

Opposition parties fear that the emergency might pose a danger to democracy in the long run. Almost all of

them have set up committees to monitor the government's actions during the emergency. Over 400 people have died since the promulgation of the emergency.

The Government has to issue a fresh Ordinance if the current one does not get Parliament's approval before it expires later this month. It has also been seeking international aid to contain the rebellion. Yesterday, Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba asked for more aid from donor nations at a meeting of the Nepal Development Forum here.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

6 FEB 2002

# Nine Maoists gunned down in Nepal

Agencies

KATHMANDU, Jan. 27. — At least nine Maoists were killed by security forces in Western Nepal, a Nepalese government statement said today.

At least four Maoists were killed in Dadeldhura and Kanchanpur districts in an encounter with the security forces on Thursday while five others were killed in Kanchanpur and Kailali districts, the Nepalese defence ministry release said.

The security forces also arrested 49 Maoists and seized weapons from various districts of the country.

Meanwhile, the rebels bombed the village homes of a top police official and a former military commander, news reports said today. No one was injured.

The house of Armed Police Force chief Mr Krishna Mohan Shrestha was bombed Friday night in Chainpur, about 400 km east of the capital Kathmandu, said *Kantipur*, Nepal's leading newspaper.

Around the same time, the rebels detonated explosives at the house of Mr Garud Shumshere Rana, the former chief of the Royal Nepalese Army, in Sihorya, about 250 km southwest of Kathmandu.

No injuries were reported as neither of the houses was occupied by the owners or their families. //

THE STATESMAN

28 JAN 2002

## Maoists attack jail, set 30 free

Surkhet  
Maoist rebels  
Press Trust of India

KATHMANDU, Jan. 16. — Armed Maoist rebels attacked the central jail of Surkhet, 550 km west of Kathmandu and set free 30 jail inmates, official sources said today.

The rebels dug a 30 foot long tunnel at the backside compound of the prison. The group attacked the prison with guns and kept the security personnel guarding it occupied by exchanging fire for an hour and a half as other rebels helped the 30 inmates escape, he said.

Meanwhile, in another incident, Maoist rebels killed a Nepali Congress worker in Dangdeukhuri district yesterday.

They attacked party regional president Mr Shrinivas Chaudhari at his residence, the sources said. Four terrorists were killed during encounters in Sarlahi and Gorkha districts, reports in the *Kathmandu Post* said.

Two rebels were killed in Piparia Village Development Committee of Sarlahi district, while trying to flee yesterday. Two more were killed in Gorkha district during a clash with security forces.

THE STATESMAN

17 JAN 2002

# Nepali soldiers kill seven Maoists

Reuters

KATHMANDU, Jan. 2. — Soldiers gunned down seven Maoist rebels in Nepal, as authorities stepped up security in capital Kathmandu, ahead of a South Asian summit which gets under way later this week, the defence ministry said today.

The ministry said in a statement that five guerrillas were killed yesterday in a gunbattle with security forces in Kanchanpur district in west Nepal.

One insurgent was shot dead in Banke district while trying to flee from custody and another was killed in a search operation in Bardia district, also in western Nepal.

Maoist rebels are fighting to topple the Constitutional Monarchy and are trying to set up a one-party communist republic in Nepal, the world's only Hindu kingdom.

The ministry said 38 guerrillas

were arrested and Nepalese soldiers also seized a large amount of weapons and ammunition from the rebels, who derive their inspiration from Peru's Shining Path movement.

Leaders from seven South Asian nations, including India and Pakistan, are due to meet in Nepal from Friday. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) also includes Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

Nepali troops have launched combing operations to flush out insurgents from their remote mountain hideouts, after the government imposed emergency in the country following a string of attacks on security posts in November.

The rebellion which started in 1996 has so far claimed over 2,200 lives. Over 450 of them have been killed since last November in renewed fighting after a truce between the rebels and the government broke down.

THE STATESMAN

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