

Pak denial on Suryanarayan but Kabul tells Delhi: ISI got him killed

SHISHIR GUPTA
NEW DELHI, MAY 16

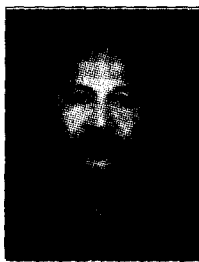
DESPITE Pakistan's denial that it had nothing to do with the killing of Indian engineer K Suryanarayan in Afghanistan last month, the Hamid Karzai government in Kabul has communicated to New Delhi that the Pakistani ISI was behind the engineer's murder by the Taliban.

Official sources said that the Karzai administration, using institutionalised security channels, confirmed the ISI hand in the killing. New Delhi, sources said, is convinced that Islamabad is trying hard to force Indians out of Afghanistan's reconstruction effort.

Suryanarayan, working for a Bahrain firm in Zabul, was abducted and beheaded by the Taliban.

While New Delhi has not taken up the issue with Pakistan, Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran discussed the issue with R&AW chief P K Hormese Tharakkan this month. The matter has also been discussed at the highest levels in the UPA government. It was decided to let the Karzai government tackle the issue.

In an interview to Kabul's private Tolu TV channel, a Taliban commander claimed that Suryanarayan



'ISI had him killed'

was killed by Mullah Latif, a militiaman working for Maulvi Mohammed Alam Andar, on the orders of the ISI.

Pakistan quickly denied the Taliban claim, saying it had no role in the incident.

The circumstances of Suryanarayan's death

has caused considerable concern in India which is actively engaged in rebuilding Afghanistan ever since the ouster of the Taliban.

In November last year, a Border Roads Organisation driver Maniappan Kutty was also murdered by his Taliban captors.

~~19 MAY 2006~~

17 MAY 2006

Secular Nepal ties Cong's Karan with BJP

BHARAT BHUSHAN

New Delhi, May 27: "Don't do away with the Monarchy." "What was the hurry in proclaiming that Nepal will not be a Hindu nation?" "I am a devotee of Shankar Baba (Lord Shiva). At this rate you will do away with Lord Pashupatinath also." "Don't hand over power snatched from the king to the Maoists by implementing their agenda."

These may sound like golden nuggets of advice to the Nepalese from someone from the BJP. But guess again. These homilies were delivered not by a BJP leader but by veteran Congress leader Karan Singh.

Singh, whom many believe to be India's foreign-minister-in-waiting, offered this advice to senior politicians from Nepal. Former Nepalese for-

ign minister Chakra Prasad Bastola, one-time negotiator with the Maoists Shekhar Koirala and Arjun Narsingh KC of the Nepali Congress had gone calling on him this Thursday.

"We were flabbergasted. That BJP leaders should get emotional about Nepal no longer being a Hindu nation, we could understand. But where was this coming from? Why was Karan Singh speaking this language?" asked a member of the delegation.

The members of the Nepalese delegation claimed that they were surprised by such unsolicited advice. Singh also seemed upset over the Nepalese parliament proclaiming that Nepal would no longer be a Hindu but a secular nation.

"What is a secular state?" he asked them after suggest-

ing that this was a hurried move. Singh also advised them not to act in a manner which would end up in power taken from the king being handed over to the Maoists.

"We told him — 'Doctor saheb, we are politicians. We work among the people. We know what to do. We have not participated in the democracy

movement on behalf of the Maoists. The battle for multi-party democracy is primarily our battle. So don't worry. We will find a middle path acceptable to all,'" one of them said. Singh then told them he himself was a democrat — "I gave a Constituent Assembly to my state and I contest elections."

When the Nepalese politicians quizzed him about his controversial role in forging a half-baked settlement with the king, he apparently told them: "I went with a limited brief and I had to stay within it. He (King Gyanendra) was in no mood to listen. What could I do?"

After meeting Singh, Gyanendra had made a proclamation on Nepal TV. Ostensibly meant to be a compromise resulting out of consultations with Singh, it had the opposite

impact. It provoked people to such an extent that more than five lakh protesters descended on the streets of Kathmandu the very next morning abusing Gyanendra and the monarchy.

Like Singh, the BJP, too, seemed worried by the prospect of Nepal "losing its true identity". BJP president Rajnath Singh, according to the visiting Nepalese delegation, got "very emotional" over their country no longer calling itself a "Hindu nation".

"Don't give up your language and don't give up your religion. These define your national identity," he advised them. The BJP president also told them not to abolish the monarchy. "We are not bothered whether this king remains on the throne or not. But there should be a king in Ne-

pal," he apparently told them.

However, one of them said: "Unlike in Karan Singh's case, we could understand why Rajnath Singh said what he did. He, in fact, apologised for getting overly emotional over Nepal no longer being a Hindu nation, saying, 'I think I should not have spoken so much (about it)'."

While some Hindu organisations in Nepal are trying to rope in the Vishwa Hindu Parishad in their attempt to keep Nepal Hindu, the BJP, it seems, does not want to mix anti-monarchy sentiments with pro-Hindu state sentiments.

Thus, former foreign minister Yashwant Sinha advised the Nepalese delegation to make sure that the anti-monarchy issue did not get mixed up with the issue of a Hindu nation.



Karan Singh: Shocked?

ROYAL MESS ■ Ultra-Left protests likely to continue

Delhi's next Nepal step: Get terms from Maoists

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, APRIL 26

WITH restoration of Parliament in Nepal and the Seven Party Alliance choosing G P Koirala for the prime ministership, India hopes nothing goes wrong on two fronts — the Maoists and the monarchy — that may jeopardise the shift towards multiparty democracy.

When the alliance begins negotiations with the Maoists, India expects them to stress two key points in the 12-point agreement between the alliance and the Maoists for the latter's entry into the political mainstream: their commitment to multiparty democracy and shunning of violence. Only then would the new regime get the approval of the international community. India's understanding is that China would not act differently on this.

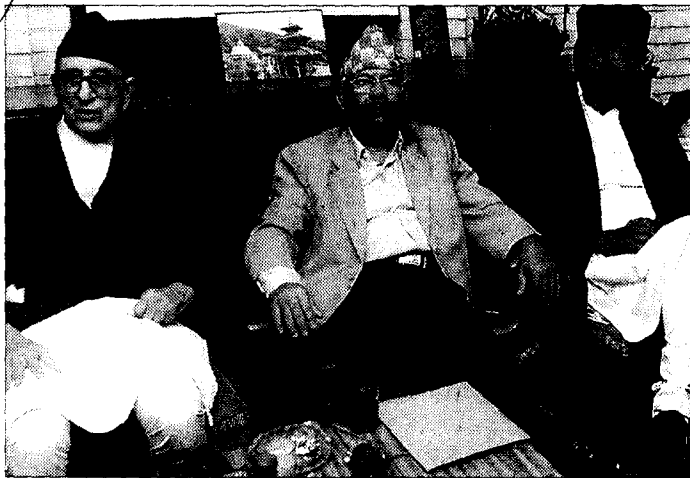
India believes the blockade announced by the Maoists, following the king's announcement on restoration of Parliament, was based on ideological positions and would end once constituent assembly elections are announced.

This was also the position taken by the Indian Left that mediated in talks among the Nepalese parties. CPI(M) leader Sitaram Yechury, who floated a four-point formula for the establishment of multiparty democracy said Maoist protests would continue till constituent assembly elections, but they would be peaceful.

The protests stem from anxiety that if they lay down arms at this stage and join the alliance, they would be completely vulnerable in case developments did not take place in accordance with the agreement. Their continued protests would be to ensure that constituent assembly elections are announced.

Yechury, who is expected to attend Koirala's swearing-in on Friday, has been in regular touch with top Maoist leaders Prachanda and Baburam Bhattarai and spoke to them last night. While the Maoists were keen on restoration of multiparty democracy, they apprehended that it may be subverted by the monarchy and royalists.

"This is not something to be worried about. It is a major issue for the ultra-Left to join the democratic mainstream," Yechury said, adding that if the Maoists were to join the



Seven Party Alliance leaders (from left) GP Koirala, Madhav Kumar Nepal, and Sher Bahadur Deuba meet in Kathmandu on Tuesday. AP

Military aid only after fresh assessment

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, APRIL 26

INDIA will commence military aid to Nepal only after the new government makes a fresh assessment of requirements and communicates them to New Delhi.

The same may not be the case with economic aid. New Delhi is already engaged in preparing a comprehensive economic package for Nepal to help it tide over the crisis brought about by months of blockade.

Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee indicated on Tuesday after chairing a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs (CCPA) here that it would be entirely upto the new Nepal government to decide its military needs after which the UPA government would be open to providing the required support.

Supply of military hardware was suspended last February.

Last week, Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran met Royal Nepal Army (RNA) chief General Pyar Jung Thapa in Kathmandu. Thapa emphasised that the RNA was a professional service and would work under any govern-

ment in Nepal. King Gyanendra recently indicated to New Delhi to consider limited supply of certain military items since the RNA was engaged against Maoists. However, an internal assessment by the Indian Army, which has channels with the RNA, indicated that the RNA's reserve supplies would last another three-four months. The main shortage could be in ammunition but there was no urgency. The RNA's main requirement is ammunition for 5.56mm India-made INSAS assault rifles and 7.62mm SLRs.

SSB on high alert

NEW DELHI: Although things are moving in the positive direction in Nepal, India has set in motion a strategy to deal with adverse developments, if any, on the border. The Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) on the Indo-Nepal border has been put on high alert and its chief Tilak Kak has rushed to the border to supervise arrangements.

Currently, SSB has only 18 battalions for the Nepal border that is regarded inadequate. While 10 more are being raised, three reserve battalions and 20 CRPF and BSF companies have been put on standby." ENS

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chy's future also depends on the way Gyanendra conducts himself in the coming days. The Indian understanding is that the monarch may have only a ceremonial role.

Now, Maoists launch diplomacy offensive

5/16
Sri
Sudeshna Sarkar

Shiv Shankar Mukherjee
KATHMANDU, June 28: After 10 years of guerrilla warfare, Nepal's Maoist rebels exchanged their guns for diplomacy, kicking off international lobbying for their cause with a rendezvous with Indian ambassador to Nepal Mr Shiv Shankar Mukherjee at the latter's office in the Indian Embassy here this morning.

As Maoist Politburo member and number two in the party hierarchy, Dr Baburam Bhattarai, and party spokesman and former MP Mr Krishna Bahadur Mahara, held a nearly one-hour long meeting with Mr Mukherjee, it was the first time that a representative of the Indian government officially met the Maoists, who are still regarded as terrorists in India for their links with Bihar's MCC and Andhra Pradesh's People's War.

Though the Indian Embassy confirmed the meeting but remained tight-lipped about what had transpired, the rebel

leadership was more forthcoming. "The talks took place in an atmosphere of cordiality," said Mr Dinanath Sharma, member of the Maoist negotiating team. "Our party has decided to begin a diplomatic initiative to win the international community's support for our goal of a democratic republic. We decided to start the diplomatic initiative with our closest neighbour India."

The guerrillas will also meet envoys of other countries important to Nepal. These include the UK, the USA, China, Bangladesh and others.

King absent

Nepal's Parliament members and ministers today took a fresh oath of office at a function which for the first time marked the absence of the King while Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala was forced to skip the event due to ill health, adds PTI.

House of Representative Speaker Mr Subhash Nemwang administered the oath of office and secrecy.

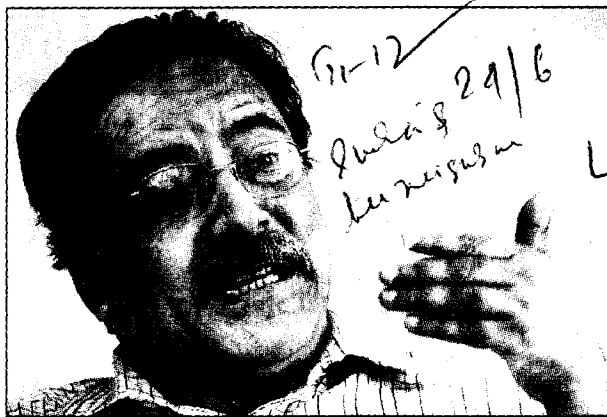
Prachanda thanks India for peace

Kathmandu: For the first time, Nepal's top Maoist leader Prachanda has said that without India's 'encouragement' in bringing the rebels and Nepal's major political parties' alliance together, the popular uprising against the King and subsequent peace talks would not have been possible.

"With the positive help from India, the 12-point agreement between the seven-party alliance and the Maoists was made possible," Prachanda said in an interview.

Prachanda was speaking in a wide-ranging magazine interview in which he seemed to show a partly pragmatic, partly hardline view of Nepal's future. He said he did not believe in a parliamentary republic, but did not elaborate on what system of government he would prefer.

"The joint movement would not have been possible if foreign powers, especially India, had not encouraged him to do something" against the King's rule, he said referring to the mass movement against King Gyanendra forcing him to reinstate the dissolved parliament and hand over executive



power to the seven-party alliance. Earlier, contrary to media reports, Maoists said that India had no role to play in bringing them and the alliance together in reaching the 12-point understanding.

India had no official role in last November's talks between the Maoists and what was then Nepal's opposition parties held in Delhi during King Gyanendra's absolute rule. But Prachanda now says India had long been urging the Maoists and Nepal parties to do something jointly, and that without this they probably would not have made common cause.

"King Gyanendra also had a role, a negative role, in bringing the Maoists and the parties together. The negative attitude of the monarch pushed the two sides to come together," he claimed. However, he said there will be an 'October revolution' by the Maoists if the talks finally fail.

Prachanda alleged that international power centres were conspiring against the government and Maoist talks. "I don't think that international power centres are in favour of giving a forward looking outlet to the crisis by successfully concluding the talks," he said without

GOOD NEIGHBOUR

The peace agreement reached between the seven-party alliance of Nepal and the Maoists was made possible with the help from India

Prachanda | MAOIST CHIEF

naming any country. Also, "after the royal palace massacre of June 1, 2001, there is no relevance of the king and the monarchy," he said. He also did not favour a parliamentary republic prevalent in other democratic countries.

Prachanda said everybody in Nepal should be given five years military training. But he also spoke of freeing up new resources for development by cutting the government and Maoist armies right back and by abolishing the monarchy—although, as before, he said the monarchy could remain if the people so voted. AGENCIES

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Koirala faces dissent over India visit

Statesman News Service

KATHMANDU, June 5: Nepal's brief honeymoon with India seems to be over with the kingdom's Left parties, known for their deep distrust of New Delhi, expressing suspicions about the Indian government's intentions on the eve of Nepali Prime Minister Mr Girija Prasad Koirala's four-day visit to India, scheduled to start tomorrow.

The first salvo was fired in

Parliament today by MPs from the Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist-Leninist (UML), the second-largest party in the reinstated house, and one of the most difficult alliance partners. UML leader and former deputy prime minister Mr Bharat Mohan Adhikari asked Mr Koirala not to sign any controversial agreement in India, a reference to Koirala's earlier visit to India as premier over a decade ago, when an irrigation

agreement ran into controversy. The heat generated by other party MPs' allegations that the PM was keeping parliament in the dark about the agenda of his visit compelled deputy prime minister Mr KP Sharma Oli to make an appearance in the house to assure the MPs that no deal that could compromise Nepal's sovereignty and national interests would be signed. The second blow came from another UML

MP, Mr Jagannath Khatriwada, who expressed doubts about India's stand on the fall of King Gyanendra's reign and the restoration of multi-party democracy in Nepal. The MP apparently took exception to the absence of Indian ambassador to Nepal Mr Shiv Shankar Mukherjee at the inaugural session of the House of Parliament on 28 April, when it historically reconvened after having lain dis-

solved for nearly three years. However, according to diplomatic sources, the invitation for Mr Mukherjee to attend the session did not arrive before 11 a.m. of the day of the event.

By that time, he had left for the western district of Gorkha to inaugurate an India-assisted project. Though Mr Mukherjee did not attend the house session, CPI-M leader Mr Sitaram Yechuri had led an Indian delegation to express

solidarity with Nepal's "people's movement".

The discord made the Koirala government today to decide it would only discuss economic issues during the Delhi visit. "The talks would be on financial assistance, Indo-Nepal benefits and Nepal's economic development,"

home minister Mr Krishna Prasad Sitaula told the media Monday after a Cabinet meeting at Koirala's residence to discuss the

agenda of his visit.

"The PM will also thank the Indian people for their support towards the people's movement," finance minister Dr Ram Sharan Mahat added. Earlier, Nepal had expressed a desire to discuss the ongoing peace talks with the Indians, including asking for assistance for holding constituent assembly elections to choose between monarchy and a republic.

Questions raised over state visit by an interim PM

Rush tag on Koirala trip

TAPAN KUMAR BOSE

Kathmandu, June 6: Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala's four-day official visit to India, which began today, has raised several questions.

Several people in the Nepalese capital feel that Koirala's visit to India has been fixed in a hurry, particularly as Delhi is yet to formally accept or declare its support to the proclamation of the restored house of representatives.

As Som Niroula, an accountant and a human rights activist, said: "Koiralaji is the head of an interim government created by a parliament which is to be dissolved and a new constitution is to be framed by a constituent assembly." At this stage, he felt, the Prime Minister should not be going out on state visits.

Subodh Pyakurel, the chairperson of the Informal Sector Service Centre, said: "The legal status of the restored parliament is unclear. It was revived by the king at the last moment and immediately accepted by the Seven-Party Alliance. The CPN (Maoist) has expressed its reservations about the alliance projecting this house of representatives as the regular parliament."

Apart from these questions on the streets, there were also rumbles of dissatisfaction expressed by Koirala's coalition partners and the CPN (Maoist).

Most of the coalition partners wanted to be assured that during his visit, Koirala would not agree to anything that would kick off controversy or compromise "national interest".



Koirala with Singh in New Delhi on Tuesday.

Picture by Rajesh Kumar

During a lengthy all-party meeting at his house yesterday, Madhav Kumar Nepal, the general secretary of the CPN (UML), told reporters: "The Prime Minister assured us that he would not sign any deal that is controversial or against national interest."

Narayan Man Bijukche, of the Nepal Workers and Peasants Party, and Amrik Sherchan, the president of the Janamorcha Nepal, were also present at the press briefing by Madhav Nepal.

According to sources, Koirala is going to India to ask for budgetary support and

development.

Finance minister Ram Sharan Mahat said Koirala's "wish list" consists of an aid package worth Rs 468.75 crore (around \$104 million) for the next five years.

But will the visit be without controversy? During the days of "democracy", every visit by Nepalese Prime Ministers to India was marked by the treaties they signed.

Most of the controversies raged around the Indo-Nepal treaties on hydroelectric projects. Whether it was the Karnali or the Mahakali project, the agreements were hotly de-

bated on the floor of the house of representatives and the Prime Ministers — from Koirala and Manmohan Adhikary to Sher Bahadur Deuba — were all accused of having sold out Nepal's waters and power-generating capacity for a pittance.

It seems that apart from budgetary support, Koirala will try to secure Indian assistance in the hydropower, road and aviation sectors. According to reports here, during bilateral negotiations he will try to obtain "special Indian assistance for at least one of the three mega hydropower projects — the 600-mw Budigandaki, the 400-mw Arun III and the 300-mw Upper Karnali".

The CPN (Maoist) has already made its position clear. Dina Nath Sharma, a member of the CPN (Maoist) peace talks team, has said: "The current government does not have the mandate to take decisions on nationally important issues."

Speaking at a function at the Reporter's Club yesterday, Sharma said: "It should be a purely goodwill visit. Political problems should be resolved before economic package."

If Madan Regmi, a well-known columnist, is any indicator of the popular apprehension, then perhaps the denizens should take note.

Regmi wrote in *The Kathmandu Post* (May 23): "Let us assume for the time being that Delhi this time is not after exploiting Nepal as it did in 1950 and 1990 which changed Nepal's political system but served India's interest instead of Nepal's. (The) Koshi, Gandaki, Mahakali river accords are examples."

07 JUN 2006

THE TELEGRAPH

India pledges aid to Nepal



Dr Manmohan Singh with Mr GP Koirala. ■ AFP

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, June 7: When the Nepal PM leaves Indian soil on Saturday, his baggage will certainly be heavier with a large package of Indian assistance, which will include not just budgetary support but also large-scale infrastructure projects.

Dr Manmohan Singh today assured Mr GP Koirala of India's "utmost importance to and immediate consideration" of the requirements of the Himalayan nation outlined by the premier.

On his first foreign trip since taking over as PM, Mr Koirala started the substantial part of his Indian journey today with a meeting with Dr Singh at 7 Race Course Road. It began with

one-on-one talks lasting about 40 minutes, followed by delegation-level talks.

External affairs ministry spokesperson Mr Navtej Sarna said Mr Koirala informed the Indian side about the "serious economic situation" in Nepal due to months of turmoil and requested Indian assistance to meet its immediate and long-term needs. Interestingly, the Nepalese government did not make any formal request for resuming military supplies by India.

"The PM also confirmed that India is deeply committed to several large projects in the social and infrastructure sectors such as roads, bridges, railway linkages and ongoing projects will be pursued with renewed vigour."

6/8/2002

THE STATESMAN

Political leaders meet Koirala

Assure India's support for establishing a secular, democratic Nepal



COURTESY CALL: Nepal Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala with Congress president Sonia Gandhi at her residence in New Delhi on Thursday. — PHOTO: RAJEEV BHATT

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: Members of the Nepal Solidarity Committee on Thursday called on Nepal Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala here and assured him of the support of the people of India for establishing a secular, modern and democratic Nepal.

The delegation, which included leaders of the Left parties, the Rashtriya Lok Dal and the Nationalist Congress Party, recounted the strong and historic links between the people of India and Nepal.

It praised the role of the sev-

en-party alliance in the restoration of democracy and in opening a dialogue with the Maoists.

Communist Party of India national secretary D. Raja said Mr. Koirala informed the delegation of the road map drawn by the political parties leading to an interim government.

Besides Mr. Raja, the delegates included D.P. Tripathi (NCP), Ajit Singh (RLD), Abani Roy (RSP), Debabrata Biswas and G. Devarajan (AIFB).

Bharatiya Janata Party president Rajnath Singh also paid a courtesy call on Mr. Koirala. The

party said it always stood for close relations with Nepal and improving the age-old cultural ties. Mr. Rajnath Singh conveyed to the Nepal Prime Minister the desire of the party to promote these bonds. Mr. Koirala explained to the BJP chief the current political situation in his country.

Expresses concern

The party said Mr. Rajnath Singh expressed concern about the recent changes in Nepal, with particular reference to the participation of the Maoists in mainstream politics and the role

of monarch as a ceremonial entity.

The BJP chief said the changes being contemplated should not result in any dilution of the unique cultural identity of Nepal. Some anti-India forces, which were intending to use Nepal as their platform, should be discouraged, he said.

Calls on Sonia

Later, Mr. Koirala, along with his Ministers, called on Congress president Sonia Gandhi and exchanged views on the emerging situation in Nepal and links between the two countries.

Amir Singh
Nepal
11/6

India ready to lift arms embargo on Nepal

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Stopping the weapons supply to Nepal after King Gyanendra grabbed absolute power in February '05, India now appears ready to lift the arm curbs but only after the Koirala government makes a special request for it.

New Delhi, incidentally, has also waived all outstanding debts of the Himalayan kingdom on arms purchases.

Though Pranab Mukherjee did not talk about resumption of arms supply, the defence minister on Friday gave an indication that the defence relationship was firmly on track once again. He said India and Nepal had "sorted out" all their outstanding defence cooperation issues during talks with visiting Nepalese PM Girija Prasad Koirala.

"All issues relating to defence cooperation have been sorted out. Very soon, our defence cooperation group, the joint consultative committee, which is an institutional arrangement, will be meeting and they will be discussing how to expand the areas of cooperation," said Mukherjee.

Welcoming the Nepalese parliament's reinstatement after 15 months of rule by Gyanendra, Mukherjee expressed hope that talks between the Koirala government and the Maoists in the Himalayan kingdom would be successful. "We hope they will find an amicable solution," he said.

The "close relationship" between the 1.2-million Indian Army and the 80,000 Nepalese Army had gone for a toss when Gyanendra had taken over



HOME COMING: Nepal Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala being welcomed by people at Kathmandu airport after his arrival from India on Friday

last year, forcing India to impose an arms embargo. Till then, India had given military aid worth Rs 375 crore to Nepal in form of automatic rifles, machine guns, mortars, mines, mine-protected vehicles and even choppers at

"concessional rates".

In May '05, the government had partially lifted the embargo but only for "non-lethal supplies" like bullet-proof jackets, hand-held thermal imagers and night vision devices.

11 JUN 2006

THE TIMES OF INDIA

India offers financial help to Nepal

DEAL DEKE
DEKHO



INDIA TO RELEASE
150 Nepalese Maoists,
Move To Strengthen
Koirala Govt's Relation
With The Rebels

Debasis Sarkar
DAMAK (Nepal)/SILIGURI

THOUGH the outcome of the meeting between the Indian Prime Minister and his Nepali counterpart was far below the latter's expectations, the financial assistance agreed upon by the two has made the Nepali administrators happy.

India took a soft stand on GP Koirala's request to release the 150 Maoist leaders, languishing in Indian prisons. This move is expected to strengthen the Koirala government's relationship with the Maoists at home. "Indian government has agreed to release around 150 Nepalese Maoists soon and it will also

support the UN role in monitoring the constituent Assembly elections," said a senior Nepal administrative official on Friday. However, West Bengal State Intelligence or authorities of jails, where Maoists leaders are imprisoned, are yet to receive any information from higher officials. New Delhi has also decided to write off debts worth Rs 150 crore from Nepalese defence ministry, which has been receiving military assistance from India since 1964.

However, quoting defence minister Mr Pranab Mukherjee, Indian Army Eastern Command officials said: "India is not likely to provide any immediate military assistance to Nepal but a joint task force may come

up to assess the situation and to advise the government on possible future action in this regard."

India agreed to extend direct budgetary assistance of Rs 100 crore and increase its annual Budget outlays for Nepal from existing Rs 65 crore to Rs 150 crore. A soft loan of around Rs 470 crore was also granted. However, Mr Koirala's long 'wish list' had a total INR value of around Rs 4700 crore for the next five years. India has also agreed to defer the recovery of around INR 500 crore overdue from Nepal Oil Corporation, to provide financial support for the 1,500-km Hulaki highway, Budhi Gandaki hydroelectricity project and the East-West Railways.

BJP's Hindu stand irks Nepal parties

Debasis Sarkar
DAMAK (Nepal)/SILIGURI

THE political forces and the Maoists in Nepal have criticised the BJP's interest to see Nepal as the world's only Hindu country instead of a secular one.

Like the Maoists in Nepal, the Congress and the Left in India are in favour of seeing the future Himalayan Kingdom as a secular country. But the BJP wants Nepal to continue as a 'Hindu country'.

"We don't care what the BJP says," said a senior Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) leader on Friday. "It is now more important to regain political and financial stability in which the label of a 'Hindu country' is not going to help in any way," he said.

The same was echoed by several other political personalities. Iterating what BJP chief Rajnath Singh said on Thursday, LK Advani said he favoured Nepal's 'Hindu' name while talk-

Nepal's decision to become a secular nation. Mr Koirala was requested to ensure preservation of unique cultural and social identity of Nepal as Hindu country for its future development."

Of the 2.7 lakh population of Nepal, 80.6% follow Hinduism, 10.7% Buddhism and 4.2% are Muslims. Nepal's initiative to leave the crown of world's only Hindu country and becoming 'secular' could not be a palatable external issue to the BJP.

Crippled with internal conflict that claimed around 13,000 lives, majority of Nepalese want to see the country as a secular and politically or financially stable first.

Eventually, that has made the name 'Hindu' secondary to the Koirala government desperate to ensure financial back-ups and assistances from neighbour India.

Long Left Parties
Want to See The
Country As
A Secular Country

ing to reporters on Friday at Delhi. Earlier, he met the visiting Nepal premier GP Koirala.

The BJP leaders in West Bengal said: "Our leaders have expressed our concerns over

1 1 JUN 2006

The Economic Times

MONDAY, JUNE 12, 2006

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Helping a friend

While there is nothing new in India providing financial and other forms of assistance to Nepal, the announcement of a Rs.1000 crore aid package during the recent visit of Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala is significant. Apart from offering economic benefits to the people of the neighbouring country, the move signals strong support for the political transformation they have launched with a remarkable unity of purpose. Implicit in India's 'no-strings' offer is the promise that it will not try to influence the process of change. The Manmohan Singh Government would also do well to oppose all external intervention in Nepal's internal affairs. That Mr. Koirala chose India as the primary source of assistance is a tribute to an extremely close longstanding relationship. The aid package reflects a desire to help Nepal overcome its most pressing economic difficulties with a one-time grant of Rs.100 crore to infuse buoyancy into its budget. The Koirala Government faces a difficult fiscal situation as it tries to cope with the fallout of months, if not years, of political turmoil. A soft credit line of about Rs.500 crore has been offered for infrastructure projects; Kathmandu will be free to set the priorities of utilising this amount. The annual allocations for the 'Aid to Nepal' scheme will be enhanced from Rs.65 crore to Rs.150 crore; dues outstanding on defence purchases waived; 25,000 tonnes of fertilizer provided at subsidised prices; goods manufactured in Nepal exempted from the four per cent additional customs duty; and the release of all funds under the Duty Refund Procedure Scheme expedited. India has promised to speed up work on all infrastructure projects and the two governments are to identify further areas of cooperation.

New Delhi might have faced few problems in deciding on its response to Kathmandu's requests for financial assistance. It needs now, more than ever, to display sensitivity and a sure touch as the Koirala Government and the Maoists move on to the next stages of a challenging political transformation. The two sides are currently considering a 'code of conduct' that will control the behaviour of Nepal's regular forces as well as the People's Liberation Army. Once discussions begin on the modalities of a permanent ceasefire, tough questions are likely to arise about the nature of the monitoring mechanism to be put in place. India may have to strike a delicate balance between its traditional opposition to intervention by extra-regional forces in Nepal's affairs and the need to address the practical issues as they arise. While all major political forces in Nepal have agreed to hold elections to a constituent assembly, this process might take as long as a year to unfold. That should provide New Delhi enough time to make up its mind on the forms of assistance it can provide during this period of momentous political change. With the abolition of the 'King in Parliament' concept, including his veto on laws, Nepal is on the fast track to becoming a republic. Republican India should have absolutely no problems with this.

THE HINDU

Voting gets under way in Fiji elections

First day of week-long polling peaceful in the island nation

SUVA (Fiji): Voting started on Saturday in racially-divided Fiji's week-long elections with the ethnic Indian Fijian Labour Party bidding to regain the power it has twice lost in indigenous nationalist coups.

The parliamentary elections began peacefully, although the start was delayed in many areas with voting papers failing to reach many polling centres in time, officials said.

Nearly 480,000 voters are registered to vote in the second election held since the South Pacific country's first ethnic Indian Prime Minister Mahendra Chaudhry was deposed in a coup in 2000.

Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase, who has led the country since being appointed in the af-

• Nearly 480,000 registered to vote

• Qarase confident of returning to power

• Tension between military, Government persists

termath of the coup and was re-elected in 2001 elections, was confident of returning to power.

"I am very confident of a victory. I will secure a reasonable working majority," Mr. Qarase said after voting in Suva.

Mr. Qarase's United Fiji Party (SDL) has also been under fire from the country's military Commander Voreqe Bainimarama over plans to offer amnesties

to those involved in the 2000 coup. While Mr. Qarase and his wife were whisked into the Suva Civic Centre to cast their votes, a relaxed Commander Bainimarama and his family waited patiently in line outside for about three hours to vote.

The two did not exchange greetings and after voting, Mr. Qarase insisted the confrontation between the Government and military would be ended.

"The tension is still there but we are determined to resolve it when we get back after the general election," Mr. Qarase said, declining to say how he intended to end the stand-off.

Over 1,000 police personnel have been deployed to ensure security but no trouble was expected, police said. — AFP

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THE HINDU

07 NOV 2000

Delays mar voting in Fiji

Polling to resume today in one-third of the nation's 300 far-flung islands

SUVA (FIJI): Fiji's election supervisor on Sunday took responsibility for long delays and other problems at voting stations on the first day of the week-long elections dominated by ethnic tensions and a dispute between the military chief and the Prime Minister.

Polling booths were closed as scheduled on Sunday in the strongly Christian country, and voting would resume on Monday in the one-third of the nation's 300 far-flung islands that are inhabited.

On Saturday, the first day of voting, thousands of people waited for hours and others were turned away from several polling

stations — most in the capital, Suva — because ballot papers and electoral rolls had not arrived on time, election officials said.

Election Supervisor Semesa Karavaki said affected stations were kept open after the scheduled 5 p.m. closing time to make up for lost time.

The contest to fill 71 parliamentary seats and elect a Prime Minister is a test of this former British colony's democracy, which has weathered three coups in the past decade and remains split by tensions between the indigenous Fijian majority and the large ethnic Indian minority. — AP



Commander of Fiji Military Forces Commodore Frank Bainimarama (right), stands in line waiting to cast his vote in the general election in Suva, Fiji, on Saturday. — PHOTO: AP

08 MAY 2006

THE HUNTER

Former Fiji PM charged with inciting mutiny

John Sr?
11-11 1985

Suva: A former Fiji prime minister and coup instigator appeared in court on Friday to face charges of inciting a 2000 military mutiny in which eight soldiers were killed, as voting continued in racially-charged parliamentary elections.

Military strongman **Sitiveni Rabuka** entered no plea when he appeared in a Suva court on Friday and he was released on bail to

appear again on June 30. He was arrested and charged late Thursday on his return from India where he had knee surgery.

Rabuka was alleged to have incited a former senior military officer, Lieutenant Colonel Viliamse Seruvakula to oust military commander Voreqe Bainimarama, who still leads the armed forces, Fijian media reports said. Bail was set at \$580 and Rabuka was ordered to sur-



render his passport, refrain from interfering with witnesses and report regularly to the police. Rabuka has previously been linked to the unsuccessful Nov 2 military mutiny at Fiji's military headquarters, the Queen Elizabeth Barracks, which occurred in the wake of the May 2000 coup. Rabuka was seen inside the barracks during the uprising, which forced Bainimarama to flee for his life.

In 1987 Rabuka led two military coups, the first of which deposed the government of the ethnic-Indian dominated Fijian Labour Party. He later served as PM of a democratically-elected government between 1992 and 1999, when the Labour Party's Mahendra Chaudhry became Fiji's first ethnic Indian prime minister. Chaudhry was deposed in a coup a year later. AFP

3 MAY 2006

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Fiji PM claims victory in divisive polls

Suva: Fiji's Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase claimed victory on Wednesday for his governing United Fiji Party (SDL) following racially-charged general elections in the South Pacific island nation.

He also promised to end a damaging stand-off with the country's military leader over plans to offer amnesties to the plotters of a 2000 coup which deposed the country's first ethnic Indian prime minister Mahendra Chaudhry.

"The SDL party and my colleagues feel honoured and privileged to be the government of the day for the next five years," Qarase said on commercial radio.

"We will have a working majority and that is good enough."

Qarase, 65, was first appointed to lead an interim government in 2000 following the ouster of Chaudhry, whose Fiji Labour Party had been running neck-and-neck with the SDL following the week-long election.

Official figures showed the SDL had 34 of 71 parliamentary seats by Wednesday evening and Qarase said he had the support of independent lawmakers—enough to secure a parliamentary majority.

Five seats remained to be counted, with Chaudhry's Indian-dominated party holding 28 seats and support from two successful candidates from a minor party. Chaudhry refused to concede defeat until all results were in and said he was also talking to the two in-

dependents. "I don't think one can say conclusively at this point that Mr Qarase will form the government," he said.

Of the 71 seats in parliament, 23 are reserved for indigenous Fijians, 19 for Indo-Fijians, four for minority ethnic groups and 25 seats are open to all ethnic groups. Race is a central issue in Fijian life, with indigenous Fijians making up around 55 percent of the

country's population of 900,000, while less than 40 percent are ethnic Indians.

Voting results showed a clear polarisation between the two ethnic groups. The SDL won all the seats reserved

for indigenous Fijians while Labour had a clean sweep of all 19 Indo-Fijian seats. "In this election, race is a very prominent factor so we really have to confront this problem," Qarase told reporters. "But the point is that you cannot reconcile the differences in a short period of time. It will take generations."

Voters faced an uncomfortable choice between a Labour Party ousted by coups both times it was elected and Qarase's ruling party, which has been in open conflict with military leader Voreqe Bainimarama over the coup amnesty plan. Bainimarama has previously threatened to oust the government if the amnesty legislation is passed.

Qarase said he believed previous widespread opposition to the plan would dissipate. AFP



Laisenia Qarase

18 MAY 2006

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Qarase sworn in Fiji Prime Minister

Seven Cabinet posts offered to Opposition Labour party

P. S. Suryanarayana

SINGAPORE: Laisenia Qarase was sworn in on Thursday as Fiji's Prime Minister for a second term following the general elections in the south Pacific nation.

Mr. Qarase was sworn in on the basis that he could command the support of at least 37 of the 71 members in the new Parliament.

Earlier, Mr. Qarase, in his capacity as the caretaker Prime Minister, had said his Soqosoqo Duavata Ni Lewenivanua party (SDL) would be able to form the government on the basis of "a marginal difference" of poll victory over the Fiji Labour Party (FLP).

As the poll results poured in, FLP deputy leader Poseci Bune said he would be "ready" to become the Prime Minister if his party secured a parliamentary majority.

Mr. Bune's comment followed FLP leader Mahendra Chaudhry's statement that the issue of prime ministerial candidacy would be decided by a "caucus."

Given the close contest in the general election, the political equations between the majority of native Fijians and the large minority of ethnic Indians, now estimated at around 44 per cent, would require to be fine-tuned, according to regional diplomats and observers.

AP reports:

Mr. Qarase took his oath of



AT THE HELM AGAIN: *Fijian Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase addresses reporters after being sworn in for a second term, in Suva on Thursday.* — PHOTO: AP

office at Government House in the capital, Suva. Mr. Qarase said he also had secured written commitments of support from two

independent lawmakers, which would give him a majority of 38 seats. "I do command the respect, loyalty and support of a

Military chief talks tough

SUVA (FIJI): Fiji faces the prospect of further political instability after the South Pacific country's military leader warned he is ready to battle the re-elected Government of Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase.

Commander Voreqe Bainimarama said the armed forces would not tolerate any anti-military moves by the Government.

"If that is the message of Qarase, we will fight them all the way" he said. — AFP

majority of members of the lower House of Representatives," Mr. Qarase said before the ceremony in the colonial-era mansion overlooking Suva harbour. He was sworn in by President Ratu Josefa Iloilo.

Mr. Qarase said he expects to swear in a new Cabinet on Monday and would offer seven Cabinet posts to the Labour Party, in line with the country's Constitution which says any party gaining more than 10 per cent of the vote should be offered Cabinet positions.

Three coups

The SDL will have 10 Cabinet posts and the two independent lawmakers each will also be in the Cabinet.

Fiji, a South Pacific nation of about 900,000 people spread over 110 inhabited islands 3,000 km northeast of Sydney, Australia, has been rocked by three coups since 1987 and there are fears the latest elections could trigger another.

Indigenous Fijians make up a small majority of the population but in recent years nationalists have become increasingly bitter at what they see as the disproportionate political and economic clout wielded by a minority of Fijians — such as Mr. Chaudhry — descended from Indians whose ancestors were imported by British colonialists to work in sugar cane plantations. — AP, AFP

19 MAY 2006

THE HINDU

Taliban sets deadline to kill hostage

Saran rejects demand for pullout of Indian citizens from Afghanistan

Diplomatic Correspondent

NEW DELHI: The Taliban have threatened to execute K. Suryanarayana, an Indian national kidnapped in Afghanistan on Friday, by Sunday evening, if New Delhi does not pull its citizens out of the troubled nation before this deadline.

Mr. Suryanarayana, who works for Al Moyaed, a Bahrain-based engineering company, was kidnapped with his Afghan driver while driving towards Qalat, capital of Zabul province, in Afghanistan. Al Moyaed is executing a project for Roshan Telecom, an Afghan mobile phone service provider.

A Reuters report from Afghanistan quoted Taliban

spokesman Qari Mohammad Yusuf as saying, "If India does not pull out all its nationals working in Afghanistan by 1900 hours IST tomorrow [Sunday], we're going to kill him." Mr. Yusuf claimed that Mr. Suryanarayana was an American spy.

In a statement, Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran rejected the Taliban demand that India pull its citizens out from Afghanistan. "Our presence in that country is to promote the welfare of the people of Afghanistan and the vast majority of the Afghan people have welcomed Indians working in their midst as their friends and well-wishers. We wish to assure the Government and people of Afghanistan that India stands by them and will

continue to fulfil its solemn commitments to Afghanistan's development," he said.

Mr. Saran said that India was in touch with the Afghan authorities to ascertain whether this message setting the deadline was actually from those responsible for Mr. Suryanarayana's kidnapping.

"Despite this message, we have intensified our efforts to seek the early and safe release of [Mr.] Suryanarayana so that he can be reunited with his family. Our Ambassador is in constant touch with the Afghan National Security Adviser and other senior officials as also the employers of [Mr.] Suryanarayana ...," he said.

"We have also contacted the

international security forces deployed in the Zabul area, where the kidnapping took place. We would like to assure Suryanarayana's family that no stone is being left unturned to obtain his release. We share their pain and grief and their anxiety and will continue with our efforts using all the resources at hand," Mr. Saran said.

In a related development, Cabinet Secretary B.K. Chaturvedi met senior officials to review the situation arising out of the kidnapping in Afghanistan.

It may be recalled that Maniappan Raman Kutty, an employee of the Border Roads Organisation, was kidnapped and killed by the Taliban in November 2005.

30 APR 2006

THE HINDU

Karzai, PM meet today, will swap notes on working with General, his policies

CRAJA MOHAN

NEW DELHI, APRIL 9

AS Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and visiting President of Afghanistan Hamid Karzai focus on regional security in their talks tomorrow, Pakistan will inevitably loom large.

Whether it is in rooting out the Taliban and the al-Qaeda, whose resurgence threatens the Afghan political future, or curbing the Kashmir militants operating from Pakistani soil, Karzai and Singh would have a lot of notes to exchange on where President Musharraf's policies are headed.

The strategic challenge before Singh and Karzai, however, is to find a way of drawing Musharraf into a mutually beneficial framework of regional cooperation. A simple way of launching it would be an early three-way summit meeting between the leaders.

Amidst rising political discord between Afghanistan and Pakistan and growing worries in Islamabad about expanding ties between New Delhi and Kabul, the idea of a triangular summit might seem outlandish.

Yet, the three leaders are con-



In New Delhi

fronted with the tension between the economic imperatives of regional geography and the traditional Pakistani search for influence across its boundaries in India and Afghanistan.

The decision by the SAARC at the Dhaka summit last November to admit Kabul as a full member of the organisation has initiated the process of integrating Afghanistan into South Asia and its incipient free trade zone.

The new US perspective on restoring the traditional economic and strategic links between Afghanistan and Central Asia on the one hand and the sub-continent on the other is reflected in the US State Department's decision to regroup the regions into a single bureau.

Even more significantly, the Bush Administration has welcomed India's growing economic profile in Afghanistan and is encouraging New Delhi to undertake greater political responsibilities in maintaining peace and stability in Afghanistan.

INDIAN EXPRESS

Pranab to gift fast attack craft to Maldives

India to continue with maritime diplomacy

Sandeep Dikshit

MALE: Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee arrives here on Saturday to continue with India's endeavour to build closer ties with its neighbours through non-traditional diplomacy.

The Minister will gift an indigenously built fast attack craft (FAC) to the multiisland nation to help it better secure its coastal waters.

Mr. Mukherjee will continue with the steps taken by the Foreign Office and the Defence Ministry to assist the smaller neighbours in guarding their exclusive economic zones against smugglers and potential terrorists and even in warding off the threat to their political structure. In the late 1980s Indian troops carried out 'Operation Cactus' to quell a coup against Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, who is still the President of Maldives.

1,192 islands

Lying in isolation, approximately 600 km southwest of Sri Lanka, Maldives requires multi-

purpose but light military platforms to send a signal to potential troublemakers as well as keep an eye on the vast coast surrounding its 1,192 islands, of which only 200 are inhabited. India's maritime diplomacy is a step in that direction. The Goa Shipyard-built INS Tillanchan (named after an island in the Nicobar group of islands) can carry out surveillance and detect hostile craft. Its efficacy has improved with its ability to induct and de-induct special forces of up to 35 personnel, despatching two on-board high-speed boats for operational and high-speed tasks.

A reverse osmosis plant and adequate food and fuel storage capacity keep it on prolonged deployments away from the home port.

To be re-named Huravee (meaning belonging to the Maldivian island of Hura), the ship cut its teeth during five years of deployment with the Defence Ministry's integrated military command in Andaman and Nicobar.

1999 Indian & Maldives

HY-12

দৌত্য করতে নেপাল যাচ্ছেন কর্ণ সিংহ

নিজস্ব সংবাদদাতা, নয়াদিল্লি, ১৮ এপ্রিল: রাজা জ্ঞানেন্দ্র আগেই ছেড়েছিলেন। এ বার কিছুটা জমি ছাড়ল ভারতও।

প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহের বিশেষ দূত হিসাবে আগামিকাল কাঠমান্ডু যাচ্ছেন কর্ণ সিংহ। জ্ঞানেন্দ্র ছাড়াও তিনি নেপালের বিভিন্ন রাজনৈতিক দলের নেতাদের সঙ্গে দেখা করবেন বলে বিদেশ মন্ত্রক সূত্রে জানানো হয়েছে। ভুটানে সফররত ভারতীয় বিদেশসচিব শ্যাম সারনও আগামিকাল থিম্পু থেকে ফেরার পথে কাঠমান্ডুতে যাবেন।

এর আগে জ্ঞানেন্দ্র চাইলেও ভারতের পক্ষ থেকে আলোচনায় বসার প্রস্তাব বারবার খারিজ করা হয়েছে। নয়াদিল্লি বারবার প্রত্যাখ্যান করায় শেষ পর্যন্ত হিন্দুদের প্রসঙ্গ তুলে সঙ্ঘ পরিবারের দ্বারস্থ হয়েছিলেন জ্ঞানেন্দ্র। এক সময় নিজে যেতে রাজি না হলেও বিরোধী দলনেতা লালকৃষ্ণ আডবাণীকে নেপালে পাঠাতে চেয়েছিলেন মনমোহন। কিন্তু দলের ভিতরে আলোচনা করার পর আডবাণী সে প্রস্তাব প্রত্যাখ্যান করেন। ভারতের



তেলের জন্য লাইন। ধর্মঘটের ত্রয়োদশ দিনে কাঠমান্ডুতে। —এএফপি

দীর্ঘদিনের কূটনৈতিক চাপের কাছে কিছুটা নতি স্বীকার করে জ্ঞানেন্দ্র সম্প্রতি নেপালে ২০০৭ সালে সাধারণ নির্বাচনের কথা ঘোষণা করেন। এ বার জ্ঞানেন্দ্রের কাছে দূত পাঠানোর সিদ্ধান্ত নিয়েছে ভারত। মনমোহনের বিশেষ দূত হিসাবে যিনি বিশ্বের একমাত্র হিন্দু রাজ্য নেপালে যাচ্ছেন, রাজ্যসভার সদস্য সেই কর্ণ সিংহ কিন্তু কাশ্মীরের প্রাক্তন হিন্দু রাজা হরি সিংহের ছেলে।

নেপালি রাজনৈতিক দলগুলি স্বাভাবিক ভাবেই ভারতের এই 'প্রো-

অ্যাকটিভ' ভূমিকাকে স্বাগত জানিয়েছে। একই সঙ্গে দেশের ভিতরে প্রতিবাদ আন্দোলনকে আরও জোরদার করতে তৎপর রাজবিরোধী শক্তিগুলি। গণতন্ত্রকামী সাতটি রাজনৈতিক দলের জোট জ্ঞানেন্দ্রের আলোচনার প্রস্তাব আগেই প্রত্যাখ্যান করেছে। ২০ এপ্রিল দেশের বিভিন্ন প্রান্ত থেকে রাজধানী কাঠমান্ডুর উদ্দেশ্যে বিরাট প্রতিবাদ মিছিল বার করা হবে বলে রাজনৈতিক দলগুলির তরফে জানানো হয়েছে। রাজ-সরকারের বিরুদ্ধে অর্থনৈতিক

অবরোধ আন্দোলনও চলছে সমানে। আজ মাওবাদী প্রধান প্রচণ্ড এবং দলের বর্ষীয়ান পলিটব্যুরো সদস্য বাবুরাম ভট্টরাইয়ের তরফে প্রকাশিত এক যৌথ বিবৃতিতে বলা হয়েছে, নেপালের এই প্রতিবাদ আন্দোলন বর্তমানে আর কোনও বিশেষ গোষ্ঠীর নিয়ন্ত্রণে নেই। তা এখন পরিণত হয়েছে রাজার স্বৈরতন্ত্রী শাসনের পরিবর্তে প্রকৃত গণতন্ত্র প্রতিষ্ঠার লড়াইয়ে। অর্থনৈতিক অবরোধেও তাদের সমর্থন রয়েছে বলে ওই বিবৃতিতে জানানো হয়েছে।

বিভিন্ন সরকারি দফতরেও দেশজোড়া আন্দোলনের আঁচ ভাল ভাবেই ছড়াচ্ছে। রাজ-বিরোধী শ্রোগান দেওয়ার দায়ে নেপালি স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রকের জনা পঁচিশেক কর্মীকে আজ গ্রেফতার করা হয়েছে। স্বরাষ্ট্রমন্ত্রী কমল থাপার চেক ভাঙাতে অস্বীকার করায় নেপালের রাষ্ট্রায়ত্ত্ব ব্যাঙ্কের দশ জন কর্মীও আজ গ্রেফতার হন। তিন জন সাংবাদিককেও গ্রেফতার করা হয়েছে। নেপাল এখন যথেষ্ট উত্তপ্ত। আগামিকাল কর্ণ সিংহ এবং সারনের একই সঙ্গে নেপাল সফরকে তাই যথেষ্ট তাৎপর্যপূর্ণ বলে মনে করছে কূটনৈতিক মহল।

India hails Gyanendra gesture

*for King
recession*
Statesman News Service

2/19
NEW DELHI, April 21: India has welcomed the Nepal monarch's "intention" to transfer executive powers to the seven-party alliance.

SCA
The offer was made a day after the PM's special envoy, Dr Karan Singh, had indicated that the King would be making "some announcement".

"This action by the King, who has reaffirmed his commitment to multiparty democracy and constitutional monarchy, should now pave the way for the restoration of political stability and economic recovery of the country," said a statement released by the external affairs ministry.

The statement also mentions that the Nepalese people had to undergo acute suffering and economic hardship during the past several months, but had kept their faith in democracy and freedom. "They deserve our respect and admiration," it said, adding that India hoped their aspirations could now be met by "enabling them to enjoy their rights through a democratic electoral exercise free from the threat of violence".

27 APR 2006

THE STATESMAN

বাম চাপেই রাতারাতি ভোলবদল ভারতের

নিজস্ব সংবাদদাতা, নয়াদিল্লি ও কলকাতা, ২২ এপ্রিল: চব্বিশ ঘণ্টার মধ্যে ১৮০ ডিগ্রি ঘুরে গেল ভারত। নেপালের সমস্যার সমাধানসূত্র পুরোপুরি নেপালের মানুষের ইচ্ছার উপরেই নির্ভর করছে, শুধু এ কথা স্বীকার করাই নয়, সে দেশের মানুষ না চাইলে নেপালে রাজতন্ত্রকে অস্বিভাজন জোগানোর কোনও ইচ্ছাও তাদের নেই বলে জানিয়ে দিল কেন্দ্র।

কাল নেপালরাজের আংশিক ক্ষমতা হস্তান্তরের প্রস্তাবে স্বাগত জানায় ভারত। আজ জার্মানি যাওয়ার বিমানেও প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহ বলেন, রাজা সঠিক দিশা তেই সিদ্ধান্ত নিয়েছেন। তবে তিনি বলেন, সাংবিধানিক রাজতন্ত্র এবং বহুদলীয় গণতন্ত্র, দুই-ই নেপালের রাজনৈতিক কাঠামোর অঙ্গ এবং ভারত উভয়কেই গুরুত্ব দিয়ে বিচার করে।

কিন্তু দলগুলি রাজার প্রস্তাব খারিজ করেছে। এখন কী হবে? প্রধানমন্ত্রীর সফরসঙ্গী জাতীয় নিরাপত্তা উপদেষ্টা এম কে নারায়ণন বলেন, "নেপালে গণতন্ত্র ফেরানোই আমাদের লক্ষ্য।" তাঁর এই বক্তব্য আরও স্পষ্ট হয় দিল্লিতে বিদেশ সচিব শ্যাম সারনের বিবৃতিতে। তাঁর বক্তব্যের সারমর্ম, নেপালের মানুষ যে ভাবে নিজেদের ভবিষ্যৎ নির্ধারণ করতে চাইবেন, তাকেই ভারত সমর্থন করবে।

সারন আরও স্পষ্ট করে বলেন, সমস্যার সমাধান তো ক্ষমতা হস্তান্তরের ভিত্তিতেই হবে। কিন্তু, নেপালে সরকারের রূপরেখা কী হবে, তা নিয়ে ভারতের বক্তব্য নেই। ভবিষ্যতে মাওবাদীরা যদি অস্ত্র ত্যাগ করে গণতন্ত্রে ফেরেন, তাতেও স্বাগত জানাবে ভারত। নেপালের মানুষ যদি রাজতন্ত্র যতদূর সম্ভব ছেঁটে ফেলতে চান, তাতেও ভারত কিছু বলবে না।

কাল বিদেশ মন্ত্রক রাজার বক্তব্যকে সমর্থন করায় সিপিএম, সিপিআই ফুর্ক। এই ফোভের কথা জানার পরে প্রধানমন্ত্রী বিদেশ চলে যাওয়ার আগে বিভিন্ন রাজনৈতিক নেতা এবং আমলাদের সঙ্গে এ নিয়ে আলোচনা করেন। তার পরেই স্থির হয়, ভারত এমন কোনও কাজ

এর পর পাঁচের পাতায়

Payment by Indian farmers not for water: Bhutan official

Sangay Dorji, Dzongdag (District Commissioner), Samdrup Jongkhar, Bhutan, writes:

Please refer to the article, "Indian farmers paying tax to Bhutan" (*The Hindu*, March 19, 2006) wherein it was mentioned that Indian farmers have been paying taxes to the Royal Government of Bhutan for using water from rivers flowing from the Himalayan Kingdom into India to irrigate their paddy fields. In this connection, we would like to clarify that the payment made by the Indian farmers is not for water but for the construction of reservoirs, storage and conveyance structures of water within the Bhutanese territory, namely a 'Water Guide Bund Rent' and not a tax.

Hence, it may be informed that Water Guide Bund Rent charged was for the land occupied by the wide and lengthy channels, big reservoirs and pipes of various sizes taken through towns and cultivated land deep inside the Bhutanese territory.

Further, these reservoirs and irrigation channels often burst and the overflow water causes great damage to the land and the standing crops inside the Bhutanese territory during the monsoon.

However, in view of the importance of water to our neighbours in Assam, India, and the excellent relations between our two peoples, neither the affected owners nor the authorities in Bhutan have made them an issue.

THE HINDU

26 APR 2006

Nepal gets back 'lifeline' from India

Sudeshna Sarkar
in Kathmandu

March 31. — After mounting tension for three months, Nepal got back its "lifeline" with the renewal of the transit treaty with India, key pact that allows the land-locked Himalayan nation to trade with third countries through Indian soil. The India-Nepal transit treaty, which was to expire next week, was given a new lease in life for another seven years when the commerce secretaries of both India and Nepal signed an agreement in Kathmandu yesterday. The treaty, that is the cornerstone of over 90 per cent of Nepal's third-country trade, had last been renewed in 1999. When the time came for renewal this January, instead of being automatically extended for another seven years, it was extended for just three months as India and Nepal

ran into differences over the number of transit points.

However, the differences were ironed out with both sides agreeing that Nepal, that uses 22 points for bilateral trade with India, would use 15 points for third-country trade through India. However, "sensitive" goods would be routed through only seven points — via Kakarbhitta, Biratnagar, Birgunj, Bhairahawa, Nepalgunj, and the Birgunj dry port to Kolkata and then to the Haldia port. India will allow Nepali goods to go from one part of Nepal to another via Indian territory and vice versa, if such a need arises. This is the first time that Nepal has reciprocated the measure earlier allowed by India. It would also continue to use the Kakarbhitta-Fulbari-Radhikapur route to send goods to Bangladesh or a third country.

0 APR 11

THE STATESMAN

Any foreign policy initiative must keep in mind the objectives of India and our nuanced stand on Nepal has so far yielded results. Propriety apart, for a former foreign minister, Natwar Singh's comments on Nepal is simplistic and naive, says Devendra Nath Dwivedi

On Nepal, Natwar is wrong

NATWAR Singh's statement on India's Nepal policy is reflective of a simplistic and naive view of politics in that country. It was an extremely superficial way of interpreting the events in Nepal unfolding on a day-to-day basis.

There is a question of propriety also involved, given the fact that Natwar Singh was the foreign minister of India till recently. Without making comments on the motive behind the statement in which he criticized the government and the Prime Minister, I would like to suggest that the entire discourse on Nepal lacks focus and perspective.

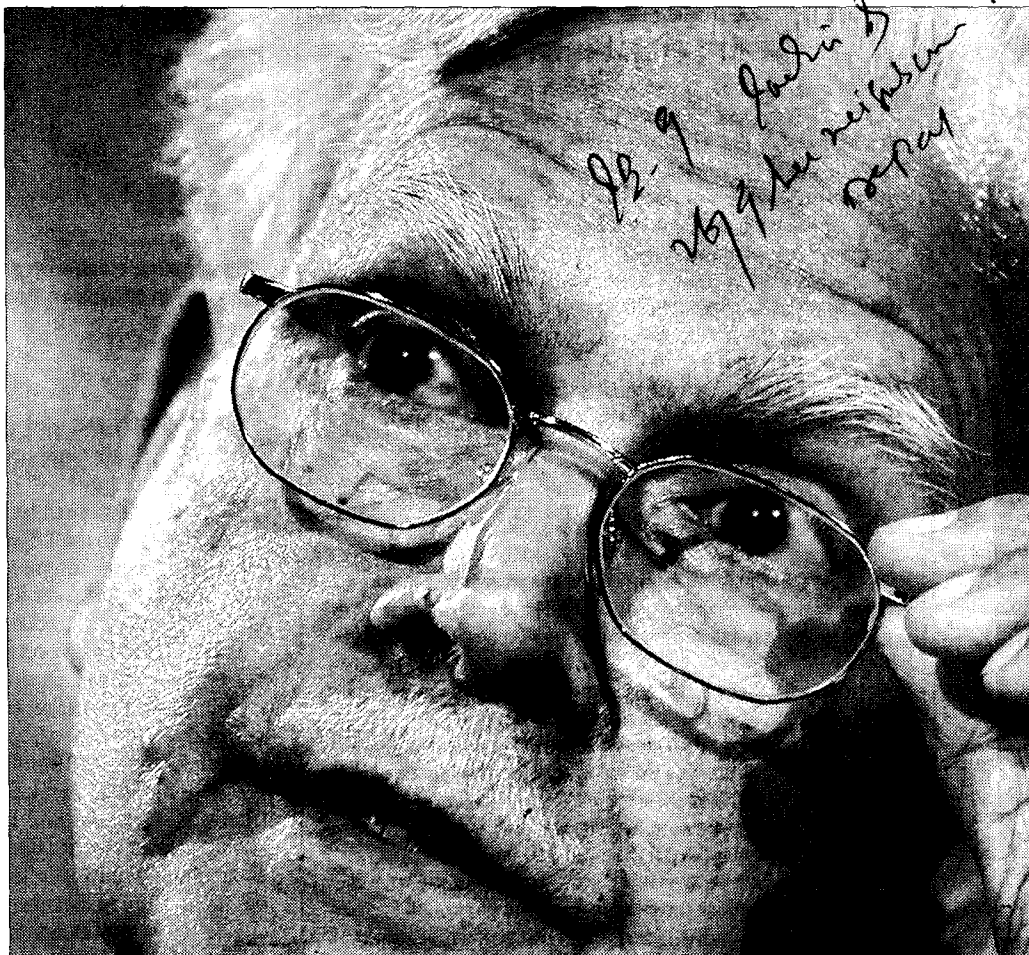
India's involvement in the Nepal issue should be seen with three aspects in mind:

- The uniqueness of India's relationship with Nepal
- The limits of legitimate power of the Indian state
- The long-term strategic interest of India vis-à-vis Nepal

Moreover, any foreign policy initiative must keep in mind the goals and objectives of India and must be based on a national consensus—which we have evolved in the case of Nepal.

It is neither about winning brownie points, nor about getting populist. India's efforts so far have yielded results. We have taken a calibrated, nuanced stand on the issue.

For one, Karan Singh's visit to Nepal was not meant to find a final solution to the problem. He broke the ice, and set in motion a process that is now unfolding. And his visit was not an isolated event. It was followed by statements from the foreign secretary and then the PM, nudging the King towards reviving the parlia-



Those who are demanding abolition of monarchy are missing the point; they are more romantic than realistic. A constitutional monarchy, hand in hand with parliamentary democracy is equivalent to the presidency. In case of Nepal, it is an institutional answer to the need of continuity in the midst of the dynamics and vagaries in competitive politics of parliamentary democracy

ment.

Sending Karan Singh was an eminently reasonable choice. India's approach was to ensure that

the popular upsurge does not go waste. At the same, it had to be ensured that the protest doesn't go anarchic.

The government has been successful in appreciating the democratic desires of Nepalese population, ensuring the country's unity

and integrity and safeguarding India's strategic interests. Those who are demanding abolition of monarchy are missing the point; they are more romantic than realistic. A constitutional monarchy, hand in hand with parliamentary democracy is equivalent to the presidency. In case of Nepal, it is an institutional answer to the need of continuity in the midst of the dynamics and vagaries in competitive politics of parliamentary democracy.

All what we should ensure is the King doesn't hold on to powers of removing an elected government and usurping the power again.

The seven party alliance (SPA) must have a realistic approach in tackling the Maoist question. They could be engaged in a dialogue but not before they accept the fundamentals of parliamentary democracy.

The Congress party has historically maintained close relations with political leaders of Nepal. For instance, Indira Gandhi and G P Koirala had an excellent relation. But we must accept the fact that there are limits to the legitimate use of state power in influencing happenings in a neighboring country. Any attempt to arm-twist the King can only be counter productive, as it has been on earlier occasions. We must realize the China-Pakistan angle to the Indo-Nepal relations.

Natwar Singh's statement betrays a lack of understanding about the complexity of the situation. And I will not comment on motives.

(As told to Varghese K George)

The writer is in-charge, Training Department, AICC

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INDIAN EXPRESS

Delhi bid to 'clarify' Nepal policy

Natwar remarks embarrass government

NILOVA Roy Chaudhury
New Delhi, April 24

THE LACK of clarity in India's recent policy on Nepal has raised hackles among pro-democracy advocates in the Himalayan kingdom, causing New Delhi to hurriedly retrace its steps and clarify its position.

As the popular agitation gets more intense, India has distanced itself from the Palace, pitching its support for the Nepalese people and the "pro-democracy forces".

A group of respected Nepali civil society detainees in Duwakot Armed Police Barracks, said in a statement smuggled out from detention: "We believe that your government's welcoming response to Friday's address by King Gyanendra was based on a misperception of Nepal's political reality and a misreading of

the address itself. Though surely based on the best of intentions, your reaction has needlessly delayed a peaceful transition in the country at a critical hour when millions of Nepalis are on the streets, agitating for an immediate return to democracy."

Adding to the flak that the government received for initially "welcoming" King Gyanendra's offer to hand over executive authority to a representative of the seven-party alliance, was a statement from former external affairs minister Natwar Singh say-

ing India's "masterly inactivity" has not succeeded. "We have let the people of Nepal down, lost the goodwill of the seven parties, earned the annoyance of the Maoists and received no kudos from King Gyanendra," Singh had said in a statement on Monday. Asking why India was not "the leading player" in the political drama be-

ing played out in Kathmandu, Natwar Singh suggested CPI (M) leader Sitaram Yechury's seven-point formula, urging the King to begin with the restoration of Parliament, as a way for the government to go forward.

Urging Gyanendra to take a page out of the Bhutanese monarch's democratic book, Singh asked the PM to immediately call an all-party meeting after his return from Uzbekistan, to carve out a national consensus on Nepal.

A day after it welcomed the King's offer, India clarified its position, saying it only welcomed the "intention" of Gyanendra to transfer all executive authority. "We have always felt that political power should be exercised by the representatives of the people and it is for them to decide what the future of Nepal will be," said foreign secretary Shyam Saran.



REUTERS

Riot policeman take on pro-democracy activists in Kathmandu on Monday.

We respect the will of Nepalese people: Saran

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Saran

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, April 22. — Faced with criticism from Nepal on yesterday's statement supporting the King's announcement, India today sought to clarify its position, following the rejection of the royal offer by the seven parties alliance (SPA). It also hinted that its support for the twin pillar principle of constitutional monarchy and multi-party democracy was flexible and that it respected the will of the Nepalese people.

CPI-M leader Mr Sitaram Yechury said the monarch's moves to create a wedge between the

seven-party alliance and Maoists should not be allowed (by the UPA) as it would make Nepal "ungovernable".

Following yesterday's statement in India ostensibly welcoming the King's proposal to hand over power to an SPA-nominated Prime Minister, observers had noted that there was a building anti-India sentiment in Nepal, where they viewed its giant neighbour as again having sided with the monarchy, at the cost of the pro-democracy movement. There were reports of anti-India slogans having been raised at certain rallies, while text messages

also kept buzzing with anti-Indian sentiments, like "throw out the Indians".

To dispel that perception, the foreign secretary, Mr Shyam Saran, took a late evening Press conference where he iterated that the roadmap for democracy in the kingdom has to be decided by the Nepalese people.

Mr Saran tried to prove that the Indian stance on the King's "concessions" was not much different from the seven-party alliance's, on principle. He said India was in contact with the palace and the parties but not the Maoists.

THE STATESMAN

23 400 2000

India suspect in Nepal people's eyes

BHARAT BHUSHAN

Kathmandu, April 21: India's role in hammering out a compromise that saves the monarchy, and then quickly welcoming the king's offer even before the Nepalese political parties here had reacted to it, is already being criticised in Nepal.

Hate messages are apparently already being sent to Indian diplomats on their phones. However, no one knows whether this might snowball into some kind of anti-India protest on the street.

An activist associated with the Nepali Congress did not think so. While saying that he did not want to be hard on India, he did comment: "The people will not like this as India will be seen as not sharing their aspirations."

"We are very friendly with the people of India. It is the government of India with which we have a love-hate relationship," he said.

Many in the Nepalese capital believe that India may end up looking "very foolish" if the seven-party alliance re-



Karan Singh, who was sent as special envoy to Nepal, after meeting Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in Delhi on Friday. Picture by Rajesh Kumar

jects the king's offer tomorrow, a likely possibility.

"It is sad that the largest democracy in the world has raised its voice to save the monarchy. The United States was in favour of the king and now India has reduced itself to being the tail of the Americans," said a dejected senior bureaucrat in King Gyanendra's government, who did not want to be identified.

India's current role is being compared to what it did in 1951 when the present monarch's grandfather, King Tribhuvan, was restored to the throne by New Delhi.

"Why are you repeating the same mistake? Don't you see that Gyanendra is seen as a 'hatyara raja' (killer king)? How many more people need to be shot dead before India understands this?" the bu-

reaucrat asked.

Protesters in Kathmandu, Chitwan, Pokhara and other parts of Nepal apparently are already shouting slogans that the king's offer was a deception and betrayal. "People like G.P. Koirala will be lynched if they accept the offer," said an activist.

India clearly does not think so. While not openly critical of New Delhi, many

Nepalese activists are wondering why the political parties were not consulted before India welcomed the king's announcement.

"What was it that Karan Singh said to the king that he felt emboldened enough to justify his takeover on television. How come suddenly he had the courage to say 'Half the sovereignty will lie in me and the other half in you'? India is giving more importance to the monarchy than to the political parties and the people of Nepal," said Sushil Pyakurel, a former human rights commissioner of the country.

Nepali Congress leader Chakra Prasad Bastola said: "I don't think that India understands the situation here."

"It is a cop-out by India which may cost it dear," said another politician who did not want to be identified. He wondered why India, which had played with a straight bat in Nepal for most of the time during the four-year-old crisis, had suddenly done something that may result in "losing Nepal at least for a generation".

Delhi
quick with
stamp of
approval

OUR SPECIAL
CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, April 21: India today put its stamp of approval on King Gyanendra's intention to transfer executive power to a government constituted by a seven-party alliance, saying the move will pave the way for restoring political stability in Nepal.

"This action by His Majesty the King of Nepal, who has reaffirmed his commitment to multi-party democracy and constitutional monarchy, should now pave the way for the restoration of political stability and economic recovery of the country," a statement said.

Delhi's reaction reaffirms its support for the two-pillar theory that hinges on co-existence of constitutional monarchy and multi-party democracy.

Welcoming Gyanendra's move, India also commended the people of Nepal for carrying out the pro-democracy struggle. "They deserve our respect and admiration. We sincerely hope that the aspirations of the people of Nepal can now be addressed by enabling them to enjoy their rights through democratic electoral exercise, free from the threat of violence."

Delhi said it stood by the people of Nepal in their hour of need and offered to help the country achieve political stability and economic recovery at the earliest.

India was waiting for Gyanendra's reconciliatory move after special envoy Karan Singh met him yesterday and handed over a blunt message from the Prime Minister to restore democracy.

Jaswant travels with king's move

OUR SPECIAL
CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, April 21: The BJP seems to be working in tandem with the king of Nepal.

Hours before Gyanendra's surrender of power this evening, party leader Jaswant Singh, who is set to visit the troubled kingdom, hinted at "developments in Nepal much before I reach there on April 24. Things would have moved. There may be announcements. I do believe I have a role to play there."

He added that there would be no change in his plan in the wake of the king's move. In fact, it makes his job "even more crucial", Singh said.

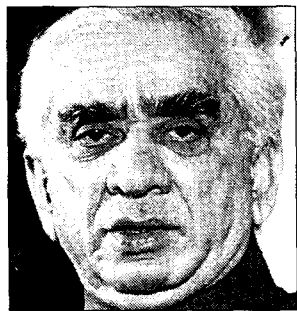
The former foreign minister later told **The Telegraph**:

"We had an idea of what was to happen. That is why I am going there so that there is smooth transition of power in Nepal."

The BJP's involvement in Nepal is not surprising. The party has time and again voiced its sympathy for the king and Giriraj Kishore of the VHP even conducted joint prayers with Gyanendra.

Singh may not go to that extent but he has often stressed India's earlier stand that Nepal politics has two pillars — constitutional monarchy and multi-party democracy.

While the UPA government has of late shifted from that position, leaving out any reference to the monarchy, the BJP would at least want a symbolic role to be retained



Jaswant: 'Crucial' job

for the ruler of the only Hindu kingdom in the world.

"I believe in India's stated position of the two pillars of democracy in Nepal. In my consultations with the Prime Minister today, I did not notice that this position had been changed. I would ask some of

you, what is there to be so embarrassed about Nepal being a Hindu kingdom? Is anyone embarrassed about Pakistan being an Islamic republic?" Singh asked.

The BJP has built a bridge with Narayanhiti Palace and sources said some "very senior leaders" met Gyanendra's "right-hand man" S.C. Shah about eight to 10 months ago.

The party has consistently attacked the UPA's initiatives in Nepal. "The government has been harbouring a soft approach towards the Maoists in Nepal and supporting their insurgency. Such an attitude would prove detrimental both to the Himalayan kingdom and India," Advani had said last Saturday.

Singh today said his efforts

would be to "contribute to restoring peace, amity and accord" in Nepal. He denied that he was going there on the king's invitation. Singh will be back on April 27.

The BJP leader also cleared the air on another controversial trip he had made six years ago to Kandahar. Asked about Madan Lal Khurana's allegation that Singh had delivered \$15 million to the terrorists who had hijacked an Indian Airlines plane in Kandahar on December 31, 1999, he laughed, saying the only thing he carried on the trip was a travelling bag.

"It is a small and a very old leather bag. Believe me, it would have broken had I carried this ridiculous amount of money," he said.

22 APR 2008

THE TELEGRAPH

Delhi takes credit the day after

Devirupa Mitra
Devirupa Mitra

NEW DELHI, April 25: It was Sunday evening when India learnt from the Nepal King that he wanted to restore parliament. At a meeting initiated by the Palace, King Gyanendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev informed the Indian ambassador, Mr Shiv Shankar Mukherjee, of his intention. According to sources, the King wanted India to ensure that political parties accepted his new offer this time around.

However, India asked him to speak directly to the political parties. On Monday, palace and government officials contacted the political parties with the offer of restoration of parliament. There was a lot of "to-ing and fro-ing" between the different actors during the day.

Following a positive feedback, the King went live on official media late last night, which was immediately followed by jubilant celebrations on the streets of Nepal. The seven-party

Andhra Pradesh
revised
alliance having accepted the offer, the scheduled protest today turned into a victory rally. With India welcoming the development, it is now up to the SPA to quickly move towards setting up a constituent assembly, which it has already indicated will be its top priority after parliament is reconstituted.

There are also indications that the Indian government might review its stand on sending military supplies to Kathmandu if the new Nepalese government makes a request to it. Following King Gyanendra's assuming absolute powers in February last year, New Delhi had frozen defence supplies to Nepal.

India's Nepal policy almost came undone a few days ago when the government welcomed the "intention" of the King in his Friday announcement. But the King had badly misread his people's sentiments, which further fuelled anger against the monarchy.

25 APR 2016

TMI DESMAN

ভারত-ভুটান রেল, পশ্চিমবঙ্গও সামিল

নিজস্ব সংবাদদাতা লালুর ফ্রেট করিডর পশ্চিমবঙ্গে আদৌ আসবে কি না, তা এখনও ধোঁয়াশায়। কিন্তু ভারত-ভুটান প্রস্তাবিত রেল সংযোগে অঙ্কুৎ থাকছে না এই রাজ্য। সম্প্রতি ভুটানের সঙ্গে পাঁচটি নতুন লাইনে ব্রডগেজ রেল সংযোগ স্থাপনে রাজি হয়েছে ভারত সরকার। এর মধ্যে হাসিমারা থেকে ফুন্টসোলিং এবং বানারহাট থেকে সামচি—রেলপথ দুটির মাধ্যমে এই প্রতিবেশী দেশটির সঙ্গে যুক্ত হবে পশ্চিমবঙ্গও।

চলতি বছরের অক্টোবরের মধ্যেই ভারতকে আরও ২০০০ মেগাওয়াট বিদ্যুৎ রফতানি করতে চলেছে ভুটান। সোমবার বণিকসভা বিএনসিসিআই আয়োজিত 'ইন্দো-ভুটান বাণিজ্য সহযোগিতা' শীর্ষক আলোচনাচক্রে প্রকল্প দুটির কথা জানান ভুটানের রাষ্ট্রদূত লিনপো দাগো শেরিং। লিনপো বলেন, বর্তমানে ভারতকে প্রায় ৪০০ মেগাওয়াট বিদ্যুৎ রফতানি করে ভুটান। ১০২০ মেগাওয়াটের টালা জলবিদ্যুৎ প্রকল্পের কাজ শেষ হলে তা আরও ২০০০ মেগাওয়াট বাড়বে।

অন্য দিকে আগামী ৯ থেকে ১৪ মে চতুর্থ ভুটান বাণিজ্য প্রদর্শনীতে আরও বেশি সংখ্যায় যোগদানের জন্য ভারতীয় শিল্পপতিদের আমন্ত্রণ জানান তিনি।

Nepal shelves plan to recall India envoy

YUBARAJ GHIMIRE

KATHMANDU, FEBRUARY 24

NEPAL's Ministry of Foreign Affairs move to recall its ambassador in New Delhi was dropped for fear that India may refuse to accept the new envoy. The move was dropped after "close Indian friends" of the present regime warned that the Manmohan Singh government under influence of the Left might refuse to receive the new envoy.

Karnadhoj Adhikary was appointed Nepal's ambassador to India nearly two and a half years ago under King Gyanendra's instruction. But sources said that the Ministry of late blamed Adhikary for the government's souring relationship with Delhi.

Meanwhile, Nepal's Supreme Court today ruled that the detention of the spokesman for the Nepali Congress Party, Krishna Prasad Sitaula was illegal, and he was freed for the second time in a week.

—with PTI

INDIAN EXPRESS

Nepal is the new hotbed of terrorism

The unguarded gap of 200 km

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mushrooming Madrassas Help Push Militants Weapons Into India

By Vishwa Mohan/TNN

New Delhi: The rising number of Islamic institutions in some Nepal districts along the border with this country is giving Indian forces sleepless nights.

According to latest estimates, as many as 73 out of 820 such institutions in Nepal have links with anti-India elements involved in pushing terrorists, along with arms and ammunition, into India through a 200-km unguarded gap.

These revelations are part of a recent report by the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), the paramilitary force guarding Indo-Nepal and Indo-Bhutan borders.

It has clearly pointed out that the bordering districts of Nepal have become a hotbed of Islamic fundamentalism as the 73 identified madrassas are giving them shelter and helping them financially.

It has identified a 10-km stretch inside Nepal, which has witnessed an unprecedented proliferation of madrassas and mosques in the past seven years.

Though the report, submitted to the ministry of home affairs, is tightlipped about the activities of mosques and madrassas on the Indian side, it spoke at length about their proliferation in

the madrassas and the ulema had close links with the Pakistan embassy in Kathmandu and got financial assistance through Islamic Development Bank (Jeddah) and Habib Bank of Pakistan.

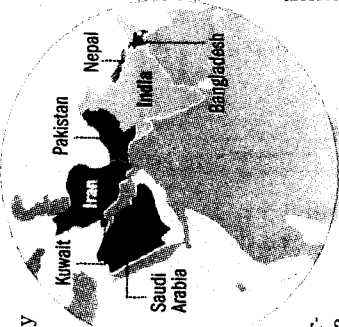
It also mentioned how Habib Bank has expanded its network in the border areas, including Biratnagar and Krishna Nagar in Nepal.

An official clarified that there was nothing wrong in the proliferation of such institutions provided they maintained their sanctity by not allowing fundamentalists to misuse them. India had raised its concerns through diplomatic channels as well, following reports of misuse of madrassas by ISI for making them as its bases to accumulate arms and ammunition and provide training to terrorists before pushing them into Indian territory, he said.

The report has identified Bardia, Kapilvastu, Nawalparasi, Parsa, Bara and Saptari in Nepal and Siddharthnagar, Maharajganj, Araria, Madhubani and Kishanganj in India as vulnerable districts where fundamentalists, operating from madrassas across the border, have found their sympathisers.

Himalayan Haven

Flow of funds

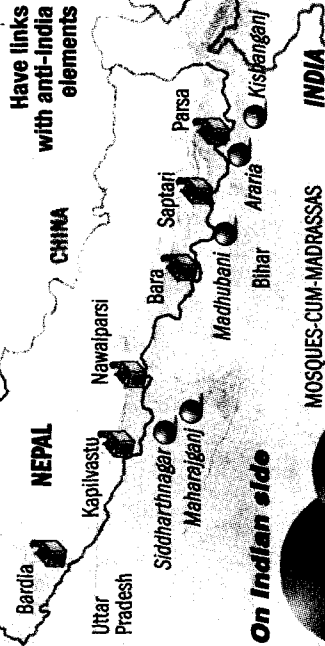


Financial assistance is being channelised through the Islamic Development Bank (Jeddah) and the Habib Bank of Pakistan

■ Donor ■ Recipient

Total No. of mosques & madrassas in bordering districts of Nepal

820



Have links with anti-India elements

On Indian side



two districts of Uttar Pradesh and three districts of Bihar.

It mentions that the Indian side has witnessed setting up of 1,172 mosques, 810 madrassas and 383 mosque-cum-madrassas along the border in the

past decade. The SSB's concern is reflected in the fact that it gave a detailed account as to how such institutions were being used by the Pakistani intelligence agency ISI. The para-military force said managers of

WB hideout for Nepal Maoists

Anjan Chakraborty
in Kolkata

Feb. 9. — Maoists belonging to the women's wing of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist). Akhil Nepal Mahila Krantikari Sangh (ANMKS), are frequently visiting West Bengal in the guise of patients and establishing contact with Maoist groups in the state once they have been discharged in order to locate "safe houses" for Nepalese guerillas in the state.

An Intelligence report from the Centre has alerted West Bengal Police who have stepped up vigil in Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri districts bordering Nepal. Police are also monitoring patients' movements into hospitals and nursing homes in the two districts. In addition, police in Naxalite-affected West Midnapore, Purulia and Bankura districts have also been asked to keep an eye on

Nepali women in their area. Intelligence reports indicate that most Maoist activists entering West Bengal through the porous border with Nepal, are women who pose as patients. "The Nepalese Maoist groups first push women activists into West Bengal to establish links with Maoist groups active in the state and then seek safe hideouts for their male counterparts in Nepal, who are at the receiving end of the Nepalese Army's onslaught," an Intelligence official said.

Interestingly, the IB report comes close on the heels of the arrest of Urmila Tamang alias Chanda Rai (29), a member of the woman's wing of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), from Mirik in Darjeeling. A resident the bordering Illam district in Nepal, Tamang was reportedly suffering from kidney problems and told police she had come for treatment.

2006

THE STATESMAN

Indo-Bhutan treaty: review time

DALIP MEHTA

76.8
27/12

AS King Jigme Singhye Wangchuk promotes the democratisation of Bhutan and prepares to abdicate, a reconsideration of the basic framework of India's relations with that country has acquired some urgency.

More than half a century has elapsed since Bhutan and India signed the Treaty of Perpetual Peace and Friendship in 1949. It is time to review its relevance. The Bhutanese have long regarded certain articles of the Treaty as offensive and incompatible with their status as a sovereign country. For example, Article II states that the Government of India "undertakes to exercise no interference in the internal administration of Bhutan. On its part the Government of Bhutan agrees to be guided by the advice of the Government of India in regard to its external relations". This article is taken verbatim from the Treaty of Punakha of 1910, signed between the British India government and a Bhutan that had been defeated in war. No such restriction was placed on Nepal in its 1950 Treaty with India.

Understandably today the Bhutanese increasingly regard the '49 Treaty as one signed between unequal partners. Being discriminatory in nature, they see it as anachronistic, humiliating and an unacceptable aspersion on their sovereign status. The Treaty fails

entirely to reflect present day realities, unlike the 1998 agreement of Peace and Tranquility between China and Bhutan, in which the Chinese unequivocally acknowledge Bhutan's sovereign and independent status. Today in Bhutan there is a vocal, educated and informed middle class, proud of its country's past and confident of its future, that will not accept a subservient role. An assertive bureaucracy and vocal parliament is unlikely to tolerate much longer a treaty it regards as an affront to national dignity. With the king abdicating in '08, a moderating influ-

It is not as if the Treaty has never been amended. Article VIII, which deals with extradition, was amended in '96 by a fresh agreement which took into account present day realities. A treaty should not be regarded as an end in itself but a means to ensure perceived national interests. For India, as far as Bhutan is concerned, these are those of defence and security. In other words, a treaty relationship between the two countries should flow from a mutuality of interests.

Flowing from this, it is suggested that a more pragmatic arrangement would be to modify, better

been given 'observer' status at SAARC, a relationship becomes inevitable. Both India and Bhutan would need to consult each other closely and craft a relationship with China that does not adversely impact on their own, and there is no reason that it should, given the improving relations between the two Asian giants. A relationship should develop between the three countries that is sensitive to each other's concerns. India should take advantage of Article X of the Treaty which states that it "shall continue in force in perpetuity unless terminated or modified by mutual consent".

This gives India the ideal opportunity to show its sensitivity towards Bhutan's national aspirations, for after all it is India that has all along recognised Bhutan's independent status, and was instrumental in assisting it becoming a member of the UN and some other international organisations. It would, in the circumstances, be a gracious gesture on India's part to take the initiative in recasting the Treaty and removing contentious aspects. This would earn India immense goodwill and gratitude in the long run.

It would also reflect the dynamics of changed times and better succeed in preserving the close relations between Bhutan and India.

The writer is a former Indian ambassador to Bhutan

Such a step would show India's sensitivity towards Bhutan's national aspirations

ence in our relations will no longer be there and India will have to deal with a far more complex and diverse political regime in Thimphu.

On several occasions the Bhutanese have deliberately ignored Article II of the Treaty in a conscious attempt to obtain international recognition of its separate status and to act independently of India in its foreign policy. The first instance of this was in '79, when Bhutan voted differently from India on Kampuchea at the Havana Non-Aligned Summit. There have been others since. In all of these cases, India has chosen to react by not reacting.

still enter into a fresh treaty that is workable, entered into willingly for mutual benefit and with realistic obligations and responsibilities. As both India and Bhutan share common security perceptions, Article II of the existing Treaty should be amended to state that India and Bhutan will consult closely on foreign policy and security matters that affect their common interests.

Bhutan's future relations with China is a case in point. At present Bhutan and China do not have diplomatic relations. Sooner or later they will, not only because China is Bhutan's only other neighbour, but now that China has

INDIAN EXPRESS

India opposed to elections, feels Nepal

Sudeshna Sarkar
in Kathmandu

Dec. 20. — Nepal's most senior minister, Dr Tulsi Giri, today said, without naming India, that external powers would like to see anarchy in the Himalayan Kingdom when he was speaking about the civic elections called by King Gyanendra on 8 February.

"It is not only the political parties who don't want elections to be held but also the people they are inspired by," the senior vice-chairman of the council of ministers said. "Foreign powers are also interested in creating anarchy in Nepal."

The minister said on an earlier occasion that Nepalese political parties had been inspired by Indian leaders.

Asked if he included India among the powers who wanted polls put off in Nepal to let anarchy reign, Mr Giri first said he had not named anyone but then added that reports from India indicated that for elections to be held, certain conditions needed to be met. "That adds up to something," he said.

Mr Giri's press conference comes after Indian foreign secretary Mr Shyam Saran's visit to Nepal last week.

Mr Saran had conveyed Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh's message to King Gyanendra that India wanted the monarch and the political parties to mend fences. "The government is ready for reconciliation," Mr Giri said. "The

king has been saying that since 1 February.

However, there has to be some ground for reconciliation, an agenda, a package. Do you want us to cooperate with people who think peace can be restored by demolishing all constitutionally-established institutions?"

Mr Giri posed. "We will never do it. If anybody dreams about it, they can forget it."

He was referring to a 12-point understanding arrived at between the Maoists and the Opposition parties that resulted in a cease-fire since September. The pact says Gyanendra's "authoritarian rule" is the main obstacle to peace and development in Nepal and aims to overthrow a "totalitarian monarchy".

Mr Giri iterated that the government would go ahead with elections even if there was no peace.

"Elections are not for the benefit of a few people but the entire nation and for the purpose of re-energising democracy in Nepal," he said.

Should the parties' anti-poll campaign cross the *lavman-rekha* (the limit), the government would take action, he warned.

Mr Giri said that Nepal wanted very good relations with India but "it doesn't entirely depend on us".

"It has to be mutual. What have we done to have India react this way? It is our responsibility to resolve the problem in our own country."

Nepal Maoists call off truce

Setback For Political Stability & Economic Prosperity Of The Country, Says India

By Indrani Bagchi/TNN

New Delhi: India responded with gloomy predictability to the new year's expected development in Nepal where the Maoists called off their ceasefire on Monday night.

When asked, the MEA spokesperson said: "This is an unfortunate decision. We have consistently called upon the Maoists to abandon the path of violence and terror, accept the discipline of multi-party democracy, and work for a political settlement that contributes to the political stability and economic prosperity of Nepal."

In anticipation of the renewed violence, security forces have beefed up their presence on the India-Nepal border, with fresh reinforcements being brought in. People will be allowed to cross the border from the authorised passages



only, said security officials. They added that checking of identity and travel papers had been intensified.

The Maoists have said they will retain their agreement with the political parties, blaming the king for the resumption of armed violence.

What this means is that they will target their violence against the royal forces. There have also been rumours that the Maoists may now even make advances into the Kathmandu valley.

Nepal watchers here expect that the situation may worsen as February 8, the date King Gyanendra has set for local level elections, approaches. The Maoists and political parties have announced a boycott of the elections.

According to sources here, the king has been meeting district officials over the past few days to assess the viability of the elections. He is as determined to go ahead with them as the Maoists are to subvert the voting.

At the heart of the current situation of instability are two realities - first, an abiding belief by the king that he can pull his strategy off, and second, an equally enduring

indecision in the Indian government which gives him this operating space.

Although foreign secretary Shyam Saran went to Kathmandu in December to try to talk things over with the king, this clearly had little impact. That is because the bottomline of India - and US - strategy envisages cooperation between the "pillars" in Nepal, who are actually bitterly opposed to each other.

India may have the political and diplomatic levers necessary to bring about this particular reconciliation, but until now, it has refrained from taking any proactive steps in Nepal, giving the impression that China now holds a greater influence in the Himalayan kingdom than India.

Meanwhile, as India and the US stand by, Nepal continues to slip into chaos.