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Party Has Attained New Height Of Unity, Says Prachanda

Bhaktapur, Nov. 21 (TRN): Following the failure of the four-day long central committee (CC) meeting to find a negotiating point, two separate political documents have been presented at the national level cadres gathering of the CPN-Maoist Friday.

The Maoist party chairman and Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' and senior leader of the party Mohan B Vaidhya 'Kiran' had presented their separate political lines regarding the nature of the republican set-up and the ways to achieve it at the party's CC meet that went on from Monday to Friday.

On the first day of the gathering, both the party chairman Prachanda and senior leader Kiran advocated for their respective reports.

Addressing the inaugural session of the gathering, chairman and Prime Minister Prachanda said that the party had to go through the transitional period of republican set-up and pledged



Photo Courtesy TRN
Prime Minister and Chairman of the CPN-Maoist Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' and other leaders of the party at the National Convention that started from Friday in Bhaktapur.

not to deceive the martyrs but to work rigorously for meeting the aspirations of the people for peace and change.

Speaking at the closed session after the inauguration of the gathering, senior leader Kiran said that the party had to adopt different political tactics to meet people's aspira-

tion and that the party was moving ahead with a reformist line, according to a participant.

'The party is moving ahead in a reformist way and, as such, we will fail to meet the aspirations of the people,' said senior leader Kiran.

About eleven hundred party cadres in-

cluding members of the party's thirteen different state committees and other state-level committees would discuss the documents and put up their suggestions. The cadres would be divided into twenty different groups for discussions, which are expected to continue for four days.

"Presently, we are at a crucial juncture of our country's history. We are being observed by families of those who sacrificed their lives, of those who are still missing, of those who are wounded and those who struggled for the liberation from all forms of oppression and those who dreamt of a new, beautiful, prosperous and equity-based federal republic Nepal," said party chairman Prachanda inaugurating the gathering at Kharipati.

And we are in a serious ideological discussion on how to meet the aspirations and needs of the people and push the country forward," he added.

He clarified that the debate

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Obama To Contend With High Expectations

- By Jim Malone, Washington, November 19 2008 VOA

President-elect Barack Obama will face an international economic crisis and two wars when he takes the oath of office as the 44th president of the United States on January 20. But the new president will also have to contend with a byproduct of his political success, great expectations from Americans at home and people around the world. VOA national correspondent Jim Malone reports from Washington.

Obama supporters experienced a kind of political euphoria on election night as the candidate from Illinois scored a convincing victory over his Republican opponent, Senator John McCain.

But just a few days later, Mr. Obama took pains to caution Americans that there were no quick fixes to the nation's economic challenges.

"It is not going to be quick and it is not going to be easy for us to dig ourselves out of the hole that we

are in," he said. "But America is a strong and resilient country, and I know we will succeed if we put aside partisanship and politics and work together as one nation."

But the reaction at home and around the world following Mr. Obama's election victory has been notable.

Obama supporters see his election as ushering in a new era of progressive change in Washington.

Around the world, foreign governments and various international newspapers have made it clear they expect changes in U.S. policies and viewpoints after eight years of the Bush administration.

Professor Robert Guttman directs the Center on Politics and Foreign Relations at the Johns Hopkins University in Washington. He told VOA's Encounter program that the expectations for Obama around the world are extremely high.

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Govt Committed To Abide By CPA

Bhaktapur, Nov. 20 (TRN): Minister for Peace and Reconstruction, Janardan Sharma has said the separate commissions on disappearances, reconciliation; state restructuring and land reform would be formed soon.

Speaking to media persons in Bhaktapur Thursday, Minister Sharma added the government and political parties are moving ahead in line with the spirit of Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA) and the government is committed to abide by the CPA.

He expressed his belief that the remnants of conflict and violence would be put to an end through political consensus and discussion.

Meanwhile, Nepali Congress Arjun Narsingh KC opined that neither the constitution would be written nor army integrated until the Maoists abided by the Comprehensive Peace Accord.

He blamed the Maoists that they were exhibiting double stan-

dard as they did not leave acts of seizing properties, looting and making people homeless.

The nation would face crisis if the Maoist terror is not checked, he added.

However, KC underscored the need of cooperation, coexistence and consensus for the lasting peace in country.

When asked whether NC would join the government, Spokesman KC said NC's joining government was killing self.

He also ruled out the integration of unqualified Maoists' combatants into the army.

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Notice:

Nepal Abroad would not be available on the weekend of 'Thanksgiving' 11/29/08.

Nepal Abroad Team

Editorial:

Serious Distractions

As though over ten years of actual insurgency and a few years of overt opposition to the contemporary government was not enough, Prime Minister Pushpa K Dahal and his party men are still talking about another revolution that would introduce the system of governance the majority in the party (NCP-Maoists) desired. Ministers from the Maoists party talk about effecting development within a defined period of time, but how will the development sustain when they continue to run notorious organizations like Young Communists League (YCL) that often make headlines, with their involvement in killing of innocent people, looting, seizing private properties, intimidation, and all other social evils. Even UML's Youth Force is on-board to compete with the YCL, even though their stated goals may have different readings. If all youths in the country quit their education and join the YCL or become the Maoists activists, what kind of state would Nepal become? Can these 'volunteers' who supposedly agreed to join either YCL or the Youth Force be competitive in the job market and live their live with degrees, known only to Finance Minister Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, awarded to them by the Maoists.

The more than a decade long insurgency was disastrous to the country and the young people who were forced out of the school to join the recruits. But the inaction of the government led by these former rebels to resume the school system will be further damaging to the lives of young people, and a loss of several generation of educated mass in the country. If one were to listen to the (Maoists) minister speaking, the development was in the backdoor, knocking to come in. Those youths who fought the war as Maoists

combatant should be given a chance to go back to school at no costs, and should equip them with 'real' skills (not necessarily the degrees) that will help them earn their livings.

The present day government also seems to have been distracted from its path, and appears to be wandering in the confusion. Those in the government were primarily elected to the Constituent Assembly (CA) and not the legislature that would form the government and administer the services to the population. People voted them to come up with a new comprehensive constitution, and not to protract their stay in the government. Prime Minister as the party chief of the CPN – Maoists may participate in the discussion about the kind of state-structure they'd like to see and implement, but their internal discussion shouldn't have overshadowed the important national affairs like the drafting the constitution. Partly (some of) the media is also responsible for this; should they all also recognize the urgency of completing the writing of the constitution over 'usual' sensitive statements and counter arguments from various political parties. The process of making the constitution is itself a very costly affair, and protracting this would prove more costly to Nepal.

At a time when Finance Ministry is in desperate need to fulfill its ambitious budget needs, government prioritizing the writing of the constitution would save all a billions of rupees, which could otherwise be used in positive developments.

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Displaced Children Face Hardship

Kathmandu, November 18 (IRIN): "When can we go home?" is Furma Lama's constant refrain. The 10-year-old has spent the last eight years displaced since her family fled Ramechhap District, 100km east of the capital, in fear of former Maoists rebels.

The rebels, who had accused them of being government spies, seized their farm and livestock, leaving nothing to live on and forcing the family to move to Kathmandu to find work and help.

However, her parents work as daily wage labourers in local construction sites and factories earning barely US\$2 per day.

Furma and her four siblings are forced to sleep on the cold floor, share their clothes, and eat only one meal a day.

"There is never enough to eat. We're eating less nowadays to save for the coming months," said her younger brother Gautam.

Problems worsening for children

Despite the end of the decade-long armed conflict in 2006, more than 50,000 displaced persons, many of them children, are still unable to go back to their villages due to fear of the former rebels and their refusal to return their farmlands.

Thousands of displaced children such as Furma and Gautam continue to live under difficult circumstances with their impoverished relatives or parents in the capital and other cities.

"Most of the displaced children need humanitarian support. Sadly they have been ignored," child rights activist Karna Bahadur Shahi, who runs a shelter for orphans and displaced children, told IRIN.

"Their situation is really bad, especially in the capital, where getting aid support is more difficult," said Shahi, explaining that most aid agencies told him their programmes were more focused on areas outside the capital.

Now Shahi is appealing for help for displaced children through religious groups, both Christians and Hindus. His team also regularly approaches households in the capital for

donations of food and clothes.

Education support needed

"The government should at least show some sensitivity towards the plight of the displaced children," said internally displaced person (IDP) rights activist Gopal Bahadur Shah from Maobadi Pirit Rastriya Sangharsa Samiti, a national committee of conflict-displaced families.

"It should introduce education programmes so that they can regularly attend school," he said. Yet government officials, requesting anonymity, blamed the lack of updated information for a clearer picture of the displaced children's situation.

Aid agencies explained that since displaced children were scattered around the capital, conducting research was difficult.

However, IDPs explained that all the aid agencies and the government had to do was announce their presence and they would gather anywhere and at any time with the children.

"I want to study. I want to go to school," said seven-year-old Hukum Prasad Oli in the capital, where he is living with relatives, who were also displaced from the remote Rukum District, nearly 500km northwest of Kathmandu. Oli's father died while his mother disappeared after leaving him with his aunt.

Some local community schools have tried to help sponsor the education of the displaced and orphaned children such as Oli but have to provide evidence from local government officials in their native villages that both parents were lost in the conflict.

Nepalese Calendar

Sun Nov 23 / Mangshir 08 '65

Utpatika Ekadashin

Mon Nov 24 / Mangshir 09 '65

Duwadashin

Tue Nov 25 / Mangshir 10 '65

Trayodashin

Wed Nov 26 / Mangshir 11 '65

Chaturdashin

Thu Nov 27 / Mangshir 12 '65

Aunshi/Thanksgiving day

Fri Nov 28 / Mangshir 13 '65

Pratipada

Sat Nov 29 / Mangshir 14 '65

Duwitiya

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Students Learn About the Role Of Women In The US Diplomatic Corps



Photo Courtesy US Embassy Nepal

Kathmandu November 14 (US Embassy Nepal): Through the Public Affairs Section's ongoing Embassy Speaker Program, the U.S. Ambassador Nancy J. Powell addressed more than 150 Bachelor and Master level female students and their professors at Padma Kanya Campus, Tribhuvan University, in Kathmandu.

Ambassador Powell stressed the importance of education,

the English language, hard work, mentoring, human rights, and a legal system to enforce those rights. She encouraged the female students of Nepal to be engaged in education, in politics, and in the rewriting of the Nepali constitution. The program attendees learned about the experiences and challenges that women could face in their professional ca-

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Literacy Campaign To Start From January 14

Kathmandu, Nov. 19 (TRN): The most ambitious National Literacy Campaign announced by the government two months ago aiming to eradicate illiteracy from across the country within two years will formally begin from 14th of January.

With the announcement of formal campaigning of the programme, the government has aimed to make a total of about 2.6 million illiterate people literate from across the country within six months.

"The government in two different phases of programme has aimed to literate 2.6 million people," Dr. Leksh Nath Poudel, joint spokesperson and joint secretary of the Education Ministry told The Rising Nepal Wednesday.

The first phase of the programme will begin from 14th of January and will continue for three months. And another three months of second phase of the campaign will start from 14 of March. Within six months of time, the government will educate a total of 1,296,000 illiterate people. And in the second phase campaign it has aimed to educate 1,395,000 people, Dr. Poudel said.

The government two months ago through the budget had announced to run a national literacy campaign with the slogan of "Know alphabets, Be Civilised".

Although this is a beginning of the campaign to eradicate the illiteracy from the country, the present initiation will not be enough to educate a chunk of 7.8 million people. According to the government census, it has been saying that 7.8 million people are still deprived from educational opportunities.

Dr. Poudel said that the government has also aimed to educate especially 15-45 age group of illiterate people. As per the government statistics, there are a total of 5.6 million illiterate people in this age group. "Thus the present initiative taken by the government will be hard pressed to meet its target as it has set two years of deadline to eradicate illiteracy from the country," Dr. Poudel said.

Talking on the financial aspects of the campaign, he said that the government has allotted a total of Rs. 1.4 billion to implement the campaign for a maxi-

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Calendar of Events

November 21-23: Powersports enthusiasts from across the country can see the latest and greatest innovations, products and services, aftermarket products, as well as the hottest new motorcycles, custom bikes, ATVs, scooters and more at 'Cycle World International Motorcycle Show' at Reliant Park, Houston TX 77054. For show schedules at other cities visit motorcycleshows.com

November 22: The Newah Organization of America (NAO) has scheduled Saturday November 22, 2008 to celebrate the annual Nepal Sambat 1129 from 4pm to 9pm at Kemp Mill Elementary School in Silver Spring MD. 'Janakabi Durga Lal Shrestha (Khobilu)', the writer of a famous Nepali song 'Phoolko Aankhama Phoolai Sanshara' b Ani Choying Dolma will be the guest of honor. For more information visit newah.org

November 30: The America Nepal Society (ANS) invites all to participate in the farewell program of Ambassador Dr. Suresh C. Chalise on Sunday November 30, 2008 from 1.00pm to 5.00pm at Sherwood Regional Library 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane Alexandria VA 22306 For details visit nepalhorizons.com

December 06: The Asian Division's Friends Society of the Library of Congress is organizing 'Intangible Cultural Heritage - Musical Instruments in Asian Culture' on Saturday Decemeber 06 from 2.00pm to 4.00pm at Asian Reading Room, Asian Division, The Library of Congress 101 Independence Ave SE Washington DC 20540. For details contact Yuwu Song at yson@loc.gov or visit nepalhorizons.com.

December 20-23: Nepali Public Relations Committee America and Ad and Event Management Nepal Pvt. Lyd has scheduled to organize Nepal Festival USA - 2008 for thr first time in America at Manhattan New York. For details visit janasamparka.com, nepalevent.com and nepalfestival2008.com

Thursdays: The Shri Sai Baba of Shirdi Bhajan / Kirtan is conducted at Durga Temple 8400 Durga Place, Fairfax Station VA every Thursdays from 7pm to 8pm. Sai Satsang in Dallas, TX: Sri Shirdi Sai Baba Satsang is held every Sunday between 4pm and 6pm CST in remembrance of Sri Sai Baba and Sri Babuji at Center for Spiritual Living, 4801 Spring Valley Road, Suite 115, Dallas TX 75244

Saturdays: The Durga Temple & Chinmaya Mission welcomes everyone to **Bhagavad Gita Satsangh** every Saturday at the Durga Temple 8400 Durga Place, Fairfax Station VA from 10:30am to noon. For further information contact coordinators at 703 793 8855 / 703 646 5924.

Citizenship Classes:

Free preparatory class to assist with the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Service examinations are being conducted on Saturday November 22, 29 from 2pm to 4:30pm at Dallas West Branch Library, 2332 Singleton Boulevard, Dallas TX 75212. For details call 214 670 6445.

ESL Classes:

Free English classes for adults offered in North Oak Cliff Branch Library, 302 W 10th Street, Dallas TX 75208 from 1pm to 5pm. For registration call 214 670 7555.

To list the scheduled event(s) of your organization on the Community Events above, please email us: enews@nepalabroad.com

Govt Not Serious About Talks: MJM

Rajbiraj, November 22 (THT): Chairman of Madhesi Janamukti Morcha (MJM) Jaya Prakash Yadav on Friday blamed the government of not being honest about talks but just using it as a rhetoric.

"The government is just harping on about talks but is not displaying any honesty," he said to journalists at an undisclosed location.

Stating that the government had not informed him about the talks

yet, Yadav said, "All the government is doing is deceiving the Madhes."

He added his party would not accept the results of the talks held between Minister for Peace and Reconstruction and coordinator of government talks team Janardan Sharma 'Prabhakar' with Gaurav in Goithi of Saptari last week.

Stating that Gaurav, who is the Madhesi Virus Killers' (MVK)

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Fierce Democratic Struggle Shapes Globalization

The tale of locating a Nano car factory reveals how change in India requires consensus

- Salil Tripathi November 19, 2008 YaleGlobal

LONDON: Used to treating India as an emerging giant and a poster child of globalization, the world had to pause when violent protests stopped a much-publicized project in its tracks. The fact that the famous Tata group was forced to scrap plans to make the \$2,500 Nano car in West Bengal might reinforce the impression that, despite impressive industrial strides, India is not ready for serious investment.

But those who followed the aftermath of the publicized pullout noticed that the car project is still very much on track, in another location, the western state of Gujarat. At one level, Tata's surrender to peasant groups and opposition parties is a blow to the state, sending a negative signal about India's willingness to accept investments; at another, it's a testament to the vibrancy of civil society. The birth pangs of Tata Nano offer an example of how a democratic India deals with the inevitable turmoil of industrialization and global integration.

The broader issue is how one of India's leading companies negotiated its way out of the kind of problem that bedevils big business – oil, mining, gas and other large manufacturing companies routinely face opposition from indigenous groups, local communities and political parties in many parts of the world. In India, the challenges are particularly acute: Some two-thirds of India's billion people are officially categorized as farmers, and farm income produces an increasingly smaller proportion of the country's gross domestic product. The Nano episode highlights a central issue. Given that agricultural productivity does not rapidly boost incomes and industrial growth helps countries progress faster, how can poor countries like India emerge from poverty sooner, if they cannot make the move from agrarian to manufacturing sectors quickly and painlessly?

This is not the only complicated project for Tata or West Bengal. Indeed, in neighboring Orissa, Tata has faced vigorous opposition from indigenous communities over a steel plant in Kalinganagar. Protests turned violent, and unlike an automobile plant, a steel plant can't be located too far from raw materials. West Bengal's plan to build a petrochemi-

cal complex in Nandigram, where Indonesia's Salim group planned to invest, met opposition, too. Ironically, reputable human-rights groups have credibly accused the ruling Communist Party-led Front of spreading a reign of terror in Nandigram in support of the project. Again in Orissa, groups opposed to another major steel investment – by POSCO of South Korea – have abducted and since released company officials.

Something seems rotten in the state of India, but contrary to campaigning organizations' assertions, this is not a simple tale of greedy corporations stealing resources from marginal farmers. Rather, it shows the dysfunctional approach of India's state governments in handling the sensitive issue of land ownership. The state's record in this matter since India's independence in 1947 has been abysmal, inspiring little confidence.

The main problem concerning Nano was Tata dealt with the government to acquire privately owned land. West Bengal's Communist-led coalition, ruling the state for 31 years precisely for such policies, is proud of transforming sharecroppers into landowners. Tata wanted more than 1,000 acres of land; the government acquired the land, and as it often happens with such transactions, some acquisitions were made under duress, by threat or with misleading information, campaigners allege. Local communities and an opposition party demanded Tata return 400 acres. As protests turned violent, Tata said it would move to protect employees, sub-contractors and communities that supported the project. Ratan Tata, the group's head, said that rather than negotiate at gunpoint, he preferred leaving West Bengal.

Ironies multiply, including a leftist government wooing one of India's oldest private-sector groups and the Tata group facing opposition. For more than a century, Tata, which derives three-fifths of its revenues overseas and whose subsidiaries include steel and auto plants in the UK and manufacturing and services operations in all parts of the world, has built its reputation as an enlightened



This land is our land: Indian farmers force Tata to relocate its Nano car factory; the protest shapes, but doesn't stop globalization

corporate citizen.

Indeed it's at the forefront of corporate social responsibility. Its steel plant was the first company in India to conduct a social audit in the 1970s, before such ideas were considered worthy among Western companies. Its workers had eight-hour shifts before the International Labour Organisation recommended such working conditions; it accepted collective bargaining before legally required. Its philanthropic record, too, is impressive, funding some of India's premier research institutes for sciences, social science, environmental engineering, state-of-the-art hospitals and an arts complex on Bombay's waterfront. In context, though, such details do not matter: Companies cannot offset bad conduct in one area with good deeds elsewhere, not to suggest that Tata did anything illegal in West Bengal.

At a deeper level, the protests expose a major weakness in India: While smaller projects, or those dealing with the services sector – banking, information technology, even healthcare – progress with relative ease, large infrastructure or manufacturing projects that may require relocation or substantial changes in the lifestyles of rural communities face major roadblocks, literal and metaphorical. This is partly because of the rural-urban divide in India and the perception that economic reforms India initiated in 1991 only benefited the cities or the middle class and wealthy. Many campaigners point out thousands of farmers took their own lives due to inability to repay debt, even as cities be-

come more prosperous. Some of that alienation has turned violent: In remote parts of many rural districts, Maoist groups have considerable sway, with some reports suggesting that Maoists run some parallel administrations in as many as a fifth of India's districts.

As urban India races ahead, some observers expect rural India getting left behind, to be attracted to mounting opposition to industry-led progress. From an investor's point of view, is China, where such protests are quelled more easily, a better investment bet?

The narrative might seem accurate, except for what happened on Oct 7, as Tata announced its new Gujarat location in Sanand, with other states – including Sri Lanka – vying with offers. This is debate, Indian-style. Making radical change in democratic India takes time precisely because securing consent is essential – change cannot be imposed by fiat. Because that struggle is hard, reversal is equally difficult, if not impossible.

Securing consensus in a billion-strong country where everyone has an opinion cannot be quick. As a democracy, India cannot impose pass laws, as in South Africa's apartheid regime, or restrict rural-to-urban migration, as China attempts. It must manage the transition in a humane way. The state can take some simple steps, such as getting out of the business of acquiring land for private purposes, so that companies negotiate directly with the people, with the state restricting its role to regulator and enforcer of the law.

Change in India takes time, but deliberated upon, the result of a struggle, debate and compromise, the effects are longer lasting. That's perhaps the only way to govern a multi-everything entity like India. The drama in West Bengal was not a step away from globalization, but rather a reflection of a nation making up its mind on how to engage with the world. Indeed, West Bengal's Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee said as much in early November: "Globalization is a must. Any country that chooses not to be part of globalization is bound to be doomed."

Salil Tripathi is a London-based writer who specializes in Asian and international economic affairs. He is former correspondent for India Today and Far Eastern Economic Review. Reprinted with permission from YaleGlobal Online - www.yaleglobal.yale.edu - (c) 2008 Yale Center for the Study of Globalization.

Obama To Contend With High Expectations...

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"We have two wars, we have an extreme economic meltdown, a financial crisis, but Obama does not have any power until January 20," he noted. "So, while there is honeymoon around the world and excitement, by the time he actually takes power a lot of people are going to be saying, well, how come he did not save this bank or how come he did not do that?"

Another expert, Norman Ornstein of the American Enterprise Institute, says international expectations of the Obama presidency should be tempered by reality.

"Barack Obama will be an American president who will pursue America's national interest, and America's national interest is not always the same as other country's national interest," he explained. "And so if they just think that he is going to do what they want, they are going to be sadly mistaken."

In the short term, Mr. Obama's transition team is focused on the monumental task of building a government ready to take power on January 20.

"The president-elect has a total of about 3,000 political appoint-

ments at various levels that he has to make," said William Galston, an expert on government at the Brookings Institution in Washington. "There is no permanent government. There is no shadow cabinet. And so the president-elect has to create a government from scratch in about 10 weeks."

Mr. Obama demonstrated great rhetorical skills during his presidential campaign. But as presidents from Franklin Roosevelt to Ronald Reagan to Bill Clinton have realized, the power to communicate with the people can be just as important when governing.

"If a president is going to be successful, the president has to not only set the vision about where he wants to take the country, he also has to be very truthful about the challenges that the country has to confront, the sacrifices that are going to have to be made and the tough decisions that are involved in trying to deal with the problems facing this country," explained Leon Panetta, who served as White House chief of staff for former President Clinton.

During the presidential campaign, Senator McCain often re-

ferred to Mr. Obama as one of the most liberal members of the U.S. Senate.

But political analyst Stuart Rothenberg says the early appointments to the incoming Obama administration suggest a pragmatic, centrist approach to governing.

"I was talking to somebody who worked for him at the Harvard Law Review who said recently that Senator Obama is probably more liberal than most Americans know, but he will be more pragmatic than most Americans expect - certainly most Republicans expect - because he is ambitious, he wants to succeed," he said. "He knows he cannot go too far and he knows where the country is. And the picks he has made suggest that is the case."

Mr. Obama will have the advantage of having fellow Democrats control Congress when he takes office in January. But Democratic control of both the White House and Congress has not always worked out so well.

Presidents Franklin Roosevelt and Lyndon Johnson worked effectively with Democratic-run Congresses early in their terms.

But the last two Demo-

cratic presidents, Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton, had significant problems early on with Congress and eventually paid a political price.

Mr. Carter lost his re-election bid in 1980, while Mr. Clinton was forced to deal with a Republican-led Congress only two years after he won the presidency in 1992.

Condolence!



Kritika Singh (21 yrs)
October 28, 1987- November 17, 2008



**May the departed soul
rest in peace**

Nepal Abroad

Bhutan's Forgotten Citizens

Bhumika Ghimire IN



On November 6th Bhutan celebrated coronation ceremony of its new king. 28 year old Oxford educated bachelor Jigme Khesar Namgyel

Wangchuck assumed leadership of a nation that is just beginning to take baby steps towards modernization. The country held its first democratic elections in March 2008 and only recently allowed satellite television and internet access.

Bhutanese call their country Druk Yul which means "Land of Thunder Dragon". The country has been described by many as the ultimate tourist destination, untouched by hazards of modern world with perfectly preserved environment and undisturbed ancient culture.

Unfortunately for the new King, integrating Bhutan with the modern world while keeping its natural and cultural heritage is not the only challenge on hand. For last 17 years the country has been wrestling with a major issue, which surprisingly was

not mentioned or discussed during the lengthy and lavish coronation celebrations.

King Jigme Khesar's father-Jigme Singye came up with a plan for a more homogeneous Bhutan during the 1990s. He wanted Bhutan to have one culture, one language and even imposed a dress code. Problem with his ideal was that his country was homogeneous. Significant numbers of ethnic Nepalese were living in the country. They had their own language, culture and religious beliefs.

Not to be deterred, Jigme Singye decided to throw out the "undesirable Nepalese" and create a perfect Bhutan. As a result more than 100,000 ethnic Nepalese were left stateless.

Nepal and Bhutan don't share a border; the two countries are separated by the Indian state of Sikkim. Indian authorities allowed safe passage to the refugees to enter Nepal. Circumstances under which the refugees were escorted into Nepal are often disputed but it does not take a rocket scientist to understand

that the scene was definitely not pretty or peaceful.

With India's help Bhutan successfully got rid of more than 100,000 of its ethnic Nepalese citizens. Those refugees are now living in camps funded by the United Nations in and around Nepal's Jhapa district.

For more than a decade Nepal and Bhutan have been wrangling about the refugee issue, India has refused to get involved. Not a single refugee has been repatriated and all the diplomatic efforts have produced almost zero results-except for protracting the debate.

It was disheartening to see that Bhutan's new King did not make any move towards reconciliation or showed any concern towards his citizens suffering in a foreign land. In his message to the nation after coronation King Jigme Khesar promised to keep Bhutan safe from "outside influences" and emphasized on preserving the country's heritage but he chose to forget about the refugees.

Bhutanese refugees have

urged their new King to allow them back home. They have asked the Nepalese government for help. But the Maoists lead government is in no position to save the Bhutanese; in fact it is in no position to save itself. Bitter fighting among various political parties over the issue of integrating former Maoist fighters into the Nepalese Army could very well cause the government's collapse. Who is going to stand up and fight for the refugees then? At this time, the answer is sadly no one. The international community, including the United States, has decided to take the easy route. They have decided to resettle the refugees in a third country. Already some refugees have been taken in by the USA and Australia and some will be going to Europe.

It is better to provide a stable home, citizenship to the refugees instead of leaving them to languish in camps for years without any legal status but if we keep ignoring gross abuses like the one committed by Bhutan and keep cleaning up their mess, aren't we empowering the abuser?

Sports In Nepal At ...

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Olympic Games or the Asian Games or other major international competitions we find ourselves groping around the dark. Not surprisingly we are reduced to a bunch of second string athletes. The best we can give is either improve our personal record or break the existing national record.

Against the backdrop, I can say without exaggeration that sports in Nepal is in a state of shambles. As such our society has not welcomed sports as it should, thus resulting in the non-existent of sporting culture. To make matters worse the government has failed to prioritize the sport sector. The impact is clearly visible with development slipping into a state of hibernation.

Despite unprecedented craze and enthusiasm for sports in the country the government continues to ignore its importance. As a matter of fact, a whole lot remains to be done to restructure the system that is badly flawed and poorly financed in both national and district levels.

Whatever infrastructures and facilities exist is inadequate and unprofessionally manned. Shockingly there have been no attempts either to consolidate or expand the infrastructures. This has led to a sharp and steady decline as far as sports activities is concerned for a good number of years. For example the district, national, regional

and metropolitan meets that used to take place with regularity have ceased. Also the uncertainty that looms large has cost us dearly in terms of finance. It has been a real hard struggle for us to convince and win the support of corporate houses.

The establishment of Sports Ministry ten years ago with objectives to rescue and foster sports sector in coordination with various sports agencies has not worked. To add fuel to the fire, National Sports Council (NSC), Nepal Olympic Committee (NOC) and National sports associations are so politicized that they have proved ineffective. Instead of working in tandem for the over all development of sports they are shamelessly engaged in a political tug of war.

With such insincere, dishonest and incompetent people governing the sport bodies, obviously things have gone from bad to worse. The biggest irony is that NSC is unhappy over the recent development budget allocated to them by the government. They have said that the budget is paltry and insufficient to carry out their so called pragmatic dream project as planned.

No matter how heavily we invest the end result is bound remain the same long as bureaucrats are allowed to run the show. More importantly sport must be given a central place in national planning and governed by sincere people with vision and strong principles.

Nepalese Students Learn...

contd. from pg 7...

reers. The Ambassador also answered numerous questions from the students on topics such as the history of women in the Foreign Service, today's Foreign Service, challenges for women in the Foreign Service, mentorship, the speed of change,

balancing family and work responsibilities, and how men would respond to women in the Diplomatic Corps. She also explained to the students how the U.S. Mission here in Nepal is helping women members in the Constituent Assembly to raise their capacity by providing training.

Literacy Campaign To...

contd. from pg 3...

num period of six months.

The government has also fixed that this campaign will be started with the cooperation and networking of local units and each village development committees of the concerned district. The allotted budget will be at first given to the local units and the local units will distribute the amount to each VDCs as per the needs and of the campaign, clarified Dr. Poudel. "The amount will be distributed on the basis of the number of illiterate population in the concerned districts,"

added Poudel.

The government will start 41,500 centres or classes to teach the people in its first phase and in the second phase it will start about 47,870 centres to educate the illiterate people. "There will be at least one teacher in each centre who has passed SLC or Intermediate Level to teach them," he said. "When this could happen it is sure that minimum 89,370 youth volunteers will explore employment opportunities within this year," claimed Poudel.

Liquor-sale Laws...

contd. from pg 7...

Although Home Minister Bamdev Gautam's pledge that drinking is perceived to be one of the major causes behind the soaring crime rate and social ills, sellers complained that the restrictions were only meant to burden sellers with taxes.

Monitoring is the backbone of this law, if monitoring fails it will be just a financial burden to people, said Pabitra Bajracharya, president of the Association of Retailers.

Throttle Bottle regulations

- Department stores and shopping complexes in metros, sub-metros and municipalities are required to have designated outlets to sell liquor, cigarettes and tobacco products

- Hotel and restaurants can serve alcohol after obtaining a licence

from the Department of Inland Revenue and Comptroller's Office Liquor can only be sold between 10 am and 10 pm

- Those below 18 years of age cannot buy liquor

- Consumers have to furnish their citizenship certificates while buying alcohol and sellers have to maintain invoices

The annual cost

- Five-star hotels have to pay Rs 30,000 to obtain the licence, four-star Rs 25,000, one-star Rs 7,000, while non-star hotels and restaurants are required to shell out Rs 5,000 to sell both Nepal and foreign-made liquor and Rs 3,000 to sell Nepal-made liquor Retailers need to pay Rs 8,000 to sell liquor made in any country and Rs 3,000 to sell liquor made in Nepal.

Party Has Attained New...

contd. from pg 1...

now was about how to take the Maoist movement ahead with which thought, strategy and tactics. "Assimilating the rule of social development and that of the political events, our party has always forced itself into a discussion and made itself stronger, more determined and unified," Prachanda said. "We have always evaluated our mistakes harshly and taken lessons from the past and moved forward."

Referring to the past discussions in the party, he said that the party had proved that it had ability to move ahead in the rule of unity, struggle and transformation, and new unity founded on the new basis. "Every time we went into discussions, the reactionary, regressive, imperialist and expansionists forces thought that we were in crisis and tried to weaken us, but we always emerged with greater height of unification and more strength and we will do the same at this time too."

Maoist chairman and PM Prachanda said that there was no alternative force to his party for fulfilling the Nepali people's long cherished as-

pirations. "With our rise to power as the biggest party in the Constituent Assembly, people have hoped that there will be a significant change in the country; things will take place in real favour of the nation, the people, peace and prosperity," he said. "We have to meet the aspiration we stimulated in them and the dreams we instilled in them."

He, however, admitted that the people had started worrying as the Maoist-government had not been successful in giving a sense of change even after three months of the government formation.

Premier Prachanda said that justice loving people all over the world were watching his party and worried about what ideological move the party would bring in, whether it would take a revolutionary step or miss a way forward. "The communist movement of the world, the political movement of the world and our foes and friends, are all looking at us. It is a matter of both pride and challenge for us and we have to take risk for revolution by not taking stereotype steps but an innovative ones."

Saying that the party had been successful in failing the plots and ill-intentions of the reactionary forces, he urged the cadres to take up the discussion in such a way that the foes of the class struggle once again failed and the party emerged stronger and unified with a clear way forward.

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Liquor-sale Laws Go Into Effect

Kathmandu, November 18 (THT):Laws to regulate the sale of alcoholic drinks became effective today, but many of those involved in the business have little idea about the regulations to be followed.

Long queues were seen on the premises of Inland Revenue Offices in the capital to obtain licence to sell alcohol, but most licence-seekers were in the dark about the regulations.

As many as 1,150 hotels, restaurants and retail shops were issued licence to sell liquor today. Kumar Lama, owner of Reena Res-

taurant, Bhatkeko Pul, expressed ignorance about what is expected of him once he obtains the licence, except that it is must to resume the sale of liquor in his restaurant.

Lama said he had no idea of the age bar and time frame set by the government to sell liquor.

Navin Shrestha owns Ganga Cold Store in Jamal. He has taken the stock of alcohol off the shelves. He says he is planning to obtain a licence shortly, but he has no idea that the government has put in place certain restrictions on liquor sale.

...Contd. on pg 6

Sports In Nepal At Cross-roads

-By Sushil Thapa, sushilthapa@verizon.net

In the modern era sports has assumed immense significance. More than just an avenue for recreation, as evidenced sports has become an integral part of the society, whether one agrees or not.

Most of us tend to overlook the fact that sport has the magic to unite the nation in terms of loyalties, ground swell of support and national fervor whenever the national team is in action, nationally and internationally.

Every sporting success that transpires in the field uplifts a nation's self-esteem and standing in a very big way. This has prompted nations across the globe to embrace sports and work seriously for its enhancement. However, contrary to the universal belief it looks though sports is still unimportant to our government.

No wonder we find ourselves very close to a lost entity in international sports. For us it has been virtually an uphill task to keep up the pace with the rest of the world. Not that we do not deserve to compete against the best in the world. I am of the opinion that we certainly should make our international presence felt for the sake of experience and expo-

sure regardless of the final outcome. In reality contemporary sports standard is so high that it demands exceptional showing to make some kind of impact on our part. Equally important is the rigorous mental and physical preparedness for the competition which we awfully lack.

Over the decades we have failed to come to grips with the pace of international sports. Undoubtedly, we always put in a lot of effort and energy but end up well short of the mark. Our biggest drawback is that we compete ninety - five percent of the time sans proper and adequate training. The simple truth is that we participate for the sake of participation only.

After every dismal performance the onus is on athletes for their failure to deliver the goods. They are brought under the microscope and needlessly made scapegoats. Most of the time critics knowingly or unknowingly avoid getting to the root of the problems for inexplicable reasons. In reality the system we have is simply not working because of insincere and unprofessional officials at the helm.

When competing at the

...Contd. on pg 6

Govt Not...

contd. from pg 3...

army commander, did not belong to MJM ever since the latter took a new name five months ago, Yadav ruled out the need to respect the accord made by someone not belonging to his party.

Yadav said Gaurav had not been in MJM leadership since August 12, when the Indian police held the two in Pratapgunj.

The MJM Chairman, who was released from prison three days ago, however, said he was not against talks but demanded sincerity on part of the government.

Meanwhile, Gaurav said Diwan was their new party chairman since Yadav belonged to a breakaway faction. "I held talks with Minister Sharma in the capacity of MVK army commander, not as an MJM affiliate."

Happy Birthday !



Neyasha Ghimire

Sacramento CA
November 24



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Australian \$1	50.63	51.01
Swiss Franc 1	66.41	66.90
Singapore Dollar	52.57	52.96
Japanese Yen 10	8.45	8.52
Chinese Yuan 1	11.78	11.87
Indian Rupees 100	160.00	160.15
Swedish Kroner 1	9.82	---
Danish Kroner 1	13.51	---
Hong Kong Dollar 1	10.39	---
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Malaysian Ringgit 1	---	---

[Source: Nepal Rastra Bank, November 21 '08]

Child Trafficking In Nepal

Contd. From the previous week...

The second forum is not an organized network but was put together to specifically address some of the glaring lacunae in the SAARC Draft Convention. This forum, represented by NGOs, Lawyers, policy makers, social workers and concerned individuals, has had two meetings in the recent months in Goa and Delhi respectively. The third initiative to affect changes to the Draft Convention was jointly spearheaded by UNIFEM and the office of the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Ms. Radhika Coomaraswamy. Three experts met in Colombo in July this year to review the Draft and suggest changes.

Notwithstanding minor differences in suggested language and logistics, all of the three initiatives have come up with the same major recommendations in their separate meetings.

- That the title of the SAARC Convention be expanded to cover trafficking not only for the purpose of prostitution but for other purposes as well.

- That a distinction be made between women and children in view of the fact that as adult citizens the

agency of women to voluntarily work in certain industries and work sites such as prostitution be recognized, whereas commercial sex work per se is tantamount to abuse of children and minors.

- Those women's preference, choice and autonomy are taken into account in formulating policies and programs for rescue, repatriation and reintegration.

- In addition to the above key suggestions for change, guidelines for implementation and enforcement of the clauses contained within the Convention as well as a recommended preamble to the Convention have been formulated by the three groups. One of the forums suggested that the title be gender neutral and read as 'Trafficking of Persons' instead of 'Women and Children'. The Resistance Network plans to hold a parallel Peoples' SAARC Forum at the time of the upcoming SAARC Summit to lobby for the suggested changes as well as to raise public awareness of trafficking and related issues of security of food and livelihoods within the region.

In addition to the above declaration which directly addresses the issue of trafficking, the SAARC body

has also resolved to abolish all child labor by the year 2000; prostitution has been identified as hazardous work for minors. Furthermore, the Beijing Platform of Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995), which has been supported by all the SAARC countries, addresses the issue of trafficking by making a strong plea for stepping up international and regional cooperation for concerted action by all parties and agencies, and for allocation of adequate resources to address the issue.

The international significance of drafting of a SAARC Convention on Trafficking at the behest of the South Asian States cannot be underestimated. Through this initiative the SAARC region has undertaken a very crucial first step globally, to come up with a regional response on the trafficking of women and children. Credit for this is also due to the vibrant and active lobbying on the part of several NGOs and women's organizations within the region and the support provided to this initiative by INGOs and the UN agencies. However, as it presently stands, the SAARC convention on Traffick-



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ing has some major flaws, and if the suggested changes mentioned above are not incorporated then the new regional Convention may not be particularly effective in addressing the problem of trafficking. Therefore, there is a pressing need to intervene in the process of finalization of the SAARC Convention via effective lobbying strategies, and to advocate for the recommended changes. These recommendations are commensurate as well with the changes being suggested to the Protocol on Trafficking of Women and Children which is subsumed under the proposed new draft of the UN Convention on Organized Crime.

The Road Less Travelled

I have a fondness for intelligent, intense and strong women; women with glasses and salwar kameez, women with newspaper and lattes, women with notebooks and off-style denims and women who display a little cleavage for the sake of sexuality. The fondness sometimes escalates to a different level where I lose my sanity and actually fall in love with them. They have alleged it as obsession, infatuation and attachment; I have argued it as love, I wonder how they try and know more about me than I myself do.

Pervert - perhaps that is what I am, but at least I consider myself to be honest. Relatively honest, because I dare not tell my wife all my romantic escapades, sometimes I thought I should, but then they are not fraught with sexual adventures and therefore I again believe her ignorance is bliss when something is not alarming.

An infidel - I would agree, but then I do not believe in the norm set by the society where a man cannot love more than one woman at one time and vice versa. Society, is

it also supposed to control our feelings, mere abstract, arbitrary and innocuous feelings?

A cell phone is a fiend, and those free minutes are even more sinister, they not only evoke time consuming tête-à-tête, but also call upon unwarranted feelings towards each other that get intimate every second. I could never have told an anaconda from ayurveda when it came to women's mood swings, they soar like a rocket sometimes only to plummet like a meteor. A moment of pleasure, a degree of guilt, a pile of secrets, a chunk of laughter, some confessions, some affection, some eroticism, they all lie in a verbal exchange between two opposite sexes. Sometimes, it does not necessarily have to be all; sometimes it essentially has to be just one - explicit dark secrets which is, in due course - imminent.

I am an emotional fool, I want to kiss women giddily, feel the softness of their hands, caress their hair and rub their forehead. I limit my affection to those measures, anything else would be con-

sidered profanity on my own behalf, forget the society. But I am disturbed when those affection clad gestures are stigmatized as a dissolute acts, and voices keen to put me behind bars for something they completely misconstrued.

"Make love to me will you?" SHE had asked me one cold January night as we both struggled to keep our voices low on a tiny Motorola.

"Yes", I had blurted out perfunctorily.

An over intimate jaunt is never on my cards when I think about women, but this time SHE was so different than all others I supposedly "loved", in fact SHE was the only person I confessed my affection to, the liking towards all others over the years were always muted.

"Bridgeport is only an hour away, you could drive". SHE had whispered.

I had nodded.

A shrill chime of the cellular phone wakes me up at four am in the morning only to hear

HER trembling voice at the other end.

"Bob, I think this is not right, you shouldn't come, you are married and I have a boyfriend".

It often takes time for me to let those words sink in at dawn so I reconsider calling HER again next morning, as expected, the conversation takes off yet again, divulging more love and intimacy. We decided to meet again.

There was something eerie about this relationship that I had failed to perceive then. Being a man, I was less sexually motivated, perhaps I had never been that way before. SHE on the other hand dwelled on sexual issues time and again only to refute it later. The teeter totter finally had my emotion in shambles when I decided to meet HER regardless.



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...Contd. next week