

Nepal crisis far from over as Maoists refuse to form govt

AFP, Kathmandu

Nepal's Maoists said yesterday they would not form the Himalayan nation's first post-royal government after the defeat of their candidate for president, setting off a new political crisis here.

The former rebels' decision, seen as a blow to Nepal's peace process, came one day after rival parties in a constitutional assembly ganged up against the Maoists to elect a president allied to the main centrist party.

"The party's central committee... decided not to form the government under our leadership," Maoist spokesman Krishna Bahadur Mahara told AFP.

Elections to the assembly in April gave the Maoists the largest single bloc of seats, but not an outright majority. The Maoists had insisted their choice of president should be elected and that they

form a new government.

But a vote on Monday saw Ram Baran Yadav from the Nepali Congress party -- the Maoists' main rival -- anointed the country's first president.

"After the presidential election, it is certain that we do not have a majority. So we do not have any basis to form the next government," said Mahara.

The presidency is a largely ceremonial position, but the Maoists have argued that Yadav's victory would give them little room to manoeuvre should they form a government, and little chance of implementing key platform pledges like radical land reform.

The Maoist spokesman however added that the "door to talks with other parties is still open."

Arjun Narsingh Khatri Chhetri, spokesman for the Nepali Congress party, told AFP the presidential vote had been a wake-up call for

the Maoists.

"They wanted to divide the political parties and rule alone. Now they have to respect and be committed to democratic norms, values and processes," Chhetri said. "They can't have everything their way."

The Maoists' continued involvement in mainstream politics is seen as crucial to the survival of Nepal's two-year-old peace process, which ended a decade-long rebel uprising that killed at least 13,000 people.

"The Maoists' decision to stay in opposition is a setback for the peace process. There will be complications if the Maoists stick to their decision," explained Gunraj Luitel, editor of Nepal's Kantipur daily newspaper.

It was also not immediately clear if the other parties could cobble together their own alliance and pull Nepal out of the political vacuum that followed the abolition

of the 240-year-old monarchy on May 28.

Lok Raj Baral, political science professor at Nepal's Tribhuvan University, said the other parties "have to bring the Maoists into the government at any cost in order to keep the peace process on track."

"All political parties are equally responsible for the political mess as they were unable to trust each other," said Baral.

"They must now understand that there is no alternative to politics of consensus."

Chhetri insisted the Nepali Congress party was still committed to working with the Maoists but nonetheless issued a stern warning to them.

"They are the biggest party and we don't disrespect that," he said.

"But one has to remember even god has an alternative. If worst comes to worst, we will find an alternative to Maoist government."



Former rebel leader and chairman of the Communist Party of Nepal Maoist Pushpa Kamal Dahal (L) addresses media representatives as Maoist second in command Baburam Bhattarai (R) looks on during a press conference in Kathmandu yesterday. Nepal's Maoists said they would not form the Himalayan nation's first post-royal government after the defeat of their candidate for president, setting off a new political crisis.

Bhutan formally adopts new constitution

AP, Guwahati

The tiny Himalayan nation of Bhutan has formally adopted a new constitution that transforms it from an absolute to a constitutional monarchy, a move initiated by its royal family.

The nation's king, 28-year-old Jigme Khesar Namgyal Wangchuck, was the first to sign the new constitution, followed by the members of the country's first democratically elected National Assembly and National Council.

"Today, through this, my hand and seal, I affix onto the constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan, the hopes and prayers of my people. This is the people's constitution," Wangchuck said Friday after signing the document in the capital, Thimphu.

"It is my fervent prayer that through this constitution we will, with our body, speech and mind work with complete commitment and conviction as we strengthen the sovereignty and security of Bhutan," he said in a speech.

Benazir's guard killed in Pak attack

AFP, Karachi

Unidentified gunmen on motorcycles shot dead a security guard of slain former Pakistani prime minister Benazir Bhutto in the southern port city of Karachi on Tuesday, police and officials said.

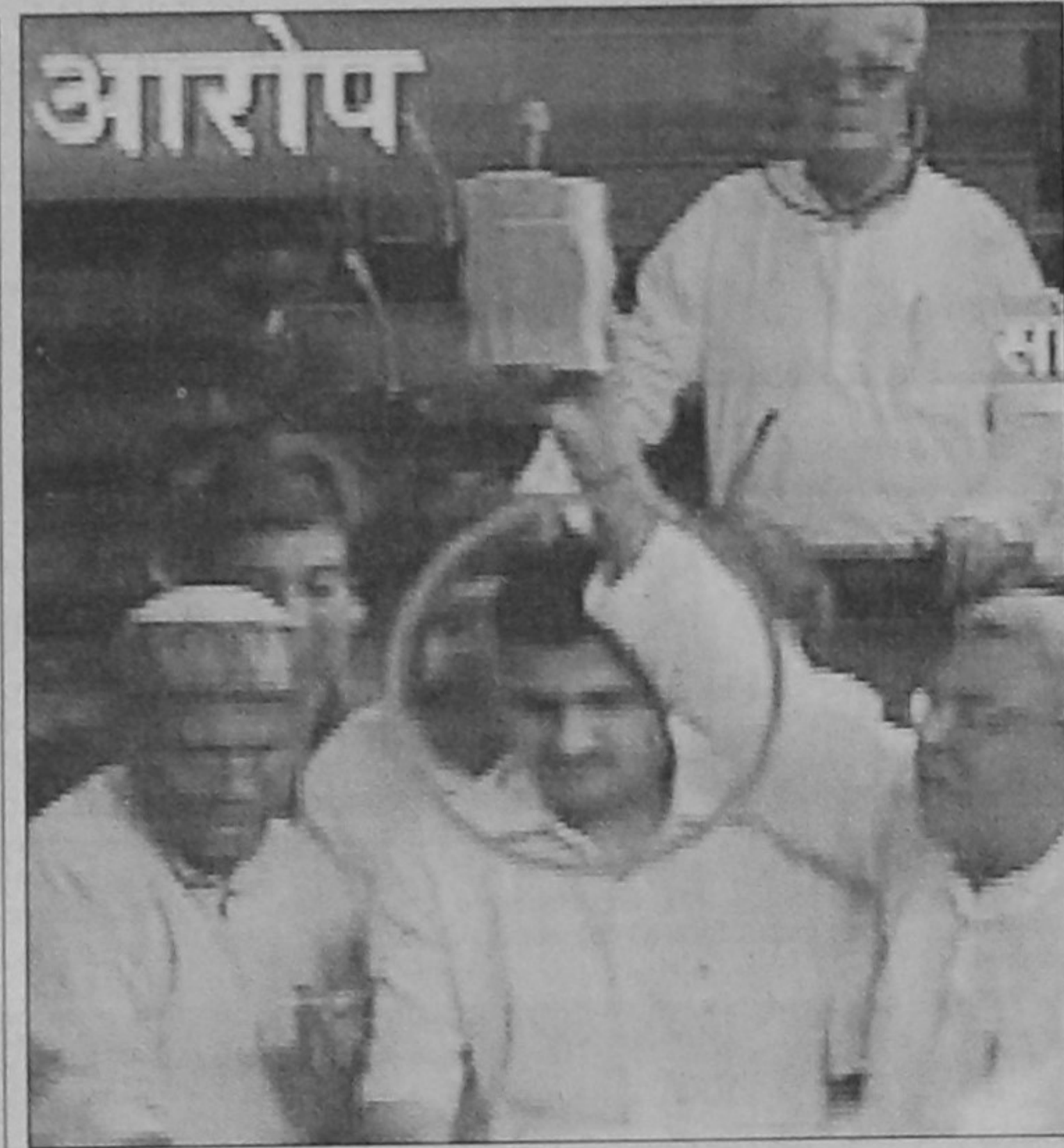
Khalid Shahenshah, 45, who was Benazir Bhutto's personal security guard in Pakistan and had been a guard at her family's Karachi home since her death, was coming out of his house in the city when the gunmen opened fire.

"He had four bullets in his body and was shifted to a hospital where he died," Aijaz Durrani, the custodian of Benazir's house in Karachi, told AFP.

Mohammad Ashraf, a local police official, said the assailants were on motorcycles and escaped after the attack.

"It is a cowardly act of terrorism," said Waqar Mehdi, a minister in the government of southern Sindh province, of which Karachi is the capital.

"We don't know so far who is behind this but we are investigating." Benazir was killed in a suicide attack at an election rally in the northern garrison city of Rawalpindi on December 27, 2007.



This TV grab image taken from the NDTV News channel in New Delhi yesterday shows Ashok Argal (C) an MP from India's main opposition Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), along with colleagues holding up bundles of Rs. 1000 notes during a confidence vote in the Lok Sabha or Lower House of Parliament in New Delhi. A crucial confidence debate in the Indian parliament descended into chaos when an opposition MP started waving around large bundles of cash he said had been paid to him in bribes.

Rahul defends nuclear pact in key debate

AFP, New Delhi

Rahul Gandhi, son of India's ruling Congress party chief Sonia, on Tuesday defended a nuclear pact with Washington that has prompted a confidence vote in the Indian government.

The 38-year-old scion of India's powerful Nehru-Gandhi dynasty was one of the key speakers in a debate on the confidence motion that started Monday.

The vote could lead to the collapse of the government, trigger snap polls and end the controversial accord that seeks to bring India into the fold of global nuclear trade.

A vote is expected later Tuesday, with the outcome seen as extremely tight.

Ahead of the vote, Rahul -- branded by critics as a political novice -- linked the nuclear agreement with the country's energy security.

"I decided that it is important at this point not to speak as member of a political party but to speak as an Indian," Rahul said as he opened his speech, before being urged to speak in Hindi.

"I will speak in Hindi too, and in English also... but I would like to say please listen to me," he appealed in Hindi to the house, which erupted in laughter a few times before being adjourned for an hour over the commotion.

Rahul, whose father, grandmother and great-grandfather were prime ministers, was promoted to the party general secretary last year in a sign that he was being groomed for a bigger role in the country's politics.

Rahul came out in strong defence of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and the atomic agreement, which would lift sanctions on nuclear trade with India.

The deal allows India, which has nuclear weapons and refuses to sign the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, to be treated as a special case on condition it separates its civil and military programmes and allows some UN inspections.

"He (Singh) has shown tremendous courage and confidence in the Indian people," Rahul said to applause by Congress members, including his Italian-born mother.

"The problem of energy security reflects itself among all Indians. Energy is responsible for allowing us to grow us at nine percent and the growth allows us to help our poor," he argued.

"If we do not secure energy supplies, growth will stop and we will not be able to fight poverty."

Left-wing parties, who triggered the vote, argue the pact compromises India's nuclear weapons programme and ties the country too close to the United States.

Visions of India up for debate in parliament

AFP, New Delhi

As India's parliament votes on the future of an embattled coalition and a nuclear energy deal with Washington, differing visions of the country's place in the world have emerged in the debate.

Home to over a billion people and with an economy steaming along with nine percent growth, India is seen by virtually every MP from all parties in the Lok Sabha, or lower house, as nothing less than an emerging superpower.

But forging a pact with Washington to help fuel that drive has infuriated influential left-wingers and communists, who withdrew support for the government earlier this month and triggered Tuesday's confidence vote.

For the Congress party-led government of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, the Indo-US nuclear deal is a means to an end -- a way for India to finally access the nuclear technology and fuel it has up to now been barred from buying.

The government argues that even if India has to accept a certain level of UN inspections as a prerequisite to the deal, the net result will be greater energy security, faster growth and, ultimately, a more

powerful global player.

"The agreement aims to give India its rightful place in the world on a parity with other powers," Anand Sharma, India's junior foreign minister, told parliament on Monday, the first day of the debate ahead of the confidence vote.

"The prime minister should be congratulated for this accord, which tries to bring India onto the global centre stage," said Civil Aviation Minister Praful Patel.

India's infrastructure is creaking under the strain of a booming and increasingly urbanised population. Black-outs are frequent in major cities, and even small family-owned businesses have to fork out large sums of money for generators and other power back-ups.

Analysts and the government say the dilapidated state of India's power network, roads and ports are a key constraint for growth and the overarching effort to lift hundreds of millions out of poverty.

In a weekend editorial, The Hindu newspaper spoke out in favour of the coalition, saying it had struck with the United States "as good a deal as any government can negotiate."

The confidence vote, it said, has "wide ramifications for (the

energy security" of a country seen as rapidly heading into a fuel crisis given the current sky-rocketing prices of crude.

But for India's left-wingers, communists and Hindu nationalists, the Indo-US accord is little more than a sell-out to an old foe and a betrayal of traditional Cold War ally Russia.

Also down the drain, they argue, is India's status as a figurehead of the Non-Aligned Movement and champion of the developing world.

"We would never like India to become party to an agreement which is unequal," BJP leader Lal Krishna Advani told parliament, also drumming up nationalism to back his argument.

"This deal makes us a subservient partner. It makes India a junior partner."

Mohammed Salim, an MP with the Communist Party of India (Marxist), accused the government of "outsourcing" foreign policy to the United States.

Kumari Mayawati, the outspoken chief minister of India's most populous state of Uttar Pradesh, said the Indo-US accord would "hamper" energy dealings with ally Iran, including a multi-billion dollar gas pipeline.

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Applications are invited from the qualified and experienced nationals of Bangladesh for immediate appointment against the following positions under Hortex Foundation. Hortex Foundation deals with promotion of horticultural and related products.

1. Managing Director-1

Managing Director will work as the Chief Executive of the Hortex Foundation.

Qualification and experience: The candidate should have a Post Graduate degree or have an equivalent qualification in any of the following subjects:

Agriculture, Horticulture, Agriculture Economics, Business Administration, Economics, Social Science, Botany, Soil Science with 15-20 years experience in his/her field. Experience in working at management level will be given preference. Candidates with formal agribusiness management training and demonstrated ability to manage complex human and technical elements in promoting agribusiness based production and export of traditional/non traditional horticultural crops to the international markets will be given preference. Knowledge in Computer, Finance and on the job training in related fields will be additional advantage. Ph. D. or MBA will be preferred. Relaxation may be given for exceptionally good candidate.

Age limit: 45-60 years.

2. General Manager (Production)-1

Responsibilities:

- Prepare an action plan for production, grading and farmers training, packaging of non-traditional horticultural products from Bangladesh in the international market in collaboration with marketing and transport expert and other Hortex Foundation personnel;
- Supervise production and harvesting along with the horticulturist at critical harvest periods and post harvest handling process at the pilot planting;
- Arrange farm inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, pesticides and packing materials for the pilot production of non-traditional horticultural products to be promoted by the Hortex Foundation;
- Advise and train pilot producers and exporters in the proper post-harvest packing, grading and handling process of the exportable products;
- Help in developing pilot export sites, R&D enterprises at sites with vertically integrated export ventures in selected horticultural crops. The pilot enterprise export ventures shall include the establishment of production, packing, transport and marketing facilities to form a complete chain from production to export markets;
- Involve in training and promotional activities of the Hortex Foundation.

Qualification and experience: The General Manager (Production) should have a degree in Agriculture, Horticulture or have an equivalent qualification in the relevant fields with minimum 12-15 years of demonstrated experience in the production, grading, packing of exportable horticultural products and in selection, installation, operation and maintenance of the equipment used in post harvest technologies. Knowledge in Computer, Finance and on the job training in related fields will be additional advantage.

Age limit: 40-55 years.

3. Assistant General Manager (Marketing)-1

Requirements:

- Postgraduate degree in Business Administration/Economics
 - At least 5 years experience in market research
 - High degree of analytical skill
 - Good command over English language
 - Computer proficiency in data/word processing, spread sheet analysis, internet browsing, etc.
 - Progressive outlook and professional approach
 - Age: Maximum 45 years
- Experience is relaxable for promising MBA from reputed Institute/University.

Attractive compensation package for really deserving candidates. Eligible candidates are requested to apply within 15(fifteen) days from the date of advertisement to the Chairman, Governing Body, Hortex Foundation, Sech Bhaban (3rd Floor), 22 Manik Mia Avenue, Sher-e-Banglanagar, Dhaka-1207, along with a curriculum vitae and a passport size photograph. Name of the post should be mentioned on the top of envelop. Only short-listed applicants will be called for interview.

Chairman
Governing Body
Hortex Foundation

Suu Kyi's detention to last until 2009

AP, Singapore

Myanmar's foreign minister has said pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi can be kept in detention legally until late 2009 and not until December this year as reported earlier, Singapore officials said Tuesday.

Myanmar Foreign Minister Nyan Win was misunderstood by his nine counterparts from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations during a dinner conversation on Sunday, said a Foreign Ministry official.

Singapore Foreign Minister

George Yeo subsequently passed on Nyan Win's remarks to the media, which reported widely that a new glimmer of hope had been raised for Suu Kyi's early freedom.

Yeo had quoted Nyan Win as saying that a political detainee can be held for a maximum of six years, and that the limit was approaching in about "half a year's time."

But the Straits Times newspaper on Tuesday quoted Yeo as saying that the six-year period will only be reached in the six months after May 2009, when her latest one-year detention period expires.

Tender Notice

Sealed Tenders are hereby invited by Pan Pacific Sonargaon, Dhaka for under mentioned work/job from eligible chemical suppliers and Advertising Agencies.

Name of the works/jobs:

- Supply the Chemicals for Laundry, Housekeeping and Stewarding of Pan Pacific Sonargaon. For One Year
- Enlistment of Advertising Agency to execute the Pan Pacific Sonargaon's Brand promotion, design, printing publication and sales promotion jobs. For One Year

Interested bidders may obtain tender schedule from the Purchasing Department on submission of the letter on their respective letterhead up to August 06, 2008 during office hours on payment of Tk. 1,000.00 for each item (non-refundable). The quotations will be received up to 2:30 p.m. on August 07, 2008 and will be opened on the same day at 3:00 p.m. in presence of the bidders, if any.

Pan Pacific Sonargaon authority reserves the right to accept/reject any tender in part or in full or all the tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Purchase Manager, Tel. (880) 2 8111005, (Ext: 4164)



PAN PACIFIC SONARGAON
Dhaka



Helen Keller
INTERNATIONAL

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

HELEN KELLER INTERNATIONAL (HKI) is an international Not-for-Profit Voluntary Organization with headquarters in New York. Our mission is to save the sight and lives of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged. We are dedicated in combating vitamin A deficiency and nutritional blindness all over the world. Currently we have a vacancy for an experienced **Finance and Administration Manager** for its Dhaka office.

Job Summary:

In this position you would work to process, examine and interpret financial and operational information to ensure effective and efficiency financial and administration functions and ensure protection, control & use of financial resources and costs. You will also be expected to assist the development of all internal financial and administrative controls, and help in analyzing current financial and administrative systems with recommendations for implementation. You will report directly to the County Director and directly supervise a staff complement of at least 10 staff

Qualifications:

- The ideal candidate should have a Management or accounting qualification i.e. MBA, ICMA or CA;
- At-least 8-10 years working experience in a progressive environment in the non profit sectors; preference will be given to experience in an International NGO;
- Outstanding knowledge on non government financial policies, procedures, budgeting, accounting, reporting and administration;
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills and ability to deal with the local administration including Department of Passport and Immigration, NGO Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs, NBR and other local administrative units;
- Must have adequate knowledge to deal with international donors in regards to financial and program issues;
- Advanced PC skills in MS Office, Quicken, Quick Book, email and Internet;
- Analytical and conceptual thinking skills and excellent organization skills;
- Demonstrated ability to thrive in progressive environments and ability to manage multiple and competing tasks and priorities.

This position offers a competitive salary and benefits package. All qualified candidates are invited to submit their applications with a copy of Resume no later than August 04, 2008.

HKI is an equal opportunity employer. We welcome all applications, however, only candidates selected for an interview will be contacted. Phone calls or personal contact will be treated as disqualification.

Send your application to: HR Manager, HKI, House 340, Road-05, DOHS Baridhara, Dhaka-1206 or through email to: amin@hkidhaka.org