



Gyanendra's Democracy Day Message starts new controversy in Nepal

Dipayan Mazumdar & Associates, February 27, 2007

URL: <http://www.pr9.net/society/government/5187february.html>

Stirring a hornet's nest, as it were, King Gyanendra of Nepal issued a statement on Feb. 18, the 57 th Democracy Day anniversary

PR9.NET February 27, 2007 - New Delhi - Stirring a hornet's nest, as it were, King Gyanendra of Nepal issued a statement on Feb. 18, the 57 th Democracy Day anniversary, justifying his action of February 1, 2005 when he had dismissed the Government headed by Sher Bahadur Deuba, president of the Nepali Congress (Democratic), and had imposed emergency in the country taking the reins of government in his own hands.

"It is clear that the prevailing situation compelled Us (the royalty in Nepal addresses themselves always in the plural) to take the February 1, 2005 step in accordance with the people's aspiration to reactivate the elected bodies by maintaining law and order following the dissolution of the House of Representatives at the recommendation of the elected Prime Minister of the Day..."

This was a reference to the dissolution of the Pratinidhi Sabha (House of Representatives) on May 22, 2002, at the recommendation of Mr. Deuba, who was then the elected Prime Minister, under Article 53(4) of the 1990 Constitution (now repealed by an Interim Constitution on January 15, 2007) made on grounds that it was not possible for him to hold elections for the House under the prevailing condition created by Maoist violence. The elections had to be held before November 22, 2002 in accordance with the provisions of Article 53(4).

Ignoring the stark reality that his action of Feb. 1, 2005 actually led to his fall and near-abolition of monarchy in Nepal following mass upsurge against that royal takeover, the King maintained that his action was prompted at reactivating the elected bodies by maintaining law and order following the dissolution.

Several parties now in the interim government headed by Prime Minister G.P. Koirala as also the Maoists, strongly condemned the statement by the King. Maoist leader Prachanda demanded that Nepal be immediately declared a Republic (which would mean that the monarchy would be abolished for all times to come). It has now dubious status. The King is not considered the head of the State, but he continues in the Palace drawing some support from diehard royalists at the best.

These condemnations, along with the pelting of stones on the King's cavalcade while he was returning from the Pashupatinath temple after offering worship there on the occasion of Shivaratri on Feb 16 and the denouncing of his statement on Democracy Day now go to show how unpopular the institution of monarchy has become in Nepal, although there are people and groups who still want him – or any other member of the Shah dynasty – to remain the nominal head of the State. The name of the five-year old grandson of the King – son of the unpopular crown prince Paras Shah, is often mentioned in this connection.

Democracy day is anniversary of the day fifty seven years ago, February 18, 1951 (actually the seventh day of the solar month of Falgun. In the Nepalese Vikram Era calendar) when a democratic government was installed with people's representatives (Nepali Congress Party) in a new government replacing the Rana regime of 104 years. King Tribhuvan the grandfather of King Gyanendra was largely instrumental in the removal of the Rana oligarchy from virtually exercising all powers till then.

Since then, this day has been observed as a national festival with the ruling monarch always attending a march past and public rally. Even King Mahendra, who had done away with parliamentary democracy on Dec. 15, 1960, had been participating in the march past and rally all through his reign and issuing statements every year. This time, there was no official function of this type although leaders of the seven party alliance led by Prime Minister Koirala had issued statements reminding people of the importance of the day.

###

About Dipayan Mazumdar & Associates

DMA is an independent Public Relations consultancy set up in 1998 to provide contemporary Corporate Communications support. We are a team of professionals from different communications disciplines. Ours is a people oriented approach – people are our greatest assets.

Phone: 011-26270629
Website: <http://www.askdma.com>
E-Mail: dmanews@gmail.com
Address: J-1824, LGF, CR Park,
New Delhi-110019