

# Bowing to Protests, King Dissolves Nepal Assembly

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KATMANDU, Nepal, Monday, April 16 — King Birendra dissolved Nepal's national assembly today and accepted the resignation of his Prime Minister after a weekend of increasingly angry protests here over the pace of democratic change.

In a nationwide broadcast this morning on Government radio, the King said he was disbanding Parliament on the recommendation of Prime Minister Lokendra Bahadur Chand, a moderate whom he appointed just 10 days ago to lead a new Government.

A Government spokesman said later that the King had accepted Mr. Chand's resignation, but that the Prime Minister would continue in office until a successor is named.

## Opposition Wants Post

The official did not say who would replace Mr. Chand. The opposition, led by Ganesh Man Singh, a 75-year-old leader of the Nepalese Congress Party, has called for the appointment of an interim Government led by an opposition leader that would clear the way for free multiparty elections here.

After two months of protests in this mountain kingdom between India and China, King Birendra made a substantial concession on April 8 by agreeing to lift a three-decade ban on political activity. The concession came two days after the authorities opened fire on demonstrators, killing an estimated 50 people.

In moving today to dissolve the assembly and seek a new Prime Minister, the King granted two of the main demands presented by the opposition in formal talks with Mr. Chand this weekend. Outside the building where the talks were held on Sunday, tens of thousands of demonstrators unhappy with the pace of political change besieged the exits. Demanding the resignation of the Cabinet and the disbanding of Parliament, they prevented Mr. Chand from leaving the building in a standoff that lasted 15 hours.

## Help From the Crowd

The siege was lifted early this morning when opposition leaders emerged from the negotiating session. One of the opposition negotiators, Prasad Upadhyaya, said the crowd dispersed after he thanked them for their "vigil and

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Thousands of demonstrators besieged a Katmandu building where Government and opposition leaders negotiated demands for political change. King Birendra later announced he would dissolve Parliament.

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Demonstrators blocking the exit from the Royal Nepal Academy in Katmandu yesterday, preventing Prime Minister Lokendra Bahadur Chand's car from leaving the grounds after his meeting with opposition leaders.

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cooperation.”

The demonstrators had stoned the Prime Minister's car and deflated its tires at the Royal Academy, Katmandu's main cultural center, where the talks were held.

Growing increasingly restive as it awaited word of the negotiations, protesters also smashed vehicles belonging to members of the Cabinet and other Government officials, dancing on the roofs, shattering windshields and ripping upholstery.

Mr. Upadhyaya said after the meet-

ing that the Prime Minister had all but agreed to meet five of the eight major opposition demands. But he said that three important demands — the resignation of the Cabinet, the dissolution of Parliament and the establishment of a special constitutional panel — could be granted only by the 44-year-old King.

Mr. Upadhyaya indicated that Mr. Chand had basically agreed to the repeal of anti-democratic clauses in Nepal's Constitution, the disbanding of the council system of governments at the district and village levels, the nationalization of all council property, the release of all political prisoners, and compensation to the relatives of people

killed in the protest movement, along with an independent inquiry into official conduct during the unrest.

During the siege, the protesters ringed the four high iron gates around the building, while about 500 riot police officers armed with cane sticks watched. The crowd — which chanted, “Lawmakers are thieves, get out of the country” — dwindled from thousands to a boisterous group of about 700 by early this morning.

Early this morning, some of the angry young men smashed one of the wooden doors of the building, but they were restrained from surging into the building by opposition members and by plainclothes policemen.