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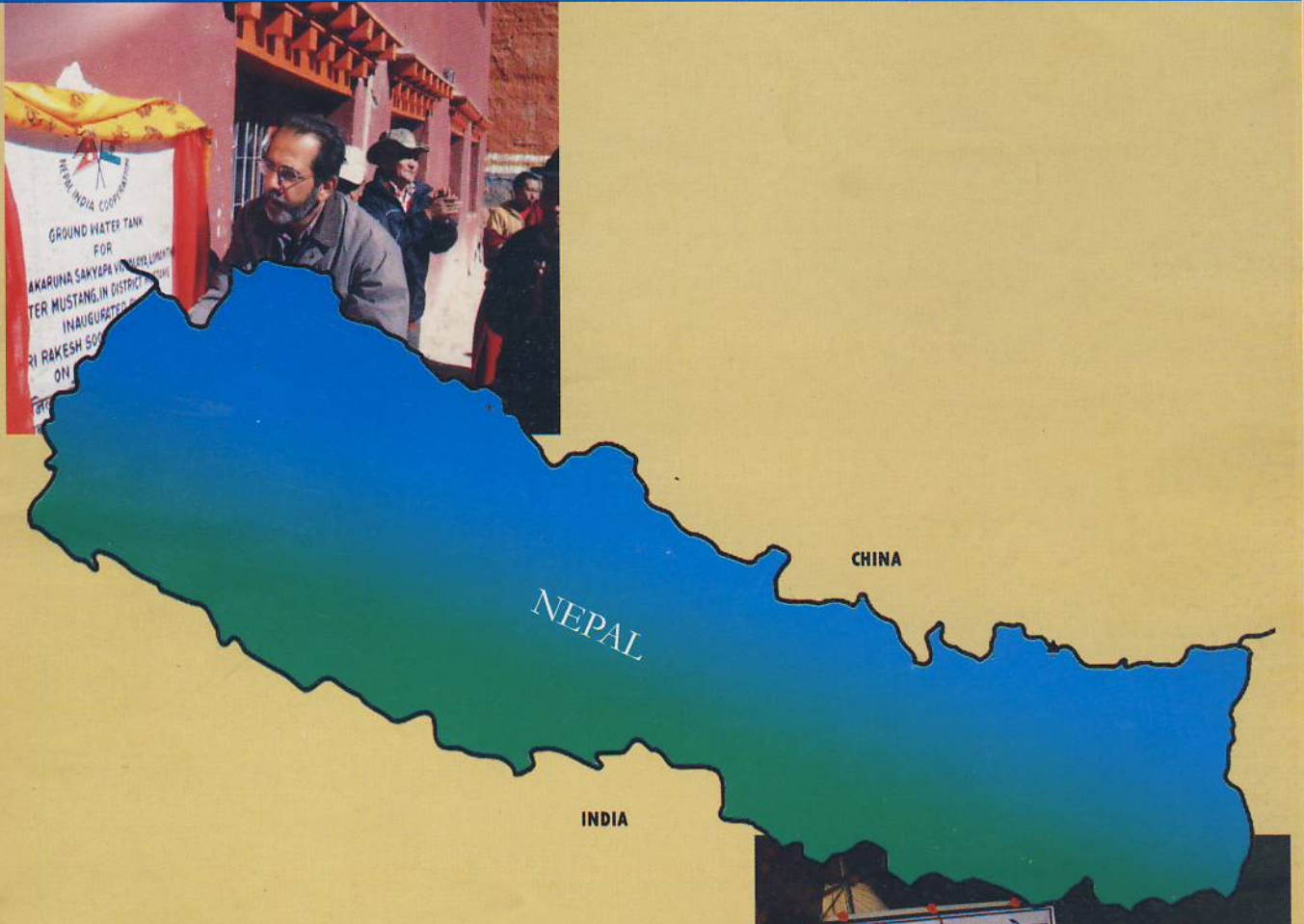
Interview: Professor Wong Hangwei

# NEW SPOTLIGHT

Oct. 30, Nov. 12, 2009

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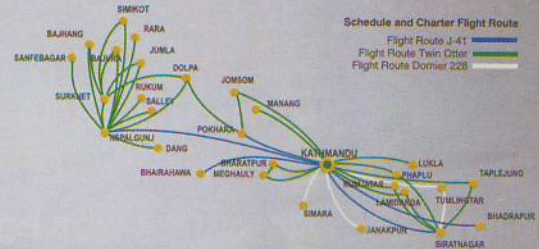


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**Cover Story:** Difficult Frontiers

8



**NEPAL AIRLINES:** Big Deal 17

**NEWSNOTES**

2

**POLITICS:** Wranglings Within

4

**CPA :** Peace Row

5

**POLITICAL INSTABILITY:** Gift of Giants

6

**ENCOUNTER :** Phanindra Adhikary

15

**EASTERN NEPAL:** Looming Threats

16

**SOCIAL INCLUSION**

18

**BOOKWARM**

22

**MISCELLANY**

23



**INTERVIEW:** Prof. Wong Hangwei 12

**ALIEN BATTLE TO SAVE PARK :** One Woman's Mission

24

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**Nepal India signed trade Treaty**

Nepal and India signed Treaty of Trade and Agreement of Cooperation to curb unauthorized trade in the capital on Tuesday.

Minister for Commerce and Supplies Rajendra Mahato and Indian Minister for Commerce and Industries Anand Sharma inked the treaty that will come into effect immediately.

New trade treaty, which is the revision of 1991 treaty, addresses changes that have taken place in bilateral, regional and international trade in the last 18 years, said Mahato.

The revised treaty assures removal of all forms of non-tariff barriers on Nepali exports to India. The pact, which is an outcome of two years of exercise, is also focused on enhancement of Nepal's trade related capacities and recognition of the quality certificates issued by Nepali laboratories after their upgradation.

According to Mahato, the newly reached trade deal will help Nepal reduce trade deficit with India apart from acting as a milestone for Nepali export sector.

India is Nepal's largest trade partner as two-third of Nepali trade is with the southern neighbor. Since 1996, Nepali export to India has grown 13 times. However, the bilateral trade is being dominated with import from India.

It has made a provision for simplification of trade and transport related documents. It makes rules of origin, duty refund procedure and tariff rate quota in favor of both the countries.

Indian minister Anand Sharma

expressed hope that the treaty will go a long way in removing hurdles in trade between the two countries and create better environment.

**British Lawmakers in Town**

Members of Britain's International Development Committee, a panel appointed by the House of Commons to scrutinize DFID's programs, led by lawmaker Malcon Bruce has arrived in Nepal, Tuesday on a four-day visit to inspect progresses of development activities conducted or funded by DFID.

The community members will specifically look into DFID's support for governance and state-building, how DFID works with the UK Foreign Office and the Ministry of Defense to support the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and security sector reform, DFID's approach to achieving poverty reduction and improving access to basic services, DFID's efforts to reduce social exclusion and inequality including its work with women and donor coordination in support of greater aid-effectiveness and peace-building.

The other members of the delegation include John Battle, Hugh Bayley, Nigel Evans, Mark Hendrick, Mark Lancaster, Virendra Sharma, Marsha Singh and MP Andrew Stunell.

**International Workshop on Tiger**

Global Tiger Workshop 2009, a first of its kind event organized to chart out

strategies to preserve Tiger, has kicked off, Tuesday.

Some 250 scientists, tiger experts, policy makers, conservationists and government officials from 20 countries, including India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Thailand, China, are participating in the workshop.

Addressing the workshop, PM Nepal expressed Nepal's commitment towards the preservation of tigers and announced some key strategies Nepal will adopt for the same.

Nepal has set an ambitious target of increasing the tiger population to 250 by the next ten years. At present there are 120 adult tigers in Nepal.

In the world, the tiger population in the wild is 3,500. It was about 7,000 in 2000. Besides, tiger is also reared in controlled situation in countries like China, Vietnam and Thailand. Whether tigers should be reared in controlled situation or not will also be discussed in the workshop.

**Army Chief General Gurung Left**

Chief of the Army Staff of Nepal Army General Chhatraman Singh Gurung left for Honolulu, United States to take part



12<sup>th</sup> Chiefs of Defense (CHOD) which is going to held from October 24-27. This is the first visit of General Gurung after the appointment as chief of Nepal Army.

In his absence, General Toran Jung Bahadur Singh look after his work as an officiating chief.

**Un Security Council Envoys' Statement**

Representatives of the Member States of the UN Security Council in Kathmandu today toured the site of the



Nepal Army Weapons Store at Chhauni and visited the Maoist army Cantonment at Chulachuli (MCS1). The visit reflected the Security Council's desire to encourage a permanent and sustainable peace in Nepal.

The visit enabled Ambassadors to evaluate progress on implementation of the peace agreements, including the process of integration and rehabilitation of Maoist army personnel, in advance of the Security Council's mid-term discussion of the UNMIN mandate on 6 November. The Ambassadors welcomed progress made in preparing for the discharge of disqualified Maoist army personnel, including minors, and urged immediate follow-up action. They also welcomed the reformation, and resumption of work, of the Special and Technical Committees.

Ambassadors and Charges d' Affaires of China, France, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States took part in the visit.

According to press release issued by British Embassy, the Ambassadors reiterated the deep concern of the Security Council to support the strong desire of the Nepalese people for peace and the restoration of democracy and the importance in this respect of the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the subsequent agreements by the relevant parties.

#### **British PM Brown praises PM Nepal**

The British Ambassador to Nepal Andrew Hall met Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal recently to hand him a letter from Prime Minister Gordon Brown. In the letter, PM Brown, while thanking PM Nepal for his participation in a high-level UN meeting on health, said, "Your leadership and support for free health services and maternal and child health in Nepal was a crucial part of the event."

DFID Minister Mike Foster also wrote to PM Nepal to welcome the launch of Nepal's campaign to end gender-based violence. Noting the link between political stability and economic development, he wrote, "Without consensus between the parties little progress is possible, and this threatens the efforts your government is making to improve the lives of poor people across Nepal."



#### **Thai Embassy donations**

The year 2009 marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Nepal-Thailand diplomatic relations. To commemorate the event, the Royal Thai Embassy made a donation of NRs 100,000 for organizing a free Cataract Surgery Camp. The money was handed to Dr. Siddhartha Ranjit, Chairperson of Youth Eye Service (YES).

According to Asi Mamane, Chargé d' Affaires a.i. of Royal Thai Embassy, a donation of NRs 40,000 was handed over to Naba Raj Adhikari, general secretary of Children's Forum Nepal, at the Embassy on 21 October 2009 to promote understanding on Nepal- Thailand relations among school students.

#### **Wash hands, save lives**

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Physical Planning and Works, Bijaya Kumar Gachchhadhar launched the second Global Handwashing Day on 15<sup>th</sup> October at Nepal Administrative Staff College, Jawalakhel.

To mark the occasion, three ministries, the Ministry of Physical Planning and Works, Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Local Development signed a joint commitment paper to promote sanitation and hygiene in schools with child and gender friendly facilities.

A survey conducted in 2004 showed that only 17 percent of Nepalese washed their hands after defecation. "Hand washing with soap is the easiest and cheapest way to reduce child mortality," said UNICEF Nepal Representative, Gillian Mellsop. "Studies have shown that newborn lives can be saved if birth attendants and mothers wash their

hands with soap before delivering and touching babies."

Similarly, WaterAid Nepal also supported the program organized on the occasion of Handwash Day with the government UNICEF is supporting various innovative activities in many districts of Nepal coinciding with the Global Handwashing Week.

#### **Handover of KOICA Volunteers**

The KOICA Volunteers handover ceremony to government and public organizations took place at the Ministry of Finance on October 21<sup>st</sup> 2009. The ceremony saw interaction among MoF, KOICA, KOICA Volunteers and representatives of recipient organizations. The volunteer recipients were Bhaktapur Hospital, National Information and Technology Center, Korea Nepal Friendship Hospital, Nepal Red Cross (Pokhara), School of Health Science (Chitwan), District Public Health Office (Kathmandu), Trishuli Hospital, Kathmandu University, District Education Office (Chitwan) and TU Bishwa Bhasa Campus. Ten new KOICA Volunteers briefly explained about their future plans.

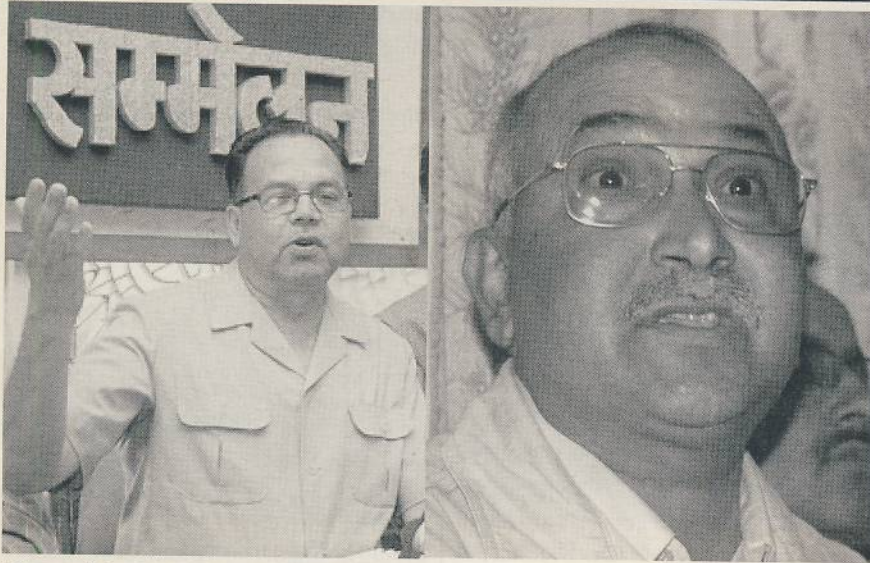
KOICA Volunteers program dispatches Korean nationals to partner countries to share expertise, knowledge, and experience in order to make practical contributions to socio-economic development. Between 1990 and 2008, a total of 5,808 volunteers were sent



overseas to work in sectors such as education, health, rural development and information & communication technology (ICT).

Since 1990 Nepal has received a total of 238 Korean volunteers to work in different sectors. KOICA dispatches about 20-35 volunteers annually to Nepal, and they are receiving positive feedback from the recipient organizations as well as the local people. ■





Khanal (Left) Oli : Temporary Cease-fire

## POLITICS

# Wranglings Within

*The future political course in Nepal will be determined by the intra-party feud among major political parties as much by external factors*

By BHAGIRATHYOGI  
with SAROJ DAHAL

**S**o, where would the country's premier meet his own party's senior leaders? At his own official residence or at his party office? Interestingly, Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal chose to meet chairman of his own party, CPN (UML), Jhal Nath Khanal and another senior leader K P Sharma Oli at Hotel Soaltee on October 21 over tea. The meeting was organised by some youth leaders of the UML who were worried to see widening rift within the party that is leading the coalition government.

Oli followed up by organising a dinner at his residence at Balkot, Bhaktapur, inviting premier Nepal, his arch-rival, party chairman Khanal, UML ministers and other senior leaders. The 'dinner' was seen as part of efforts to growing rivalry between Oli and Khanal since the party's ninth general convention in Butwal in February this year.

The internal dissension within the UML has reached to such a level that two rival committees are active in districts like Dhanusha and Kathmandu. Each faction is said to enjoy the

blessings of either Oli or Khanal. Those supporting Oli blame Khanal of trying to push the party on the lap of the Maoists. Supporters of Khanal strike back saying that Oli has failed to reconcile his defeat in the party's general convention for the post of party's top leadership. "The row within the UML is related to personality, rather than policy," said Gokarna Bista, a central committee member of the CPN (UML). Added Yogesh Bhattarai, another UML leader, "It's but natural for party chairman Khanal—who is elected democratically both as party chairman and parliamentary party leader—to be unhappy to see that the party chose Madhav Kumar Nepal—who had lost elections from two different constituencies—as the prime ministerial candidate." Oli is said to have played a major role in promoting Mr Nepal as a prime ministerial candidate.

Though some UML leaders like Bamdev Gautam are said to be close to the Maoists, others insist that intra-party feud within their party will not pose any immediate threat towards the future of the coalition government. "I don't see any threat to the government

from our own party," said Bishnu Poudel, Secretary of the CPN (UML).

Another coalition partner, Nepali Congress, is also passing through an intense intra-party feud in the wake of promotion of Foreign Minister Sujata Koirala to the post of Deputy Prime Minister. "The decision was taken without the consent of the party's central committee. The forthcoming meeting of the NC central committee may even decide to recall Sujata from the cabinet," said Dr Narayan Khadka, a central committee member of the NC.

Congress heavy-weights like acting president of the NC, Sushil Koirala, NC parliamentary party leader Ram Chandra Poudel expressed unhappiness over party president and former premier G P Koirala's decision to promote his daughter within the party as well as in the government. But analysts say the party is least likely to take any disciplinary action against Sujata by publicly defying the NC patriarch. Poudel and Sushil Koirala may even part ways in the run up to the party's forthcoming 'mahasamiti' meeting, sources said.

NC leader, Khadka, too, dismisses speculation that intra-party wrangling within the Nepali Congress may pose threat to the future of the coalition. "Though we won't accept Sujata as the DPM, there is no question of going against this government," he said.

The largest party in the 601-member Constituent Assembly, Unified CPN (Maoist) too is not above petty politics within its top echelon. The party is said to be divided over the option of launching a fresh struggle of continuing parleys with other parties to find a way out to the on-going impasse. Devendra Poudel "Sunil," politburo member of the Maoist, however, claimed that there is no differences within his party over the issue of launching a fresh agitation if their demands are not met.

The Maoists have now demanded the resignation of Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal and say they are ready to lead the new coalition. It is, however, not clear who will lead the coalition if such an opportunity arises. Sources say party ideologue, Mohan Baidya 'Kiran' now wants Prachanda to be the next premier so that he could fight for the post of the party's chairman.

As internal permutations and combinations are going on within major political parties, it has become quite difficult to predict what course the country's polity will take. ■



CPA

# Peace Row

*The government is in a fix after one of its senior ministers raises a demand for reviewing the peace pact*

By SANJAYADHAKAL

**D**efense Minister Bidya Devi Bhandari is quite a soft-spoken lady. But, of late, she has been breathing fire against the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) – which, she says is in the need of immediate amendment.

Branding the pact as old and outdated, she has called for broad political understanding to change it.

Her primary concern rests with the problems the Nepali Army (NA) is said to be facing due to some of the provisions of the peace pact.

According to her, the NA is running out of weapons and ammunitions and is facing difficulties in its regular training and recruitment.

“The national army cannot remain paralyzed,” she said.

that the peace process would reach the logical end in six months. That did not happen. Therefore, we cannot remain stuck and allow the national army to become paralyzed,” she said.

She has said that the major bones of contention within the CPA are the provisions related to the restriction of the NA.

“The national army cannot be kept in the same level as Maoist combatants and stopped from engaging in its regular training and recruitment,” she said.

The second sour point, she said, was the move to put the CPA as a part of the interim constitution.

“The weakening of the national army will pose danger to sovereignty, integrity and democracy of the nation,” she said. Her remarks have drawn severe criticism from the Maoists.

“That is totally against peace process. We severely condemn her statements,” senior Maoist leader Dr. Baburam Bhattarai said.

UNMIN Concerned It is not only the Maoists who have been rattled by Defense Minister’s remarks.

The international community, particularly the UN, seems to be disturbed with these unexpected turn of events.

In fact, soon after Minister Bhandari made the statements, UNMIN chief Karin Landgren sought a clarification of sorts from the Prime Minister who assured her that the government wasn’t thinking anything about changing the peace pact.

As the UN Security Council is not in the mood to extend the deadline of UNMIN beyond January 23, 2009, the



**PM Nepal at NA Training Centre :**  
Commitment to CMP

international community is keen to see the peace process – importantly the issue of army integration – wrapped up before that.

However, the ground situation does not provide anything for them to be excited about.

The peace process lies unattended as the issue of army integration drags on.

Even the seemingly easy part of rehabilitating the disqualified combatants has hit obstructions as the combatants are said to be demanding cash incentives before they depart from the cantonments.

The Army Integration Special Committee has been tardy in following through the process.

As the vital processes remain stalled, the major parties are locked in a bitter political rivalry. The five and a half month-long dispute over ‘civilian supremacy’ has taken a new turn after the Maoists have openly stated that only changing the leadership of the government will now satisfy them. The Maoists have already given a deadline till October end to the government – threatening of launching a major street stir then after. ■



**Defence Minister Bhandari:** Different stand

Her remarks has embarrassed Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal, angered the Maoists, disturbed the international actors and sent a chill down the spine of ordinary people.

But Minister Bhandari remains adamant that it is high time to review the CPA.

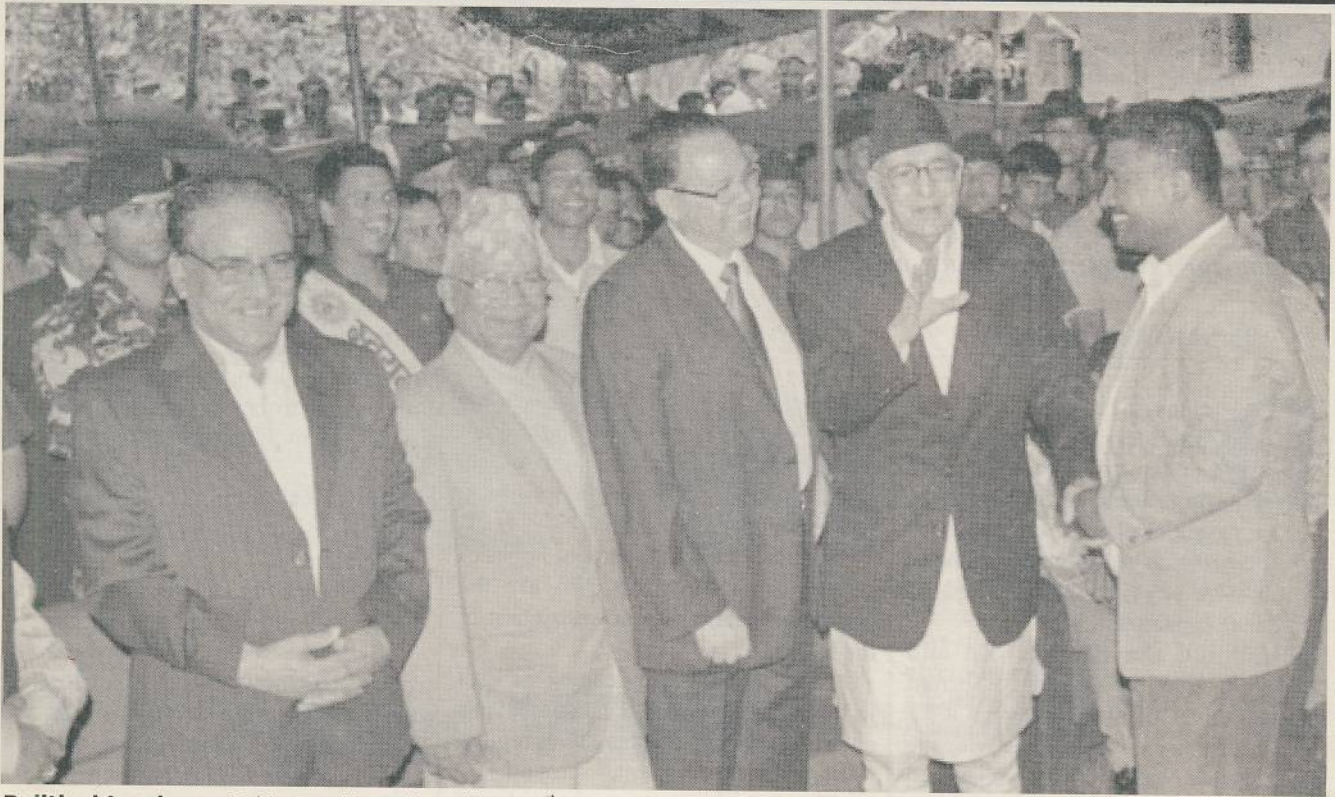
“The CPA was signed three years ago in a different context. It was promised

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**Political Leaders** : Making and breaking alliances \*

## POLITICAL INSTABILITY

# Gift of Giants

*As Nepal's neighbors continue on a collision course, it may be a wishful thinking to expect lasting political stability in the country*

By KESHAB POUDEL

**“W**e will launch a political agitation to unseat the government led by CPN-UML leader Madhav Kumar Nepal. Until a national government is constituted under our leadership, we will not allow the Legislature Parliament to function,” Maoist leader Mohan Baidhya Kiran, who recently came back from a tour of China, declared.

“If Maoists have the guts, they should pull down my government through a constitutional process. They cannot unseat me from their agitation in the streets,” Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal challenged.

The Unified Communist Party of

Nepal-Maoist (UCPN-M) has issued a fifteen-day ultimatum. Or else, it would “dislodge” the government. This indicates a new kind of political instability brewing in the country.

UCPN-M has come a long way since the party joined open politics after signing on an India-brokered 12-point agreement with seven other political parties in New Delhi in 2005.

Since then, Nepal has transformed: from a monarchy to a republic, from a unitary state to a federal nation and from exclusionary politics to inclusive ethos. What Nepal has yet to see happening is the establishment of a lasting peace and stability.

Until a few years ago, members of political parties and civil society

institutions had the monarchy to blame as the main factor behind elusive stability. They asked the people to come to the streets to remove the monarchy.

The culprit is gone but instability remains. Even the Maoist government, which enjoyed the support of nearly two thirds of the Constituent Assembly members, collapsed in June following the resignation of Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda over non-implementation of his decision to sack the then army chief.

In a big country, it is the internal factors that determine the external policy but for a smaller country it is the external factors that seem to determine its internal politics.

It is increasingly seen in Nepal that its internal political dynamics is not immune to the stands its neighbours, India and China, take. Their differences have mattered to all systems and governments: the absolute monarchy, the constitutional monarchy, the absolute democratic government led by Nepali Congress leader Girija Prasad Koirala, who secured both the positions of the party president and the prime minister, and the rebel leader Prachanda-led government with fresh mandates from CA elections.

Renowned South Asian expert, also



a Nepal expert, late Leo E Rose wrote in his book, Nepal: Profile of a Himalayan Kingdom, "it is a normal phenomenon for the foreign policy of any society to be strongly affected by domestic political and economic factors, and this is certainly the case in Nepal. But the reverse principle- namely, that international factors have a strong and often decisive impact on Kathmandu's domestic policies- is even more apparent. This is a painful fact of life for many Nepali's and one that some of them would prefer to ignore."

What late Rose wrote in his book in 1980 is still valid. "But despite intensive efforts over several centuries to isolate the country from alien influences of all kinds and to emphasize indigenous response to new situations and challenges, the penetration of Nepal from outside is truly massive in scale and probably irreversible," he wrote.

At a time when Nepal's two neighbors are staging open confrontations, Nepal needs to go a long way to secure political stability. From the holding of CA elections to the declaration of republic, the federal and secular Nepal's hopes to achieve a long lasting peace remain trapped in a prolonged political instability.

Even after the meeting between Indian Prime Minister Man Mohan Singh and Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabo,

the differences between the giants have not narrowed. Just after his visit to Bangkok, Indian Prime Minister Singh said the Dalai Lama, whom China considers as a separatist leader, is an honored guest of India and is free to travel anywhere he wishes to.

The recent visit of Indian ambassador to Lomangthang, a bordering town with Tibetan Autonomous Region of China, where he inaugurated a school and the Chinese Ambassador's visit to Kakarvitta, which borders with Indian state of West Bengal or just over Chicken neck, to inaugurate China Study Center, indicate their interests in Nepal.

The Maoist leader's and prime minister Nepal's remarks quoted above hint at further instability in the new republic's political journey ahead. PM Nepal may be replaced by someone else, but this will only open up another round of political instability.

As late Rose, in his book Nepal Strategy for Survival, writes, "To Kathmandu, the current potentialities of external domination and subversions are not very different in kind though- they may be in degree- from those with which Nepali governments have had to contend for at least two centuries."

Since what Rose wrote in his book in 1971, Nepal's situation has not changed much. Of course, old political



**Vaidya : A new threat**

systems, political actors and institutions have gone, what Nepal continues to inherit is a prolonged course of instability which nobody can preempt. "For nearly two centuries, this small Himalayan Kingdom has been beset by a seemingly irresistible array of interested outside parties, eager to assist, and advise and manipulate," wrote Rose.

In about six months in power, the government led by Nepal seems to be in trouble like all his predecessors, dashing the hope for political stability in the Loktantrik federal republic of Nepal.

Will Nepal have political stability anytime soon?

"It will be another wonder if politics in Nepal remains stable despite its location between two big neighbors which have unresolved conflicts between themselves," said a political analyst, a renowned constitutional lawyer, who does not want to be identified. ■

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## NEIGHBOURS

# Difficult Frontiers

As deep and prolonged instability looms large over the political horizon of the neighboring Nepal heightening their security concerns, India and China scramble for a cover leaving the sandwiched nation in the woods. But there is hope, still.

By SUSHIL SHARMA With SAROJ DAHAL in Kathmandu, UMAKANTA KHANAL in Jhapa and SITA MADEMBA in Dharan

**I**ndian ambassador Rakesh Sood goes up north in Mustang, on the borders with China. For “trekking” — in an area China considers most sensitive to its security. (The area was a major base of the Khampa rebellion, in the early Seventies, against the Chinese rule in Tibet). He had been preceded a few months

ago by a number of western diplomats including the-then US ambassador Nancy Powell.

Unlike his western counterparts, Sood gets permission from the Nepalese



government to enter areas that had remained “restricted” for decades due to the Chinese sensitivities. He doles out funds to the saffron-clad monks for the local monasteries and schools.

Chinese diplomats get angry. They question, what is the point of declaring “restricted”, if permission is given to enter the area.

Down south, Chinese ambassador Qiu Guohong gets himself busy in areas on the borders with India near what is called the sensitive “chicken-neck” zone.

He opens China Study Centre in Jhapa that borders the (in)famous Naxalbari – the birthplace of India’s present number one internal security threat, the Maoist insurgency.

Qiu opens a Confucius centre in the nearby Itahari and assures all possible help to the locals after an unprecedented rousing reception by the *janjati*-dominated Dharan.

The Indian intelligence agencies get alarmed. The media quotes them as warning that the Chinese activities on the Nepal’s borders with India are “harmful”.

What is likely to alarm the Indian authorities even more is the reported Chinese plan for a penetration in a totally new area - the media.

According to sources, China is considering ways to “invest” in big media to counter the similar “investment” from the countries it sees as its rivals in Nepal.

It wants to make “a front door” entry not “a backdoor-entry”, though, said the sources. They did not elaborate.

The moves and countermoves of the big neighbors are only a reflection of their growing sense of insecurity in Nepal.

Said former foreign minister, Upendra Yadav, “both are deeply suspicious of each other.”

Security remains the top concerns of both.

As Nepal faces an uncertain future amidst an increasingly dangerous political transition, their security concerns have heightened.

This has led to a flurry of visits to and from both countries.

After two former prime minister, Sher



**Indian Ambassador Rakesh Sud (middle) with local monks in Mustang:** Up north Photo: Indian Embassy



**Chinese Ambassador Qiu Guohong (center) in Kakadbhitta:** Down south Photo (Umakanta Khanal)

Bahadur Deuba and Surya Bahadur Thapa, the UML boss Jhlnath Khanal is due to visit Delhi shortly.

Apart from the prime minister Man

Mohan Singh, Khanal is expected to meet, of all people, a non-political but the influential national security advisor M.K. Narayanan.



That was what Thapa and Deuba also did.

On its part, China played host to the Maoist chief, Prachanda, in a highly publicized visit.

Chinese president Hu Jintao showed a rare gesture by sparing time to meet Prachanda.

Although the meeting lasted less than 10 minutes contrary to earlier reports of a longer chat, the Chinese president chose the occasion to counsel the Nepalese Maoists not to rock the fluid political situation.

He is also said to have cautioned against "annoying" India.

But the meeting held out of Beijing sent a shock wave across the Nepal-



**Tibetan Demonstration in Kathmandu : Chinese Headache**

## 'We Are Trapped In Mutual Suspicion Of India And China'

- UPENDRA YADAV

Former foreign minister and chairman,  
Madhesi Janadhikar Forum

**Lately, both India and China seem overly interested in Nepali politics. How has this affected Nepal?**

India and China are suspicious of each other. Unfortunately Nepal is sandwiched between the two, hence the present unfortunate situation. Indirect influences are but natural. But if diplomatic influences are avoided Nepal could become politically stable and economically prosperous.

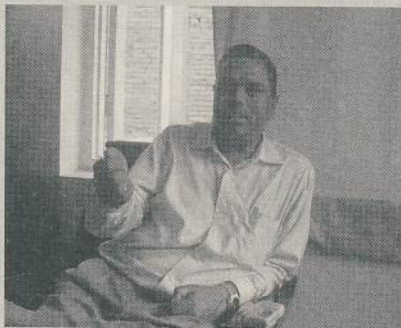
**Indian ambassador travels up north in Mustang, and his Chinese counterpart goes down south in Jhapa and Sunsari, doling out booties. What do these mean?**

We have been trapped in the mutual suspicions and mistrusts of India and China.

**Is there direct interference? There had even been allegations that India was instrumental in splitting your party**

India has big security sensitivities in Nepal. It is not sure of the efficacy of Nepal's assurance on the security issue. This has affected Nepali politics.

**Political stability in Nepal will serve India's cause. No?**



India probably does not want to see Nepal remain unstable. But its main problem is: it is undecided on whom to trust here.

**Is the public support to the present Nepali government by India real or fake?**

As I understand, India wants the Madhav Nepal - led government to continue. But at the same time, it is not fully satisfied with the present government.

**Will there be a political consensus in Nepal after this government goes?**

No, the government will fall under a consensus. Not that the consensus will follow the collapse of the government.

— By SAROJ DAHAL

watchers and policy makers and the executioners in Delhi.

So much for the mutual mistrust and suspicion of Nepal's neighbors.

"The unpredictable future of Nepali political course has made them nervous", said a former foreign minister.

The political instability along with the absence of a stable and strong institution or leader in Nepal has left both neighbors without anyone to look up to, to take care of their concerns.

Hence both have been forced to bear the responsibility themselves.

The result: a free-for-all with a potential of exploding into a situation like that in Lebanon, Afghanistan or former Yugoslavia.

Some analysts see that as a too pessimistic assessment. But the big neighbors themselves do not feel sure about Nepal speaks for the gravity of the situation.

And there are some who see a ray of hope in the expanding economic and business ties between the two Asian giants. According to them, the two will be fool to risk big economic gains to make small political profit.

As both have a common stake in peace and stability of Nepal, the two can come to an agreement on how to achieve it.

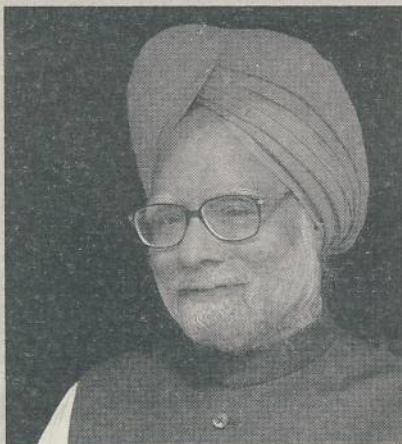
Since India has a dominant say and influence in the Nepali affairs, the initiative will rest on it. And since China has come in a big way in recent years, India can not go it alone as in the past.



## Man Mohan Singh Coming?

Amidst criticism over the Indian non-reciprocity vis-à-vis the prime ministerial visit to each other, Prime minister Man Mohan Singh is expected to visit Nepal early next year.

The visit is expected to take place in January.



Preliminary preparations are already underway although a final decision has not been made yet.

Barring the unforeseen and barring the unpredictable political situation in Nepal, Singh will definitely visit Nepal, said a highly placed source.

It will be the first visit by an Indian prime minister in more than a decade. The last prime minister to visit Nepal was Inder Kumar Gujral.

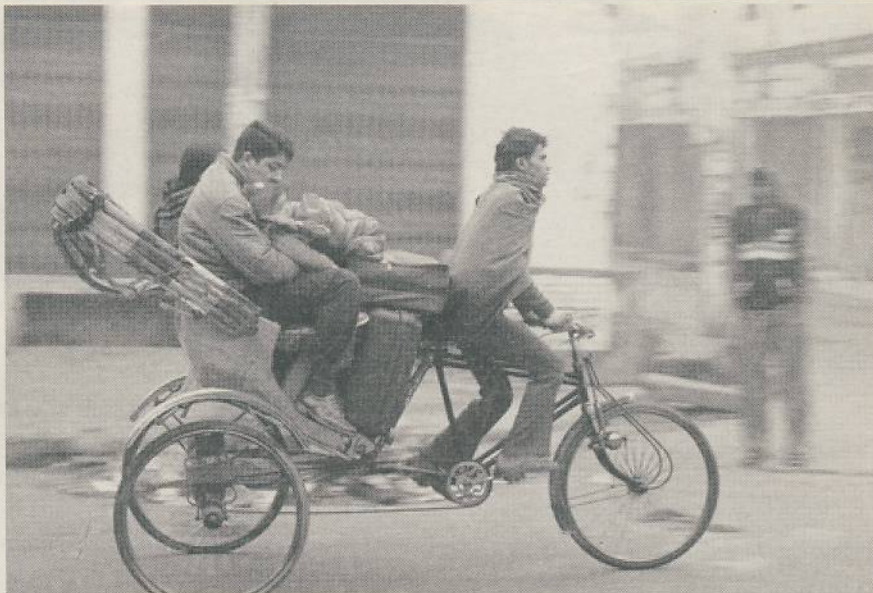
There had been five visits by Nepalese prime ministers to India since then.

Given the recent escalation in bilateral tension, the two biggies will be much warier of each other in their small neighborhood.

Reliable sources say, India is toying with two ideas at this stage for ensuring political stability. One, facilitating a national government with a non-Maoist figure as its head. Two, support an army-backed presidential rule.

Either of the options will need a vital pre-condition to yield the desired results of stability, said a highly-connected analyst.

"That is: the consent and full support of China." ■



Porus Border with India: Pain in the neck

## 'China Wants To See Us Lead the Government'

-KRISHNA BAHADUR MAHARA

Former Information Minister and Senior Leader, UCPN (Maoist)

**While in Beijing, how did you find the Chinese assessment of present political situation in Nepal?**

The Chinese authorities appreciated our position. They said that being the largest party we should lead the government and that the constitution-making and peace process should move smoothly.

**What about the Indian assessment? You often meet the Indian leaders too. What difference did you find?**

Unlike India, China does not prescribe the mode of government in Nepal and that who should lead it and who should not. All it wants is the end to frequent change of government and end to any hostile activities against China.

**Are you distancing away from India and getting closer to China?**

No. In fact, our relations with India make up 80 per cent while with China it has just reached 20 per cent. How can we be closer to China than with India?



**So are you going on a visit to India soon?**

If invited, we are ready to go there. Talks are also underway to this effect. It is not that our relations with India have become bad or relations with others better.

**But you accuse India of blatant interference in Nepal's internal affairs.**

I don't think Nepal and India have bad relations. But to quote an Indian author, "India is a big country with a very small heart." Even now, everybody knows that the key of the Nepali government is not inside Nepal. ■

- By SAROJ DAHAL



# 'Talks, Not Agitation, Good For Nepalese Maoists'

- Professor Wong Hangwei

**As regards to contacting the UCPN (Maoist) of Nepal, it is for the same purpose. With Prachada's visit, the formal relationship between the two parties has established and this is the particular significance of this visit.**

*Maoist chief Prachanda's remarks after he returned from China recently have fuelled speculations about what might have transpired between him and top Chinese leadership. Outspoken Chinese expert on Nepalese and Indian affairs, PROFESSOR WONG HANGWEI gave some hints in an interview with NAVIN SINGH KHADKA of the BBC Nepali Service. Excerpts:*

**How do you see Prachanda's recent China-visit?**

It was the first formal visit by the Unified CPN Maoist of Nepal. Before 2006, this party had no contact and relation with China. It was after it became legalized in Nepal and since it became perhaps the largest party following the elections, it started relation with China. But so far, no high level delegation from that party visited China. Prachanda did visit China a few months ago but then he came here as a premier and not as a UCPN (Maoist) chairman.

**What significance do you see in Prachanda's China-visit as his party chairman?**

As a premier, he had come to China to take part in the Olympics ceremony. He then exchanged views with government officials. The talks between two governments is different from the talks between two parties. After China opened the door, the Chinese Communist Party has had a new policy under which it has had relations with almost 400 parties from all over the world – up from 140. So the policy of the CCP is to establish good relations with all the parties in different countries, certainly with emphasis on neighbouring countries' different parties. Usually the purpose of establishing such relation is to exchange viewpoints on questions of common concern. The other policy is to work together to increase exchanges and cooperation, I think this is the main purpose of Communist Party of China contacting parties of other countries. As regards to contacting the UCPN (Maoist) of Nepal, it is for the same purpose. With Prachada's visit, the formal relationship between the two parties has established and this is the particular significance of this visit.

**Prachanda has made the visit when senior Maoist leaders have been blaming foreign powers for the army-chief episode that led to their stepping down from the government. Some of the Maoist leaders have openly blamed India for that. So, can this visit be seen as the UCPN (Maoist) trying to seek the support of China, as another regional power?**

I think it is correct, really, really. Even India once supported the Maoists. The Maoists and other parties can come to China regularly. The Chinese Communist Party also has good relations with the Nepali Congress and the UML. Now, during Prachanda's visit, if he raised these issues of foreign interference with his Chinese counterpart, the Chinese side will also exchange views. For example, if Prachanda raised this question to Mr. Hu (Chinese president Hu Zintao), then Hu can also express his viewpoint.

But it's not like what some Indian leaders do. India just interferes in internal affairs of Nepal. About this incident you just mentioned (about the army chief episode), I just heard from a number of leading politicians and figures of Nepal that this incident was completely manipulated by the Indian side.

**Do you think Beijing also looks at it the same way?**

I just speak my own view, nobody tells me the government's viewpoint. As a scholar I do view things myself and I have quite a number of channel of information. Many Nepalese friends told me that it was all manipulated by India. And I also watched the developments in the web. The UML at first supported Prachanda's action to sack Katwal but later the foreign minister of India telephoned Mr. Khanal (UML Chairman Jhalanath Khanal) and asked him not to support Prachanda's action. This is a direct interference. So I believe what Nepalese friends told me. All this was manipulated by India side.

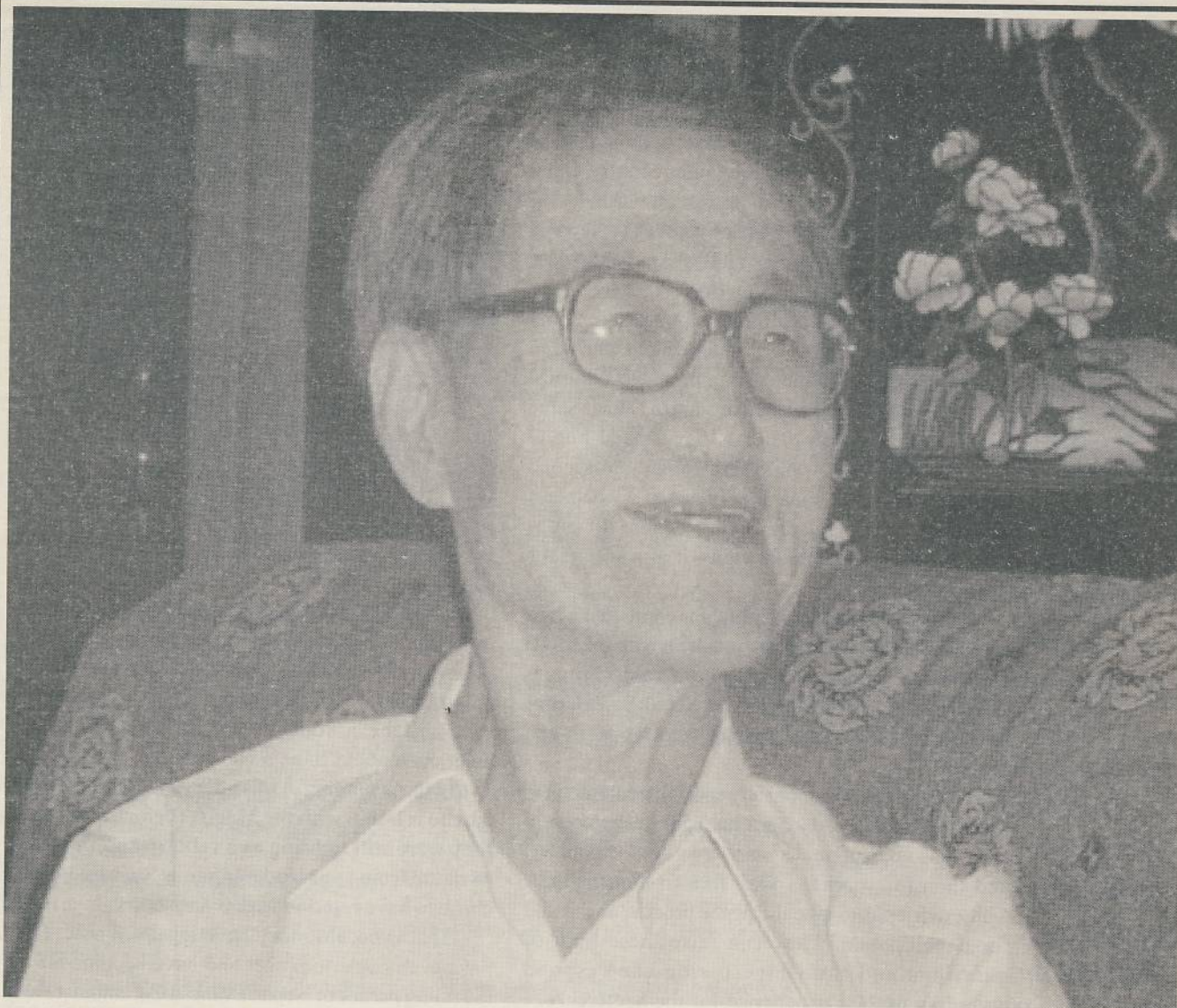
**The Chinese government too must have been monitoring the developments. What do you think is its view?**

I don't know, I cannot speak on behalf of the Chinese government. I speak for myself.

**You mentioned that exchanging the views on issues of common concern was the policy of the Chinese Communist Party. What could be the issues of common concern between the UCPN (Maoist) and the Chinese Communist Party?**

In my viewpoint the stability of Nepal is a matter of common concern. Nepali people wish to see the peace process to be complete and China is also concerned about the peace process because it wants to see peaceful environment for the benefit of economic development. Issues like international terrorism, economic development and cooperation are the other issues of common concern.





**You said earlier that Maoists were seeking Chinese support, does Beijing too see the UCPN (Maoist) as its possible trusted ally in Nepal, especially after the end of monarchy?**

China's main foreign policy is not to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries. China deals with the authority of the country. In the past, the monarchy ruled Nepal and therefore China had to deal with monarchy. Now the situation has changed and it is the internal affair of Nepal. Besides establishing a good relation with the government, the Chinese Communist Party also tries to make good relations with political parties of other parties. It already has good relation with the Nepali Congress and the UML and since the UCPN (Maoist) has become legalised in Nepal, China certainly likes to establish good relation with this party as well. And the developments have proved that Maoists are more energetic and one of the most patriotic forces in Nepal. Comparatively they have more potential to influence in the unification of all patriotic forces in

Nepal for progress in the economic field and social development. This may be a point.

**So you think Beijing has pinned high hopes on the Maoists.**

I think that may be a point. What Prachanda spoke to Mr. Hu I don't know but I can just imagine what topic they may have discussed.

**You must have some idea about what did the two talk.**

I cannot make irresponsible remarks in this matter. But I estimate that certainly they talked about how to achieve stability in Nepal for development of both the countries and how the two countries and the two parties can cooperate in the days to come. I think these were the major topics.

**You have been stressing on stability of Nepal, but many analysts believe that China and India compete to increase influence in the region and therefore countries like Nepal ultimately suffer.**

I don't think China has such an intention to

*It already has good relation with the Nepali Congress and the UML*



compete for influence. I think India very strongly likes to compete. The psycho of few politicians and members of the ruling class in India is not normal. China upholds the principle of progress, development and the win-win concept. But whatever kind of work China is doing in Nepal or any other country, India views it as a threat. This psycho is not normal.

**The number of China study centres in Nepal is on the rise and many Indian analysts and observers have raised their eyebrows on that.**

I have read some rumours about that. China study centres in Nepal are independent ones and they try to help introduce China in other countries. For a long time India has tried to control Nepal. Some of the senior Indian officials have made public statements that they would turn Nepal into second Bhutan. Whatever China does in Nepal – whether it gets involved into any project in Nepal or if there is any Chinese visit — India views it in a suspicious way.

**For a long time India has tried to control Nepal. Some of the senior Indian officials have made public statements that they would turn Nepal into second Bhutan.**

**Prachanda's visit to China has come just when his party has not been able to patch up with the UML and Nepali Congress and as you said China is concerned with the instability in Nepal. So, is it that Beijing will now have special relation with the Maoists?**

I don't think it is about any special relation. Since Mr. Prachanda's party became legal quite recently and it has no experience on how to run the country, and therefore perhaps they like to consult their Chinese friends to take the peace process ahead and for development. They can raise these kind of questions and the Chinese side can respond according to their experience for their reference. I have read news items in the internet about what Prachanda said after he returned from China. He has said talks are his priority rather than protests. I think that is a good move. I am optimistic that the stalemate will be over in the near future.

**Some Indian analysts say that Chinese foreign ministry had openly offered to help train Maoists' ex-fighters so that they all could be integrated into the Nepalese army and that was a matter of big concern to India.**

I think some Indian officials are not responsible and some Indian media fabricate facts. When the Maoists were in the government, Mr. (Ram Bahadur) Thapa, the then defence minister visited China once. As the line minister, he perhaps discussed with the Chinese side about the possibility of future development. At that time the Nepalese government was considering about how to integrate the two armies – the national army and the Maoist army. Every country has to have a single army. I guess they may have discussed about the possible military



cooperation in the future. I guess it was a topic about the two armies. Mr. Thapa was here as a government minister and not as someone with the UCPN (Maoist). If the Chinese government provides military aid to Nepal it will be through the government and that will be a state-to-state affair. What you mentioned about India's viewpoint, it is baseless.

**In the beginning of this interview you said China had no relation with the Maoists before 2006 when they were still fighting as a rebel group that took its name from your leader's name. So, why Beijing chose to have relation with it only now?**

That is because they have legalised now. They have even come to power and have become one of the ruling parties of Nepal. Chinese Communist Party does not establish relation with parties of other countries on the basis of ideology. Before the cold war, ideology mattered. But after the cold war the policy was completely changed. You see nowadays Chinese Communist Party has a good relation with Mr. Putin's party, which is a communist party and the relation is much better than before. A lot depends on what kind of policy does the foreign party carry out. The Maoist party of Nepal is very keen in maintaining Nepal's independence and sovereignty.

**But is it also not true that Nepal's Maoists are not having good relation with India and China sees that as an advantage?**

We like to see the Nepalese parties having good relation with both India and China. That is how we think a harmonious area could be established. The Chinese Communist Party does not develop relation with the parties of other countries with a precondition. Influencing the parties that have bad relation with India, this is not the policy of Chinese Communist Party. ■



# “We work for a risk-free Nepal”

-PHANINDRA ADHIKARY

**PHANINDRA ADHIKARY**, country representative of the International Relief and Development in Nepal, is also a steering committee member of the Association of International NGOs (AIN), a key stakeholder in disaster risk reduction. A natural disaster-prone zone, Nepal recently observed the International Year of Disaster with various programs, some of which under the aegis of AIN. In that context, Adhikary spoke to **NEW SPOTLIGHT** on various related aspects. Excerpts:

## How did Nepal take part in the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR)?

Some of the key stakeholders in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) in Nepal like DIPECHO partners, AIN, DPNet and NDAC joined hands to mark the 2009 ISDR Day. We gave opportunity to the people from the grassroots, who are affected and impacted by disasters and who live under constant threat of disasters, to raise their concerns directly with the policy makers in the country.

## What is the situation like in terms of natural disasters in Nepal?

Nepal is prone to a multitude of natural disasters like earthquakes, floods, landslides, hailstorms, droughts and famines. The country loses infrastructure and property of common people worth of millions of rupees. From epidemics, floods, heat and cold waves, landslides, droughts to earthquakes, Nepal has been facing a number of problems. For instance, Koshi flooded large areas in eastern Nepal last year. Similarly, the torrential rainfall damaged property worth billions of rupees in far western region. Flood damaged large swathes of land in far west in the first week of October. Similarly, drought is threatening the life of people. Because of Nepal's physical location and limited service delivery, any disaster adds burden to the people. With more than 30 percent of population living below the poverty line, the recurring natural disaster has worsened the situation.

## Has climate change further increased Nepal's vulnerability?

It is adding more woes. Not just the climate change, the rising food prices

and global economic crisis have pushed the country into deeper trouble. Poor people of Nepal have suffered a lot. Many people are forced to leave their homes and live in temporary shelters in Koshi areas as well as in far west.

## As Nepal is one of the highly vulnerable countries, what does it need to do to reduce the risks?

Nepal needs a strong and efficient Disaster Management structures and procedures. Since Nepal is one of the mountainous countries with no access to road in remote areas and many communities are living in isolation, what the country needs is a system focusing on local realities. Such initiative must start from community levels and communities should be given prime role in immediate response, rescue and rehabilitation and trained in doing so.

## How serious is the situation?

Increasing incidences of disasters and their impact on people's lives and livelihood is a matter of serious concern to all of us. People in Nepal have shown considerable strength to live with disasters.

## What role are international non-governmental organizations playing in addressing the concern?

We, the INGOs, NGOs and civil society work very closely with the people. We are working with them on relief, rehabilitation and preparedness and contributing to the DRR process in Nepal. Other than people themselves and their representatives, no one understands people's concerns better than I/NGOs, NGOs, and CSOs.

## It is said that INGOs and NGOs organize programs in urban areas rather than working in rural parts of Nepal. How do respond to this view?

I don't agree with this. We have been actively supporting activities in rural parts of Nepal through NGOs and civil society organizations. Whenever disasters occur, you can see our presence in immediate response, relief, and rehabilitation work. While INGOs, NGOs, and CSOs have been putting their best efforts, both in response and risk



reduction, a strong policy framework, Act, and appropriate operational directives will ensure that issues and concerns are rightly addressed.

## What is your view on the recently released national strategy for managing disasters?

We are pleased that the national strategy for disaster management has now been approved. This is the beginning, and more intensive efforts are required by all of us, starting with strong advocacy for the Act to implement the national strategy for disaster management.

## What needs to be done to make it effective?

We call for action following the strategy, implementation directives, increased investment in DRR and people's voices in decision making should be there now. We encourage continuing and more concerted collective efforts and would like to assure our continued commitment and support to the DRR process that enhances community resilience and their capacity to manage risks. We want to work together for a 'risk free Nepal'. ■

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## EASTERN NEPAL Looming Threats

*Businessmen and traders still live and work amidst threats from various armed groups*

By **UMAKANTAKHANAL**  
in Birtamod

**I**t was hoping against hope. The security situation in eastern hill districts was expected to improve after implementation of the new security strategy and deployment of the armed forces. Businessmen of the eastern hills were optimistic that their trade and commerce would begin to thrive once the government enforced the new security strategy in *purwanchal*.

The armed forces camps set up in each district headquarters were expected to curb activities of different ethnic groups like Limbuwan and Khambuwan which disrupted smooth functioning of businesses a month ago.

Different Limbuwan groups continue to extort money from businessmen and traders on products like cardamom and ginger.

The main occupation of the people of eastern hills is agriculture. Principal farming includes cardamom and ginger, which are exported to India and third countries.

“The focus of the new security strategy is to control the illegal activities of the different ethnic groups”, the superintendent of armed police of Pathibhara Battalion, Lakhampur, Jhapa - Ganesh Thada Magar said. “If we find any person extorting money from businessmen and blocking roads, we will arrest them and hand over to the administration.”

Federation of Limbuwan State Council (Palungwa Group), Lingden Group, Misekhang Group, Limbuwan Pratiya Parisad, Kirat Janabadi Workers’ Party and Pallo Kirat Limbuwan Rastriya Manch are active Limbuwan Parties in the east.

The armed forces had claimed that the situation would be normal after the implementation of the new security strategy. But the Limbuwan groups have stood against the strategy blaming that it is against the parties and groups which have been born for separate statehood. The president of Federation of Limbuwan State Council, Lingden

Group, Kumar Lingden said, “This is totally against us. We have stood against this.”

Kirat Janabadi Workers’ Party has also threatened that if the strategy is not withdrawn and the armed police forces begin arresting the party’s cadres, the party would start agitation against the government.

The victims of extortion, the businessmen and the traders of agricultural products, have had their hopes belied. They believed they would get to work normally. The president of Large Cardamom Entrepreneurs’ Association of Nepal (LCEAN), Rajendra Ghimire had said, “We are hopeful that all kinds of illegal activities and extortions will be controlled after the armed forces are deployed in the eastern hill districts. If the government tries to control such activities, we should be hopeful.”

But that was not to be so. According to Ghimire, the businessmen have to pay more than seventy five thousand rupees to the Limbuwan groups for a truck of large cardamom. Seeing the abnormal situation, Ghimire has emphasized the transparent functioning of the armed forces.

“To abolish the tradition of extortion of money and the illegal activities of such groups seems to be a vital task,” SP of armed police of Pathibhara battalion Ganesh Thada Magar said, “But the people should support us.”

A trader of large cardamom in Phidim, Panchthar, Deepak Nepal has said that the Limbuwan groups are still active in extortion of money. He said, “Recently I travelled from Phidim to Jhapa, but I saw there is no change. Limbuwan groups are still extorting money from businessmen.”

It is apparent that the armed forces have a herculean task before them: controlling unlawful activities by different armed groups. “They try to stop even the Chief District Officer’s vehicle on the way,” a journalist from Phidim, Prem Ojha, said.

“There is no change in the situation. Many people have been shifted permanently to the eastern Terai because of Limbuwan agitation.”

His newspaper has been closed for two months when Limbuwan cadres threatened him with physical assault a few days ago. ■





NA'S Boeing 757 : Over burdened

## NEPAL AIRLINES

# Big Deal

*The country's flag carrier decides to buy two aircraft in more than two decades*

By A CORRESPONDENT

**P**urchasing aircraft may be a routine business for many airlines in the world. For Nepal Airlines (NA), it is a big deal. NA's aircraft purchase or lease decisions in the past have rocked governments.

One of the oldest airlines of Asia, NA is having to do with two ageing narrow-body Boeing 757 airplanes in its international sector. It will add two new airbuses by March/April 2010.

The NA board took a decision this week to purchase two airbuses. This decision assumes more significance especially in view of Nepal Tourism Year 2011 when Nepalese airlines will need to be able to cater to a million tourists visiting the country.

The credit goes to courageous NA executive chairman Sugat Kansakar, who pushed the idea of buying the aircraft. Kansakar is known for transforming Nepal Telecom and its network by introducing CDMA despite severe opposition from within the organization and outside it. Unlike what critics said CDMA helped bring about a kind of internet revolution in Nepal.

Similar criticism is heard regarding Kansakar's push for purchasing new airbuses to add to the NA fleet. Kansakar is undeterred.

"As a commercial and business



Kansakar : Man with vision

entity, Nepal Airlines needs aircrafts to continue its business in competitive markets. With an organization having a long pool of efficient and capable manpower, Nepal Airlines can easily capture the markets which shrink in the absences of aircrafts," said Kansakar. "If Nepal Airlines is not permitted to purchase new aircraft, there is no reason why we need to retain this organization."

Nepal Airlines used to occupy over 20 percent of market, which is less than 10 percent now because of lack of aircraft.

Before taking the decision, Nepal Airlines Board looked at the proposal of Boeing and Airbus. It decided to purchase the airbus A 320-200 with a seating capacity of 150 passengers and A 330-200 series with a capacity of 279 seats.

Nepal Airlines is considering using the loan from Provident Fund and other commercial banks to purchase the new aircraft. The deal will be worth over Rs. 12 billion. The airline is also trying to get loans from local banks with a guarantee from the government.

However, Nepal Bankers Association president Sashin Joshi said Nepali bankers do not have the capability to invest such a big amount of money and stressed the need for foreign investors. "Provident Fund has yet to sign a deal with Nepal Airlines. The fund has demanded the government guarantee for its loan," said Tourism secretary Nagendra Prasad Ghimire. "The fund wants government guarantee that it will get return on its investment."

Kansakar said: "We will pay back the money even if there is just 60 percent of occupancy. The investors do not need to worry about their investment."

All the foreign airlines have been increasing their Kathmandu flights. Even Qatar Air is said to be doubling its flights in the near future by making Kathmandu as one of its hubs. As more than 2 million Nepalese are working abroad, Nepal Airlines stands better chances of increasing its share of passengers.

In 1998, Nepal Airlines finally abrogated a proposal to purchase two airbuses at the last minute following denial by the Ministry of Finance to stand guarantee. This time also, the ball is in the court of the Ministry of Finance.

Established in 1959 with DC-3 aircraft, Nepal Airlines purchased Boeing 727 Aircraft in 1976 when it was under the management of supervision of Air France. If the government wants to keep its own flag carrier, it must give guarantee to purchase two aircrafts.

"Nepal Airlines needs new aircraft to compete with other airlines," said Keshab Raj Khanal, director General of Civil Aviation Authority. ■



## New Foundation for Social Science Researches in Nepal: Civil Society Forum Workshop of Social Inclusion Research Fund

By Mohan Das Manandhar  
Rojan Bajracharya<sup>1</sup>

### Background

“Social Science Researches of Nepal Perceived New Vision” as one day civil society workshop on “Issues of Social Inclusion in the Context of State Restructuring” was concluded on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2009. This workshop was organized by Social Inclusion Research Fund (here after “Fund”) as its regular process to attain the research themes from Civil Society which would then be prioritized and decided by the Fund’s Screening Committee for “Call for the Proposal” for Research Fellowship and Research Apprenticeship Grants. The advisory function of interest/advocacy groups and other civil society organizations safeguard the objectives to make social science researches more relevant to the agenda of excluded and disadvantaged groups so that the researches contribute more effectively to policy debate and deliberative democratic process.

The Fund’s significance was conceived during the assessments of two Norwegian funded programs in 2001 and 2003. It got established in 2005 with the joint agreement between Government of Nepal and Royal Norwegian Embassy, Kathmandu and SNV, Nepal agreed to station the Fund’s secretariat. Specifically, the Fund has three main objectives: i) Produce high quality and critical research on Social Exclusion/ Inclusion issues of Nepal; ii) Make social science researches more relevant to the excluded and disadvantaged groups’ agendas; and iii) Ensure the Fund supported researches contribute more effectively in policy and public debate and deliberative democratic process

The Fund had recently completed its first phase in which it had supported the 25 Research Fellowships and 149 Research Apprenticeship Grant in 2006 and 2007. Two Norwegian research institutions and five Nepali research institutions collaborated in researches



and has so far published the eight research papers. The Fund has been extended for second phase of 15<sup>th</sup> July 2009 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2012 duration. The meeting dated 24<sup>th</sup> September 2009 chaired by Dr. Yubaraj Khatiwada appointed the new Screening Committee for the Fund’s second phase under the chairpersonship of Dr. Ganesh Man Gurung. In the second phase, the Fund will award 40 Harka Gurung Research Fellowships (here after “Research Fellowship”) and 100 Matthias Moyersoen Research Apprenticeships (here after “Research Apprenticeship”). In this light, the Fund has organized the civil society workshop on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2009 to decide the research themes for the Fund’s research grants. The entire workshop was chaired by Dr. Ganesh Man Gurung, Chairperson of the Fund’s Screening Committee and facilitated by Manju Thapa Tuladhar, Lead Advisor of the Fund.

### Inauguration Session

The inauguration session of the workshop was honored by Dr Yubaraj Khatiwada, Vice Chair of National Planning Commission as the Chief Guest and Mr. Narsingh Chaudhary, Chairperson of National Inclusion

Commission, as the Guest of Honor. The inauguration session started with welcome speech by Ms. Manju Thapa Tuladhar, Lead Advisor of the Fund. In her speech, she welcomed the civil society participant and ensured on their active participation in the workshop. The session was then addressed by Mr. Mohan Das Manadhar, Senior Advisor of the Fund in which he presented brief introduction of the Fund and its first phase activities. He further added that the Fund should incorporate the contemporary issues of State Representation and Participation in the Fund’s current agenda of social exclusion/ inclusion and nation building of Nepal. He also pointed that the government budget and planning document should address the imminent social inclusion issues.

The chief guest of session, Dr. Khatiwada, highlighted on exploring the social inclusion agenda via development approach. He argued that the current social inclusion/ exclusion discourse is socio political by nature and it has ignored the fact that the inequity in public distribution system and low human development is main grievances of the excluded groups. He



stressed that the inclusive development approach will provide economic access to all excluded group via employment and other economic activities which will lead to increase in income level and consequently there will equal access on all basic service resulting equitable human development. He further added that the planning process of the country had incorporated the inclusion approach since Tenth Plan document (Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper) in which social inclusion was regarded as one of the four pillar of development. The guest of honor, Mr. Chaudhary, expressed the importance of workshop in current constitution building process and future social science researches of Nepal. He argued that the 250 year past geographical unification of Nepal was blight for multi-lingual, multi-cultural and multi-religious Nepal which perpetuate in autocratic rule of Saha and Rana dynasty and resulted significant excluded groups. He argued that the Interim Constitution 2063VS had adopted inclusive approaches by legitimizing the proportional electoral process but the Government of Nepal is not serious on social inclusion/exclusion agenda. He added that National Inclusion Commission which had been formed seven months past to support government and constitutional assemble on social inclusion issues is still not appointed with full members obstructing the commission's activities. He thanked the Fund for providing the assistance to prepare the commission's report.

The session was also addressed by Mr. Hans Heijdra, Country Director of SNV Nepal and Ms. Kristine H. Storholt, counselor of Royal Norwegian Embassay, Kathmandu. Mr. Heijdra shared the fruitful experiences of SNV Nepal's on the Fund's first phase activities and stressed for the institutionalization of the Fund as national entity. Ms. Storholt expressed Norway's commitment's to support on the social science researches of Nepal in future. She added that there should more studies on multi dimensional status of Nepal and the grievances and contemporary situation of excluded



groups.

The chairman of session, Mr. Gurung highlighted on the traditional discriminatory status and caste hierarchy system of Nepal and its uniqueness in compare to social exclusion/ inclusion concept originated in the west. He highlighted on the social inclusion/ exclusion discourse of Nepal in post and pre democratic transformation of 1990's. He expressed that the state structure of post 1990's period had formidably addressed the dissatisfaction and disappointment of excluded groups and the Fund had substantially contributed in these measures through its researches and policy and public debates. As being the new Chairperson of the Fund's Screening Committee, he assured that the Fund would successfully administer the Fund supported researches under his overall guidance. The inaugural session was concluded with vote of thanks by Ms. Manju Thapa Tuladhar, Lead Advisor of the Fund.

#### Thematic Presentation

The workshop followed with the presentations on the thematic area by the members of the Fund's Screening Committee. There were presentation on six thematic areas – Women, Minorities/ Muslim, Dalits, Madhesi, Adivasi Janajati and Marginalized Groups.

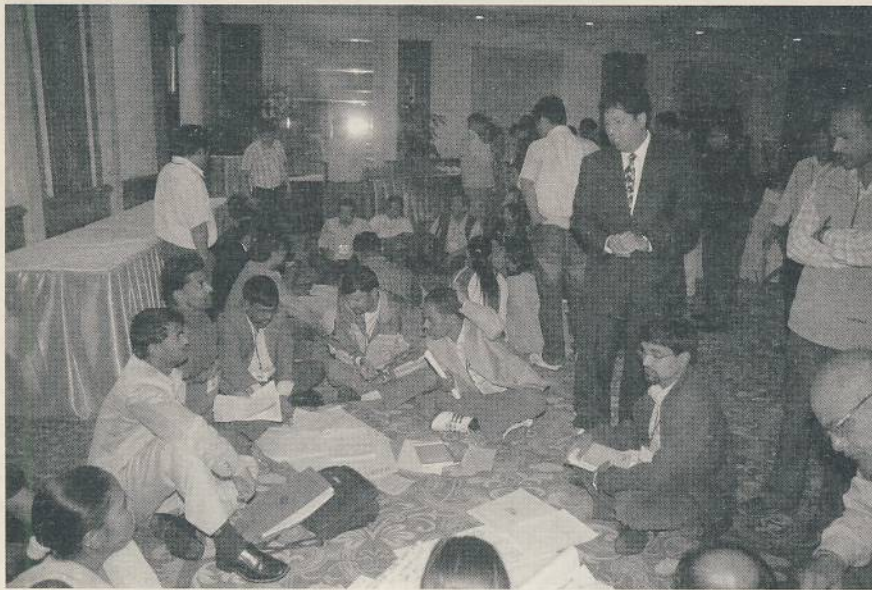
Dr. Sumitra Manandhar Gurung representing women in the Screening Committee, expressed that the

researches on women should focus on: i) Diversity within Women, ii) Issues of Patriarchical Set- up, iii) Potentials and Existing Roles of Women, and iv) Identity, Dignity and Entity of Women. She stressed on the importance of disaggregating the issues by gender and ethnicity diversity within women in order to explore on feminization of development and poverty.

Ms. Mainoona Siddiqui, representing Minorities and Muslim in the Screening Committee, highlighted that the researches on minority religious groups - Muslims and Christian - are important for the development and progress these minority religious communities. She added that there were few studies on religious minority groups so the Government was unable to address their issues in its plans and policies.

Dr. Madan Pariyar, representing Dalits in the Screening Committee, was absent in the workshop and Dr. Sumitra Manandhar Gurung made presentation on his behalf. The presentation first briefed on atrocities of caste-based discrimination and untouchable practices prevailed in Nepal. He added that the contemporary issues and agendas of Dalits are on: i) Dalits' Identity in the New Constitution and State Restructuring; ii) Dalits' Human Right, Dignity and Social Justice; and iii) Dalits' Socio- Economic Status. He further expressed that the Workshop and





the Fund supported researches would highlighted on further more issues of Dalits' inclusion and discrimination.

Dr. Saket Thakur, representing Madhesh in the Screening Committee, highlighted the various themes on which the social science researches of Nepal should focused. Specifically, he emphasized to explore the role of caste, ethnic and cultural variables in the social exclusion practices of Nepal. He also added that the research studies on inter - community power and resource sharing in multi- level democratic structure would be fruitful in current state restricting process. Likewise, he also stressed for common voice among upper castes and dominant groups vis-à-vis low castes and suppressed groups on social inclusion/ exclusion agenda.

Dr. Mukta Singh Tamang representing Adivasi and Janajati, briefed on the agenda of Adivasi and Janajati on state restructuring process which include: Right to Self-Determination; Federal Design and Culture/ Ethnic/ Linguistic Equality; Aspects of Self- Rule and Shared- Rule; Ethnic Autonomy at Local Level; Electoral System; *Agra-adhikar*; Operationalize Secularism; Ensure Linguistic Rights; Multiculturalism and Educational Institutions in Federal Structure. Further, he added that there should be researches on: i) Access of Indigenous on Land and Natural Resources; ii) Culture and Identity of

Indigenous; and iii) Issues of Endangered Indigenous Peoples.

Dr. Saubhabya Shah, representing Marginalized Groups, started his presentation with brief discussion on how the communities/ groups at periphery level are excluded from center and how three different forms of marginalization – Discrimination, Devaluation and Delegitimization – perpetuate in the society. He further explains on diverse form of marginality persist in Nepali society, namely: Old Aged, Psychically Disables, Spatial and others. He further added that the current delay in constitutional drafting process of Nepal is creating havoc in democratic practices of the country.

Mr. Teertha Dhakal, representing National Planning Commission, expressed the importance of the Fund supported researches on country's planning process. He further added that the findings of Fund supported

researches would be fruitful insight in upcoming planning process.

Mr. Bhuban Karki, representing Ministry of Finance, informed that Ministry of Finance had initiated the Gender and Inclusion based budgeting. He highlighted the importance of social science researches to materialize such budgeting process.

**Thematic Group Work**

The participant of workshop made six groups for group discussion in six thematic areas - Women, Minorities/ Muslim, Dalits, Madhesi, Adivasi Janajati and Marginalized Groups. There were intense group discussions between the participations in order to recommend the research themes for the future social science researches of the Fund. The groups came out with precise themes in bullet points which they presented to the Fund's Screening Committee.

**Research Themes for Call for Proposal 2009**

The Fund's Screening Committee meeting held immediately after civil society workshop prioritized the research themes presented by civil society workshop and decided the research themes for "Call for Proposal 2009" for Research Fellowship and Research Apprenticeship Grants. The Fund announced the Call for Proposal 2009 in national dailies dated 17<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> October 2007 and the announcement was also aired through FMs all over the Nepal.

*1 Mr. Manadhar and Mr. Bajracharya are engaged with Social Inclusion Research Fund. This article is based on the Civil Society Forum Workshop organized by Social Inclusion Research Fund on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2005.*

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## Research Themes of Call for Proposal 2009

### Research Theme for Research Grant

#### CONVERGENT THEMES

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representation and Participation of Excluded Groups in State and Non- state Agencies</li> <li>• Affirmative Action, Reservation and Special Rights to Excluded Groups</li> <li>• Socio- economic and Political Status of Excluded Groups</li> <li>• Issues of Group/ Community Identity at Local, Regional and National Level</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basis and Forms of Federal Structure in the context of Nepal</li> <li>• Issues of Excluded Communities in Media</li> <li>• Violence, Impunity, Human Rights and Rule of Law</li> <li>• Practices in Peace Building and Intra/ Inter-Communal Harmony</li> <li>• Local Governance and Excluded Communities</li> <li>• Issues of Implementation of Government's Inclusion Policies and Programmes</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

#### GROUP – SPECIFIC THEMES

##### Women

- Intersectionality of Identity within Women
- Feminization of Poverty and Development
- Discrimination against Women
- Impact of Climate Change on Marginalized Women
- Status of Migrant Women Workers

##### Adivasi Janajati

- Traditional Institution of Adivasi Janajati and Governance
- Indigenous Knowledge and Cultural Identity
- Indigenous Women's Status and Identity
- Traditional Economy and Employment
- Program and Policies for Indigenous Women
- Status of Endangered Indigenous Peoples
- Issues of Implementation of Government's Inclusion Policy and Program

##### Muslims/ Minorities Groups

- Reproductive Health and Poverty of Muslim and Minorities
- Livelihood Opportunities of Muslims and Minorities
- Landless Muslims and Minorities
- Muslims Women and Public Spaces
- Religious Conflict, Peace and Harmony

##### Madhesi

- Social, Political, Economic and Cultural Dimension of Conflict in Madhesh/ Terai
- Natural Resource and Land Management in Madhesh/ Terai
- Issues of Cross Border Relationship in Madhesh/ Terai
- Intra- communal Relationship in Madhesh/ Terai
- Social, Cultural and Demographic Status of Other Backward Communities (OBCs) in Nepal

##### Dalits

- Land and Dalit Rights
- Dalit's Access and Management of State Resources and Basic Services
- Livelihood , Traditional Occupation and Dalits Identity
- Employment and Poverty among Dalit Women
- Madhesi Dalits, Violence and Inter- caste Relationship

##### Marginalized Groups – includes Third Gender, Physically Challenged and Others

- Socio- Economic Status, Physical Infrastructure and Family Condition of Disabled
- Economic, Social and Political Marginality of Kamali
- Connectivity, Employment and Exclusion of Regionally Marginalized
- Lifestyle, Status, Social Relationship and Mapping of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Individuals (LGBTI) Communities in Nepal
- Causes and Experiences of Conflict and Violence
- Post- conflict Rehabilitation and Reconstruction.
- Conditions of Internally Displaced Individual and Communities



# Success for all to see

By **BIPINADHIKARI**

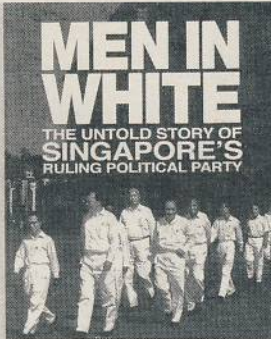
Singapore is a success story for all to see. Founded in 1819 as a British trading colony, Singapore joined the Malaysian Federation in 1963. The Federation did not work for it. This led to its separation from Malaysia two years later. Its tough journey as an independent country starts from here.

As an independent country, Singapore had some major challenges to overcome: national security, the poor local economy, lack of democratic institutions, and many social, racial issues. The vulnerability of Singapore was deeply felt, with threats from multiple sources, including the communists, Indonesia (with its confrontational stance), and extremists who wanted to force Singapore back into Malaysia. The challenges of the transition were enormous for the political lot of the country.

The new country was able to deal with many of these challenges very successfully. By the next three decades, the independent Singapore had become one of the few wealthiest countries in the world in terms of GDP (PPP) per capita. It is a vibrant society, making outstanding achievements in all socio-cultural sectors, science and technology, and modern infrastructure. A highly developed and successful free market economy, Singapore enjoys a remarkably open and corruption-free environment, stable prices, and a per capita GDP equal to that of the Big 4 West European countries.

The idea that a small island city-state of two million people with no hinterland could survive in what was then a difficult and troubled region seemed manifestly absurd. But the country not just survived, but also developed and flourished as one of the most juggernaut economies of the world.

The book "Men in White: The Untold Story of Singapore's Ruling Political Party" is the first comprehensive work on the role of People's Action Party (PAP) - the longest surviving and undoubtedly the most dominant political party of Singapore in nation building. Established on 21 November 1954, the PAP is the party of the main builder of Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew who gave



**Sonny Yap, Richard Lim & Leong Weng Kam, Men in White: The Untold Story of Singapore's Ruling Political Party (Singapore: Singapore Press Holdings Limited, 2009) (Hard cover price Singapore \$ 42.80)**

leadership to Singapore not as its first elected Prime Minister from 1959 to 1990, but also its moral force up to this day.

PAP has dominated Singapore politics for more than half-a-century ever since. It remains the ruling party today with a tally of 12 general election victories. There is no doubt the success of Singapore owes much to the success of the PAP as a driving force.

Three senior researchers Sonny Yap, Richard Lim & Leong Weng Kam have narrated the PAP story in three parts. The first part, authored by Sonny Yap and Leong Weng Kam, covers the turbulent early years of the PAP and the divisive politics it was trapped in. In the second part Richard Lim tracks its transformation into a formidable political force of Singapore. In the third part, the team examines the PAP's survival strategy; and what could destroy it. The Editor in Chief, Cheong Yip Send, notes in his preface:

"For many generations of Singaporeans, especially those born after independence in 1965, the early years of the PAP are a very distant memory. If this book helps stimulate in them, as well as generations to come, an abiding interest in our past, the years of work that have gone into this book would not be in vain. We cannot be a strong nation if we cannot remember our past."

Written in the journalistic style, the book is very comprehensive in its

treatment of the major aspects of Singapore's transition. It is based on the documents and records of the party, oral history of its members and opposition players, and interviews of the many of the surviving players, including of several before they passed away. It is not just the pro-establishment actors, but also those who differed in both the process and outcome of this transition, who have been given enough space by the book.

It tries to project comprehensive pictures of the events since the 1950s, and the views of all - those for or against the PAP. The party is very apprehensive of communist political ideologies, despite a brief joint alliance with the communists against colonialism in Singapore during its early years. The idea of survival as an independent nation has been a central theme of Singaporean politics ever since. The book also shows how the PAP coped with this issue in its difficult years.

Lee Kuan Yew, who has contributed foreword to this book has noted: "At the time it was happening, I could only guess what my adversaries were thinking and planning to do to demolish us. Many of the accounts in the book I read for the first time. They may not have revealed everything and could have tarnished their narrative for posterity. Nevertheless, their recollections added spice to the narrative. I had pointed out some factual errors but told the writers to decide who is more reliable. The final version is their book and they had to exercise their editorial right."

Singapore is a parliamentary democracy. But its human rights records have not been encouraging. Even in the 21st century, with all modernization, an easing of restrictions on freedom of assembly has been overshadowed by heavy penalties and restrictive measures imposed on opposition activists, journalists and human rights defenders.

While political opponents are allowed, the various arrangements which are in place have the effect of suppressing dissenting voices. There are presently about 23 registered political parties in Singapore. The book hardly shows any references on how honestly the PAP and its leaders tried to ensure their participation in nation building. This book is going to have many comments from the writers' compatriots in this area.

Nevertheless, this is a very perceptive work. I strongly recommend this book to the leaders who have a noble cause and determination. It will teach them how to be futuristic.

*lawyers\_inc\_nepal@yahoo.com*



# Lack of food for thought

*Food security in Nepal has been one of the major concerns lately.*

According to World Food Programme (WFP), 45 out of 75 districts are not able to produce enough food to meet their population's daily needs.

Nepal, which was self-sufficient in food grains until the 1980s, now imports food from its South Asian neighbors.

It spends nearly US \$30 million to import rice and approximately US \$ 750,000 to import wheat from India and Bangladesh respectively.

Poor agricultural productivity caused by droughts, natural disasters and poor farming practices and technologies among the farmers have been attributed to food 'insecurity'.

The population of Nepal is increasing at a faster rate compared to the increase in agricultural output, which hints at more problems for the coming years.

The global economic crisis has worsened matters. It caused a worldwide price hike, especially affecting the poor and remote villagers. Nepal's west, which happens to be the most

impoverished part of the country, suffered too.

Since the extremely poor have no cash reserves, they will find it really difficult to cope up with the increased price rates. This means that in the coming years, the number of impoverished will gradually increase in Nepal.

Experts held extensive deliberations on the issue at a recent programme organized by SAWTEE.

"The food insecurity can be solved if agricultural growth is promoted and more budget is allocated to the agricultural sector," said Dr. Bishwa Nath Tiwari, Professor, Department of Economics.

The hike in fuel price, a result of the global economic crisis, has affected farmers. The Nepal Oil Corporation, which is deep in debts, has not been able to supply fuel properly in the country.

Although presently, the matter has been solved, there is no doubt that shortage of fuel in the market could recur.



This has especially affected the farmers with water pumps and tractors, who rely on diesel for their machineries.

The fuel shortage has further reduced the number of vehicles which transport seeds and fertilizers, meaning an increase in their prices.

Says Tiwari, "The rising energy (fuel) prices, have been one of the major factors in decreasing productivity and hence increasing food insecurity."

Thus, another pressing need of the day is to tackle the fuel crisis.

Until and unless the global fuel price is stabilized, the problem of food insecurity will persist; and there is little Nepal can do to stabilize the fuel price. Hence, it needs to find alternative ways to deal with the problem.

*-Abijit Sharma*

## Book

# AIR TRANSPORT

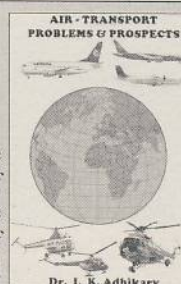
The book "AIR TRANSPORT: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS" written by Dr. Indra Kumar Adhikary (Ph.D in Aviation Jet-Engines, working as Consultant, Techno-Avia, Moscow) along with the world air-transport development, problems and prospects, has illustrated the present problems and prospects of civil aviation of Nepal is the first and only one of its kind - so far published.

Air transport is one of the most important arteries of transport systems of modern world. With the state of art of air-services the world has become more accessible and closure and is capable to conduct regular air services and tackle any sort of emergency rescue operations.

It is well known fact that the development and growth of air transport depends on various factors including economic growth, fuel price changes, airline productivity gains and airports, airspace capacity, air safety etc,

etc. As fuel price consists of 20-35% of operating costs, the hyper rise and fall of fuel prices and economic recession of recent time, has been badly affected the world air transport sector. Instead of these factors, it has its own traditional problems: environmental (greenhouse gases emission and noise), operational (aircraft, professional manpower, maintenance, repair and overhaul, air safety) etc.

The book published in Moscow in 2009, with color cover-page, consists 125 pages with diagrams, charts, pictures and data tables. In this book has reviewed the historical development of Civil Aviation system, origin of ICAO, aims and objectives of ICAO and a brief description of major civil aircraft manufacturers (Boeing, Airbus, Tupolev, Ilyushin, Antonov, Bombardier, etc.). Similarly, he has illustrated the real



situation, problems and prospects of Air-transport system of Nepal. Major problems produced by the Air-transport System: the atmospheric pollution, the noise pollution and air safety problems and their solutions, have presented and analyzed in the books in the same manner.

Defining the real conditions, problems and future prospective of the whole air-transport system requires a thorough study, deep analysis and interpretation of all factors. Such type of work can do only devoted specialists with an extraordinary ability, Dr. Adhikary is one of them.

Although the comparative analysis of different factors affecting air-transport system is a very complicated one, the author has successfully presented his results and views in simple and illustrative ways. That's why this book is very useful not only to the aviation specialists but also to the readers interested to the air-transport system. Hope, the book will attract more aviation specialists, students and readers in future.

*-Reviewed by Cheentan Sharma*



## ALIEN BATTLE TO SAVE PARK

## One Woman's Mission

*Environmental activist Chanda Rana has launched a battle against a deadly plant Mikania Micrantha, which is destroying unique eco-system of Chitwan National Park*

By A CORRESPONDENT

As Nepal's policymakers are concentrating their efforts to articulate Nepal's environmental problems at the forthcoming Climate Change summit in Copenhagen, Denmark, an alien plant is playing havoc with the unique eco-system of Chitwan National Park.

Only a few people seem to have taken notice that the deadly invader Mikania Micrantha is gradually eating away other plants in the famous park. Far fewer have done anything about this.

Chanda Rana, the president of Save the Environment Foundation (SEF), has filmed and produced a thirty-minute documentary revealing the devastation caused by the alien plant to the Chitwan wildlife, especially the rhino, habitat. This is the first time anyone interviewed all stakeholders, including the local people, experts and officials to produce such a documentary.

Mikania Micrantha started to invade the forests of Chitwan National Park in 1994. Rana is the first environmental activist who documented its threats, how it operates its life cycle and invades forests, shrubs, grasslands and entire eco-system of the park and its surroundings.

Rana's DVD Documentary is entitled 'Mile-A-Minute: A serious threat to Chitwan National Park'. It depicts a serious threat posed by the alien species of plant to the entire eco-system of the area.

"The documentary consists of the findings of my study and field observations. Apart from this, I have tried to include the voices of the concerned stakeholders who are closely observing the adverse effects of the invasion and infestation of the wild climber," said Rana.

Based on field visits, research, study and expert opinions, Rana's documentary is the first of its kind which narrates how the alien plant, Mikania Micrantha, is growing and how it is gradually infesting the entire region along with the buffer zones of the national Park.

"There is the need to act immediately to

save the Chitwan National Park from invasion of wild weed Mikania and preserve one of the world's unique eco-systems and natural heritage sites. Voices should be heard at home as well as in the Copenhagen Summit of Climate change in Copenhagen, Denmark," said Rana. "We are all aware that global warming is threatening the very existence of human civilization and forests including national parks like Chitwan which have been



**Rana (Left) Pointing Finger Towards Plants: Saving Chitwan**

playing a vital role as carbon sinks are contributing to mitigate adverse effects of global warming. If we will not take action, the wild plant Mikania will destroy Chitwan's unique eco-system and wildlife habitat."

During her holiday trip to Chitwan National Park in December 2007, she noticed the infestation by the wild plant. "When I was on an elephant safari, I noticed the entire grassland, bushes, main habitat of one horned rhinos were covered by this wild plant. In my informal discussions, I came to realize that I have to take certain action against this wild plant which has serious and adverse effect on many trees and grasslands. This documentary is part of awareness campaign against the infestation of Mikania Micrantha," said Rana.

As the wild plant has already affected

20 percent of the Chitwan National Park and fifty percent of Rhino habitat areas, it is also threatening the entire eco-system. "First seen in 1994 after a major flood, the wild plant Mikania Micrantha is threatening the rhino-habitat including the grassland," said Shanta Gewali, rhino expert of Nepal Trust for Nature Conservation.

Sponsored by Ashok Rana, Chief Executive Officer of Himalayan Bank, the entire documentary is the work of Chanda Rana, who has made personal contributions to this project. At a time when the country's policymakers and activists have been taking part in global program through the support of donor countries, Rana has individually contributed to make the documentary to generate environmental awareness.

"By highlighting the devastations in the Chitwan National Park, Chanda Rana has made the greatest contribution to the nature conservation. After watching the documentary, I have realized that we need

to take some immediate action," said Deepak Bohara, Minister of Forest and Soil Conservation. "By bringing this issue through personal initiative, Rana showed her commitment and dedication to nature," said Bohara, who received the DVD handed over by Chanda Rana.

According to Rana, the documentary will be screened in London on 24 November when Nepal Nature Conservation Year 2009 will be celebrated jointly by NTNC and Geological society of London. Under the personal efforts of Rana, Save the Environment Foundation has already launched several programs in the valley including city greenery promotion, garbage management, raising people's awareness on air pollution, campaign against plastic bags and many other programs. ■



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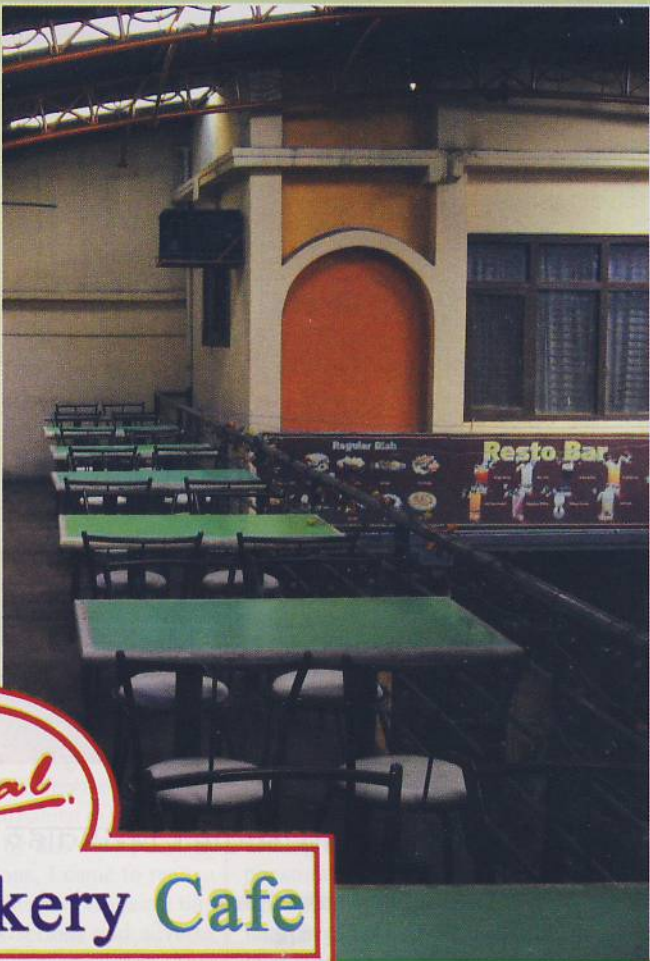
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