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The National Newsmagazine

# SPOTLIGHT

Mar 07-13, 2008

## Business Community

# Under Siege

CA Poll : Opening Pandora's Box  
 John Wood : Saga of Inspiration  
 Encounter : Rabindra Nath Sharma

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**COVER STORY: Under Siege** In the face of continuous attacks, abductions, extortions and killings, business community is feeling greatly demoralised and desperate

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**POLITICS: Pandora's Box** The coming Constituent Assembly election is certain to open Pandora's Box

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**FACE TO FACE:**  
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**SPOTLIGHT**

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**Chief Editor And Publisher**  
Madhav Kumar Rimal

**Editor**  
Sarita Rimal

**Managing Editor**  
Keshab Poudel

**Senior Reporter**  
Sanjaya Dhakal

**Design and Layout**  
Hari Krishna Bastakoti  
Jyoti Dangol (Singh)

**Photographer**  
Sandesh Manandhar

**Legal Advisor**  
Advocate Lok Bhakta Rana

**Marketing**  
Navin Kumar Maharjan  
Madan Raj Poudel

**Editorial Office**  
GPO Box 7256, Maitidevi, Kathmandu  
Tel (977-1) 4423127 Fax: (977-1)  
4417845  
Chief Editor's : 4435594.  
E-mail : spot@mail.com.np  
Internet : www.nepalnews.com/spotlight

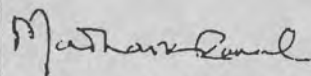
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**T**he bigger parties of the SPA seem busy patting their backs at the understanding they have been forced to reach with the couple of bigger Madhesi fronts. Whether this understanding will even partially smoothen the way for the peaceful conduct of the polls to the constituent assembly is still quite vague and will not be clear till a few days more. Would it be wise to believe that this understanding will restore total peace and normalcy in the country without which no free and fair polls are possible and except a handful of hangers on of the bigger political parties, the millions of voters would risk their lives to go to the polling booths? To be more precise, would it not be sheer folly even to imagine that the SPA government have cajoled the two Madhesi fronts to come to the understanding? What about the other smaller fronts which are more dangerous as they are militant and given to killing their opponents? When are they being invited for dialogues? Would these Madhesi fronts listen to the SPA leaders? Isn't it an open secret that all the Madhesi fronts and SPA government too are like puppets in the hands of a skilful puppeteer who is pulling the strings invisible to non-discerning eyes? And who can tell for sure what is the puppeteer planning to do? As such, we would still prefer to reserve our opinion and not jump to childish conclusions. However, we must not fail to warn our millions of simple and patriotic countrymen to be on their guard lest these puppets mortgage our sovereignty or subject our country to disintegration for fulfilling their nefarious interests. A people's constitution is the most imperative need of our country. But we don't want that this incompetent puppet government should be entrusted with such a pious and historic task because we know, at the behest of their alien masters they are sure to hurt the interest of this poor country. How can we forget the simple adage - a burnt child dreads the fire? That's why we have been persistently emphasizing to replace this government with one patriotic, honest and more efficient. But, the crux of the matter is who will dismiss this authoritarian government? The powers that could twist the arms of these politicians and force them to step down seem quite happy nursing their own interests. Their high blown sympathies for the millions of poor and deprived Nepalis seem to be nothing but sheer hypocrisy. The influential media, the small intelligentsia and the civil society that should have led the poor masses and given them the right direction too are running after the power brokers in the expectation of some kind of favor for themselves. In the total absence of dedicated and honest leadership, it has become quite easy for the glib politicians to lead the uneducated and illiterate masses astray and persuade them to misuse their precious judgment to the ultimate detriment of the nation. In such a vicious situation, the one and only ray of hope to save the country from being embroiled in a disastrous civil war is the Nepal Army. But, the politicians are not only trying to defile them but also to demoralize them. However, we know Nepal army cannot be deterred from performing their hallowed duty of defending the country come what may. As such, we can only advise them to be fully prepared to meet all exigencies.

  
**Madhav K. Rimal**  
Chief Editor & Publisher



## Pessimistic Outlook

Your analysis seems to be guided by pessimistic views on the possibility of holding the election for CA (Elections Process Begins: What Next? February 29-March 6). I don't agree with your analysis that there is still uncertainty about the election process. At a time when all the political parties and groups in terai have expressed their commitments to participate in the election, CA is now a reality and people will cast their votes on April 10, 2008 for the election of CA.

*Shreeram Thapa*  
Via email

the country. If Nepal is unable to control the inflation, it could trigger worse situation in the country. As the country's leading parties are in the election fray, the country's economic situation seems to be heading towards disaster. There is a need to take steps in the right direction on right time to solve the economic ailments.

*Deepak Subba*  
Via email

## Deluge Of Demands

The interim government is fulfilling all fundamental demands related to the country's identity and sovereignty one after another at the last minute of holding the Constituent Assembly election. Our political leaders have promised us that the election for CA is going to be held to sort out all the differences. However, they have been fulfilling all the fundamental and major decisions regarding them. The interim parliament has already decided the future of monarchy and nature of state and the government has already signed several agreements with various groups to divide the state based on various ethnic groups. If the government fulfills all the demands, why do we need the election for CA? Is it just meant to settle minor issues?

*Sumitra Shrestha*  
Via-email

## Plenty Of Contradictions

I have read many contradictions in the face to face columns given by Madhesi Janadhikar Forum president Upendra Yadav and CPN-UML leader Raghujai Panta. Panta- whose party agreed to postpone the date for CA election twice in the past, argued that the elections are necessary to prove the legitimacy. I don't understand his points of legitimacy and accountability as all of us know that the country has been under one or other kinds of unaccountable government for the last seven years following the dissolution of elected government. Yadav, who has been demanding full autonomy with right to self determination blocking all the normal activities in southern plain, argued that he is neither separatist nor anti-Constituent Assembly. Panta and Yadav exposed themselves by taking contradictory stands.

*Krishna Sharma*  
Battisputali

## Learning Democracy

Being a close neighbor of India, world's largest democratic country, Nepal has big advantage of learning the process of democratization, rule of law and other such important issues. However, instead of learning ideals of democracy and values, we have been learning all the bad things from India including violence and extremism. When India's Supreme Court gave a verdict warning that Balkanization would not be allowed and the chief justice of Indian Supreme Court delivered the verdict that India is one country and it will not accept the son of the soil theory, our seven party leaders were accepting the demands of regional groups endorsing their proposal promoting son of the soil theory. You have rightly pointed out the landmark judgment of Indian Supreme Court to open the eyes of Nepal's politicians. As the government has already accepted this theory, it will have implications in whole South Asia region. Our politicians, intellectuals and legal luminaries must show guts to follow the landmark decision delivered by Indian Supreme Court on Maharashtra.

*Jitendra Jha*  
Via email

## Dangerous Inflation

Your cover story on (Inflation: Spiraling beyond Control February 22-28) is very interesting. I agree with you that recently the macro-economic stability and the inflation are showing dangerous trends. The problem of rising market prices of essential goods has been exacerbated by the acute shortage of fuel and other essential commodities. It is unfortunate to say that the policy makers have been ignoring the real and major concern of the country. You have rightly pointed out the fundamental weakness of the country's economic problems. Although this government is interim, it must take some drastic steps to contain the inflation.

*Maya Lama*  
London, Via Email

## Non-functional institutions

Nepal's political institutions are virtually non-functional and economic institutions too have not been performing well. The latest example is the disruptions in the supply of essential commodities including the petroleum products and other essential goods. The price rise is going alarmingly high. It was interesting to read the factual analysis of overall economic scenario of



## Over 1300 Huts Gutted In Fire In Refugee Camp;

Over 1300 huts were gutted when fire broke out in Goldhap refugee camp in Jhapa district. The fire had suddenly started from a house at around 6:30 pm in the evening, Saturday (Mar 01), and later engulfed the entire camp. Initial reports say only three persons have been injured in the fire, which has affected the settlement of over 10,000 Bhutanese refugees. Fire brigades from the district were busy trying to put it out till late at night. Hundreds of security personnel were mobilised to rescue the people. After their huts were gutted, thousands of refugees have been compelled to stay in nearby fields. Meanwhile, Home Minister Krishna Sitaula inspected the affected camp on Sunday morning. He informed that the government will make available Rs 3 million as assistance immediately. He also said that the government will appeal to domestic and international organisations for help.

*Compiled from reports*

## Police Bust Kidnap Racket

Nepal Police have arrested the much-pursued kingpin of a major kidnapping racket active in the Kathmandu valley, Amar Tandan and his chief accomplice Ram Kumar Pyakurel. In a police operation dubbed 'Operation 776', an investigation team headed by superintendent of Police Devendra Subedi nabbed the kidnapping racket believed to be behind all major kidnappings in the Kathmandu Valley for

the last one year. Tandan, 41, of Amuwa VDC-3, Rupandehi and his chief accomplice Pyakurel, 26, of Urleni VDC-9, Nuwakot district have carried out at least 15 kidnappings including that of businessman Mahesh Murarka, police said. At a press conference in

the capital Wednesday (Mar 27), Senior Superintendent of Police Upendra Kant Aryal, chief of Metropolitan Police Crime Investigation Division (MPCD), Hanumandhoka, said the criminal gang received ransoms ranging between Rs 550,000 to Rs 7.7 million from each victim's family. "As told to police, the racket received a total of Rs 26.9 million in ransom from the abducted victims," informed SSP Aryal. The police operation revealed that the notorious gang was hunting for what they called 'fatter cows' to collect even larger amounts in ransom. SSP Aryal informed that Tandan, the mastermind behind the kidnappings, took 40 percent share of the total ransom while he distributed 60 percent to his accomplices working to execute the plan. Tandan received a total of Rs 12.33 million of the total ransom and all his accomplices including the arrested Pyakurel received Rs 2 million each from the ransom collected. The kidnappers are found receiving the ransom via money laundering after transferring it to different countries including Hong Kong, Singapore, Dubai and Bangkok. Tandan reportedly sent his money to a US national-owned Real Deal Company in Luxembourg. "We have made efforts to bring the money back through the help of Interpol," said Aryal. The kingpin of the racket Tandan was slapped a total of 22.5 years jail-term on charges of smuggling brown sugar into Kathmandu. He got to know Pyakurel when the latter serving a jail-term on charges of stealing a two-wheeler at Dilli Bazar prison some two

years ago. Tandan absconded jail in April 2007 before becoming involved in this organized racket. A BBS degree holder from Raheja College Mumbai in India, Tandan is proficient in eight different languages including English, Hindi, Nepali, Gujarati, Chinese, Thai, Telwi and Marathi. Police have recovered nine mobile SIM cards belonging to both Nepali and Indian companies from his possession. He mostly dealt in Gujrati and Marathi language over the phone while settling ransoms with businessmen from the Marwari community, police said. The kidnappers are found to have taken at least three houses on rent to hold their victims. Investigations revealed that the racket hired a house on Rs 16,000 per month at Maijubahal and another building at Mandikhatar, Dhumbarahi at Rs 17,000 rent a month, besides another building at Chhapiya VDC in Rupandehi district for the purpose. Police investigations revealed that the kidnappers made kidnapping plans in Goregaon in Mumbai, India, the house of one of the accused Arjun at Jaikuti in Rupandehi districts and Gautam Hotel at Jamal in Kathmandu. The kidnappers used five different cars and a motorcycle to carry out their kidnappings. They sold the car used for taking away the businessman Mahesh Murarka to the scrap out of the fear of being apprehended, police said. Speaking at the press conference, Additional Inspector General of Police Keshav Prasad Baral, chief of Crime Investigation Department at Police Headquarters, said lack of cooperation on the part of the victims had made them unable to apprehend the guilty earlier. He also asked all stakeholders including the victims' families to share related information with police and help check this newly-emerging crime. *Kantipur reports*

## Govt, FRNF Strike 5-Pt Deal

The government on Saturday (Mar 01) signed an agreement with the Federal Republic National Front (FRNF), an alliance of seven groups agitating in Terai and eastern region. The five-point agreement signed at the Prime Minister's residence in Baluwatar this afternoon includes 'guarantee' of ending centralized governing system through the constituent



assembly; martyr status to those killed during the FRNF-called agitations and Rs 1 million compensation to the families of the deceased. The agreement became possible after the Front agreed to drop its demand for fully proportional election system for the CA and "constitutional guarantee" of autonomy to federal units on the basis of language and region. Representatives of five of the seven constituents of the Front – Federal Democratic National Forum, Federal Limbuwan State Council, Tamsaling Autonomous State Council, Dalit Janajati Party and Tharuwan National Front – signed the agreement while Republican Madhesi Front and Bhangya Nath Gupta-led Madhesi Janadhikar Forum –Madhes (MJF-M) rejected it. With the signing of the deal, FRNF has withdrawn its agitations in Terai and eastern districts. However, leader of MJF-M Kishore Bishwas has said that his party will not take part in the Constituent Assembly election and rather continue its agitation. The agreement was signed in the presence of Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala. *Compiled from reports*

### A Report Blames Bhutan Govt Of Continued Atrocities

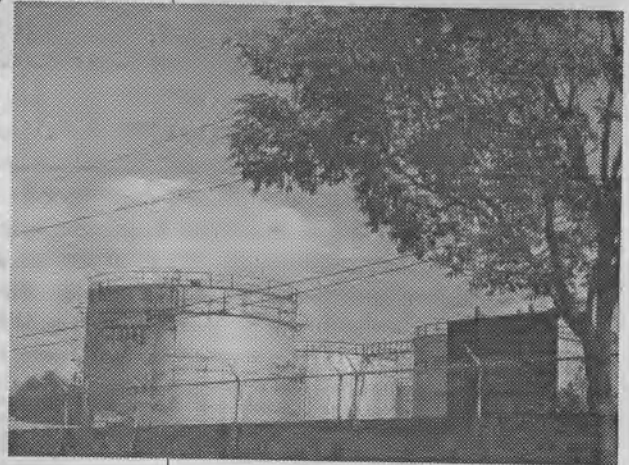
A report by a rights group has criticized the Druk regime in Bhutan for a spate of crackdown and arrest of minorities. Issuing a statement on Monday, Human Rights Organization of Bhutan (HUROB) has said that "if the crackdown by the Bhutanese government against its own citizens continues then it will cause another exodus of the people from the country for safety and security of their life and of their families." "Therefore, we request all to raise the

issue with the Royal Government of Bhutan without delay to stop arresting people on doubts of being affiliated to a political party and belief in particular ideology. So that people live and enjoy peace without fear and trepidation and another phase of human misery is not created," HUROB said in the statement signed by its chairman S.B Subba. It also said the Royal Bhutan Police is arresting mainly Nepali speaking locals in the district of Samchi by charging them of being activists of the Communist Party of Bhutan-Marxist, Leninist and Maoist (CPB-MLM) and making them disappear. According to HUROB, the condition and whereabouts of one Lal Bahadur Chettri of Katarey village in Samchi district is still not known even after a year of his arrest by the Royal Bhutan Police on allegation of being CPB-MLM member. Soon after that his son Devi Bahadur Chettri was also arrested without any reason and is being kept in Samchi jail. HUROB said it is very concerned of the safety and security of the two prisoners. "As in the past, the prisoners might be facing inhuman tortures and cruel treatments," the human rights organization said adding that prisoners are always kept incommunicado till they are convicted in Bhutan, barring them of a fair trial. *Compiled from reports*

### Govt Invokes ESA To Ensure Supplies

The government on Monday enforced the Essential Services Act (new amendment), which among others, allows the State to intervene even in private sector undertakings in order to ensure smooth and regular flow of essential services in the country. The Act was amended through the decision of Council of Ministers, said Moda Raj Dotel, spokesperson at Home Ministry, adding that the amendment was necessitated by the fact that ESA was formulated 50 years ago and had gone

obsolete. Dotel said, "The Act has granted special authority to the government, whereby it can democratically intervene with different essential service providers including the private sector to uphold the basic rights of the people." In the past, the Act had specified items such as essential goods, telecommunication, drinking water and fuel, among others, as essential services. However it was silent on how the government would intervene. "The new



Act allows the government to take service providing agencies including that of the private sector into control and operate the same by paying compensation to the owner," said Dotel. Although he refused to elaborate, sources said that the Act was amended taking into account the problems the government faced in importing and distributing fuel. Tanker-owners and drivers have been foiling government efforts to import petroleum products from Birgunj, the largest customs point, by launching strike and not cooperating with the security authority. While that has affected fuel import, the country has plunged into a severe petroleum crisis. "By activating the Act through public notification, the government can now take tankers into its control and operate them by hiring drivers of its own after paying compensation to tanker owners," said an official at Supplies Ministry. If tanker drivers in Amlekhgunj refuse to cooperate in import action, the government would activate the Act sooner, he added. *The Kathmandu Post reports* ■



Winter rainfall in Kathmandu *Kantipur*

**THE NEPAL ELECTRICITY AUTHORITY (NEA)** has cut down the load shedding by one hour a day. The NEA's acting chief Shyam Bahadur Shrestha informed that from Friday (Feb 29), the daily load shedding hours will be decreased from eight to seven hours. "Because the repair of one of the damaged units of Kulekhani II power plant has completed, we are reducing the load shedding hour from Friday," Shrestha said. However, the prospects of importing 40 MW of power from India to considerably bring down the crippling hours of load shedding are still dim. "There appears some technical glitches due to which it has not happened," said Minister for Water Resources Gyanendra Bahadur Karki, Shrestha elaborated. "They have to construct around eight to ten towers on Bihar side of India, which they have not done so far. They said it will be completed within a week. But already one and a half month has passed." There is a demand for over 700 MW of power while NEA is able to supply only 500 MW. During dry season when snow-fed rivers dry up, most of the power projects in Nepal generate under capacity.

**THE STATE-OWNED NEPAL OIL CORPORATION (NOC)** has informed that it will now considerably increase the supply of fuel to address the acute shortage. After the end of Terai unrest, the NOC has said, it will be able to supply more fuel easily. Currently, it was forced to supply fuel by clamping curfew in bordering regions. "The Indian Oil Corporation can provide us with 3 million liters of fuel every day. So we will bring in enough supplies to end the crisis in a few days," said Mukunda Prasad Dhungel, chief of distribution at NOC.

**THE SUPREME COURT (SC) HAS SCHEDULED** a hearing on the corruption case against suspended governor of the Nepal Rastra Bank Bijaya Nath Bhattarai and executive director Surendra Man Pradhan on March 11. The apex court scheduled the hearing after receiving the full-text judgment from the Special Court on Wednesday (Feb 27). SC spokesperson Til Prasad Shrestha said. The Special Court had transferred the case to the apex court on February 17 after the Special Court judges could not decide the case. Bhattarai and Pradhan were present at the apex court to face the trial.

According to Shrestha, a single bench of SC Justice will look into the case and take decision. On June 29, 2007, the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority had filed the case against Bhattarai and Pradhan claiming that they had caused a loss of Rs 30 million by terminating a contract signed with a joint venture of Lloyd Hill Oakton, USA, in association with KPMG, Sri Lanka. The agreement was signed on February 6, 2006; it was terminated nine months later. The anti-graft constitutional body had sought a two-year jail term and recovery of Rs 24.5 million from Bhattarai and Pradhan as per Clause 8(3) of Corruption Prevention Act, 2002.

**SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL POLICE ORGANISATION (Interpol)** Ronald K Noble on Friday recognized eight Nepali police officers for their "professionalism demonstrated in carrying out their law enforcement duties" and expressed commitment to undertake a Nepal Police officer as an attaché at its headquarters in Lyon, France, as requested by the Nepal Police. Speaking at an interaction with reporters, Noble said the Interpol would hire Nepal Police officers at the Interpol's headquarters in view of the credibility demonstrated by Nepal Police of late. "Interpol highly appreciates the work of the Nepal Police for arresting Dr Amit Kumar within a couple of days of issuance of a Red Corner notice against him." By arresting him within a few days, Nepal Police has proved that it is 'equally capable' in crime investigation," Noble added. According to him, Nepal showed an exemplary cooperation by quickly deporting Dr Amit to India. He said the Indian kidney racket allegedly run by Amit Kumar is one of the much-publicized crimes in the world. Earlier at a function organized at Police Headquarters, Noble gave away letters of appreciation to IGP Om Bikram Rana, AIGP Keshav Baral, SSP Upendra Kant Aryal, SP Devendra Subedi, DSP Sher Bahadur Basnet, sub-inspector Raju Sharma, assistant sub-inspector Chim Bahadur Tamang and constable Lila Gurung. Baral heads the Crime Investigation Department at the police headquarters whereas Aryal and Subedi are chief and deputy-chief respectively of the Metropolitan Police Crime Division (MPCD). The MPCD arrested Dr Amit Kumar. Basnet headed the investigation team and Sharma, Tamang and Gurung were involved in the team that arrested Dr Amit from Chitwan. Police officials said this is the first time that any Nepal Police officer received award from Interpol for crime investigation. ■



Prize distribution of Corporate National Games 2004



# SUPREME COURT MUST CONSIDER ALL FACTS

## *Nepal Going to be Robbed of Vast Upper Karnali Potential*

• Dr. AB Thapa

**I**t is a big consolation that the people of the Karnali region have already petitioned **Supreme Court** against the government decision to grant permission to a private developer to use the Upper Karnali site to build 300 MW hydropower. They are claiming that the proposed hydropower is going to be constructed without the guarantee that the people of that region are going to be benefited, and thus they are going to be deprived of the opportunity to benefit from that hydropower project.

Unfortunately, the mishandling of the Upper Karnali project is not simply going to affect the people living in that region. Worst of all, it will have disastrous consequences for the whole country. Nepal will be robbed of the great opportunity to develop the relatively small (by comparison with Karnali Chisapani, Pancheshowr or Kosi projects) Upper Karnali Storage

project that could provide additional net annual benefit equivalent to total gross value of the annual production of paddy in whole Nepal. It is hoped that the Supreme Court will consider all these facts in course of deliberations to pass judgment on Upper Karnali project. Similarly, **Nepal Bar Association** and other related institutions will also come

forward to safeguard our country's vital national interest by rescuing the Upper Karnali storage project.

### **Two Projects Mutually Exclusive**

The proposed 300 MW Upper Karnali project can be implemented only at the cost of sacrificing the 4180 MW Upper Karnali Storage project According to the pre-feasibility study report the 300 MW Upper Karnali project and the 4180 MW Upper Karnali storage project are mutually exclusive. The 4180 MW Upper Karnali project is the most attractive hydropower among the projects identified so far in Nepal. It far excels even the highly attractive 10,800 MW Karnali Chisapani project in performance to generate electricity at extremely low cost on a massive scale. It can be roughly said that the 4180 MW Upper Karnali project might be able to produce as much as 50% of the total energy generated by the 10,800 MW Karnali Chisapani project at only about 1/3 cost of the latter.

The overwhelming superiority of the 4180 MW Upper Karnali storage project among the large hydropower projects

identified so far in Nepal is so obvious that the team of the consultants conducting the pre-feasibility study of the 300 MW Upper Karnali project under the financial assistance of the World Bank found themselves duty bound to warn us to refrain from harming the 4180 MW Upper Karnali storage project. They have clearly stated in the pre-feasibility report that the construction of the 300 MW Upper Karnali project will preclude the implementation of the 4180 MW Upper Karnali storage project.



### **Is Parliamentary Committee Adequately Informed?**

It is reported in a local newspaper that at some stage the

*Upper Karnali Storage project According to the pre-feasibility study report the 300 MW Upper Karnali project and the 4180 MW Upper Karnali storage project are mutually exclusive. The 4180 MW Upper Karnali project is the most attractive hydropower among the projects identified so far in Nepal. It far excels even the highly attractive 10,800 MW Karnali Chisapani project in performance to generate electricity at extremely low cost on a massive scale.*

**Parliamentary Natural Resources and Means Committee** was also involved. It is not clear whether or not the Parliamentary Committee was informed about the fact that the 300 MW Upper Karnali project and the mammoth 4180 MW Upper Karnali storage project are mutually exclusive. Do all the members of the **Parliamentary**

**Committee** know the whole truth about the Upper Karnali projects? Is the Acharya task force or another Committee under the former finance secretary, set up to advise the Government, competent to make satisfactory recommendation, which requires in-depth analysis of all relevant technical documents?

### **People Must be Informed**

There is no escaping the fact that it is not possible to implement the proposed 300 MW Upper Karnali project without sacrificing the most attractive 4180 MW Upper Karnali storage project. Do not the people of our country have the right to know from the Water Resources Ministry and Parliamentary Natural Resources and Means Committee why the mammoth 4180 MW Upper Karnali storage project is being sacrificed to implement the relatively tiny 300 Upper Karnali project?

### **Why Upper Karnali Storage So Attractive?**

The Karnali river makes a big loop in its lower reach near a place called Asare. From here the river flows in

the south-east direction for about 25 kilometers, after that the river makes a complete reversal in its direction. The river comes back to a point just two kilometers away from its earlier position near Asare. There is a drop of about 150 meters in Karnali river bed elevations between these two positions merely two kilometers away from one another. The project to utilize this bend for power generation is known as the Upper Karnali Project. There are very good sites to build a large storage dam at the beginning of the bend. Thus, it makes the Upper Karnali Storage Project far superior to the 10,800 MW Karnali Chisapani Project in terms of per unit capacity investment cost because its hydropower station would be operating at a firm head two times greater than that of the latter though the total length of the waterway of both these hydropower plants would be almost exactly the same.

**Large Cost Reduction at Higher Heads**

Of all the site characteristics, head is the most important. **Design guidelines, 1989 approved by the American Society of Civil Engineers** ( a document used throughout the world for the design of hydropower) has given some simple reasoning that would help to explain why the Upper Karnali

project operating at a head about two times greater by comparison with the Chisapani hydropower could be built at far less per unit installed capacity cost. "Very simply if one doubles the head the quantity of water needed to produce a certain amount of energy is halved, Thus, for like site energy

development the conduit area and reservoir volume are halved and further large cost reductions occur for powerhouse and machinery costs. This fundamental consideration is at the root of the large cost reductions that occur at higher heads." Needless to explain that the lower investment cost means the generation cost of the electricity would also be less.

**Comparative Investment Cost of Upper Karnali Storage**

By comparison with the mammoth 10,800 MW Karnali Chisapani Project the firm head of the Upper Karnali Storage Project would be almost two times greater. It can be derived based on Stage A Optimization Study Data of the World Bank financed Karnali Project (Chisapani) Study report that per KW installed capacity construction cost of the Upper Karnali Storage Project could be only about 2/3 of such cost of the project at Chisapani. If such comparative cost reduction advantage is treated as additional bonus to accrue to Nepal on top of

normal royalty to be received from private developer then our country might be able to earn per year at present cost of peaking energy about US \$ 300 million as extra bonus which is equivalent to gross value of the total annual production of paddy in the whole country considered to be between 2.5 to 3 million tons at a price of about US \$ 100 per ton.

**Upper Karnali Pre-feasibility Report**

The World Bank supported pre-feasibility study has clearly explained that the 4180 MW Upper Karnali Storage Project and the 300 MW Upper Karnali Diversion Project are mutually exclusive. The relevant excerpt from the World Bank supported study report is presented below.

*"Even when assuming that the KR 1A run-of-river project (it indicates the small 300 MW Upper Karnali project) is a sunk cost, it will be seen that a single large power plant (4180 MW) associated with the major storage project is less costly than the combined cost of smaller plant at the same location (3532 MW) and a second power plant at the foot of the storage dam ( 348 MW) discharging directly into the KR 1A run-of-river project head pond. Based on this assessment, it*

*There are very good sites to build a large storage dam at the beginning of the bend. Thus, it makes the Upper Karnali Storage Project far superior to the 10,800 MW Karnali Chisapani Project in terms of per unit capacity investment cost because its hydropower station would be operating at a firm head two times greater than that of the latter though the total length of the waterway of both these hydropower plants would be almost exactly the same.*

*appears that the later development of the major hydro storage project at Site KR 1 ( 4180 MW Upper Karnali Storage Project) would cause the KR 1A run-of-river project to be effectively discontinued. There may be limited opportunity for secondary energy generation during the periods of spillage".*

**Foreign Expert Against 300 MW Upper Karnali**

Mr. Paul Terrell from the Bechtel International of the USA was Chief Advisor Consultant of the Upper Karnali Project study conducted under the World Bank financial assistance. Mr. Paul Terrell has categorically cautioned Nepal in his article published in the journal "HIMAL" that our country should never compromise optimum development for the sake of a quick deal.

Our grandiose national plans to develop our water resources to uplift the economic condition of our country in general and the people of Karnali in particular would be nothing more than an empty rhetoric if we failed to intervene in time to save the 4180 MW Upper Karnali Storage Project which might be the best even in the whole world for the generation of cheap peaking energy on a large scale. We should not hesitate to invite competent foreign experts for advice if we find ourselves not capable to make correct judgment on this very important matter. ■



Signing of 8-point pact with UDMF: Cart before the horse?

## POLITICS

# Opening Pandora's Box

*With the election for the Constituent Assembly (CA) coming closer, the country is heading towards opening the Pandora's box*

By KESHAB POUDEL

Prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala signed an eight point deal with the leaders of the United Madhesi Democratic Front, a tripartite front of three parties from Terai, on Thursday February 28 in Baluwatar, a salient point of which is a federal democratic republic comprising autonomous province for Madhes.

Minister for Peace and Reconstruction Ram Chandra Poudel signed five point pact with Federal Republican National Front (FRNF) in presence of prime minister Koirala in prime minister's residence on March 1 guaranteeing autonomous provinces on

the basis of ethnicity and languages.

The government has already signed a number of similar agreements with Dalit, women and Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities in the past assuring that their demands for inclusive Nepal will be the agenda for coming Constituent Assembly. The government even amended the interim constitution three times in the past to meet the Maoist demands.

When prime minister signed the agreements to pave the way for CA polls, some factions and groups opposed the agreement. Madhes Janadhikar Forum led by Bhagyanath Prasad Gupta,

Madhesi Loktantrik Morcha and Loktantrik Madhesi Morcha – which were part of FRNF, boycotted the agreement saying the agreement betrayed their demands for proportional representative system.

Along with them, Terai's major armed rebellion groups Jantantrik Terai Mukti Morcha (Goit and Jwala), and 18 other splinter groups opposed the agreements and have issued a threat to do whatever possible to foil the CA polls.

As a country of multi-ethnic, linguistic, and religious communities, Nepal is a country full of internal contradictions, managing which is a much difficult task even in normal times.

Nepal's internal contradictions were managed not by brutal force but by social harmony among the people in the past. However, the recent upsurge of various kinds of violence have cracked the social harmony, and there is no viable means to unite the society together.

From demands of federal autonomy on the basis of ethnicity, languages to federal state on the basis of geographical identity, one can see more divisive



**Minister Poudel signs pact with FRNF:** Successive give-aways

trends. In this situation, drafting the widely acceptable constitution through the CA is certain to be an upheaval task.

"I want to ensure representation of all the communities in the constituent assembly so that they can ventilate their opinions while making a new constitution," said prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala addressing the function after signing the agreement with FRNF. "The nation will become stronger if all have their representation in the constitution making body."

However, prime minister's statement has not satisfied all. "We will continue our armed struggle till our demand for separate state in Terai is fulfilled," thundered Jwala Singh leader of Jantantrik Terai Mukti Morcha. "We will not allow holding of the election."

Although the count down has already begun for the election for CA and a few weeks are left for the use of ballot papers not to decide but to endorse changes introduced by Seven Parties ruling alliances, the mood has already shown that the coming days are going to be much harder than the present ones.

"Despite serious obstacles, there is a hope that the election will be held on its declared date of April 10. But elections are not going to bring readymade solution for all requirements of the people in the forms of government. In fact, there is no debate in the country till now about the coming agendas before the assembly and its performance. This is not going to be an election for a leader or his party. Whoever leads in the election, he will have to lead to open Pandora's Box as the parties have already accepted some of the demands," said the political analyst.

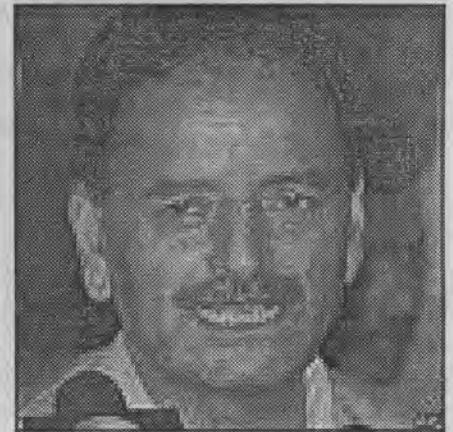
According to Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, a source of extensive foreseen troubles or problems, Pandora is the first woman created by Hephaestus endowed by the gods with all the graces and treacherously presented to Epimetheus along with a box, originally a jar in which Prometheus had confined all the evils that could trouble humanity.

Making constitution through CA is not an agenda of Nepalese politicians as they knew it will create the problems, which will take decades to manage. In

earlier days, whenever the debate for CA came, some credible politicians as well as constitutional experts had warned the people about its negative consequences.

"After the revolution in 1951, the agenda of Constituent Assembly came into being under a tripartite understanding reached in New Delhi. Slowly and gradually, all the political parties including the King reached to an understanding to have a consensus constitution than to open the Pandora's Box of constitution making. After five decades of political experiments, another agreement was signed in November 2006 by prominent parties of this country to hold the elections for CA again in New Delhi," said the analyst. "Now this second understanding made in New Delhi has forced people to undergo tests and trials of a Pandora's Box, which knowledgeable people see as nothing but another phase of internal strife and conflicts."

After facing the series of pressures and agitation in the interim period, the



**Minister Sitaula:** Peace maker?

politicians realized the difficult task to bring out a constitution through a CA but they don't have another option now.

#### South Asian Experience

Although politicians, partisan academicians, journalists and common people are hoping that CA will draft the constitution in shortest period of time to

make new Nepal, the experiences of other countries including those in South Asia show otherwise.

In South Asia, all countries have their own bitter experiences of writing the constitution through the CA. It took more than two years for India to make a constitution through CA. India was successful to have a constitution through this process. But the same was not true for Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Soon after the Pakistan's independence, a CA was formed but it took almost a decade to prepare a draft, which was ultimately scrapped by military dictator Ayub Khan.

**Wishful Thinking**

The CA has become a predominant agenda and concern of Nepal at present. "There is a wishful thinking spread through subtle ways to create mass hysteria in favor or against any desired goals," said the analyst.

Anybody - who has been watching the role of the prominent parties to force the state authority one after another to concede basic changes in the forms of government for future - understands the complexity in future.

Although the interim constitution was made to pave way for the Constituent Assembly, political leaders have already amended the constitution three times in the past adding their own agenda illegitimately.

"All the illegitimate actions are being taken to legitimize them through the elected body in the form of CA. If they submit themselves at the disposal of the patriarchs of political parties, the country may get the constitution through its single sitting deliberation. In some critical junctures, such things had happened in the past like passing Mahakali Integrated River Treaty," said the analyst. "Even after Janandolan II, all key decisions were made in prime minister's residence in Baluwatar near midnight and people were

brought to celebrate the deal. But after every deal there came out a new force in the street and entered into the prime minister's residence in the same manner to come out with series of mid-night achievements."

**Not Bin+ding**

Series of such incidents have shown that successive forces don't abide by the

previous arrangements. How the house of elected person can be forced to accept the decisions of self appointed persons?

One cannot forget that after a serious show of force, the King restored the parliament not under any provision of the constitution but by using his traditional prerogative. The present interim parliament is, in fact, a creation of the monarch, which has subsequently decided to abolish monarchy. The parliament has promulgated an interim constitution and laws without involvement of the people in decision making.

"If the parliament of the interim period could throw away the constitution of 1990 and all major commitments of prevailing parliament, one cannot expect the elected house as CA would ditto the acts of its illegitimate predecessor. Elected persons are psychologically energetic by the response in the people of their constituency and they may belong to same political party but they needn't subjugate themselves under the acts of an alliance of heterogeneous political views," said the analyst.

Others, too, agree that the CA does not need to follow the guidance given by interim parliament. "The CA has its



**A rally by ethnic group:** Differing opinions

own functions and it is not obligatory for CA to endorse all the agreements signed by the government," said senior advocate Daman Nath Dhungana.

Political analyst argues, "Whatever turmoil the people have gone through in recent past, would look like nothing compared to the coming next phase of turmoil. If that assembly is dramatically manipulated by any unseen hand, that will have its own negative results. If they are left free to take their course and decide the fate of the country, the god alone may know the end result of that. Nepal is going to face that ordeal. The rest of the world may afford to be an idle spectator but Nepal's two immediate neighbors can hardly afford even that."

"Nepal's transition at this phase can be easier if the neighbors reach into an understanding not to interfere in Nepal's internal affairs. But, if any of these two exhibit their arrogance, Nepal's problem would involve others," added the analyst.

The next phase in Nepali politics would be a real show of Pandora's Box. One cannot be sure of his/ her position in the new political situation and the fate of the country will hang in the test ■

## BUSINESS COMMUNITY

# Under Siege

Following a spate of attacks, abductions, extortion and even killings of members of their fraternity, the business community, as a whole, has been feeling the worst phase of insecurity and uncertainty. In a span of two week, one businessman was shot at while another was stabbed to death by unknown assailants in the heart of capital city. In the last one year alone, fifteen businessmen were killed while over three dozen were abducted/assaulted. In the foreboding feeling of anxiety, the business community has been warning of an eminent collapse of the entire business enterprises if the situation is not corrected at the soonest. This week they took to the streets to press their point home. In hundreds, they chanted slogans and demanded security. They have threatened all out agitation including non-payment of taxes in case the authorities fail to ensure their security any longer

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

*On February 26, Shashi Kanta Agrawal was shot and injured when unidentified assailants opened fire at the vehicle he was traveling to his home at Naya Baneshwore. He sustained bullet wounds in his leg. Agrawal survived what was described as an attempt on his life.*

*Kiran Gupta was not so lucky. Wife of entrepreneur Roshan Gupta who ran Pashupati Shoe Center in Guchha Tole of New Road, she was repeatedly*

*stabbed by unknown assailants. On February 29 night, a group of the assailants pounced on Gupta couple and demanded money. As Roshan tried to tell them that he has kept his money elsewhere, they started stabbing the couple. Kiran died of the wounds.*

These are but few examples of the continuous incidents of assaults against businessmen. In the last year alone, according to the data made available by the Federation of Nepalese Commerce

and Industry (FNCCI), fifteen businessmen have been killed while over three dozens were assaulted/abducted.

Cornered to a point of exasperation, the businessmen came out en masse, on Monday (March 3), chanting slogans against the government and raising demands for security.

“Just last week, we had asked the government to take action against those involved in shooting at Shashi Kanta Agrawal. Three days later, Kiran Gupta



**Balaju industrial estate:** Business enterprise suffering from insecurity

was killed. Is that the government's reply to us?" charged Binod Chaudhary, president of Confederation of Nepalese Industries (CNI).

Chanting slogans against the government, the businessmen expressed commitment to stay united. They vented their anger against what they called as 'ineffective home administration.'

"We will be united. If the government does not pay heed to our call, we can stop paying taxes," said Kush Kumar Joshi, vice president of Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI).

Participated by a wide section of the community, the rally held at Basantapur was a repeat of what the FNCCI had organized a year ago at the same venue. Last year, the business community had poured into the streets following a series of assaults against the members of the community by the Maoist-affiliated trade

unions and Young Communist League (YCL).

"It is unfortunate that we have to come here again in a year. Last year, the seven parties had given us written assurances about our security. But it has not materialized. Day by day, we are further victimized," said FNCCI president Chandi Raj Dhakal.

"We suffered from hours and hours of load shedding. We accepted it silently. We suffered from continued fuel scarcity, we accepted it again. But when it comes to the security of our lives and when it comes to the atmosphere of conducting business, we cannot watch it helplessly," Dhakal added.

Handing over a memorandum to the Prime Minister, the FNCCI has demanded immediate guarantee of the security of their fraternity.

The memorandum urges the government to create industrial peace

and security to prevent further demoralization of business community, which it says has led to blockade of new investment and accelerated the capital flight.

It has said that the government should seriously pay attention to the growth of such untoward activities at a time when the country is heading towards the Constituent Assembly (CA) election.

#### **Desperate Lot**

Caught between rock and the hard place, the businessmen have suffered from a number of problems of late.

The militant trade unionism bulldozed by the pro-Maoist workers; the continuous bandh in crucial Terai region; rise of violence in restive south; and growing extortion racket had kept them on their toes.

As the persistent political instability further hurt their morale, there has come a spate of targeted attacks against them.



**Business leaders hold rally: Wanted security**

"We have reached a point where we have no option but to wrap up our businesses," said Rajendra Khetan, an industrialist.

He pointed at the unprecedented level of insecurity and fear among the business community and urged the authorities to carry out their duty.

Khetan says that the government must roll up its sleeves and give priority to the concerns of the business sector. The dominance of political issues have pushed the private sector's concern to the backside, he feels.

"The government must deal with the criminals in appropriate manner. This is becoming too much," said Diwakar Golchha, vice president of Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI).

Nepal Police, on its part, has been saying that it does not receive enough cooperation from businessmen to deal with abductions and kidnappings.

Last week, the police busted what it said as a major kidnapping racket active.

#### **Killed in 2064:**

*Rajeev Shrestha, Lalitpur (Unknown group)*  
*Ajaya Chaurasiya, Birgunj (Unknown group)*  
*Surbir Shrestha, Kathmandu (Unknown group)*  
*Praveen Agrawal, Lalitpur (Unknown group)*  
*Jung Bahadur Thakur, Birgunj (Unknown group)*  
*Paras Pathak, Kapilbastu (Unknown group)*  
*Tej Narayan Mahato, Kapilbastu (Unknown group)*  
*Khadka Bahadur Shrestha, Dhanusha (Terai Tiger)*  
*Manohar Kumar Shrestha, Birgunj (JTMM)*  
*Biswa Nath, Bhaktapur (Unknown group)*  
*Sapta Raj Shakya, Kathmandu (Unknown group)*  
*Deepak Thapa, Gorkha (Unknown group)*  
*Shrawan Kumar Shah Kanu, Bara (Unknown group)*  
*Keshab Bahadur Gurung, Butwal (JTMM-G)*  
*Kiran Rauniyar, Kathmandu (Unknown group)*

#### **Bombs exploded:**

*New Anil Textiles, Bara (Unknown group)*  
*Kabadi Collection Center, Sunsari (Unknown group)*

**37 others were abducted/assaulted**

to have carried out at least 15 kidnappings including that of businessman Mahesh Murarka.

The gang used to carry out kidnappings for ransoms of hundreds of thousands of rupees. The police informed that the gang had, till date, collected Rs 26.9 million in ransom. The gang was well organized and operated trans-nationally – Tandon was based in Mumbai and they received ransom money by laundering money.

#### **What Next?**

The government had promised to float a separate Industrial Security Force (ISF) to ensure security for the industrial and business community.

But that promise has not materialized even after years. Each time the business community approaches the government requesting security, the government tries

to placate them by assuring of forming ISF soon.

Behind their backs, the authorities have cited lack of resources to float such a force. Business community is angered by the government's vacant promises.

"If they do not have resources, they can approach the business community, which is ready and willing to do its utmost to raise funds for the purpose. It is inappropriate to sideline this issue for a prolonged period," said a businessman.

At a time when the government is preparing to hold the election for Constituent Assembly (CA) on April 10, the continued insecurity haunting



**Businessmen submit memo to PM: Security reminder**

Amar Tandon and his chief accomplice Ram Kumar Pyakurel were arrested by the police team led by Superintendent of Police Devendra Subedi. The racket is believed to be behind high profile cases of kidnappings in the valley in last one year. Tandon's gang is said

the business community does not send a positive message regarding its claim of creating conducive atmosphere for polls.

Observers have said that while the government is naturally concentrated on the issue of holding election, it will be a folly to cast a blind eye to the issue of private sector. After all, after April 10, there will be April 11 and nobody wants to wake up that morning realizing that the entire industrial sector has been totally paralyzed. ■





## EXHIBITION

# Double Vision

*Four prominent artists – two Dutch and two Nepalis –display their paintings at the exhibition*

By A CORRESPONDENT

**A**lthough four artists took part in the exhibition and that, too, coming from different countries and different cultures, what they had in common was the understanding of the world and their vision on the elements and things they see.

This is what one can see in the art exhibition of two Nepalis and two Dutch artists where they have shown their talent as well as imagination about different cultures and society.

Two artists Nan Mulder and Gea Karhof, from the Netherlands and Ragini Upadhyaya and Seema Shah from Nepal have different tastes and styles of paintings. But what is common among them is their imagination about the things in the world.

In Double Vision, an exhibition, which includes paintings of four artists, they visualize different cultures. The concept behind the present exhibition was initiated in 2004 when Mulder and Karhof had visited Nepal to see Tibetan Stupas.

This joint international exhibition has

earlier been held in Opey Eye Gallery, Scotland and Kunstcentrum Haarlem. This is the concluding show of the series.

Although the artists have their own culture and surroundings, they found some common theme for their paintings. Besides the medium, the goddess Kumari is something that is common in works of the four artists.

Having a long experience of traveling to different parts of the world, two Artists both Karhof and Mulder have picked up cultures of different places. They included elements of various countries in their paintings.

Similarly, Nepal's two prominent artists Ragini and Shah too have their own ways of paintings. One of the important parts of the exhibition was that the work of all artists realistic and not abstract. All the primary colors, red, black and golden were predominant in the arts of Nepalese artist.

Organized by Siddhartha Gallery and inaugurated by Royal Netherlands honorary counsel Hands Heijdra, the exhibition will be there till March 15. ■

## UNMIN CHOPPER CRASH

The United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) has stated that seven UN staffs – including three Nepali nationals – have died in the crash of its helicopter in Ramechhap district on Monday (Mar 3). Other reports said that apart from the seven UN staffs, three crew members were also killed. Some reports have quoted police as saying there were 12 passengers on board the ill-fated chopper traveling from Dudhuli of Sindhuli district to Kathmandu when it crashed over Bethan village at around 4 pm.

“With deep sorrow, UNMIN is able to confirm the identities of the three Nepali UN personnel who died in the helicopter crash in Ramechhap district yesterday, after having notified the families of the deceased. Bhim Bahadur Gurung and Rabindra Khaniya were liaison officer and language assistant respectively with the UNMIN Arms Monitoring Office; Rajesh Maharjan was an UNMIN vehicle mechanic. Four international arms monitors died in the accident, from Gambia, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea and Sweden. The air crew, from a Russian company, comprised two Russians and one Belarussian,” states a press release issued by UNMIN on Tuesday morning.

“The United Nations has notified the respective Permanent Missions of each of the countries of deceased UN international personnel, and they are in the process of contacting the families. An UNMIN team left Kathmandu by road last night and is now at the accident site. Investigation is primarily a matter for Nepal's Civil Aviation Authority, with the participation of UNMIN and the aircraft company,” the release further states.

The UNMIN has said that it is in the process of recovering the remains of the deceased so that they can be returned to Kathmandu at the earliest opportunity, and has said it will make all necessary arrangements to ensure that the wishes of the families in this matter are facilitated.

“On behalf of the Secretary-General, I express my deepest condolences to the families of the deceased. They died while working to sustain peace in Nepal, and UNMIN will continue in the midst of this tragedy to apply its best efforts to this purpose,” said Ian Martin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Nepal. ■

# China Is Strong Supporter Of Nepal's Political Stability

- HE YAFEI

*Assistant minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China HE YAFEI came to Nepal this week on an official visit. Yafei addressed a programme organised by China Study Center. Minister He Yafei, who came from New Delhi, in his speech, highlighted importance of Nepal-China relationship. Excerpts of his statement compiled by KESHAB POUDEL*

*China will be a strong supporter of the political stability and economic development of Nepal. We will do whatever we can to support Nepalese people in your growing endeavor to make your country sovereign, independent, stable and prosperous.*

## **On Friendship**

I am excited and touched by warmth expressed by friends of China in Nepal. The moment I stepped on the soil of Nepal, I was overwhelmed by the warm and long standing friendship between our two people.

## **On Purpose of Visit**

I came here for regular consultations between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China and Nepal to discuss on our bilateral relationship. One journalist asked me few minutes ago, if I could sum up the purpose of my visit. I said expanding cooperation.

## **On Nepal's Stability**

China will be a strong supporter of the political stability and economic development of Nepal. We will do whatever we can to support Nepalese people in your growing endeavor to make your country sovereign, independent, stable and prosperous.

## **On Bilateral Relations**

If we look at our bilateral relationship and if we look at our great friendship between the people of our two countries, we have to remember the contribution of our leadership – leaders of several generations. My teacher had told me that

when he was a boy, he had seen our late premier Chou En-lai visiting Nepal. We all remember late premier Chou En-lai and others who contributed a lot and laid the foundation for this great friendship and warm and great relationship we have today. My government is fully committed for lasting friendship between our two people.

## **On Sharing Experiences**

A stronger and more prosperous China is beneficial to Nepal. It offers a great opportunity to Nepal. We continue to support and offer development assistance to Nepal. We also want to share with you our experiences in economic development. We learned lessons both good and bad. We want to share these experiences with you.

## **On China Model**

Some people in the world now talk about the China model of economic development. I don't believe in China model but I believe in sharing the experience. We learned our lessons. We built our economy to follow the prosperity that is suited to China. That is to say, we have taken an account the reality and conditions of China. You have to follow your own path because your conditions and reality is different than China. What we can do is we can share our experience with you.

## **On Political Stability**

The second thing we have to learn is stability. For the economic development of society and the country, first and foremost thing you need is stability. That is why, despite of a lot of criticism against it and a lot of unwarranted interferences against it, my government has been steadfast in saying



we want our stability first. Stability is number one prerequisite for the development without which there will be no success of any kind. So I want to comment to my friends here that Nepal also needs stability.

#### **On Peace Process**

We are happy to see the peace process is holding and going on. The first question a journalist asked me when I arrived at the Airport was about the prospect of peace process in Nepal. What I said is certainly China supports it and we are happy to see this process nearing completion.

#### **On Beijing Olympics**

We had our party congress last year. It has pointed ways to Chinese people to move ahead. Our chairman mentioned this year is particularly important for China because we are going to host the Olympics. It is the first

time China is doing so. It is also the very first time a developing and socialist country is holding the Olympics. We are facing some difficulties. There are some non-governmental organizations and some celebrities who are completely against China. That is fine - that is their view but Chinese people will move ahead to make the Olympics a success. I would also like to extend invitation to all Nepalese people to come to Beijing in August to be with us for that great occasion.

#### **On Issues of Consultation**

I discussed with my counterparts on the whole range of issues in our bilateral relations and also major international and regional issues of concern to both the countries. I believe our consultation will contribute to further expansion of cooperation between our two countries. ■

*Stability is number one prerequisite for the development without which there will be no success of any kind. So I want to comment to my friends here that Nepal also needs stability.*

# 'International Mistrust of the Maoists Could Still Derail The Polls'

*-Rabindra Nath Sharma*

The president of the Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP-Nepal), **RABINDRA NATH SHARMA** has recently resigned on health grounds. That was not the only ground for his resignation. He was unhappy with the party's decision to contest the CA election. Sharma, who is known for his wide contacts and deep political observation, spoke to **KESHAB POUDEL** at his residence in Budhanilkantha. Excerpts:

## **Why did you resign?**

I submitted my resignation because of poor health, although if the party had decided to boycott the election, I would have continued for some more months. RPP-Nepal should not have contested the election. It is going to be counter productive.

## **Did not you fear that your decision to boycott the election would have been construed as being anti-CA poll?**

First of all, I still do not believe that the election will be held in April. Thus there is no sense in deciding to go for the polls. Secondly, our decision to participate in the election has legitimized the third amendment of the constitution, which has already said that the first meeting of CA will endorse Nepal as a republic. One of the goals of our party is to restore the constitutional monarchy but this election is going to be conducted to uproot the monarchy.

## **Why are you so pessimistic about the polls?**

The recent statements given by CPN-Maoist leader Prachanda indicate that Maoists will disrupt the polls at the last minute. There is no history in the world where communists have joined the mainstream power politics through election. In case of Maoists, which is still professing the idea of capturing state power, I don't believe they will contest the election if they think that the result will go against them.

## **How do you see the actual position of India vis-a-vis the election ?**

If the election for CA is held at this point of time, no one will be able to manage it afterwards. It will trigger prolonged instability and chaos, which will ultimately have spill over effects in India. I don't think any country can support such an unpredictable move, which affects its interests.

## **You mean, they have miscalculated?**

As India shares a long border with Nepal, India's policy makers do not have that kind of luxury to make mistakes. They, too, have limitations. Nepal has been passing through a very critical phase. All forces are trapped in a mess. Even in terai, there is a possibility of internal clashes among various factions.

If Indian activities grow in terai, Chinese sensitivities will increase. China will not accept the growing Indian role in Terai.

## **To change the topic, don't you think an elected body will obey the guideline of non-elected parliament?**

I can't believe that the newly elected CA will be independent enough to defy the guidelines of the non-elected parliament. Since all political parties have fielded the same people who passed the earlier amendment, how can they disobey?

## **As we have seen manipulation in politics, don't you think there will be manipulation in CA?**

The present change is also a part of manipulation. But, I cannot say that manipulation will be possible when there will be such a huge crowd of elected members of 600.

## **Other political parties, international communities including the United States of America and even Nepal's two neighbors have been stressing for the election for CA. Can Maoists dare to defy them?**

Every party has their own interest. In politics, it does not matter what you say but it matters how you act. For instance, India has at least four layers of policies on Nepal. It is similar with China and the USA. In the event of Maoist coming to power, USA and India will change their stand. China, too, is watching carefully.

## **But, there is also a school of thought that India will accept Maoists if they obliged to fulfill the Indian security interests. Don't you think India can use Maoists to complete its dirty works?**

This logic was there in the past when the Maoist insurgency started. Now, the Indian government no longer trusts the Maoists. It is open to all that the Maoists are the product of India. But the Maoists are no longer under India's complete control. India will not put all its eggs in a single basket including the Maoist basket.

## **Why has the Indian position changed now? Is it because of Chinese penetration among the Maoists or something else?**

The expression and interest shown by Chinese in the Maoists have created some uneasiness in India. The recent statements given by Chinese scholars on trouble in terai indicate that they are keenly watching the development in terai.

## **Do the Chinese trust Maoists?**

That is very difficult to say.



**If the situation deteriorates further, what would be the reaction of India?**

India is not a sole player now, as China has also shown its presence. The United States, European Union and United Nations are also there.

**As all political parties have already decided to go for republic, do you see any possibility of retaining the monarchy in Nepal?**

As the monarchy has strong backing outside Nepal, political parties' decisions alone are not enough to declare Nepal as a republic. So, there is possibility of retaining some form of monarchy.

**What do you mean by outside support?**

I mean India. India might have made certain understanding with the king. After mediation by India, drastic political change took place in April 2006 when the king conceded his power to political parties. India and the king made certain understanding at that time about the future of monarchy.

**How do you evaluate India's position now?**

India is afraid of the performance of Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala and Maoist intention. India is now compelled to reconsider its policies. If there is anarchy, India cannot send

its troops into Nepal to restore stability. In this situation, India needs monarchy to provide stability in Nepal.

**If that is so, why Indian policymakers have given up the twin pillar theory?**

India still wants to retain the king if monarchy agreed to give maximum concession to serve the Indian interests. All have seen the consequences in Nepal without the presence of strong stabilizing force. In the new equation, a slow and gradual move to boost the monarchy has already begun.

**How will the king act, if monarchy is overthrown?**

The king does not have the power to act. If the situation becomes such that the international community have to support the King to bring stability in Nepal, then the king will act.

**The king will take over the power again to crush the Maoists?**

No. If the situation goes out of control, the army will take over to restore the law and order. At that time India and other international community can support the army with a mandate to hold the election under a civilian government. If the situation goes out of track, India and America will decide which track Nepal needs to follow. ■

# TERAI STRIFE

## Guns And Roses

*Bolstered by agreements with the unarmed Terai groups, the government gears up for a security offensive against the armed outfits*

By SUSHIL SHARMA

**T**he government is contemplating a special security offensive to crush the Terai rebels ahead of the April polls.

The move follows recent agreements with the non-armed Terai parties to end the agitation there.

In a BBC interview, home minister Krishna Prasad Sitaula said that if the armed outfits renounced violence, joined peace talks and entered the peaceful political process that is most welcome.

If not, he warned, the security agencies would come down heavily upon them.

"A special plan of operation is underway (to deal with the armed groups). It will be launched soon," thundered the soft-spoken minister.

Sitaula did not reveal the details. But he made one thing clear: there will be no-nonsense approach towards the Terai rebel groups. He said, "elections will go ahead, no matter what."

Bolstered by the recent agreements with the agitating unarmed Terai parties, the home minister appears to have set his eyes on crushing the armed rebellion there.

A number of armed groups have emerged in Terai over the past two

years. Two groups, led by Jaya Krishna Goit and Nagendra Paswan 'Jwala', are believed to be the biggest and the most influential.

They have dubbed the government's recent agreements with the unarmed Terai parties a betrayal and threatened to disrupt the April elections.

There is no independent assessment of their strength. So, it is not clear if they have the capability needed to achieve their 'disruptive' goal.

Going by the mood of the home minister, the government does not seem to have taken the armed outfits as a serious threat.

Sitaula was asked if his new-found confidence had anything to do with the recent assertion of his own boss.

The reference was to what prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala said in his hometown Biratnagar four months ago. That the Terai problem can be resolved "within a minute with the cooperation of the neighbouring India".

Sitaula brushed the issue aside. "It smacks of a motive", said the dismissive minister. "We can resolve our problems ourselves."

It was a clear assault on none other



**Sitaula :** Gun and rose

than the occupant of the Baluwatar residence of the country's executive chief. And a puzzle too!

Said a commentator, "answers to present challenges including that of Terai lie in untangling that crucial puzzle." ■

## NEIGHBOURS

# Watchful Eyes

*Security concerns hound the neighbours amidst serious questions over stability in Nepal*

By SUSHIL SHARMA

As its neighbour across Everest struggled through a critical political transition, China sent yet another official delegation this week.



He Yafei : Significant visit

Vice minister for foreign affairs He Yafei-led team was the latest to come avisting Nepal.

There has been a never-seen-before series of such visits over the

past two years of political upheaval. A clear indication of the growing interest of the Dragonland in the neighbourhood of its sensitive

“autonomous region of Tibet”.

No surprise that “stability” and “security” were the two issues He Yafei reiterated in every meeting he held in Kathmandu. In official talks, in public speeches, in informal chats – and in speaking to the press. In fluent English – without the assistance of interpreter.

The message was unmistakably clear. China is not confident of what is going on in its immediate neighbourhood. Said a China watcher, “with once-reliable partner,

monarchy’s future hanging in balance, China is in search of an alternative.”

The Maoists would have ideally fitted in the Chinese bill. But not yet. The Nepalese Maoists are yet to win the hearts and the minds of the Chinese, despite recent high level contacts Prachanda’s men had had in Kathmandu and Beijing.

Vice minister He Yafei did not choose to have separate meeting with the Nepalese Maoists except shaking hands during dinner receptions



Army Chief Katuwal: Courtesy Call

organised by the foreign ministry and the China Study Centre.

The Chinese official instead drove to the Nepali army headquarter in Bhadrakali to pay “a courtesy call” on Prachanda’s bete-noire, Rukamangad Katwal.

Richard Bouchers and Shyam Sharans had done it before. But not a senior Chinese official – at least in recent memory.

He Yafei did it. Amidst the Chinese concerns for ‘stability’ and ‘security’ in Nepal. ■

## BOOK

# Past And Present

*French scholar Sylvain Levi's book reveals many important parts related to Nepal's evolution as an independent nation*

By A CORRESPONDENT

As the great Chinese philosopher Confucius once said one should not forget one's origin, reading of history reminds the people how their society has evolved, how they were ruled and what difficulties their society faced in the process of its evolution.

Since Nepal has been passing through a very crucial phase of its struggle to survival, a book on Nepalese history originally written in French by French scholar Sylvain Levi and recently translated into Nepali reveals many things about the country's independent identity and its rulers of the past.

French scholar Levi had visited Nepal during the rule of Rana Prime minister Dev Shumsher when Nepal had just witnessed the death of another Rana ruler Bir Sumsher who had come to power by assassinating his own uncle Ranodip Singh along with his cousins and sons of Jung Bahadur, the founder of Rana regime.

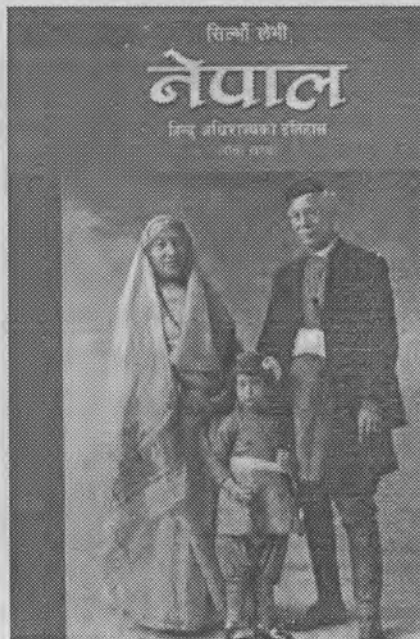
The period was also very important because the conspiracy against liberal Dev Sumsher was already in the process by his own brother Chandra Sumsher who subsequently ruled Nepal for more than 20 years as prime minister.

Although he stayed in Nepal for a very short period to complete his research, his book about history of Hindu Kingdom of Nepal highlights the political situation at that period.

There have been a number of books on Nepal's history by British authors and officials. Levi was the first non-British to describe Nepal's history. He gave a different perspective on Nepal situation. His views were also comparatively freer and independent as France did not have any

strategic or military interest in Nepal.

Thanks to the contribution by French Embassy, the publication of book in Nepali in cheaper price has been made



**Nepal: Hindu Adhirajyako  
Itihas (Part II)**

**Le Nepal: Etude Historique  
d'un Royaume Hindu**

**By: Sylvain Levi**

**Translated by: Dilli Raj  
Upreti**

**Edited by: Pramod  
Khakurel, Victor Pradhan  
and Basanta Thapa**

**Published by: Himal Book,  
Himal Association, Lalitpur  
Nepal**

**Price: Rs.275.00**

**Pages: 276**

possible recently. Translated from French into Nepali by Dilli Raj Upreti, former Nepalese ambassador to France and French language expert, one can find very original taste when reading this book.

The second part of the book was published about one and a half years following the publication of first part. The second part of the book is very interesting in the sense that it also includes the daily diary of Levi.

In his diary, Levi observes the society of Kathmandu valley, important religious and other places as well as the rulers, palace, people and natural surroundings of the valley. His trip from Indian plain to beautiful hills and descriptions of journey helps understand Nepal's isolation from the rest of the world.

The book begins with descriptions about religions and religious ceremonies, monuments and festivals. Levi minutely observes the festivals and historically important monuments of the valley. In the second chapter, the book includes history of Nepal ranging from history of Nanyadev, to Gurkha dynasty.

The last chapter includes the diary of his two months stay and his journey to Nepal.

Although he observes contradictions in socio-culture in Kathmandu valley where he finds the people more interested to show their mastery in recital than the mastery in content of subject and language, his observations are very realistic and based on facts.

Despite low level of contacts, France was a country which had long influence in Nepal's society particularly in the army. Even before the visit of Jung Bahadur to England and France, Bhimsen Thapa tried to make contact with French and even imported military uniform like that of French.

As Nepal has been going through a major crisis for its identity at present, publication of the book in Nepali written by French scholar Levi is very important and significant. Dilli Raj Upreti has also contributed immensely by translating the book into simple Nepali language. As Confucius says, learning the past is important to meet the challenges at present. ■



**“T**he lasting peace and stability can be established if democratic forces emerge victorious in the election.”

*Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, addressing unification function of Nepal Trade Union Congress-Independent.*

**“W**e will capture the state power through the Constituent Assembly election.”

*Prachanda, Maoist chairman, addressing a program in the capital.*

**“T**his agreement will not weaken Nepal but strengthen the people of Madhes.”

*Mahatha Thakur, chief of Terai Madhes Loktantrik Party (TMLP), after the signing of eight-point agreement.*

**“T**his is only an initial phase in the struggle for Madhesi people. We will have to fight it out for every word and every phrase when they write new constitution through Constituent Assembly.”

*Rajendra Mahato, chief of Nepal Sadbhavana Party (NSP), at an interaction at Reporters' Club.*

**“I** hope that the government fully implements the agreement so that Madhesi people do not have to come down to streets again.”



*Angshu*  
Annapurna Post

*Upendra Yadav, coordinator of Madhesi Janadhikar Forum (MJF), after the signing of the eight-point agreement.*

**“I** cannot speak anything beyond what is already written in party's election manifesto, which talks about democratic republic being the party's agenda for the coming election.”

*Sujata Koirala, Minister without portfolio and daughter of Prime*

*Minister Koirala, responding to her position vis-à-vis monarchy, when speaking at an interaction at the Reporters' Club.*

**“T**he Election Commission has reached its elastic limit. It can no longer extend any election schedule.”

*Bhojraj Pokharel, chief election commissioner, talking to reporters after the EC extended two more days to allow Madhesi parties to file their candidacies for April election.*

## TRANSITION

**RETURNED:** Ronald K. Noble, the Secretary General of International Police Organization (INTERPOL), after completing his two-day visit to Nepal.

**HONORED:** Eight Nepali police officers for their “professionalism demonstrated in carrying out their law enforcement duties,” by visiting secretary general of INTERPOL Ronald K. Noble. They include Inspector General of Police (IGP) Om Bikram Rana, AIGP Keshav Baral, SSP Upendra Kant Aryal, SP Devendra Subedi; DSP Sher Bahadur Basnet, sub-inspector Raju

Sharma, assistant sub-inspector Chim Bahadur Tamang and constable Lila Gurung. They received letters of appreciation for recent successful operation regarding the swift arrest of India's kidney racket kingpin Dr. Amit Kumar—on whom INTERPOL had issued red corner notice.

**APPOINTED:** Sheel Kanta Sharma, Indian diplomat, as the Secretary General of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Secretariat for the tenure of next three years. He succeeds Bhutanese diplomat Chenkyab Dorjee.

**MERGED:** Nepal Trade Union Congress with Democratic Trade Union Congress to form Nepal Trade Union Congress – Independent. Laxman Basnet is the chief of the unified trade union.

**GUTTED:** Over 1300 huts in Goldhap Refugee camp, when fire broke out in the settlement of over 10,000 Bhutanese refugees.

**WON:** Nepal won the position of first-runner up in the Plate championship of ICC Under 19 World Cup cricket held in Malaysia after losing to West Indies in the final match.



Wood carries books on yak's back: Helping rural children

## LEAVING MICROSOFT TO CHANGE THE WORLD

# Saga Of Inspiration

*One fateful journey of an American trekker leads to a momentous inspiration triggering the worldwide phenomenon called Room To Read*

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

**T**en years ago when John Wood came to Nepal on a three-week holiday from his extremely busy schedule as an executive-level officer at the world-famous Microsoft Company, little had he thought how momentous a turn his life would take in subsequent years. The very objective and the path of John Wood changed when he chanced upon a visit to a dilapidated school in a remote village in Bahundanda of Lamjung district in western Nepal. Then working as the business development director for Chinese region for the Seattle-based Microsoft Company, Wood gladly abandoned the prestige, money and power for the sake of leading a campaign to help underprivileged children around the world. It was a mere chance that one

day during his trekking, he met with Pashupathi Neupane, a local district resource person. Hearing about the lack of resources to improve school education in villages from Neupane, Wood decides to pay a visit to a local school the following day. There he finds the school in poor physical condition. An avid reader from childhood, Wood is further distressed to find no books in the school library. A few books they had were locked inside a tin box because of teachers' fear that 'kids could ruin them.' Neupane told Wood that though he was a district resource person, he did not have enough resources. "Maybe you can help," was what Neupane told him. "I did not know when he spoke those words where that would lead," Wood said, speaking at a function held at Yala Maya Kendra last

week, which was held to launch the Nepali translation of his global bestseller "Leaving Microsoft to Change the World" – a book about his rich saga of experience from Bahundanda to Seattle to cocktail fund-raising to business practices and so much. Neupane's words subsequently led Wood to quit his highly-paid job and high life and wander in search of kids' books. He called his friends and acquaintances requesting for donation of children's books. No sooner he collected thousands of them, which he brought to Bahundanda loaded on the back of a yak. That move ignited an entire campaign called Room To Read. The campaign founded by Wood helps set up libraries by donating books to the remote regions for the purpose of underprivileged kids; it also aids in computer education and provides scholarship to girl students. The campaign has now expanded beyond Nepal. "What started in Nepal has been exported to Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Sri Lanka and in five provinces of India. What started here has leapt across the oceans and reached South Africa and Zambia," said Wood. The Room To Read has founded over 5000 libraries and set up more than 400 schools apart from providing scholarships to over 4000 girls across the region. Wood's book describes one man's inspiration, which goes on to change not only his life but also the lives of thousands of underprivileged kids around the world. Translated by Nepali writer Khagendra Sangraula, the book titled "Microsoft Dekhi Bahundanda Samma" was launched by Neupane and Wood jointly. "I hope that we will similarly be able to help the underprivileged students from Rolpa, Rukum, Dolpa and other parts," said Pashupathi Neupane, gleaming with pride when speaking at the launching ceremony. As one commentator Anil Chitracar said about Wood's book, "It shows to many youngsters even from Nepal who aspire to one day work for Microsoft company that the journey to Microsoft is but half a journey. The other half is about returning back to Nepal and working for the society here." ■

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