

# SPOTLIGHT

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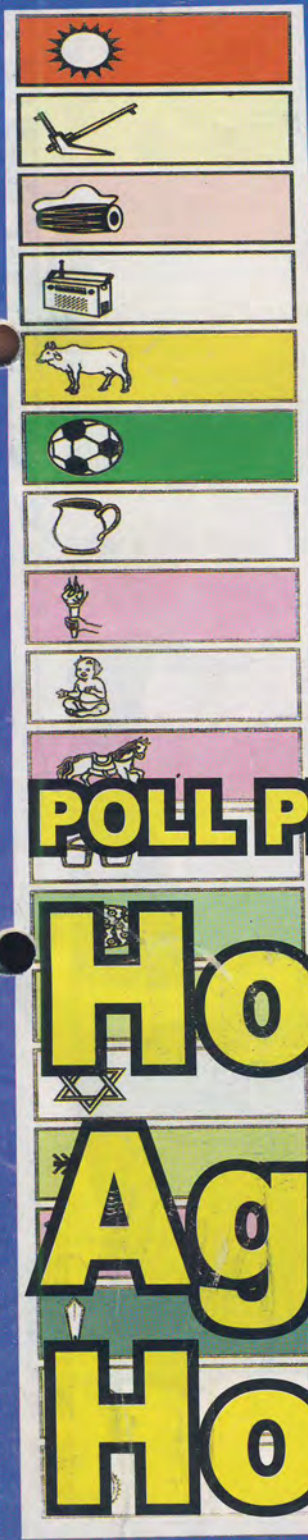
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## POLL PREPARATION

# Hope Against Hope

Unmin:  
 Pointing to  
 challenges

Rhino Count:  
 Encouraging  
 Rise

Business: In  
 Poll mode

# अब... १\* रु. १ मै बचत खाता



नेपाल इन्भेस्टमेन्ट बैंक बढी मठ्ठा बढी  
नागरिकहरुमा बैकिङ्ग सेवाको पहिलो अनुभव  
एवं बानी बस्न सकोस मठ्ठाका लागि सगौरब  
प्रस्तुत गर्दछ... **मात्र रु.१ मा**  
**“आफ्नै बचत खाता”**  
सम्पूर्ण अन्तराष्ट्रिय स्तरको सेवा सुविधा सहित ।



जीवनका पहिला पलहरू देखि नै बचतको बानी  
सुरक्षित भविष्यको लगानी ।।

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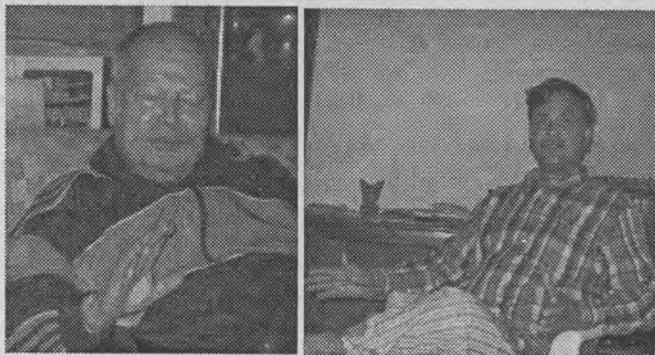
**COVER STORY: Let Consensus Prevail** As the parties reach grassroots and interact with people, they are faced with local issues rather than high-sounding ideals

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**POLL VIOLENCE: Unbridled Rise**  
On the eve of election, clashes and violence grow

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**FACE TO FACE: UML leader Ishwor Pokharel and former minister Ramesh Nath Pandey, speak on contemporary issues**

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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

**Cover Design & Layout :**  
Hari Krishna Bastakoti

**Layout**  
Jyoti Dangol (Singh)

**Photographer**  
Sandesh Manandhar

**Legal Advisor**  
Advocate Lok Bhakta Rana

**Marketing**  
Navin Kumar Maharjan  
Madan Raj Poudel

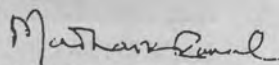
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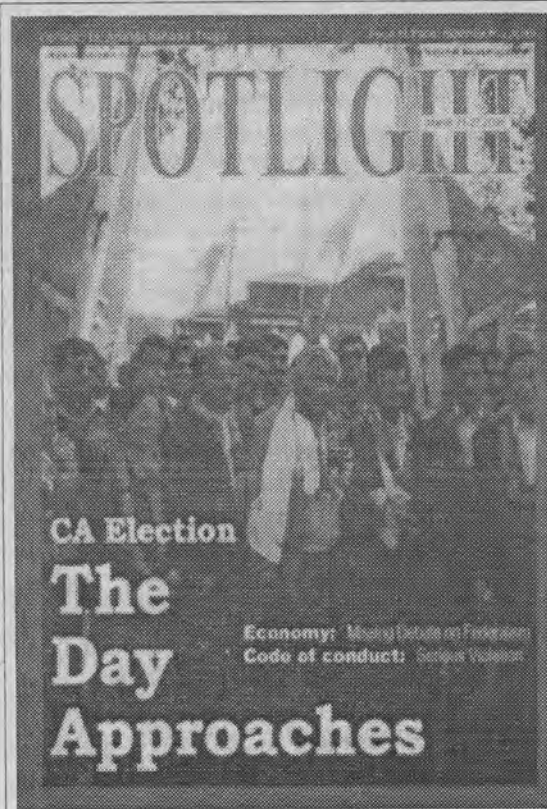
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**W**ith less than two weeks for the polls, the fears still persist that the government will, once again, fail to accomplish the most cherished objective of the Nepali people. The rumors floating around the foul and tainted atmosphere of the capital, only contribute to magnify the panic and hysteria of the masses. The keenness to exercise their fundamental right to choose the representatives is most conspicuous by its sheer absence. Except the candidates and a handful of their mercenary supporters, hardly any one seems to be affected by the election fever. This apathy has been generated by the criminal ineffectiveness of the SPAM government to provide security to the people. Moreover, the overwhelming knowledgeable Nepalis know well that the whole show of elections to the constituent assembly has been orchestrated by the alien power that commands total subservience from the politicians in power in Nepal at the moment. Consequently, whatever the overlord wants will happen. Millions of innocent Nepalis, who are absolutely ignorant about the reality, are suffering under the delusion that the Koirala government is in command in this country. It is a pity that no politician, no civil society members and no patriotic intellectuals has given any thoughts on the utter necessity of educating their people. And it is needless to emphasize that Nepal's traditional good friend and neighbor has always savored and never failed to exploit the quislingism of Nepali rulers to the hilt. Of course, it will be a great folly to blame others for our own failures. It is our misfortune that Nepal has not yet been able to produce a leader who would not hesitate to make even the most supreme sacrifice to preserve the absolute sovereignty of our small country in the last sixty years. As such, as long we cannot produce a patriotic government, we will have to bear all kinds of destabilizations and humiliations. Any way, with international observers arriving in the country, it may look that , after all, elections might take place. But, with the most ineffective government in power, the Election Commission unable to enforce its code of conduct and ultra-legal institutions taking law into their hands do not bode well for establishing peace, law and order, so very indispensable for successful elections. As much we would still prefer to keep our fingers crossed, hoping against hope that this most historic event will come to pass, even though with anti-national blessings.

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



## CA Analysis

The analysis on CA Election: The Day Approaches (March 21-27) was very interesting. There is no option other than to hold the election now. Of course, the possibility for the postponement of the election has not completely vanished yet. At a time when all major internal and external players; particularly, Nepal's neighbors and other western countries, too, have openly supported the election, it is definitely a reality now. For majority of Nepali people, they want peace and stability, which is still elusive.

*Janardan Singh  
Birgunj via-email*

liberal economic policy. There are more than four million unemployed youths and they need employment opportunities but political parties do not have any program for them. For instance, Nepal also needs hydro power projects to meet the demands of power in the country. However, country's major political parties have just tried to sell their dream by expressing commitments for high economic growth rate without giving any long term program. After the election for CA, what country requires is the economic revolution but the question remains how Nepal will achieve that revolution.

*Sushila K.C  
Thamel via- email*

## Federal Debate

Constitutional expert Bipin Adhikari has rightly pointed out that knowing federalism as a concept is one thing but devising it as a workable model for Nepal is quite another. I don't understand why Nepal's intellectuals and so called members of civil society have been pushing this agenda. For a small country like Nepal which has so many contradictions within, the federalism will definitely add many problems. I agree with Adhikari that even countries like Canada and United States, which have built on federalism as forerunners in this area have outstanding problems to be resolved. Spotlight has to generate the debate on federalism by inviting persons like Adhikari. Our political leaders must read it before committing any political mistake.

*Jagruti Parajuli  
Pokhara via-email*

## False Sense

People are in the false belief that the election for Constituent Assembly will bring stability and prosperity. This is an illusion. After reading your analysis, it made me clear that Nepal will have to go through a long phase of political instability. Nepal has already changed five constitutions. I don't think it is easier for political parties to provide stability in the country. After the election of CA, the parties will open Pandora's Box where they have to face hundreds of problems. From language to ethnicity and caste and gender, ill prepared political parties have to resolve all problems. Nepalese people may have to see worse than now.

*Jeevan Shrestha  
Dublin Via email*

## Lasting Peace

After the election for CA, the peace process will come to an end and the

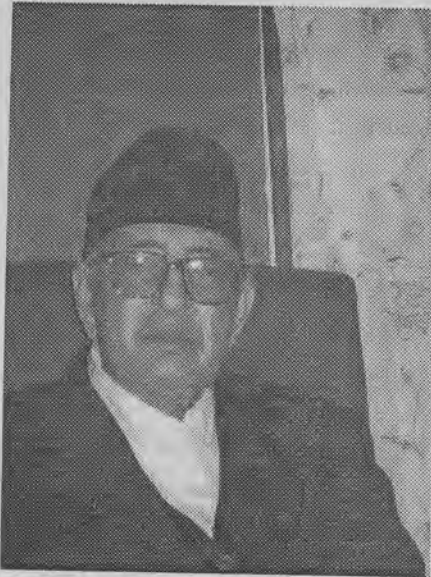
SPOTLIGHT / March 28, 2008

country will have long lasting peace. I have no doubt that the Maoists, who have pledged to make the country prosperous, will be in the power after the election and they will bring long lasting peace in the country. We have already tested all the political parties including Nepali Congress, CPN-UML and Royalists but nobody was able to bring stability in the country. It is almost certain that CPN-Maoists will win the election with commitments to bring political stability.

*Minendra B.K.  
Brussels Via-email*

## Where Is Economy?

Although the manifestoes of country's major political parties have been released, they seem to have ignored economic agenda (March 14-20). It is frustrating to know that political parties are not concerned about economic development and



## CA Is A Key To Change: PM Koirala

Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala has said that the upcoming Constituent Assembly (CA) is going to be the key to change. Talking to reporters in Baluwatar, Saturday (Mar 22), PM Koirala said that the goodwill of the international community is an asset to Nepal. He also said that the foreigners were coming to Nepal not only to observe but also to learn lessons about peace process. "If we show them by holding CA, that will be a model at an international level," he said. Indicating to inter-party clashes, he said that no one is going to be a loser in this election. Meanwhile, PM Koirala, who is also the president of Nepali Congress (NC), is scheduled to set out for election campaign from March 25. Eighty-three-year old Koirala is preparing to participate in election campaigns in major cities, despite the doctors' advice to take rest. "Prime Minister Koirala will participate in the election programs, organized at major centers of all five development regions," said Home Minister Sitaula. He said Koirala will participate in election programs in Biratnagar, Nepalgunj, Pokhara and Mahendranagar. *Compiled from reports*

## BJP Leader Advani Backs Constitutional Monarchy In Nepal

As the country is only weeks away from voting the Constituent Assembly

(CA) whose first meeting is expected to formally implement the decision to remove monarchy, a senior leader of India has backed the necessity of constitutional monarchy here. Lal Krishna Advani, senior leader of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), in his book "My Country, My Life" - released a few days ago in New Delhi - has stated that constitutional monarchy is a symbol of Nepal's sovereignty and independence. He has written that the constitutional monarchy should be preserved in Nepal like in many other countries of the world. Advani has further written that Naxalites of India and Nepali Maoists have ties. "Everyone knows this. However, the United Progressive coalition central government headed by Congress-I has ruled out this," he has said. The BJP has been traditionally favoring the constitutional monarchy and Hindu state in Nepal. *Compiled from reports*

### Dr. Bhattarai Warns Of New War

Senior leader of the CPN-Maoist Dr Baburam Bhattarai on Saturday (Mar 22) warned that his party would launch a



new kind of people's war if it lost in the constituent assembly polls scheduled for April 10. Addressing a public meeting in Constituency No 5 of Kailali district, Bhattarai said, "The new people's war will be a peaceful one, and urban-centered. No one needs to fear on any score." Claiming that the Maoists would secure a comfortable majority in the CA polls, he said reactionary forces had engineered to coop up 20,000 soldiers of the People's Liberation Army so that the Maoists would lose the polls. "Ever since Maoists raised the issue of a democratic republic, even the parties that were indulging in terrorism have turned republican," said Dr Bhattarai. He

added that the CPN-Maoist was the progenitor of the constituent assembly. "Only a parent knows what labor pangs are and what trauma she has to go through to bring the child into this world and bring it up," he said. Bhattarai also warned other political parties not to be smug in the belief that they would win this time too just because they won in the past. He added that only the party raising the issue of the constituent assembly deserved to win. Describing CPN-UML as opportunist, Bhattarai said the UML had hardly played any role in the peace process. He also said the UML had never taken a clear political stand at any time. Condemning the UML for not agreeing to an electoral alliance with the Maoists, Bhattarai said the UML was trying to forge an alliance with reactionary forces. Recalling that the NC had launched a decisive agitation 57 years ago to end the Rana hegemony, he said that now the NC would not be able to glean any dividend from that agitation. *Compiled from reports*

## Nepalis Spend Rs 350 On Average A Month On Mobile Phone

A study by the Nepal Telecom Authority (NTA) has shown that, on average, a Nepali spends Rs 350 per month on mobile phone. There are people who pay minimum of Rs 621.5 on postpaid mobiles and those who keep the Rs 500 minimum balance in prepaid mobiles and spend it in six months. The NTA has said that every three months, the average spending on mobile bills has been changing though. Six months ago, this amount had stood at Rs 396.55. Meanwhile, the average spending on CDMA and PSTN (landline) phones are relatively higher. The NTA report says people spend, on average Rs 963.51 on these phones. *Nepal Samacharpatra daily reports*

## NSP, ML Unveil Manifestoes

Nepal Sadbhawana Party (NSP) unveiled its election manifesto on Tuesday (Mar 20), proposing executive powers to the Prime Minister and giving ceremonial head-of-state status to the President. NSP chairman and former minister Rajendra Mahato unveiled the

party's election manifesto at a press conference in Kathmandu. Like its UMD ally, Madhesi Janadhikar Forum (MJF), has said in its manifesto that there will be chief ministers in various autonomous provinces, adding that the state should be restructured by dividing the country in mountain, hilly and Terai provinces and that factors like language, ethnicity and culture should be considered while granting autonomy in these provinces. The manifesto further states that the president shall be elected by the members of provincial and central parliamentary assembly and that the Prime Minister should be the top leader of the party forming a majority in the parliament. Meanwhile, CPN (Marxist Leninist) also publicized its election manifesto for Constituent Assembly election amidst press conference at the party's headquarters today, proposing Prime Minister with executive powers and ceremonial status to the President. The manifesto further says that Prime Minister will be elected through direct voting and will be able to serve a maximum of two terms while the President will be appointed by the parliament. CPN (ML) has also proposed seven states in federal Nepal, while saying that the election is meant for progressive democratic transformation. *Compiled from reports*

### No Ban On Everest Climbing, Govt Says

Refuting earlier reports, the government has said no ban on climbing the Mt Everest has been imposed as requested by the Chinese government. In a statement on Tuesday (Mar 20), Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation (MoCTCA) dismissed media reports that it had suspended the mountaineering expedition to Mt. Everest on the request of Chinese government. The Ministry said its attention had been drawn by the dissemination of false information quoting the ministry on the issue. MoCTCA further said it had not banned climbing expedition on Mt. Everest and other peaks and that the policy related to mountaineering expeditions remained same as previous. It was reported that

the government had decided to restrict mountaineering on Mt. Everest for 10 days beginning May 1. China has already announced a ban on mountaineering expeditions from its side until May 10 and had asked Nepal not to issue any permits until that day. However, the Ministry officials have said that they are facing difficulties in issuing mountaineering permits since they are unable to dispatch liaison officials without the permission of Election Commission as the election is approaching. *Compiled from reports*  
**MJF, NWPP, NJM Release Their Manifestoes**

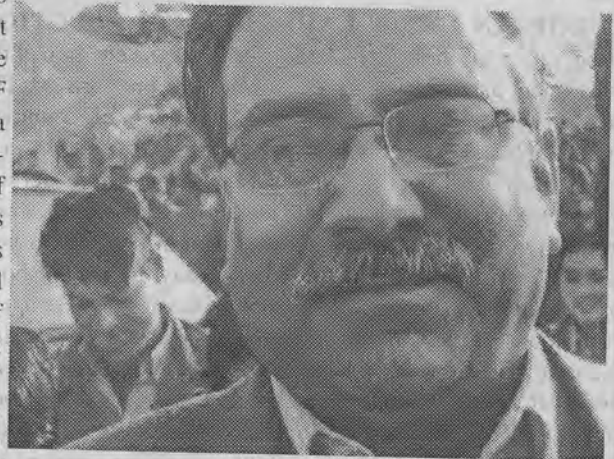
Three parties, the Madhesi Janadhikar Forum (MJF), Nepal Workers and Peasants Party (NWPP) and Naba Janabadi Morcha (NJM) released their election manifestoes on Sunday (Mar 18). All three of them have proposed directly elected president as the chief executive. The MJF has said that the party will go for federal republican system of governance with right to self-determination and is against any form of monarchy. It also says that Nepal shall be a secular country. MJF has proposed that even people from the Madhesi community shall be able to hold the portfolio of the all-powerful President, who would be able to serve a maximum of two terms. It also proposed for Chief Ministers in provinces to be elected through adult franchise. Speaking at the press conference, MJF coordinator Upendra Yadav said, "The West-Minister style of governance has completely failed. This is why we have proposed President as the chief executive to be elected through direct voting." The MJF in its election manifesto mentions two chambers of parliament at the center, one would be House of Representatives and another 'Ethnic Assembly' comprising of people from various communities in Nepal. Similarly, it states that there would be legislative assembly in the

states, pretty much like in the Indian federal system. Another important thing mentioned by the manifesto is of conducting a census in the country before the drafting of new constitution. The NWPP manifesto proposes to turn the country into a 'socialist republic' with popularly elected President as the executive head. According to the NWPP manifesto, parliamentarians cannot hold ministerial berths. It also proposes compulsory military training to the citizens. Saying that delineation of federal units on the basis of ethnicity would lead to the disintegration of the country, the NWPP proposed that the existing 14 zones be recognized as federal units. The NJM led by Ramraja Prasad Singh has proposed electing presidents from mountain, hill and Terai region turn by turn. *Compiled from reports*

### Prachanda Fears

#### Conspiracies To Defeat Him

Maoist chairman Prachanda has said that foreign elements are hatching conspiracies to defeat him from Rolpa 2 constituency. Saying that the conspirators think that defeating him from Rolpa – the place from where the Maoists launched their people's war – would end all kinds of movement, Prachanda accused that they were busy plotting his defeat. He did not elaborate who he meant by the conspirators. He



made those comments talking to 'revolutionary journalists' in Libang of Rolpa district on Sunday (Mar 18). Prachanda is contesting the April 10 election from Kathmandu 10 and Rolpa 2 constituencies. *Compiled from reports*



People playing Holi festival in Kathmandu *Kantipur*

**THE NEPALI ARMY (NA) HAS SAID** that it will have no truck with elements that believe in terrorism, extremism and radicalism and that wants to seize state power based on such beliefs. The NA has said, Thursday (Mar 20), it will neither bow down nor compromise with such elements. "The NA will not bow down or compromise with elements that play with Nepal's sovereignty and territorial integrity, that raises arms against democratic system and wants to direct the political system through arms; which in this global context believes in terrorism, extremism and radicalism and wants to seize state power based on such beliefs," states the NA press release. The statement has come in the wake of media reports that Maoist chairman Prachanda recently had a meeting with NA chief General Rookmangud Katawal. The reports had quoted Maoist leader Agni Sapkota as saying that the two had met recently. In its statement, the NA has urged the people not to believe in such media reports that are aimed at dragging the NA leadership to political disputes.

#### **EUROPEAN UNION LAUNCHED ITS ELECTION**

Observation Mission (EU EOM) to observe the election of the constituent assembly, scheduled to be held on April 10. The mission will have 120 observers from 22 different EU countries, including Norway and Switzerland. The mission is made up of a core team of 10 election experts. Forty long-term observers will arrive on March 22 and will be deployed in teams of two around the country to assess the campaign period and pre-election preparation. Before the election day, around 70 short-term observers, including a delegation of members of European Parliament, will join the mission to observe voting and counting. The mission will remain in the country for several weeks after the election to assess the final stage of the electoral process. EU has the largest number of observers among the international observing organizations, which has accepted the government's invitation to observe the constituency assembly polls. Talking to media persons today, Jan Mulder, the head of the EU EOM, a member of the European Parliament, said that the mission would observe not only the process and happenings but "all possible spheres related with the election and the electoral process". He added that team would not be

limited to the capital and other urban areas, but would go as far as possible and cover all the incidents and proceedings there. After the election day, the mission will issue a preliminary statement of its initial findings within a day or two. And a more comprehensive, final report, including recommendations for future elections, will be published within two months of the end of the electoral process, which will be given to all government institutions of EU countries as well as government of Nepal.

#### **ABOUT 25,000 YOUTHS ASPIRING TO GO TO SOUTH KOREA**

for work have filled up exam forms at the makeshift office set up by the labor ministry at Dasharath Stadium amidst heavy police presence. Laxmi Sharan Ghimire, director at the Department of Labor and Employment Promotion for Employment Permission System (EPS), said that they would be attending the exam for Korean language proficiency to be held after two weeks. The Tribhuvan University is collecting the exam forms. Youths who traveled to Kathmandu to fill up the form complained that it would be better for them if the government had made arrangements to submit forms in their own districts. Ghimire assured that there would be no cheating in results as the Koreans would be checking the answer papers. He also assured that the selection process of people aspiring to go Korea would be corruption free. Only the people securing pass mark in this exam will be eligible candidate to for Korea.

**EVEN AS REPORTS HAVE BEEN COMING** that the Chinese authorities have requested Nepal to prevent mountaineers from scaling the Mt Everest between May 1 and 10, tourism entrepreneurs have reached understanding not to send them during the period. According to Kantipur daily, the government authorities are expected to endorse the entrepreneurs' understanding. China has already announced not to allow scaling of Everest from its side during the period when it is preparing to take the Olympic torch atop the highest peak in the world. It had requested Nepali side also to follow the suit to avoid anti-China activities during that period. In an interaction held by Nepal Tourism Board (NTB), Sunday, Nepal Mountaineering Association (NMA), Trekking Agents Association of Nepal (TAAN), Nepal Association of Tour and Travel Agents (NATTA), Sagarmatha Mountaineers Association have reached such understanding, the daily adds. "We told we can help by not sending mountaineers during that period. We are also committed to avoid anti-China activities during mountaineering and to share information with the government," a participant at the meeting said. This spring season 17 expedition teams have applied for Everest ascent. Recently, international news agencies reported that the Nepal government had prohibited the Everest ascent from May 1-10. However, government officials have said that they have not yet made such decision. The entrepreneurs have said that they cannot conduct business by irritating Chinese authorities. ■



# ALL EYES ARE ON THE SUPREME COURT: *The Fate of the West Seti Project*

• Dr. AB Thapa



**I**t is a great consolation that in South Asian countries judiciary has started to play increasingly important role in protecting the interest of society, whereas the politicians prone to be easily influenced are not seldom seen to be compromising themselves. Thus, now all eyes are on our Supreme Court. All of us, who are familiar with the problems of our water resources in general and the West Seti in particular, are hoping that the Supreme Court will consider all facts before giving its ruling on West Seti project.

It is quite unfortunate that the Water Resources Ministry is run these days by those who are not adequately experienced in the field of water resources, particularly in handling mega projects. The following one case suffices to indicate it.

## **How Prime Minister's Position Made a Mockery**

Two prime-ministers, one of them the present Prime Minister of Nepal Mr. G. P. Koirala, had signed an agreement to conduct detailed feasibility study of the Kosi dam project which is expected to be one of the largest multipurpose water resources projects in the whole world. The project is considered indispensable to save the life and property of millions in Nepal, India and also Bangladesh. It is also proposed to provide as a component of this giant project a navigation canal linking Nepal with the Ganges waterway. Such canal will help to connect our country with the seaport. The project is expected to provide enormously large irrigation and power benefits also.

Unfortunately our Ministry of Water Resources does not seem to realize the extent of the damage to entire nation if the Kosi dam project is not handled with great care. At present one wing of the Ministry of Water Resources and Indian experts have started to conduct jointly the detailed study of the Kosi project. At this very time to the great horror of everybody another wing of the same Water Resources Ministry without the slightest hesitation is busy to devastate the proposed Kosi dam project. Just few months back it allowed a private developer to conduct detailed feasibility study to implement the Lower Arun Project. It is a perfectly known fact that the Kosi Dam Project and the Lower Arun Project are mutually exclusive.

All are hoping that the Supreme Court will recognize the fact that our country's vital national interest should not be made a casualty of inexperience.

## **West Seti Project Will Uproot Thousands in Banke**

The Laxmanpur barrage, few other barrages including the Girjapur barrage across the Karnali river, and the Saryu Canal are the direct extension of the West Seti High Dam

Project proposed to be built in Nepal. The year-round operation of the Saryu Canal (drawing regulated flow of the West Seti through the Girjapur barrage) earmarked to irrigate a vast area of agricultural lands of the north-east UP would be totally dependant on implementation of the West Seti High Dam Project.

The Saryu Canal has been built too close to our country's border with India. As a result, people of our Western Terai particularly those living in the Banke district have already started to suffer from submergence. Now, instead of relieving the suffering of the people of the Western Terai by holding dialogue with Indian Government at the highest level to make necessary modifications of the Saryu Canal to avert submergence of Nepalese territory, we are going to greatly worsen the plight of our people by supplying all year round the West Seti regulated flow into the Saryu Canal that would cause widespread submergence and uprooting of people in Banke district in far greater number.

The Supreme Court must ask the Water Resources Ministry to furnish proof that the West Seti dam related structures will not submerge Nepalese territory.

## **Downstream Benefit Sharing with India**

Some times back important news have appeared in the news media that very much concern water resources of our country. It is reported (INDIA TODAY dated January 20, 2003) that the Government of India has appointed in December, 2002 a three-member task force headed by the former power minister Suresh Prabhu. The task force, which has to submit its report by June 2003, is expected to address the issue to obtain the consent of Nepal (also Bhutan and Bangladesh) perhaps through a revenue sharing pact to divert water of the major rivers for irrigation across the India. Needless to say that the storage dams proposed to be built in Nepal in future would have to play the decisive role for this type of grandiose project to succeed. Now India appears to be taking the initiative to find a way to share benefits accruable from the water delivered from Nepal for distribution across India. However, we have not done enough homework to resolve this issue.

The above reporting provides our country a good ground to take further initiative to start negotiation to develop a policy to give the regulated water supplied to India from the storage reservoirs proposed to be built

in Nepal the same type of treatment as the United States is now giving to the regulated water of the Columbia river supplied by Canada. The Columbia river treaty has granted the Canada the right to recover 50% benefits accruing from the use of the Columbia river water in the United States virtually in perpetuity.

It would be the severest loss to the nation if the private developer is allowed to take up the implementation of the West Seti project ignoring the irrigation and other downstream benefits. The share of downstream net irrigation benefit accruable to Nepal could even exceed the net power benefit Nepal could hope to get. It has been explained about it in the WECS bulletin dated May, 1995 (Volume 6, Number 1&2).

**Feasibility Studies**

The West Seti high dam project is among the very few schemes in Nepal which have been extensively studied. It has two

major components. They are the irrigation and power. A study at feasibility level on power was carried out by SOGREAH of France, whereas the Karnali Multipurpose

Project study fully covers the irrigation component of this project. Feasibility level study of the Karnali Multipurpose Project had been done thrice in the past. One of the main objectives of the latest feasibility study was to involve India in the studies to determine the magnitude of the irrigation benefits accruable to that country from the regulated flow of the Karnali River and obviously it also denotes the regulated flow of the West Seti River which is a tributary of the Karnali River.

**The West Seti High Dam Project**

It has been proposed to build a 187 meters high dam across the West Seti river in the feasibility study carried out by the SOGREAH. The total storage capacity of the reservoir will be 1,600 million cubic meters. The power station will be underground type. The power station will produce 2202 GWh firm energy annually. The total annual energy production will be 2,402 GWh. After the regulation of the West Seti run-off the present dry season flow at the dam site of about 45 cubic meters per second will be increased to about 135 cubic meters per second. Thus the net augmentation of the dry season flow could be about 90 cubic meters per second which is about 40% dry season flow of the Karnali river.

**Downstream Irrigation Benefit**

There will be significantly large downstream irrigation benefit accruable to India after the completion

of the West Seti Storage Dam Project. Such benefit has been quite thoroughly evaluated in the Karnali Multipurpose Project study. Agricultural production over a vast area adjoining the Karnali river in the Indian territory is at present greatly constrained by the scarcity of water needed for irrigation particularly in dry seasons. The regulated West Seti flow could be used for increasing the cropping intensities of the Sarda Sahayak irrigation system or the Saryu irrigation system already provided in the Utter Pradesh province of India. It is not necessary to build a new barrage for the diversion. The West Seti regulated flow could be diverted for irrigation from the existing Girjapur barrage into the Sarda Sahayak canal or the Saryu canal. Additional canal network also would not be needed for the delivery of water. The existing capacity of the canal system would be adequate.

*One of the main objectives of the latest feasibility study was to involve India in the studies to determine the magnitude of the irrigation benefits accruable to that country from the regulated flow of the Karnali River and obviously it also denotes the regulated flow of the West Seti River which is a tributary of the Karnali River.*

According to the study carried out by the SOGREAH, if the year 2003 is taken as the reference year and the 1989 price level is adopted at a discount rate of 10%, the total discounted power benefit of the West Seti project would be 912 million

US Dollars against a discounted cost of the project estimated at 456 million US Dollars. Thus the total net discounted power benefit of the project could be 456 million US Dollars. Based on the feasibility study of the Karnali High Dam project the total net discounted irrigation benefit of the West Seti project at 1989 price level for the reference year 2003 could be as high as 720 million US Dollars. It implies that the net irrigation benefit of the West Seti project could be much greater than the net power benefit. Now a very big question arises. Should we ignore the West Seti downstream benefit? Will we be morally correct to do so? Will it not be a treason apart from being in breach of our constitution? These are the legal questions that should be answered.

**In Conclusion**

A through study should be carried out based on confirmed data to determine exactly the impact of the Saryu canal on Nepalese territory. It would also be necessary to determine how far to the south the Saryu canal must be shifted once it is established that the proximity of the canal alignment to the border is the cause of the present flooding in Nepal.

Nepal should not commit a blunder by continuing to go ahead with the decision to implement the West Seti project before resolving the downstream benefit sharing and submergence problems. ■

## CA POLLS

# The Puzzle

*The fate of the elections will perhaps be known only at the last minute*

By A CORRESPONDENT

**W**ith only two weeks left for the vote, the clouds over the much-talked about constituent assembly elections appeared to have cleared.

The seven-party agreement last Monday on stopping attacks on each other was an important initiative to ensure that the polls were not disrupted.

But such attacks have not ended. Especially the Maoist youth brigade, the YCL, continue to hit the headline with its disruptive adventures across the country.

The sudden outburst of Maoist anger over the 'mysterious' import of weapons for the armed police has not helped the matter, either.



Employees at election commission: Still uncertain

There are speculations that the Maoists are looking for an excuse to avoid elections. The reason, it is said, is the fear of a drubbing in the polls.

Even liberal estimates give the

Maoist not more than 15 per cent of the total votes, say some.

Maoists deny this. They claim to win. Who else than us, they challenge.

But their desperation for an alliance with the UML and the threat to stage a revolt if defeated at the hustings contradict their tall claims.

Observers suspect a Maoist plan to capture booths and intimidate voters for a better elections showing.

Such suspicion has caused alarm bells not only at home but across the border as well.

The communist-wary international community wants to bring the Maoists to their size through the vote.

To them, skipping the vote would be a better alternative than to let the Maoists storm into power by hook or by crook.

With only two weeks left for the vote, time is running out for both national actors as well as international observers.

A third deferral of the elections does not look likely at this point of time.

But nobody is ruling it out even now. This is quite puzzling.

The answer to this puzzle will have to be found not in Kathmandu, but in capitals where the fate of 'the sovereign' people of Nepal is decided.

## NC

## Dissidents Speak

*Twenty NC dissidents urge party leadership to follow middle path*

By A CORRESPONDENT

**A**t a time when almost all Nepali Congress leaders have bowed down to the party's leadership decision to give up its ideology, some two dozen senior Congress leaders under the leadership of former speaker Taranath Ranabhat have shown guts to challenge the party's decision.

Although their statements are not going to make any difference in the on going party politics, they have shown the guts to speak against their party leadership. This will place them in different position in the history of Nepali Congress.

In their statement, the NC dissident leaders appealed to all political parties and public and the would be members of the constituent assembly to take initiatives to save the country from political extremism and protect national sovereignty, integrity,



freedom and unity. A press appeal, signed by 20 leaders including Taranath Ranabhat, Bipin Koirala, Shiba Bahadur Khadka, Marshal Julum Shakya, Omkar Shrestha, Dinbandhu Aryal and Harnedra Bahadur Shrestha, Akbar Bahadur Singh, Sudristi Lal Das, Dirgahraj Kafle, Indira Koirala, Hari Lal Joshi, Keshab Prasad Bhattarai, Krishna Kumar Joshi, Narayan Prasad Koirala, Anar Singh Karki, Shila Panta, Bishnu Bahadur Shahi. Laxmi Prasad Koirala and Indra Prasad Panta asked the people to save the nation from being divided into many federal states.

The decision to divide the country into

many states would spoil national unity and invite new form being divided into many federal states the statement said. A handful of leaders from a few political parties are imposing their decision on the people without gathering people's mandate on crucial national issues like constitutional monarchy, republic, unitary state, federal state, Hindu state or secular, the statement said.

The leaders have urged the public to support the late leader B.P Koirala's middle path ideology and NC leader Krishna Prasad Bhattarai's stance on the middle path. They however, not elaborated their future path.

This statement came when some sources close to Prime Minister declared that the country will be heading towards federal republic after the CA polls. Sources said high officials of Nepal's southern neighbors backed Prime minister Koirala to go for poll and make the constitution as promised by his party's manifesto.

"The elections will held and the country will have new political order after the elections," said Koirala in his resident addressing the journalist. "What Congress said is final," said Koirala indicating his party's change tune. ■



CEC Pokharel with EC officials: Concerned with violence *Kantipur*

## POLL VIOLENCE

# Unbridled Rise

*From CEC to UNMIN, everyone is concerned with the unbridled rise of poll-related violence*

By SANJAYADHAKAL

**H**ours after the top leaders of the seven parties including Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala and Maoist chairman Prachanda had a serious discussion, on Monday (March 24), to try and end the inter-party clashes in the run up to the election, there were two brazen attacks by the Maoist cadres.

A day after Prachanda had criticized what he called 'big media' for reporting one-sided criticism against Maoists for inter-party clashes, the cadres of Young

Communist League (YCL) attacked and disrupted the election rally held by a pro-monarchy party Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP-Nepal).

They also vandalized the vehicle carrying senior Unified Marxist Leninist (UML) leader KP Oli in Jhapa on the same day.

Prachanda's assertions notwithstanding, the clashes have continued, particularly at the hands of his party cadres.

Earlier, Chief Election

Commissioner (CEC) Bhojraj Pokharel has expressed sadness over the growing cases of poll-related violence across the country. Addressing a press meet held at the newly established Media Center in Kantipath, Pokharel said, "The EC urges all the parties and the candidates to peacefully hold their programs and campaigning and refrain from any kind of violence and fully abide by the election code of conduct."

"Thousands of national and international observers are keeping a close watch on the whole of our election process. If EC's requests for abiding by the code of conduct is not followed, the EC can take stringent actions including imposing fine, canceling candidacy or annulling the voting in booths from where any forceful actions are reported," said Pokharel.

In the matter of last one week, three Maoist cadres have been killed by unknown gangs – two in Rolpa and one in Kapilvastu district.

On the other hand, Nepali Congress leaders and workers were physically assaulted by Maoist workers in Okhaldhunga and Rolpa district. ■

**FNCCI**

# In Poll Mode

*As the nation heads towards Constituent Assembly (CA) election, business community are electing their leadership*

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

In most likelihood, one of the two contenders for the position of president of the Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI), Chandi Dhakal and Kush Kumar Joshi, will have been elected to lead the business community when this article appears in print.

At the time of writing this report on March 25, the business community was gearing for the election of their new leadership. The election for the leadership of the FNCCI is going to take place on Wednesday (March 26).

Hounded by insecurity and thoroughly demoralized by the lack of business environment, the private sector



**Dhakal and Joshi: Leadership Battle**

entrepreneurs had been making repeated appeals to the government to bring the situation to order.

As such, even as the country prepares to chart the new course through the election of Constituent Assembly

(CA), the business community prepared to elect their new leadership to guide the sector through the coming tumultuous days.

Dhakal, the sitting president, is seeking fresh term while Joshi, current second vice president, wants to give new leadership.

"I want to give leadership to the business community in this challenging times," said Dhakal.

Joshi, on the other hand, said, "There should be performance-based test of leadership. The current leadership has already been tested and found wanting."

Both Dhakal and Joshi, however, have said that the primary agenda for the business sector, at present, is ensuring security and proper business environment. Another common point they have is to catapult the economic agenda to the center-stage of national debate.

Over 500 voters including those from district chambers, binational chambers, product associations and associate members will elect the new leadership in the 42<sup>nd</sup> annual general assembly of the federation. ■

## GURKHAS AGITATION

# Taking A New Turn

*Gurkha veterans return medals to protest alleged discrimination against them*

By A CORRESPONDENT

British Gurkha veterans have returned some 50 medals awarded to them by the British government in recognition of their long service to the 'Crown and the country' in protest of alleged discrimination against them.

Over 1,000 former Gurkha soldiers and their families joined them at the Parliament Square in front of the historic British parliament at Westminster, London, on Wednesday (March 19). When asked what was their main demands, president of Gurkha Army Ex-Servicemen's Organization (GAESO), Padam Bahadur Gurung, said they didn't have any demands and that they were

fighting for equal rights.

Former British Gurkhas have been waging legal and political battle against the British government calling for right to live and work in the UK, equal pension and other benefits vis a vis their British counterparts.

Former Gurkha soldiers receive a monthly pension of about £131- compared to about £1,000 for their British counterparts. The Gurkhas are also calling for revision of the British govt's decision to award automatic right to Gurkha soldiers who retired after 1997.

"This arbitrary cut-off date is not acceptable to us," said Damber Ghale, MBE, chief coordinator of the Gurkha

United Forum-one of the organizers of Wednesday's demonstrations. Former Gurkhas, including Ghale, handed their medals over to Nick Clegg, the Liberal Democrat leader, who called their plight a "national disgrace". Third largest party in the British parliament, Liberal Democratic Party has been launching a campaign to press the British government to fulfill genuine demands of the British Gurkhas.

During Commons question time, Mr Clegg asked Gordon Brown why Gurkhas who served in the Army after 1997 were "worthy" of British citizenship, but those who served before were not. Holding up one of the medals, Mr Clegg pressed the Prime Minister: "Do you know what it means for a loyal British soldier to give up a medal that he won for his long years' of service to this country?" Prime Minister Brown said the 1997 date was chosen because that was when the Gurkhas' main base moved to Britain. Their former headquarters in Hong Kong was handed over to Chinese rule that year. ■

## CONSTITUTION ASSEMBLY

# Emerging Consensus

With the election for CA less than two weeks away, voters and political parties are narrowing down their differences on the election agenda. The efforts of political parties to turn the present election as the one to write the constitution have failed. Political parties and voters are working hard to have consensus to bring peace, prosperity and development through the CA election. However, other much talked jargons of constitution making is least debated issue in the campaigns

By KESHAB POUDEL

Out of one hundred voters interviewed in the various constituencies in the valley and out of half a dozen of candidates of major political parties, majority of them said that their real concern after the election will be to bring about peace, economic prosperity and development.

All the top leaders of seven party alliance are stressing the need to hold the election for CA to bring peace, prosperity and economic development. Although

one of the main aims of the election is for constitution making, the issues raised by voters and political leaders are not just about constitution making.

"After this election, the country will turn a page for peace, prosperity and economic development. Even after election, seven parties need to work together for another one decade to push the country into the path of prosperity," said prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala at his residence on March 21,

addressing a group of journalist. "We all have similar agenda, to write a constitution for the betterment of people. I need the help of media."

After traveling to various constituencies of Kathmandu valley and Kavre district and meeting with the voters, this reporter saw different moods. For majority of voters, the CA election meant as a gateway to economic prosperity, peace and development.

"I hope these elections will bring



Party workers: Gearing up for campaign

long lasting peace in the country. It will help my sons to get the employment opportunity and quality education," said Jeevan Kharel, 55, a resident of Panchkhal of Kavre district. "My priority is for development not for the forms of constitution."

The public opinion reflects that the real issue is not about constitution making. Forms and contents of constitutions are least debated issue in the election campaigns.

"I have to assure people that my next tenure will be dedicated in bringing peace, development and prosperity to the people. I have to say I will reduce load shedding, supply drinking water, expand roads and improve the quality of health facilities," said Ishwor Pokharel, senior leader of CPN-UML and candidate of CPN-UML for the constituency no 4 of Kathmandu district. "Of course, the election is for writing the constitution, but the local issues are also important."

"First and foremost, people want peace, development and economic prosperity. Only after that other things come into the expectations of the people," said a political analyst.

Surrounded by the world's two fastest growing economies, India and China, Nepal has enough opportunity to tap economic prosperity and high growth in case of peace and stability. However,

the country is heading towards unending disputes of constitution making. Despite the common people's wish to see peace and economic prosperity, political and constitutional debates are inevitable to bring more chaos.

"Constitution is of least concern to voters as they have experienced of several elections in the last five decades under six different constitutions," said the analyst.

Politicians who had been engaged in high sounding ideas of making constitution through the involvement of people have kept this issue aside while going in a door to door campaign for soliciting votes from their voters.

"I am not concerned about the forms of constitution. My concern is when will we get enough water to drink? Will they guarantee employment opportunities and quality education?" said Sunil K.C, a resident of Kirtipur constituency no 10 where Maoist leader Prachanda is also contesting from.

"If you vote us, we will bring new Nepal to you where you will get everything," said Prachanda at a public meeting in Kirtipur. "Other parties have already failed to fulfill the demands of people."

Candidates have one point attention to get elected and reap benefits of power. Common people have their own

priorities which they want to achieve with the help of anybody who is going to exercise that power.

"Forms of government and the contents of the constitution are not in priority in the debate anywhere. Common people seem to be much wiser in the question of forms and contents of the constitution. They seem to know it better that what is best governed is the best. No candidate and no party are hoping to get the support of the people merely on the theoretical debate of the nature and forms of constitution," said the analyst.

"Looking at the present morale of the people and response of the politicians, one is amazed why so many lives were lost and properties and public utilities destroyed in the past in the name of quest for perfect democracy. But the tragedy with the nation is that the present interim constitution has put the nation at stake by making everything interim and thus unstable," analyst argued.

It is going to be tough for politicians to bring the peace, stability and prosperity as expected by the people.

The recent article written by writer Larry Diamond, co-editor of *The Journal of Democracy in Foreign Affairs* (March-April 2006) reflects Nepal's situation.

Diamond writes, "elsewhere in the developing and post communist worlds, democracy has been a superficial phenomenon, blighted by multiple forms of bad governance abusive police and security forces, domineering local oligarchies, incompetent and indifferent state bureaucracies, corrupt and inaccessible judiciaries, and venial ruling elites who are contemptuous of the rule of law and accountable to no one but themselves. Many people in these countries – especially the poor – are thus citizens only in name and have few meaningful channels of political participation. There are elections but they are contests between corrupt, clientelistic parties. There are parliaments and local governments, but they don't represent broad constituencies. There are constitutions, but not constitutionalism."

Winners of the elections may have their priority to bring peace and stability in the country so that they would stabilize themselves in power but the rest of the politicians who are out of the power may

have different priority as has been the case in the past.

"Even in a less complicated constitution in the past, politicians in the opposition bench had not been tolerant to the majority. Now in the present context all kinds of impractical ideas about the constitution making are there to be taken up. Winners may have their own interests and losers have their own in the priority. People are always aroused by populist slogans to explore possibility of taking up the normal constitutional process," said the analyst.

Before the election and after the election, there may be changed pastures of politicians. When the elections were announced, all the politicians were away from the people at grass roots and addressing the city centered urban elites with high sounding political ideals. Now in the election campaigns, they are facing the people at the grass root and have become wiser to address the needs of the people.

While presenting their political manifestoes for election purpose, they seem to be much closer to basic issues of the country. "Our vision has made the clear cut target for the development for the country. We have clear agenda on economy, land reform and other major fundamentals," said Pokharel.

"Nepali congress is the only party which has clear vision on economy and political structures. People will vote for me looking at our agenda," said Narahari Acharya, candidate of Nepali Congress from Constituency no 4 of Kathmandu.

Although all political parties except Rastriya Prajatantra Party Nepal led by Kamal Thapa, have amended their party



**UML leaders:** Grippled by election fever

constitution to veer towards republic, some have still given room for monarchy. As a highly expected successor to the premiership Sher Bahadur Deuba in his recent interview to Nepal Weekly said the first session not first meeting of CA will decide on monarchy. This statement of former prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuba carries a lot of meaning.

Other emerging Congress leaders like Sujata Koirala have already made their personal opinion public regarding the institution of monarchy. As an oldest and largest party, there is much

possibility that Nepali Congress will emerge in the lead position and a centrist view may come forward while making the constitution and exercising it.

"It may not be too optimistic to hope that sensible and workable constitution may come out which will be in the larger interest of not only the people inside, but to the large context, in the neighborhood," said the analyst.

Even Prachanda said recently that he will accept the verdict of the people. It is real strength of the sovereign people with ballots in their hand that they can make even armed insurgents into participants of a peaceful, democratic, competitor in the election.

"Had the election not been postponed indefinitely in October 2002, perhaps all these vices of Pandora's Box would not have come out despite the role of destabilizing unseen forces. After interaction between people and political leaders, the situation has changed. Till they were running to power centers, they were raising completely irrelevant issues. Now, when they are face to face with people who have ballot in their hands, the same politicians have now come to understand the ground reality and are trying to win over the hearts and minds of the people," said the analyst. ■



**Minister Sujata Koirala:** Campaign goes on despite hurdles





Cambridge A Level students: Smiles of Success

## University of Cambridge Brilliance in Nepal 2007

*University of Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) presented awards to thirty-one Nepalese high-achieving students*

By A CORRESPONDENT

**F**rom world toppers to other high achieving students different schools, University of Cambridge International Examinations presented awards recognizing students for their highest performance in A-Level examination of last year.

Jointly organized by the Cambridge Educators' Association in Nepal and the British Council Nepal, four students scored highest marks in the world. Pratham Joshi of Katmandu Mulpi Institute scored highest mark in the Computing in November AS level exam.

Similarly, Srishti Adhikary and Aayush Khadka of Rato Bangla School secured highest mark in Psychology (November) A level and Language and Literature in English June AS level respectively.

Julia Mary Hayes of Kathmandu International Study Center secured highest mark in English Language (June) in AS level.

Similarly, Prashanta Kharel of Budhanilkantha School and Aayush Khadka of Rato Bangla School were top



Adhikari: World topper

in Nepal across any 3 A level and 1 AS Level respectively in June and November.

Likewise, Kiran Shrestha of Kathmandu Xavier International College was the topper in Nepal AS level November. Gajendra Rijal of Rato Bangla School in AS level Chemistry and Physics A level in November.

Himanshu Golchha British Council

topped in Economics of AS level November. Shrishti Adhikari Rato Bangla topped in General paper international AS level. Shobha Limbu of Chelsea International School in General Paper International in November. The British School's Rosie Hogg topped Psychology in AS level June.

Shree Krishna Regmi of Kathmandu Malpi Institute topped accounting in June A level, Shalini Rana of The British School A level June in Art and Design, Sameer Aryal of Budhanilkantha School topped in Biology in A level, and Abhishek Chettri of Rato Bangla topped in biology A level in November.

Similarly, Suman Poudel of Kathmandu Malpi Institute topped in Business Studies and Economics of A level June. Prajesh Adhikary of Rato Bangla topped in Chemistry in A level in November.

Likewise, Nirakar Poudel of Kathmandu Malpi Institute topped in Computing A level June. Sugat Bhattarai of Rato Bangla school topped in economics in A level November. Aalok Raj Pandey of Rato Bangla topped in

Mathematics in November. Sajala Pandey of Budhanilkantha topped in sociology A level June. Milap Dixit of Rato Bangla topped in sociology of A level in November.

Secretary of Ministry of Sports and Education Shanker Prasad Pandey, John

Fry, country manager of British Council and Suzy Chaudhary of CIE Nepal Representative distributed the prize. Sudhir Kumar Jha, president of CEAN and principle of Chelsea International School gave votes of thanks. There are altogether 21 institutions in Nepal running A-Level classes. Currently more than 160 countries run A-Level classes. ■

# “I Am Confident Of Election”

-Ishwor Pokharel

**ISHWOR POKHAREL**, CPN-UML central committee member and standing committee member, is contesting the election for the Constituent

Assembly from constituency no 5 Kathmandu. Pokharel, 54, is known as a powerful member with more than three decades in CPN-UML's central committee. On the eve of the election, Pokharel spoke to **KESHAB POUDEL** at his residence in Maharajgunj. Excerpts:

**As there are still doubts over whether the election will be held or not? How do you see the situation as a candidate of CPN-UML?**

I don't have any doubt about the election. I am confident that the election will be held on schedule April 10. There is no basis to rumors that the election will be postponed.

**At a time when the violence is escalating and Maoists still are reportedly threatening the candidates, what is the basis for your confidence?**

We don't have any other alternative other than to go for election. If we cannot hold the election, we will lose the legitimacy to rule the country. In case of failing to hold the election, the situation is going to be worse in the country.

**In the last two years, the elections were postponed three times and no one question raised the legitimacy of the government. How do you say that this time the election is related to the legitimacy?**

It was different in the past as there were so many hurdles. Nobody raised the question of legitimacy but now the situation is different as all international observers are in Nepal and international community have expressed their commitments. Thus, I am confident that the election will be held.

**How do you see the Maoists who have been reportedly creating the problems that may result in the postponement of election?**

I don't think Maoists have any option other than to support and take part in the election. Only through the election, Maoists, too, can achieve their objective to have democratic republic. Maoists also need international legitimacy.

**How do you see the law and order situation?**

It is deteriorating and there is virtually no government in the country. The home ministry is just a spectator of all the incidents.

**Maoist leaders have been accusing CPN-UML leaders for snubbing their proposal to have left unity. How do you look at it?**

We need unity among all democratic forces. So far as left unity is concerned, we always have shown maximum flexibility for it. But, CPN-Maoist has shown rigid stand.

**Don't you see the possibility to have consensus to support the top leaders?**

This can be done but one must have very realistic approach.

**How do you see the position of CPN-UML?**

There is a nationwide wave in favor of CPN-UML. If people are allowed to vote freely and without intimidation, they will vote CPN-UML.

**At a time when leaders of all political parties have been talking about the need to have seven party unity, why there are so many violent?**



There is no doubt the country requires the unity among the seven parties till the new constitution will be formulated and next election is held. Even if CPN-UML will win the majority, we want to see all party national government to draft a new constitution. We want healthy competition among political parties as we all have our own programs and identity. We must have friendly competition. It is unfortunate that Maoists are yet to give up their past behavior.

**Why would the voters choose CPN-UML?**

CPN-UML has clear vision and programs for prosperity and development of the country. Our economic agenda, political agenda and constitutional agenda is very clear. We have presented 20 years vision programs. Voters still remember our nine months rule when we introduced so many new vision. I think people will vote us and give majority so that they want to see the constitution formulated under our leadership.

**Who are your competitors?**

Our competitor is Nepali Congress. We have already contested several elections in the past.

**How do you see the Maoists? Don't you think they will cut your vote banks?**

CPN-UML has its own vote bank and people will vote our candidates. Of course, some of them might have left our party but overwhelming majority of the party workers are with us.

**At a time when there is allegation of intimidation, kidnapping and violent, how do you see the possibility to hold the free and fair elections?**

Of course, we should have prevented such incidents. Despite all these things, the election campaigns are going on very peacefully.

**How do you find the response of your voters?**

Voters are very much enthusiastic to vote to elect the members to draft the constitution.

**What is the priority of voters?**

Voters want peace, development and prosperity though the CA elections. Their prime concern is peace and normalcy in the country. People are taking the present election as the past elections. This election is for the constitution making. We must convince the people that the CA elections will decide the fate of their rights and country's destiny. ■

# 'Big Countries Do Not Have Hearts And Emotions'

- Ramesh Nath Pandey

Former foreign minister **RAMESH NATH PANDEY** has been out of limelight since the end of a direct rule of King Gyanendra two years ago. He hit the headlines a few weeks ago after Maoist supremo Prachanda admitted to have met him "for consultations" on political situation ahead of the proposed constituent assembly elections. The firebrand champion republican's meeting with a prominent royalist raised many an eyebrow at a time when the future of the monarchy looked sealed with the CA polls fast approaching. Less than three weeks to go for the polls, Pandey spoke with **KESHAB POUDEL** Excerpts:



## So, where is Nepal heading?

The country has been facing the most serious crisis in its history. Disintegration is looming large. Political leaders have been talking about a federal state, but they have never tried to understand whether it is economically and geographically viable or not.

## But the country is geared up for the April 10 CA polls.

The political party leaders want election just to legitimize their hold on power.

## Maoists too?

They are clearer in their agenda than other political leaders. For instance, the Maoists have proposed directly elected executive president for the country. It is logical in the sense that the prime ministerial system has failed to deliver over the years. However, the CPN-UML and the Nepali Congress are still in favour of an executive prime minister and a ceremonial president.

## Even as the polls are nearing, there are fears of disruption – again. Why?

There are always certain elements of uncertainty in any election but the

election process in Nepal has already moved far ahead. It will require a very big hurdle at this stage to disrupt the polls.

## Like?

Three new-born regional parties recently imposed a virtual economic blockade in terai last month. There are several armed groups there as well as in the eastern hills. They can impose blockade harsher than the last one to derail the election. Besides, if one of the three key parties suspect a big loss, it could change the present poll wind. If two of them shared the suspicion, it could reverse the wind.

## How do you see the role of our two big neighbors to bring stability in Nepal in the context of CA polls?

Small countries have hearts and emotions but big countries lack both.

They are more concerned about their national interest. They care more about the ground reality.

## What is the reality, right now?

We are at a very critical juncture in our history. If we are able to pass this phase safely, history will be grateful to us. If we fail to manage the present crisis, we will be discredited.

## How do we preserve our history of continuity?

That is the challenge before us. If we act wisely, our future is very bright. Otherwise, we will be doomed.

## CA elections have been seen as an answer to such challenges.

CA is only a means to formulate constitution. That is not the end.

## So, CA is not a panacea?

When the Indians made constitution through CA, our leaders thought that they would bring similar constitution. What they forgot was that India was a British colony and it inherited all the institutions from a colonial period. They practiced Westminster model and accepted English language. However, we have a fundamentally different situation as we have our own indigenous political evolutionary process. Although Pakistan was also a former British colony, even it could not repeat India's experiment.

## So, we are heading towards the direction of Pakistan?

We are heading nowhere. We are back to the position of 1951 when we overthrew the Rana regime.

## Who is to blame for this situation?

Lack of visionary leaders. At a time when we don't have any political leader with clear vision about the political structure, how will they manage the aspirations of various ethnic groups, linguistic and regional groups at the time of drafting the constitution? When there is a big gulf between the people and the parties, internal as well as external players find opportunity to create crisis one after another. ■



Fresh water sources: Lying untapped

## WORLD WATER DAY

# Not A Drop To Drink

*Amid the election campaign for Constituent Assembly, Nepal celebrates the World Water Day by completely ignoring the crisis of drinking water*

By KESHAB POUDEL

**S**ani Tamang, 16, who lives with her parents in a rented house in Sankhamul, has to spend at least a couple of hours to carry drinking water from nearby stone spout.

Although she is a student appearing for School Leaving Certificate Examination, her priority is to collect water even on the day of examination.

"As my mother and father both of them go for work, it is my duty to complete the household chores including to carry drinking water. Since the tap had gone dry

since December, I have to go for nearby stone spout where I have to stand in a queue for hours."

In Sankhamul and adjoining areas of Kathmandu ward no 35, other middle class and high class families of household buy waters from private tankers but the poor communities have very little options. For all communities' drinking water has become a scarce commodity. The most vulnerable are the people living below the poverty line.

According to WaterAid Nepal's Urban

Program Operation Framework (2005-2010), in an average 78 percent urban population have access to water supply. This does not ensure adequate and safe supply. For example, water distribution is contaminated and most part of Kathmandu receives only half an hour supply in alternative days. The frameworks state that water supply is heavily subsidized and rich enjoy the subsidy.

Although Nepal is known as a country of abundant water resources, the government is yet to provide drinking water to all its population. Despite these kinds of problems in the country, political parties have shown little concern about it.

Unfortunately, the issue of drinking water has not received due attention in the election period as the leaders of political parties argue that the problems of drinking water will be resolved after the election. "The priority of the government is now to hold the election for CA. You will have new Nepal with all the facilities after writing the new constitution through CA," said prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala replying to queries of journalists in his residence.

However, the candidates of various political parties - who are now in door to door campaign seeking votes, see the plight of poor class of people who have been walking at the street with empty buckets.

For many, there is no tap water at all but those who have access to tap water, too, are compelled to drink contaminated water.

"There is drinking water in the tap but you cannot drink it without boiling," remarked Tatsuo Mizuno, Japanese ambassador to Nepal in a two day Nepal Donors Consultation Meeting in (February 21).

The test conducted by Environment and Public Health Organization (ENPHO) in May 2004 revealed that the city water supply is contaminated by various types of bacterial coliform resulting in frequent outbreak of water borne diseases. As tested by ENPHO alone 1,361 patients were hospitalized due to water borne disease including cholera.

The remark made by Japanese ambassador at the meeting of Nepal's donor countries and policy makers spoke volume of Nepal's situation.

This remark is understandable as Japan is a leading development partner of

Nepal supporting projects to increase the access of drinking water in rural as well as urban areas.

Thanks to the support from Nepal's development partners, Nepal has made certain progress. Although the water supplied through the tap is still contaminated, the access of common people to drinking water has drastically increased in the last decade. According to Pay Survey 2001, 17 percent or 218,322 households of five municipalities of valleys are unconnected to piped water supply and 63 percent of those unconnected are poor.

According to interim plan, the overall coverage of improved water supply is estimated at about 71.6 percent but the quality of coverage data is highly unreliable. It does not reflect how many of those systems are actually functioning and the quality of water supplied is not always safe due to arsenic, iron and bacterial contamination. Thus people without access to improved water facilities have no choice but to collect water from often polluted rivers, lakes, streams and traditional wells. Sanitary conditions are even worse with rivers, fields, and forests serving as toilets for around 75 percent of the rural population.

The impact on the health and quality of life is clear and predictable. According to UNICEF, each year around 13,000 children die in Nepal before reaching their fifth birthday due to water related disease and poor sanitation.

Still many rural women and young girls spend an average of four to six hours every day collecting water from the nearest source. This task is not just exhausting but simply uses up valuable energy and leaves very little time to do other productive activities. As a result young girls are spending time collecting water when they should be at school.

"Those stark realities will continue to remain and the people will continue to suffer unless a concerted effort is made by government, private sector and civil society," said Sanjaya Adhikary, country representatives of WaterAid Nepal.

The Millennium Development Goals target is to provide access to drinking water and sanitation facility by 2015 to all. Statistics show that approximately 81 percent of the total population in the country currently obtains drinking water from improved facilities. The

corresponding figure for sanitation coverage was 39 percent. Nepal is likely to reach near universal access to drinking water and sanitation by 2015.

With high priority accorded to the water supply and sanitation sector, significant progress has been achieved in this field in a relatively short period. In 1970, only 6 percent of the people living in the rural areas had access to a protected water source. During the water supply and sanitation decade (1981-1990), this figure rose to 34 percent. At present, nearly 72 percent of the country's population have access to basic water supply.

The overall coverage of sanitation went up from 6 percent in 1990 to 46.8 percent in 2001. It is, however, unfortunate that improvement in the water supply is not commensurate with increasing demand for water for drinking purposes, industrial use and irrigation. Major towns and cities of Nepal face acute water problems.

In Kathmandu valley, water supply meets only 79 percent of the total urban demand. Water quality has deteriorated in many cases due mainly to the lack of treatment plants and poor supply network. Neither does the rural region nor do the municipal areas apart from the towns in the Kathmandu valley where only 15 percent of the houses have access to a sewerage facility.

"The total cost of attaining the MDG on water supply and sanitation for 2005-2015 amounts to NRs. 137,3982 million at 2004/05 constant prices. The average annual cost amounts to NRs. 12, 490.7 million at constant price. The estimated cost is slightly higher than what government has been spending at present. In fact, expenditure in this sector as a whole declined from NRs. 2436 million in 1999/00 to NRs. 1757.8 million in 2001/02,"



Serpentine queues to get water: Shocking scene

writes Millennium Development Goals Needs Assessment For Nepal.

WaterAid Nepal estimated that an additional 11,300 households needed to be served between 200-2015 to achieve the drinking water target. Total financial requirement for meeting this target is US\$ 1087 million and the resource availability for 200-2015 is US\$ 755 million, resulting in an annual resource gap of US\$ 23 million.

Finance minister Dr. Ram Sharan Mahat in his budget statement allocated Rs. 5.33 billion for the year of 2007-08 fiscal years for drinking water supply. According to the budget, the government is expected to provide safe drinking water to additional 2 million population.

"During the interim plan period, our aim is to provide the drinking water to all our population. As the government has already expressed its commitment to fulfill the budget, we will be in a position to meet the demand by 2015," said Jagdish Pokharel, vice chairman of National Planning Commission.

Whatever one says, there is still a long way to go before supplying the drinking water to all becomes a reality. ■

## UNMIN REPORT

## Pointing To Challenges

*The first election report prepared by the UNMIN points to challenges and difficulties before the CA election*

By A CORRESPONDENT

Amid the reports of clashes and violations of election code of conduct, the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN), which is also mandated to monitor the Constituent Assembly (CA) as a part and parcel of Nepal's peace process, on March 22, released a first of a series of periodic reports on the conditions for the 10 April Constituent Assembly election.

At the outset of the report, it commends the achievement of overcoming significant political hurdles that had seriously threatened to derail the electoral process. However, its report gives most of the space to highlight 'new challenges and difficulties that have emerged in the campaigning context.'

"The aim of UNMIN's public report is to encourage the political parties and all Nepalis to create a free and fair atmosphere for the Constituent Assembly election," said Ian Martin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Nepal.

The 4-page report highlights the results of UNMIN and OHCHR-Nepal monitoring over the past two weeks, related to violence by groups opposed to the election, violations of the electoral code of conduct and of human rights, and arms monitoring.

The UNMIN has made several recommendations for action to improve conditions for the election.

"Nepal is today better positioned than at any time since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in November 2006 to hold a credible Constituent Assembly election, a critical milestone in the peace process. Significant political hurdles that had seriously threatened to derail the process have been overcome, although not entirely removed," the report says.

Though happy at the gradual improvement in security in Terai, it has expressed concern over activities of



**Martin:** Bringing forth reality

armed groups. "In the past two weeks the activities of forces opposed to these agreements, particularly the armed groups, has intensified. There has been an upsurge of killings, violence, intimidation against candidates and voters and threats to disrupt the electoral process. On 29 February the Janatantrik Madhesi Mukti Morcha, Jwala Singh faction (JTMM-JS) issued a statement outlining a series of actions it said it plans to carry out to disrupt the election, and on 13 March four other armed groups issued a statement making similar threats: both statements threatened physical action against candidates and others engaged in the election. Other armed groups have expressed willingness to engage in dialogue with the Government," the report says.

It has also expressed concerns over pressures applied on some candidates to withdraw from the election fray. "Several candidates have reported receiving death threats over the telephone and candidates' houses and party offices have been targeted with improvised explosive devices (IEDs). On 18 March, Kamal Adhikari, the Rastriya Janamorcha

candidate for Banke-2 constituency was assassinated: the JTMM-JS was the first group to claim responsibility, but there have also been other claims or attributions of responsibility. On 19 March, Ashok Kumar Yadav, a candidate of the Communist Party of Nepal - Unified Marxist-Leninist (UML) was stabbed in Saptari-2 constituency, allegedly by the Akhil Tarai Mukti Morcha (formerly JTMM-Goit). A number of armed groups took responsibility for the detonation of IEDs at or near government, party and media offices, and the residences of candidates and government officials. Such explosions have been particularly prevalent in the eastern Terai. The situation risks becoming increasingly volatile."

It has also drawn the attention towards the violations of code of conduct. "The electoral campaign is increasingly taking a violent turn, with daily reports of clashes between party supporters, use of other forms of violence, intimidation and threats. There is growing evidence of action by CPN-M cadres, including members of the Young Communist League (YCL), to restrict in various ways freedom of assembly of other parties in different areas of Darchula, Dhankuta, Sindhupalchowk, Chitwan, Bardiya, Baitadi, Lalitpur, Okhaldunga, Gorkha, Kaski, Kalikot, Dhading, Salyan, among others. This has often entailed the use of violence or threat of violence. A repeated warning from CPN-M cadres has been that other parties should not campaign in its "base areas". Voters have been told that the CPN-M will know how they vote and will take action against those who cast their ballot for other parties."

"Widespread concern about booth-capturing and fear of violence on election day, and after if results are disputed, have been expressed by police, party activists and members of the local population alike, especially in the more remote areas. This "fear factor" could affect voter turnout."

"UNMIN has drawn to the attention of the leadership of the CPN-M that it is inconsistent with this principle that a number of commanders and members of the Maoist army have been nominated and are campaigning as candidates for election without having been discharged from the Maoist army," the report further complains. ■



One-horned rhino: Numbers on rise

## RHINO COUNT

# Encouraging Increase

*The preliminary results of rhino count shows that their numbers have increased*

By A CORRESPONDENT

**A**fter the declining trend in the number of rhinos for quite some time, one happy news has come as the latest rhino census has

intended to increase in their numbers. According to the census team, they have spotted 408 rhinoceros in Chitawan National Park area during the recent census. This is up by 36 rhinoceros than those found in Chitawan three years ago.

"There are 100 males and 130 females but the sex of remaining 178 rhinos could not be established," said Shyam Bajimaya, director general of Department of Wildlife Conservation and National Park.

The report shows that there are 277 full grown up rhinos and 51 adolescents, and 80 young ones.

Three years ago, then census had shown the number of rhinos at just 372.

However, the situation is not encouraging in other two parks – Bardia National Park and Shuklaphanta Wildlife Reserve.

Despite increasing number of natural deaths and alarming level of poaching in the last decades, Nepal's rhino population has increased. Having faced a major set back in conservation of rhinoceros following the intensification of insurgency, the changed context after the ceasefire has improved the situation.

"This is a very encouraging sign to see such a rise in the number of rhino population. Our method was very scientific and findings of the current census are highly reliable," said Bajimaya.

This year, the census was carried out in improved mode with the support from WWF, Nepal Trust for Nature Conservation and other international

non-governmental organizations.

"This is one of the most reliable census in the history of rhino counting," said Dr. Santaram Gyanwali, technical expert at Nepal Trust for Nature Conservation. Forty elephants and 200 staffs were employed for the purpose.

After the restoration and rehabilitation of security posts along the boundary of Nepal's national parks, the incidents of poaching have drastically declined. Increased participation of local population through the buffer zone concept has also contributed to conserve the rhinos and other such endangered wildlife in Nepal's national park.

Nepal's rhino population climbed down from 612 peak to just about 372 in the year 2005. This drastic decline had caused alarm.

In 1994, there were 466 rhinos in Chitawan National Park. In 2000 rhino count, there were altogether 612 rhinos including 544 in Chitawan National Park, 63 in Bardia National Park and 5 in Shuklaphanta Wildlife Reserve.

According to the census of 2005, the number of rhinos declined to 379 including 372 in Chitawan National Park and 7 in Shuklaphanta. Since 1999/2000 to 2006, altogether 264 rhinos were lost - 149 to poaching and 115 due to natural deaths.

The rise in the poaching remains a major cause of concern to Nepal's success in the conservation of its endangered species. Nepal was home to more than 1,000 rhinos before 1950 when Nepal was closed to the outside world.

But deforestation, poaching and shrinking of the rhino habitat in the southern plains because of migration of people eroded that number. The rhino population fell to 400 in 1957 and to a shockingly low of 100 in 1966.

With the completion of rhino census, Nepal has once again showed that it has well planned and well developed know how to preserve the endangered species like rhinoceros ■

## BOOK

# Public Administration

*At a time when there is lack of book for the students of master's level of Public Administration, Tulsi Narayan Shrestha comes out with a solution*

By A CORRESPONDENT

**P**ublic administration plays crucial role in development activities as well as in the maintenance of stability and order. This is the reason teaching of public administration is pre-requisite to prepare the man power for the country.

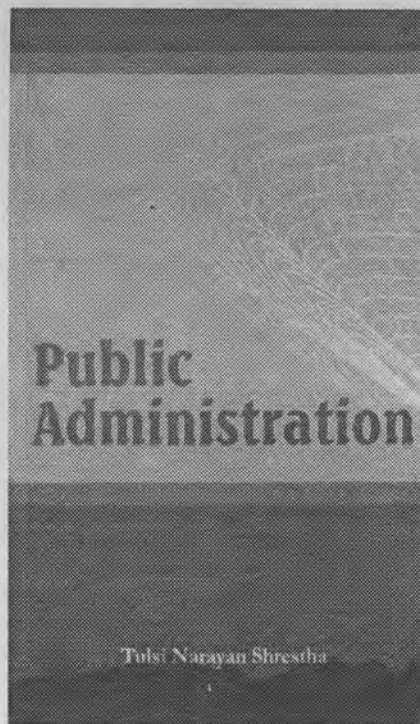
Till a few years ago, the public administration was just a part of the book on political science of master level at Tribhuvan University. As political science is also, in one way or the other, related to the management and administration, the decision to include separate paper on public administration in its syllabus of master level political science program was very significant.

Despite introducing separate paper on public administration, the students had difficulty to find a book based on their curriculum, which can contribute to enhance their capability on the public administration education.

Having long experience of teaching public administration at the University, Tulsi Narayan Shrestha felt that the students needed a book which can cover their whole curriculum of public administration at master's level.

Written as per the content of public administration syllabus, this book intends to cater to the needs of the post-graduate students of political science studying in Tribhuvan University.

Divided into six parts, part I deals



## Public Administration

**By: Tulsi Narayan Shrestha**

**Published by: Ratna Pustak Bhandar, Kathmandu, Nepal**

**Price: Rs.295.00**

**Pages: 342**

with the introduction to public administration and its current issues. Part II focuses on organization and its model and part III discusses various dimensions of personnel, development and regulatory administrative system. Leadership, Public and public

administration and budgetary process are analyzed in Part IV. Developments of Nepal's administration, its ecological perspective and administrative reforms have been detailed in part V.

The last part deals with local governance and decentralization. On the whole, this text discusses various issues and aspects of Public Administration and is expected to be useful and helpful not only to the post-graduate students of political science studying in Tribhuvan University but also to the general readers interested to the discipline of Public Administration.

Having written a number of books on Nepalese administration, decentralization and local governance, Shrestha, a PhD in Public Administration, is a well known scholar of public administration.

"Administration is a very strategic resource in the process of development simply because the ultimate outcome of the entire development depends upon its efficiency and effectiveness. Thus, administration plays a key role in the socio-economic development civilities aimed at improving the quality of life of the people," said author Shrestha. "Taking into consideration of the inadequacy of the text books on such revised Public Administration paper Master Level Political Science, I have made a modest attempt to preserve this volume."

From basic concept of public administration to the changing role of administration in the context of globalization, liberal market economy, Shrestha also discusses organization and models as well as theories and approaches.

Not only the present trends of public administration, he has also dealt with the historical evolution of public administration in Nepal. ■



“Nobody is going to lose in this election.”

**Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala**, claiming that the Constituent Assembly (CA) election will be a key to major change in the country.

“The press does not take seriously when our cadres are killed. Already seven of our cadres have been killed.”

**Prachanda**, Maoist chairman, at a press meet.

“Only a parent knows what labor pangs are and what trauma she has to go through to bring the child into this world and bring it up.”

**Dr. Baburam Bhattarai**, senior leader of the Maoists, saying that the Maoists must win the election to usher in the republic, addressing an election rally in Kailali.

“If they (parties) continue to violate election code of conduct, the Election Commission will be compelled to take actions ranging from imposing fine on parties; terminating the candidacy of a candidate; or annulling the voting in particular booths where there are reports of forceful voting.”

**Bhoj Raj Pokharel**, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC), at a press meet.

“The NA will not bow down or compromise with elements that play with Nepal’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, that raises arms against democratic system and wants to direct the political system through arms; which



in this global context believes in terrorism, extremism and radicalism and wants to seize state power based on such beliefs.”

“I don’t need security personnel who do not follow my orders.”

**Matrika Yadav**, Minister for Forest and Soil Conservation, who discharged security personnel of Nepali Army (NA) and locked up their quarters at his residence, claiming that they refused to travel with him to Janakpur.

“The pattern of these incidents has

raised serious questions about whether the CPN (Maoist), or significant parts of it, are willing to engage in a genuinely free and fair democratic process.”

An election report issued by United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN).

“There are three votes in my family. I guess, we will divide it for three big parties.”

**Haribansha Acharya**, a comedian who has been campaigning for the successful election, when asked whom he would vote for, in Naya Patrika.

## TRANSITION

**PASSED AWAY:** Ishwor Ballav, senior litterateur and famous poet, of heart attack, at the age of 70

**LAUNCHED:** Election Observation Mission (EOM) by the European Union.

**UNVEILED:** Election manifestoes by Nepal Sadbhavana Party (NSP) led by Rajendra Mahato; CPN-Marxist Leninist

led by Chandra Prakash Mainali; Nepal Workers and Peasants Party (NWPP), Madhesi Janadhikar Forum (MJF) led by Upendra Yadav and Naba Janabadi Morcha (NJM) led by Ramraja Prasad Singh.

**SET UP:** A media center, by the Election Commission (EC), in Kantipath.

**FILED:** Nomination for candidacy for the position of president of Federation

of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI), by Chandni Raj Dhakal and Kush Kumar Joshi. Dhakal is the sitting president while Joshi is second vice president of FNCCI.

**DIED:** Three persons, two in a road accident and one after falling from roof of a house, during this year’s Holi celebrations in Kathmandu valley.



## EXPOSITION

# Perfection Of Line

*Artist Madan Chitrakar explains the images and trends of present political and other activities*

By A CORRESPONDENT

**A**s the country passes through a new phase of political, social and cultural transformation, it is natural to see vivid expressions and situation in front of every individual. But, not all the people can see it or feel it.

With eyes filled with color and brain with imagination, only artists and painters can see this kind of transformation through his/her eyes and explain them to wider public. This is what renowned artist Madan Chitrakar does through his canvas.

Inaugurated by Bangladesh's ambassador to Nepal Intiaz Ahmed, the exhibition titled *The Unspoken* is about the political, social and cultural transformation going on in Nepalese society.

From uncertain political process to change in the cultural values, social harmony and country's symbol of

existence, all things have been shaken in recent political upheavals and social change.

Nepal is not like it used to be in the past when there was certain sense of political stability and predictable course of cultural transformation. Today, everything is uncertain, unclear and unimaginable. However, artist Chitrakar depicts these entire uncertain situation with his inherited skills and clear vision.

Exhibited at Siddhartha Art Gallery, the paintings depicted at the wall of the gallery are narrative as he narrates the situation and scenes with the eyes of historian and philosopher. One needs to have historical and philosophical knowledge to understand the social and political transformation. This is what painter Chitrakar has shown in his paintings.

The country has seen so many changes and upheavals that it is

impossible to express through words as it requires more imagination and narration in the paintings also. This is what artist Chitrakar tries to do. His collections represent images, description and his own thinking. According to artist Chitrakar, he can't articulate all these expression in words.

Through his paintings, artist Chitrakar tries to ventilate on going uncertain situation of Nepal.

Artist Chitrakar chooses the neo-tan trick and contemporary images to capture the present political and cultural mess. His works clearly depict the whole range of bloodshed, disturbance and consequences of instability without showing the bloodshed.

Although his thoughts are based on the country's on-going situation which includes bloodshed, violence and difficulty, he uses very friendly colors and metamorphic images to symbolize his thought.

As there appear more ethnic clashes and demands for autonomy with the right to self determination, the writer also sees the possibility of disintegration of Nepal. One of his paintings shows Nepal's flag torn into small pieces. He sketches the torn out Nepali flags to show the struggle to create a new flag after Janadolan II.

For the past one decade, Nepal has seen intensification of conflicts in rural parts of Nepal where a large number of people had no option other than to flee for their survival. Showing the deserted look of rural area, artist Chitrakar shows how the conflict affected the rural life.

His paintings also expressed agony and disaster as well as hope for the future. What is interesting to see in his paintings is that it speaks volume about the social and cultural upheavals and painful moments.

He draws images with cheerful faces but one has to find the agony and painful process of social and political transformation hidden behind those images. The exhibition will continue till April 3 at Siddhartha Art Gallery.

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