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The National Newsmagazine

# SPOTLIGHT

Mar 24- 30, 2006



## Tang's Visit A Step for Regional Reconciliation

Politics  
Blockade Withdrawn

: Democracy Without Election  
: Short-lived Relief?

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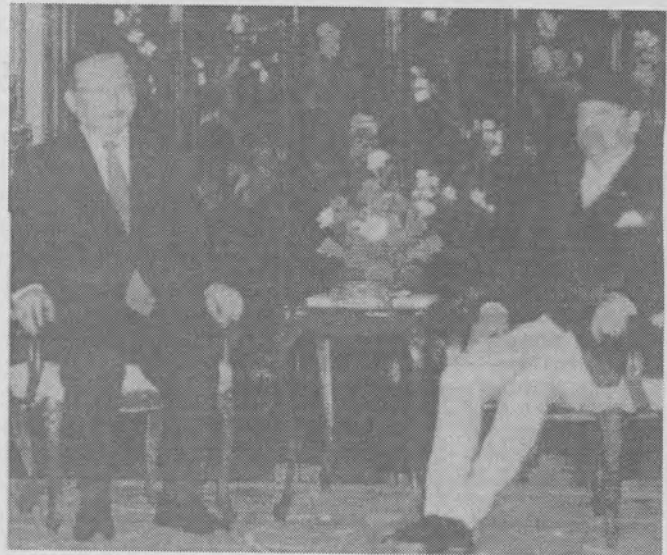
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**COVER STORY : Peace Mission** TKP  
 The visit by Chinese State Councilor Tang Jiaxuan re-stressed on the need for reconciliation in the region

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**Politics: Democracy Without Elections** Photo: Guy Kitchens  
 All of the political forces are demanding for the restoration of democracy but are opposing elections.

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**US POLICY: Twin Troubles**  
 US Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Donald Camp makes key statement in House Committee in Washington stressing twin troubles facing Nepal - terrorism and autocracy

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**SPOTLIGHT**

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**P**ast few weeks in Nepal have been full of significant events. Before the arrival of George W. Bush in India, American ambassador James F. Moriarty had in his several interviews appealed to the King and the opposition political parties to come into reconciliation and unite to tackle the problems of Nepal. Almost in the same line, the head of South Asia Group at British Foreign and Commonwealth Office in the United Kingdom Antony Stokes issued similar advice. There is a unanimous support of other western democracies as well as Japan for the reconciliation. And now in that process, Chinese state councilor Tang Jiaxuan gave the same advice in public to the King and the constitution-abiding political parties to come into reconciliation and deal the problems of Nepal.

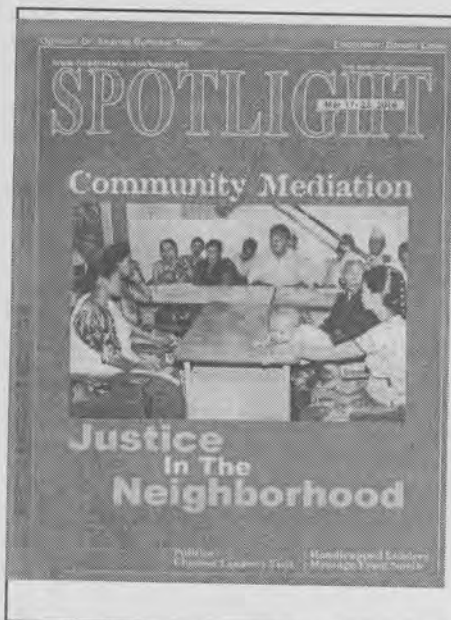
Endorsing the second proclamation drafted in Indian capital New Delhi by representatives of seven parties and the Maoists, leaders of seven political parties have ignored these opinions and advices choosing the path of reconciliation with the Maoists and confrontation with the King. Parties have shown that the problem is not the Maoist violence but something else. Soon after the completion of visit of Chinese councilor Tang, who categorically stressed for reconciliation between the constitutional forces in his one to one meeting with leaders of opposition political parties, communist-dominated seven parties front has rebuffed his advice and declared a working unity with the Maoists. Parties have expressed their full commitment to New Delhi declaration signed with the Maoist ignoring genuine advices of others. Political leaders pursued the Maoists to withdraw their indefinite general strike (Nepal Bandha) and, in return, they lent support to the demand for Constituent Assembly and called for another four days general strikes in the first week of April. There is nothing new for political leaders to undermine the opinions of Western democracies including the United States, which are far away and have no strategic interest in Nepal, but the price of rebuffing the suggestion of influential leader of Nepal's powerful northern neighbor could be costly. The carefully worded written speech delivered by the Chinese leader has everything including benefits of reconciliation as well as the cost of hegemony and confrontation in the region. Ignoring the sincere opinions of all major western democracies including World Super power United States and northern neighbor China and choosing to reiterate commitment to New Delhi declaration of Maoists, political leaders have pushed the country into a very dangerous situation. Similarly, King Gyanendra's political step taken after dismissing elected government in October 4, 2002 and new proclamation of February 1, 2005 has continued to widen the gap with organized political forces. Like political leaders, the King is also trapped in a similar situation by appointing hardliners in the cabinet. As a political analyst observed, "There is no doubt that King Gyanendra has a very controversial position in the history but he has exposed all his adversaries from where they are guided and manipulated." All these developments show that very serious threat are lurking over Nepal's political atmosphere, which may, at any time, suddenly convert into a regional conflict. Friends and well-wishers of Nepal are almost nervously asking the King and the politicians of this country to maintain peace and cooperation in the spirit of reconciliation. But unfortunate leaders of this country are not reasonable enough to take notice of that.

It is not in the interest of anyone: the King, the political parties as well as Nepal's neighbors to see political problems of Nepal go out of control of internal forces and take a turn into a broader regional conflict. What has always been alarming in Nepal's case -which maintains equilibrium between two powers, is that any of its serious internal conflict may alarm its neighbors to react. Cautiously, Chinese emissary has hinted that in his recent visit to Nepal. Tang in his recent statement said, "We consistently support Nepal in its effort to safeguard sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. Nepal is a sovereign country, and its internal affairs shall not be interfered with any way by any outside forces. We believe that the Nepalese government, people have the political wisdom and capabilities to solve their own problems."

*Keshab*

**Keshab Poudel**  
Managing Editor

**Chief Editor Madhav Rimal is returning in a few days after long stay in the United States on medical grounds. This is to inform our readers that their favorite notes will be coming to them quite regularly after editor's return. Any inconvenience during his absence is regretted.**



## Good News

It is good to know that the rural people of Jhapa are getting justice through community mediation, at a time when there is a void in the local elected bodies "COMMUNITY MEDIATION: Justice In The Neighborhood" (SPOTLIGHT March 17). When the state power is solely focused on curbing the insurgency, such community based program are very important to maintain the social balance. Successful programs like this should be replicated in other districts, too.

*Sachin Shrestha*  
Balkhu

## Increase Coverage on Community Activities

You have raised the issue of the rural people in the cover story this issue "COMMUNITY MEDIATION: Justice In The Neighborhood" (SPOTLIGHT March 17). At present the mainstream media of Nepal is focused on the central issues of politics and insurgency. Community activities, problems and other issues of general people are under shadow. At such a time you have done a laudable job by covering the issue of local people of Jhapa. Lately readers are deprived of the information about such community activities. I am pleased to know about the successful implementation of the community mediation program, and I am sure other readers have benefited, too. I would like to thank you for highlighting the overshadowed, yet important issue and would like to request you to continue the trend of raising the issues of common people.

*Nikita Sharma*  
Banasthali

## Implement the Programs In Other Districts

I read the cover story this issue and learned about how the community mediation program is helping the local people of Jhapa district get justice and

empower minorities communities, women and dalit "COMMUNITY MEDIATION: Justice In The Neighborhood" (SPOTLIGHT March 17). The program that seems to me a modification of the traditional Nepali judicial practice that included the 'Panchas' is very important and relevant at the present situation when the central judicial system is out of reach of most rural Nepalese and the local administration is non-existent. If the program is benefiting the local people as you have written, what about implementing similar programs in other villages?

*Subash Karki*  
Bhaktapur

## Reconciliation: But How?

The interview with Donald Camp presents the international, particularly the United State's opinion on the current situation of Nepal "Nepalese Need To Work Out Timetable For Reconciliation" (SPOTLIGHT March 17). Everyone, including the conflicting parties, government and the Maoists are talking about reconciliation to end the present crisis. However, a convincing suggestion or a proposal about how reconciliation can be done has not come from any quarters. Obviously reconciliation is easier said than done. At such a time, I think it would be wiser for the international and national intellectuals as well as power centers to come up with agreeable points for

reconciliation than just repeat the rhetorics of reconciliation and unity.

*Seema Shrestha*  
New York  
(Via Email)

## Resume Kidney Transplant Operation

I was surprised to know that kidney transplant surgery services is not available in Nepal "KIDNEY DISEASES: Growing Risk" (SPOTLIGHT March 17). Kidney transplant has become a very common treatment in India that is available in the government as well as private hospitals in almost all cities of India. Hundreds of Nepalese visit India to have their kidney replaced. However, it is unfortunate that Nepal, despite access to the modern medical facilities, does not have a place for kidney transplant surgery even after half a century of the first successful kidney transplant surgery in the world. If the government hospitals cannot perform the surgery the government should give permission to the private hospitals to conduct the renal replacement surgery. It is not only going to make the life of Kidney patients and their kins in Nepal easier, but also going to save millions of Rupees flowing to India.

*Niranjana Joshi*  
Chennai  
(Via Email)

## Informative Article

The article about Load Shedding written by SB Pun was very informative "Load Shedding Once More Again Need to Sit around a Round Table" (SPOTLIGHT March 17). It provided minute details about the status of how much power is produced and how much is demanded and how the demand and supply is growing. If we are to consider the figures given in the article and the apathy of Nepal Electricity Authority like most government agencies, there is no reason to be optimistic. The current trend of load-shedding will continue for years to come. It is very unfortunate that while we proudly claim ourselves to be the second richest country in water resources, we have to suffer long hours of load shedding year after year.

*Nitesh Hamal*  
NayaBazar

## Maoists Open Fire At A Bus Carrying Patients

Maoists opened fire at a bus carrying patients to Chaudhary Eye Hospital in Lahan. The bus has been damaged by the bullets that the Maoists fired when it reached Kharchuhiya section of Mahendra Highway. Patients were not hurt. There were around 25 passengers in the bus including patients from Jogbani and Farbesgunj in India. Around six Maoist gunmen had opened the fire. In Kanepokhari of Morang district, the Maoists torched a bus after forcing its passengers to get down. The bus was en route to Kakarbhitta from Dharan. Likewise, a minibus carrying vegetables from Nawalpur, Sarlahi to Kathmandu was torched near Paurai jungle in Rautahat district by the Maoists. *Kantipur daily reports.*

## Cop Goes On A Rampage, Kills A Hotelier

A cop on a drunken stupor shot to death an owner of a guest house near Old Bus Park. An Assistant Sub Inspector Bidhan Chandra Shah pumped two bullets into the body of Bhuwan Kharel, 24, - apparently because the latter refused to comply with his demand for alcohol. The murderer has been nabbed by the police. Reports say Shah used to frequent to the Mata Dakshinkali guest house regularly demanding alcohol and money. On Friday night (March 17), too, Shah entered into the guest house and demanded money and alcohol. Witnesses said Kharel was hit in chest and stomach and he died on way to hospital. Meanwhile, in Okhaldhunga, a civilian lady was killed when a cop opened fire. *Leading dailies report.*

## Assembly Elections Will Disintegrate State: Ranabhat

Speaker of the dissolved House of Representatives, Taranath Ranabhat, warned that an election to constituent assembly would lead the country towards disintegration and urged the King, the political parties and the

Maoists to give up their adamant stances and return to the negotiating table to find settlement of the conflict. "Election to the constituent assembly will disintegrate the country into baisi and chaubisi states. Moreover, it is unnecessary as we already have a constitution," Speaker Ranabhat said while addressing a program in the capital. He said the issues raised by the Maoists could be discussed and the constitution could be amended to address such issues. Ranabhat urged the King to give up his political ambitions and transfer power to the people. He asked the Maoists to abandon arms and violence and the political parties to suspend their street agitation to find amicable solution to the problems facing the country. *The Himalayan Times daily reports.*

## Poverty, Underdevelopment Root Causes Of Conflict: Rajan

Former Indian ambassador to Nepal KV Rajan said that the root cause of conflict in the South Asian region is poverty, absence of democracy and lack of development. He made this remark while addressing a seminar organized by Universal Peace Federation Nepal on regional Conflict in South Asia: The Human Dimension. "Whether the Maoist demand for constituent assembly is necessary or not, it is up to the Nepali people to decide, but the real cause of conflict can be attributed to rampant poverty, deficit of democracy and lack of development," Rajan said. Rajan viewed that each sides of the conflict is "partially right" or "partially wrong" but it is the tendency of both sides of conflict that they are "totally right." He said that the King may think that democracy made mistakes in the past 12 years and the parties and the Maoists may think that the King made mistakes. "Everybody may have made mistakes in the past. So, it is time to communicate with each other and have compassion, tolerance and positive views of either sides to find peaceful solution to the crises," he said. There seems to be a complete breakdown of communication

between the parties to conflict, he said. Nobody is thinking about the consequences of the conflict about the future of the country, he said, adding, "It seems that everything is failed but I am still hopeful that leaders of the political parties and civil society will find a solution to the conflict." *The Himalayan Times daily reports.*

## Maoists Expel Two Central Members

A day after two of its senior leaders issued a statement leveling serious charges against chairman Prachanda and Baburam Bhattarai, the Maoists have expelled Rabindra Shrestha and Mani Thapa from the party. In a statement issued by Prachanda, the two leaders have been termed as being 'counter-revolutionary' and aiding the palace. Shrestha and Thapa had earlier alleged the two leaders of ideological, political, organizational, military and cultural deflections. *Compiled from reports.*

## Tatopani To Be Developed As Transit Point

In the first phase of government initiative to make Nepal a transit bridge between India and China, the authorities are developing and opening up the custom point at Tatopani. Following the King's announcement to "develop Nepal as transit point between India and China," the government is working hard to materialize it. Subsequently, the government is repairing and upgrading the Arniko Highway (Kathmandu-Tatopani). Earlier, the government's high-level steering committee on transit point had also decided to initiate consultations with both the neighbors for the purpose. "Preparations for consultations are afoot through diplomatic channels," said a source. At a time when Nepal's relation with India has cooled off, the proposal for transit point has come as a strategic balance, say experts. India had asked for such transit facilities through Nepal two years ago. China is also said to be positive about the proposal. Further discussion

with China on this subject will also be held during the visit by Chinese State Councilor Tang Jiaxuan, who is arriving in Kathmandu on March 16. Tatopani is the existing route that joins Kathmandu with Chinese border. It can link Raxaul (India) to Khasa (Tibet, China) via Birgunj and Kathmandu. Meanwhile, Nepalese authorities believe that the Galchhi-Nuwakot-Rasuwagadhi-Syaphrubesi highway would become the main transit route linking the two countries after the completion of its construction. *Kantipur daily reports.*

## Maoists Loot Rs 1.7 Million From A Bank In Nepalgunj

Armed gang of Maoists looted Rs 1,664 million from the Surkhet Road Branch of Karnali Development Bank in Nepalgunj on Monday. Five Maoists who came on bicycles overpowered the bank security guards and looted the amount before fleeing the scene. The robbery occurred at around 11:30 am. The Maoists also damaged computers and bank counter. *Leading dailies report.*

## Govt. Unveils Policy On IDPs And Surrender

The government unveiled policy on surrender and rehabilitation as well as national policy on Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). Home Minister Kamal Thapa informed about the policies at a press conference at Home Ministry on Monday. The policy on surrender has defined economic, legal and physical protection of the persons who give up violence and surrender before the government. It has increased financial incentives to those who surrender along with weapons and in groups. Incentives like overseas jobs have been defined. Likewise, the policy has a provision of providing Rs 1 million of cash incentive to central members of the Maoists who want to surrender. The cash incentive for surrendering Maoists will be effective till mid-June. The government has set up a fund of Rs 10 million for the purpose. The policy states that a rehabilitation center would be set up in Kathmandu

also. Furthermore, the government has also introduced a national policy on managing IDPs as well as those persons who are displaced by natural calamities. *Leading dailies report.*

## Request To Let SLC Run Smoothly

Ministers, officials, educationists and rights activists have urged on all side to let the forthcoming School Leaving Certificate (SLC) examination run smoothly. The annual SLC exam is scheduled to start this year from March 27 and will end on April 5. Radha Krishna Mainali, Minister for Education, said that students will not be harassed by security forces during the exam period. "No matter what political ideology a student abides by, during the exam period no student will be harassed," he said. He also urged Maoists and political parties to reconsider their strikes and agitation that could disturb students during the crucial annual SLC examination. Teachers' association and parents have also asked to withdraw strikes during the exam. They have also asked the government to withdraw armed forces from school vicinity. This year, 332,181 examinees will appear for the test. The Examination Controllers Office has assigned 994 exam centers across the country. *Leading dailies report.*

## China Signs MoU To Provide Zero Custom Facility

On the first day of the visit by Chinese State Councilor Tang Jiaxuan, China and Nepal signed two agreements on economic assistance and custom waiver. The trade agreement in which China has agreed to provide zero custom entry for Nepalese products was signed by Chinese Assistant Minister for Commerce Chen Jian and Nepalese Commerce Secretary Bharat Bahadur Thapa. Nepal has produced a list of 1550 products for exporting to Chinese market. The list includes probable export items including agro-products, construction materials, handicraft and so on. According to Thapa, Nepal has exportable items of three different

categories – those to be exported to Tibet, to mainland China and to Hong Kong. Thapa expressed hope that the new agreement will boost Nepalese exports and help resolve the problem of huge trade imbalance. China has agreed to provide zero custom entry to 'most' of the products. The actual products would be finalized through negotiations soon. Likewise, the two countries also signed another agreement according to which China will grant assistance of Rs 180 million to Nepal. The Chinese Assistant Minister for Commerce and Nepalese acting Foreign Secretary Hira Bahadur Thapa signed the agreement. The assistance will be utilized on mutually agreed development projects in Nepal. *Leading dailies report.*

## A New Hospital For APF

King Gyanendra inaugurated the hospital of Armed Police Force (APF) on Monday. The King Gyanendra APF Hospital located in Balambu, Kathmandu has 110-bed facility including General Medical, General Surgical, ICU, CCU and other wards. The hospital has been constructed at the cost of Rs 168.6 million. The hospital aims to provide convenient medical services to APF personnel and their family members. *Compiled from reports.*

## 13 Soldiers Killed In Kavre

A day after the Maoist chairman Prachanda issued a statement withdrawing blockade and bandhs, armed Maoist insurgents attacked a security patrolling unit killing 13 soldiers of Royal Nepalese Army (RNA) at Dapcha area of Kavre district. According to security forces, the patrolling unit had reached the area in order to open up the source of drinking water cut off by the Maoists there. The Defense Ministry claimed that the Maoists used residences of civilians as cover while firing at soldiers. The Ministry claimed that although only one body of dead Maoist was found later in the area, there have been huge casualties on (the Maoist) side as well. *Compiled from reports.*



**Crown Prince Paras and Crown Princess Himani leaving for Vienna, Austria**

Gorkhapatra

**WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF STUDYING AND ASSESSING THE** situation of media in the country, a team of media mission representing 12 different international organizations including the UN agency is arriving in Kathmandu on Monday. According to Federation of Nepalese Journalists (FNJ), the mission will help in the restoration of full press freedom in the country. The mission includes over one and a half dozen senior representatives from organizations like International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), International Freedom of Expression (Ifex), among others.

**THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF THE HIGH** Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Nepal will continue to operate even though the OHCHR is transformed into UN Human Rights Council. According to a statement issued by Ian Martin, chief of the office in Nepal, the office will continue to operate as per its agreement with the government here, reports Nepal Samacharpatra daily. The agreement was reached last year to allow the operation of the office in the country for two years. Meanwhile, in New York, the UN General Assembly has 'overwhelmingly' endorsed a resolution on forming a new Human Rights Council to replace the existing Human Rights Commission. The Council's first elections have been scheduled for May 9 while the first session is expected to be held on June 19. "The resolution was adopted by a vote of 170 in favor and four against," said the UN. The United States, Israel, the Marshall Islands and Palau opposed the resolution with Venezuela, Iran and Belarus abstaining. The new council based in Geneva will comprise 47 member states. The commission, which has 53 members including Nepal, will be dissolved on June 16. An absolute majority of the General Assembly members will elect the members of the Council.

**FAMILIES OF THE PERSONS DISAPPEARED BY THE STATE** have collected one million signatures appealing for the immediate revelation of their whereabouts. They presented the signatures to the officials at the Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights in Kathmandu. The family had collected the signatures between February 15-March 7. The signatures would be submitted at the UN Human Rights Commission meeting in Geneva. The families believe that the signature campaign would help to internationalize the issue.

**THE CENTRAL BANK HAS EASED THE PROCESS OF** importing gold and silver by using foreign exchange. Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) has introduced a new provision whereby any duly registered

firm/company and commercial bank could import gold/silver just like other goods. Earlier, the process of importing gold/silver was complicated as traders had to fulfill several conditions through Jhiti-Gunta system. Following the growing import of gold and silver illegally via India, the NRB has opened up the sector. The decision has also made payment process simpler. The new provision was introduced also to reduce the use of Indian currency in their illegal import. After India made gold trade flexible, illegal import from the southern border had increased. In Nepal, 12 to 15 tons of gold are consumed every year. However, due to its steep price hike, the volume of its transactions has decreased by 50 percent in the recent months.

**THE 62<sup>ND</sup> SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN** Rights Commission would start in Geneva from coming Monday. The start of the session had been postponed by one week after the discussion over the transformation of the Human Rights Commission into Human Rights Council prolonged in the UN General Assembly. In order to present Nepal report, Ian Martin, chief of UN human rights office in Nepal, is already in Geneva. Foreign Minister Ramesh Nath Pandey, who cancelled his trip scheduled trip last week, is expected to travel to Geneva next week. ■

## Japan Provides Kendo Equipment

Japanese ambassador Tsutomu Hiraoka handed over the Kendo equipments to Rajaram Shrestha, Mayor of Kathmandu Metropolitan City amidst a function on March 18, 2006 at the Multipurpose Martial Arts Centre (MMAC), Nayabazar. The equipments are donation to MMAC from All Japan Kendo Federation. **Kendo**, "Way of the Sword", originated from a martial art of handling the Japanese sword and was formerly called **ken-jutsu**. This art was pertinent to "Bushii" the warrior class of feudal time of Japan. After the era of "Bushii" or "Samurai" terminated in the middle of 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was transformed into a sport for the physical and especially moral and spiritual training for people from all walks of life, and **ken-jutsu** developed into **kendo**. Kendo practitioners use swords with bamboo blades called **shinai** and wear protection over the face, chest, stomach, and hands. The **shinai** differs with its length and weight depending on the ages of the players. As one of the most popular sports in Japan, kendo requires energy, quick decision-making, and composure. Since the International Kendo Federation was established in 1970, kendo has become very popular particularly in some Western countries such as Germany, France, U.K. and also in Asian countries such as South Korea, China, Malaysia or Thailand. Kendo's origins go back to the seventh or eighth century. Behind kendo there lie the philosophies of Confucianism, Buddhism and the code of conduct of the Samurais called "Bushido". Recently kendo has developed as a sport that attach importance to moral and spiritual training as well as acquiring discipline. "In today's Japan Kendo, together with Judo and other martial arts, is established as a major sports enjoyed by many people. Some junior and senior high school add it to the school curriculum as a part of physical education. There are also numerous training centers, called **dojo** throughout the country," states a press release from the Embassy of Japan. "This year particularly marks the Golden Jubilee of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and the Kingdom of Nepal. To celebrate the 50th anniversary, various programs are being prepared throughout the year with recognition that 50 years of friendship is indeed an epoch-making achievement and with determination to build a new chapter of friendship for another 50 years and beyond. The handover ceremony is one of the programs that highlights our friendly relations." The release further states, "It is to be noted that the Multipurpose Martial Arts Centre is a symbolic project of friendship between our two nations. It also represents twin city relationship between Kathmandu Metropolitan City and Matsumoto City of Japan. The Centre will certainly play a significant role in strengthening the existing friendly relationship between the two countries and its people."



“Election to the constituent assembly will disintegrate the country into baisi and chaubisi states.”

*Taranath Ranabhat, Speaker of the dissolved House of Representatives, addressing a program in the capital.*

\* \* \*

“Nothing symbolizes Britain’s support for parliamentary democracy in Nepal more clearly than the fact that the Speaker’s Chair carved in oak in each House of your parliament were gifts from our parliament to yours here in Kathmandu.”

*Sir John Stanley, member of the House of Commons and Conservative Party Leader, talking to reporters after arriving in Kathmandu, leading a team of six British MPs on “listen and learn” mission, in The Himalayan Times.*

\* \* \*

“A Maoist takeover would almost certainly lead to instability in a region of great importance to the United States.”

*Donald Camp, US Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia and Central Asian affairs, delivering a statement before the House Committee on International, in Washington DC.*

\* \* \*

“The mandate of OHCHR-Nepal is not affected by the creation of the Human



Bimarsha

Rights Council or the close of the Commission on Human Rights. We will continue to operate under the two-year agreement signed in April 2005.”

*Ian Martin, Representative of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, in Nepal.*

\* \* \*

“I see a very bright future of Nepal. Nepalese are diligent, honest and capable. Nepal’s progress is also my wish.”

*K. V. Rajan, former Indian ambassador to Nepal, in Bimarsha.*

\* \* \*

“If one could become a prime minister just by ‘puja’ (worship), everyone would worship.”

*Jeep Chhiring Lama, central working committee member of Nepali Congress-Democratic (NC-D), refuting reports that former prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuba was engaged in worshipping deities to become prime minister again, in Jana Astha.*

\* \* \*

“No matter what political ideology a student abides by, during the exam period no student will be

harassed.”

*Radha Krishna Mainali, Minister for Education and Sports, assuring full safety to students and calling other parties and Maoists for letting the smooth conduction of SLC examination.*

\* \* \*

“We are not scared of the Maoists, but of the agents of the government.”

*Girija Prasad Koirala, president of Nepali Congress and former prime minister, talking to reporters at his residence in Maharajgunj, in Annapurna Post.*

\* \* \*

## TRANSITION

**LEFT:** Sher Bahadur Deuba, president of Nepali Congress-Democratic and former prime minister, for USA, to collect international support for the ongoing fight for democracy in Nepal.

**ACCREDITED:** Tara Bahadur Thapa, Royal Nepalese Ambassador to Thailand, also as the ambassador to Brunei, by the King, in accordance with the Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal, 1990.

**SACKED:** Three judges- Kedar Prasad Pyakurel of Humla district court, Chitra Dev Joshi of Syangja district court and Ganesh Panjiyar of Bajura district court,

by the King, as per the recommendation of the Judicial Council.

**AWARDED:** ‘Muna’, a literary child magazine, with this years’ CNFN award, by Federation of Child NGOs in Nepal.

**PROMOTED:** Deputy Inspector Generals (DIG) of Police **Rup Sagar Moktan** and **Krishna Basnet**, to the post of Additional Inspector Generals (AIG) of Police, by the government.

**DIED:** Tirtha Man Jyapoo, a communist leader, at the age of 66.

Social Worker **Krishna Bahadur Singh**, at the age of 88.

**RELEASED:** Bimalendra Nidhi, central leader, and **Pradeep Giri**, central committee member of Nepali Congress-Democratic, from police custody, by a verdict of the Supreme Court.

**ELECTED:** Dr. Manohar Lal Shrestha, as the president, **Rakesh Verma**, as the vice-president, **Pradeep Baidhya** as the secretary, **Prem Gyawali**, as the treasurer, **Uttam Kumar Nepal** as the joint-secretary and **Pawan Kumar** as the joint-treasurer of the Nepal Surgeons’ Society, by an election of the Society.

**APPOINTED:** Dr. Mahendra Bahadur Bista, as the Director General of Health Services Department, by the government.

# Independent Power Producers Of Nepal

By DR. AB THAPA

This brief article is aimed at explaining the Independent Power Producers' Association, Nepal (IPPAN) in reference to their article published on February 3, 2006 in SPOTLIGHT. The IPPAN article published in the SPOTLIGHT reaches conclusion based on the understandings described hereinafter that, however, could not be factual. (1) Only large storage projects can take care of peak load whereas the run-of-river (ROR) projects can take care of only the base load. (2) Load shedding from 2000 till 2005 ended because the projects built by Independent Power Producers (IPP) came into operation (3) Our private sector could look ahead to harnessing our vast 42,000 MW technical hydropower potential that would certainly include the projects, like the Karnali Chisapani Project, each with installed capacity of 10 to 15 million KW if our government improved the legal and regulatory framework for attracting investment.

Every Nepali would certainly like to get clear views on above described contentions. They might also be interested to get answer on the following questions. Why our country's hydropower sector had to go through present power supply crunch. Who is to be held responsible for our power sector crisis? Could it be avoided? What lies ahead?

## Private Sector Participation Should Be Promoted

Recently in trade and industry related deliberations the privatization has become the buzzword. In several areas of economic activities and development the liberalization and privatization have already become indispensable for the growth of commerce and industry. Thus, Nepal also should promote private sector participation. The IPP could play important role in development of hydropower in Nepal. However, it would not be prudent to expect that the IPP could solely be responsible to develop our mega projects which are mostly by nature multipurpose. We should remember that even the countries like the USA and Canada could not depend upon their private sector in deciding to implement relatively big hydropower projects. The US Presidents and Canadian Prime Ministers themselves were directly involved.

## Regulatory Body Must Be Effective

The hydropower projects implemented in Nepal with the assistance of the foreign donors in the past have been well planned following the normal engineering practices. However, the handling of private sector in the development of water resources has not only raised suspicions in the people's minds of unfair dealings but has even provided glaring proof of the outright sacrifice of the interest of the people and the country.

Over the last decade our power development plans have been thrown into a complete disarray. The IPP were virtually given a free hand in planning as well as implementation of the hydropower projects. The task of the regulatory body is nothing more than a formality. The controversy over the

installed capacity of the 35 MW Bhoté-Kosi Project clearly shows that the regulatory body was merely a bystander.

## Bhoté-Kosi Project Dispute

Until now our government's performance in handling private developers of hydropower projects has been extremely shocking. Government endorsed whatever the private developers proposed. There is nobody from the government side to check the works of the private developers at the site. As a result, in case of the Bhoté-Kosi Project the concerned Department and the Ministry came to know only after the completion of the construction works that the installed capacity of that hydropower project had been raised from 35 MW to 45 MW completely defying the power purchase agreement. It is quite strange that the Government learnt about it only after a claim was lodged by the private developer with the government threatening the NEA to buy extra power to be generated entirely during the monsoon season which is going to be totally wasted.

## Jacked Up Estimated Cost

The Khimti hydropower project operating at a very high head of about 650 meters was seen in the past as one of the most attractive projects for the generation of cheap electricity. It is a very attractive hydropower project because it is planned to operate at an extremely high head. The power tunnel is not too long. On an average the per unit investment cost of the hydropower project of the size of the Khimti Project operating at such a high head would have to be about US \$ 1,000 per KW. The Khimti Hydropower Project, like the Marshyangdi, Kaligandaki and other projects, does not have big hydraulic structures that have to be provided at a relatively high cost to store water to operate the hydropower in full capacity in evening hours when the demand for electricity is at the peak. As a result, it would not have surprised anyone to find that the unit investment cost of this project is even below US \$ 1,000 per KW. According to the feasibility study report prepared by the NORPOWER just before the commencement of the construction works the estimated cost of this project was about US \$ 60 million. Thus the NORPOWER estimated that the unit investment cost of this project would be about US \$ 1,000 per KW. Astonishingly, the cost estimate was raised to US\$ 140 millions to calculate the selling price of the electricity to the NEA.

## Large Storage Projects Not Indispensable

It is wrong to consider, as some IPP are saying, that large storage projects are indispensable to meet the peak load demand. In fact, a relatively very small pond can suffice to operate hydropower to meet the peak load demand. The 60 MW Khimti Project is virtually an incomplete project. An important component of a run-of-river hydropower is a small pond for the storage of water for daily use needed to enhance the value of the firm energy. This very important structure is

missing. The Khimti project is forced to operate at base load, thus it would be producing electricity at a constant rate throughout the day and night. Under such circumstances the true per unit (KWh) value of the firm power of the Khimti for countries like Nepal and India suffering from capacity shortage might be only about half by comparison with other run-of-river power projects like the Sundarijal, Pharping, Panauti, Marshyangdi, Trisuli etc

**Grossly Inflated Installed Capacity**

The installed capacity of the Khimti project is too much for the type of run-of-river project that can operate to meet only the demand for base load. The Khimti project produces an enormous volume of seasonal energy due to unnecessarily high installed capacity of the power station, which is 60 MW against its firm capacity of only about 18 MW. The seasonal energy procured from the Khimti is completely wasted. Unfortunately, to make matters even worse, the NEA had to build at its own cost very expensive high voltage 120 KV transmission lines from the Khimti to Katmandu almost exclusively for the supply of seasonal energy, which anyway would be completely wasted.

Low voltage transmission lines at far less investment would have been adequate for the transmission of the entire Khimti firm energy. In all these matters other IPP projects are no better.

**Irrational Indrawati Power Projects Plan**

The UNDP supported feasibility study report of the Melamchi Project explains that around the time 2011 the total system demand for water supply (in Kathmandu valley) is expected to reach the total supply from in-valley surface sources and Melamchi. Thereafter the next stage of the development of the Melamchi will be required. This entails diversion from the YANGRI and LARKE rivers that flow to the east of the Melamchi. Water would be diverted by tunnels to a point upstream of the Melamchi intake. The total length of the delivery tunnels is expected to be over 12 kilometers. The Larke and the Yangri are the main tributaries of the Indrawati River. After the diversion of the Yangri and Larke rivers into

the Melamchi there would hardly be any flow in the upper reach of the Indrawati River during the dry season.

The IPP were adamant to build the hydropower utilizing the Yangri and Larke waters. They perfectly knew that such hydropower would be generating only seasonal energy after the diversion of the Yangri and Larke into the Melamchi. One hydropower project is recently completed and the others are at the planning stage. It confuses every common man to understand why it was allowed to lease out the Indrawati River to private developers to build a cascade of hydropower projects. Could not we find some other suitable rivers anywhere in Nepal to be leased out to private hydropower developers?

**Are IPP Projects Greatly Helping to Avert Load shedding?**

It is stated in the annual report 2003/04 that the NEA registered a net loss of NRs. 1.78 billion despite the fact that the electricity tariff of the NEA is one of the highest in our region. Most of the NEA revenue went towards payments to IPP. About 43 percent of the total revenue generated was utilized in purchasing energy from the IPP despite the fact that the total firm capacity of all IPP projects is only about 60 MW (out of the total installed capacity of 140 MW) during the dry season when the demand for electricity is the highest. Thus the total firm capacity of all IPP projects is only about 12% of the total firm capacity of all power stations in the national grid (about 500 MW). It is really sad to note that the NEA is obliged to pay to IPP about 43% of its total revenue despite the fact that the total firm capacity of all IPP hydropower might be only about 12% of the total firm capacity in the national grid.

During the wet seasons the demand for electricity is significantly reduced on one hand and on the other hand the electricity generation is also increased due to rise in river flows. As a result, even now the NEA is generating electricity during the wet seasons in excess of the total demand.

*(Dr. Thapa writes on water resources)*

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## BLOCKADE WITHDRAWN

# Short Relief?

Although the Maoists have withdrawn blockade, they show no sign of letting up their violent activities

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

A day after the Maoists called off their blockade and bandhs following a deal reached with the political parties in New Delhi, India, two civilians were killed in powerful explosion in Morang. A rickshaw puller Domi Sardar and a bystander Kulananda Shah died when Sardar tried to clear the road in Lohandra bridge. Unfortunately, Sardar's action triggered a bomb planted there by the Maoists.

Even though the Maoists withdrew their violently-imposed blockade and bandh that crippled transport across the country, the insurgents show no sign of giving up their violent methods despite agreeing to help the parties in their peaceful protests.

Notwithstanding the claims made by the political parties that the Maoists have shown enough inclination to give up violence and join peaceful political mainstream, the actions on the ground speak otherwise.

A day after the Maoist chairman Prachanda issued a statement withdrawing blockade and bandhs, armed Maoist insurgents attacked a security patrolling unit killing 13 soldiers of Royal Nepalese Army (RNA) at Dapcha area of Kavre district. According to security forces, the patrolling unit had reached the area in order to open up the source of drinking water cut off by the Maoists there.

Earlier, following two-week-long negotiation between leaders of seven parties and the Maoists in New Delhi, India, the two sides had agreed to implement the 12-point understanding with added commitments. The understanding led to the withdrawal of blockades and bandhs beginning March 20. In return, the parties have announced four-day general strike from April 6-9.



Road blocks: Crippling the movement

"The understanding with the Maoists is aimed at bringing them to the political mainstream," said Girija Prasad Koirala, Nepali Congress president, talking to reporters in Biratnagar on March 20. However, despite their best of efforts, parties have not yet been able to convince the Maoists to give up their violent ways.

Since the 12-point understanding reached in November last year, the Maoists have withdrawn their unilateral ceasefire and gone back to their old and tested methods of violence even as parties are finding it increasingly difficult to justify the understanding in the face of growing domestic and international apprehensions.

Since March 14 blockade was enforced, the Maoists have made ample use of terror and violence to intimidate the transporters. In attempting to forcefully block highways and obstruct transport system, the Maoists even targeted an ambulance carrying a sick kid near Kotre VDC in Tanahun-Kaski border along Prithvi highway. The ambulance was en route from Tanahun to Pokhara when the armed Maoists opened fire at it injuring the kid's grandfather. Likewise, in Tanahun

district's Dulegaunda, the Maoists blew up a part of concrete bridge over Haledi river – a precious rural infrastructure.

Likewise, the insurgents opened fire at a bus carrying patients to Chaudhary Eye Hospital in Lahan early this week. In Kanepokhari of Morang district, the Maoists torched a bus after forcing its passengers to get down. The bus was en route to Kakarbhitta from Dharan. Likewise, a minibus carrying vegetables from Nawalpur, Sarlahi to Kathmandu was torched near Paurai jungle in Rautahat district by the Maoists. Unfortunately, the Maoist actions did not attract the level of criticism and condemnation they deserved.

Even though they have called off their blockade this time, it appears to be a short relief as the insurgents show every inclination to revert back to their violent ways and means. And if they do so, it will put the parties, who are leading peaceful protests for the restoration of democracy, on the back-foot.

## POLITICS

# Democracy Without Elections

Political leaders and civil society members are demanding the restoration of democracy opposing any move to hold the elections

By KESHAB POUDEL

With the announcement of seven parties alliance to reconcile with the Maoists and confront with the King by agreeing upon the terms and conditions of second Declaration drafted in New Delhi between representatives of seven parties alliance and the Maoists, the parties have shown that they are not genuinely interested to revive the democratic process but are bent on helping to extend the present interim arrangement.

After announcing four days general strikes from April 6-9 with tacit support of the Maoists, the seven party alliance has made it clear that they are in no mood for compromise and reconciliation with the King. The democracy can be achieved only through the process of dialogue and negotiations but the parties' program reveal that they will neither restore democracy nor shorten

the life of present unaccountable government.

From political activists of democratic parties to so-called members of 'democratic' civil society, all of them are chanting slogans for restoration of democracy. Interestingly, all of them want to see restoration of democracy without elections of the House of Representatives.

"We will oppose any election tooth and nail. There is no question of holding the elections of House of Representatives," said Nepali Congress leader Arjun Narshing K.C. "Only following the reinstatement of House of Representatives, the matter will be finalized on Constituent Assembly."

There is a loud voice in the streets that the King should restore the democracy and nobody in the street will disagree to that. The disagreement comes on how democracy should be restored.

"The solution of present political crisis will be found through the elections

for Constituent Assembly. The reinstatement of House of Representatives will form powerful government to hold the elections," said leader of United People's Front Lilamani Pokharel.

According to them, the way to Constituent Assembly is through the revival of the parliament by the King. That revived parliament will give a powerful government, which will initiate for the Constituent Assembly.

Perhaps, they, too, don't believe that the King will oblige them by reinstating the parliament to abolish the present constitution and probably the monarchy, too. Political leaders have not made clear what will be the next step if the King does not help them in destroying the present constitution.

"Willingly or unwillingly, the King has declared a dateline for the elections of the parliament. Unfortunately, that has not convinced the opposition political parties. Political parties are not talking of the elections but they are demanding the power through the reinstated parliament," said a political analyst.

Nobody knows for how many years that reinstated parliament would function. After reinstatement of the parliament, when the next elections will be held? There is a demand for restoration of democracy, but by all implications, that means a democracy without elections. The parties are demanding a democracy with an interim arrangement of government having no accountability to anybody.

"The revived House will form all party government and decide the elections for the constituent assembly, which will later frame the constitution guaranteeing total democracy," said Pokharel. "We don't want to fix the life of parliament as it will be there till the elections of Constituent Assembly will be held."

The country has suffered much not only by insurrection and unstable governments but due to absence of elected parliament as well as a government accountable to it. Calling for restoration of democracy without elections for the parliament, political parties seem to be in no mood to see the functional democracy.



Party protestors: Confrontation mode

Photo: Guy Kitchens

# CHINESE STATE COUNCILOR TANG'S VISIT

## Peace Mission

Without departing from the historically evolved China's basic foreign policy towards Nepal, Tang Jiaxuan, State Councilor of People's Republic of China, has reformulated the lines and languages of the policy of China in a changed context. With an adequate emphasis upon the requirement of national reconciliation between all political forces in Nepal as well as broader reconciliation among the nations in South Asia for the purpose of attaining economic prosperity and economic development, China has taken the notice of the fact that regional conflict has a reflection upon the current conflict in Nepal. Along with the United States, world's only superpower, Britain and Japan, China also joins the group stressing for the reconciliation between the constitutional forces. How Nepal's internal political forces and democratic India – which has also been officially stressing the reconciliation between monarchy and political parties - will respond to Tang's fresh call for regional reconciliation remains to be seen

By KESHAB POUDEL

**“I** am fully satisfied with my visit to Nepal,” said Chinese state Councilor Tang Jiaxuan, who began his fourth visit to Nepal praying for peace in Lumbini, birth place of Buddha, before boarding to his own chartered

*Airbus on March 18 at Tribhuwan International Airport on his way back home to Beijing.*

Unlike previous visits of Chinese leaders, the stress of Chinese leader Tang, who is also former foreign minister, was upon the reconciliation and unity among Nepal's constitutional forces. At the same time, there was a call for regional reconciliation.

Five-decades back when Nepal's peace and stability was seriously under threat from an India-based armed insurrection, then Chinese defense minister Chen Yi threatened to act declaring an aggression upon Nepal will be considered as aggression upon China. Following forty years of relative tranquility, Nepal's peace and stability has once again been seriously disrupted

with more intensity and devastation similar to the past but the reaction from China has now been completely different.

#### Peace Offensive

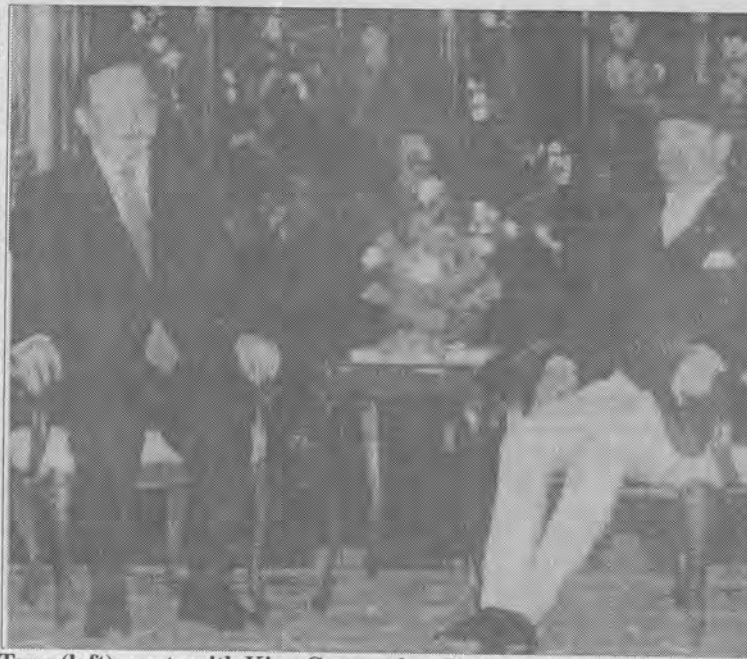
Five decades ago it was in a line of military offensive whereas this time it is in a form of peace offensive. China considers Nepal's independence as a guarantee of its own security. Nepal's importance has not been reduced but the way of dealing is quite different. Any serious minded security strategist could easily guess how China will prefer to deal with

when its perspective adversaries. The way China

has been transforming its social and economic structures, it needs peace and harmony. Therefore, instead of aggressive postures, China goes for reconciliation and cooperation with all major powers as long as possible.

"The Himalayan region occupies a strategic position between China and India. Although factors of tensions and instability are always present in this region—because of unresolved territorial disputes and also political upheavals in Nepal—a new era of regional diplomacy is about to start as China takes steps to realize its priority for 'economic development in peaceful environment.' At the hinterland of the Himalayas, Tibet at the forefront of China's strategy in this region. The impact of that strategy on China's perception of Tibet issue needs to be reassessed in the context of China's "Go West" policy and trade diplomacy toward South Asia," writes Thierry Mathou, a career diplomat and an associated political scientist with the Department of Himalayan Studies of the National Center for Scientific Research, Paris in his article *Tibet and Its Neighbors*. (See *Asian Survey* July/August 2005)

Few weeks back, China had a joint military exercise with its disputed territory Taiwan which was an example of China's endeavor to overcome narrow and



Tang (left) meets with King Gyanendra: Peace on the agenda TKP

distinctive prejudice. Experiences have shown that the present China has been much open and transparent in its dealing with other countries and South Asia is not exception.

"China has taken notice of the fact that the regional conflict has a reflection upon the current events of conflicts in Nepal. The psychology of cold war has to be changed into the psychology of trust and belief by open and transparent activities in the region. Nowhere in the other South Asian capital, has any Chinese leader previously made such a pronouncement for a regional reconciliation. This is for the first time Chinese government addressed the problem of the cold war mentality between India and China," said a political analyst. "The way Chinese confidence and capability have been built up by their massive economic progress, it is not the war board upon some irrelevant ideological issues but the peace and cooperation have now been in the interest of China to promote."

"This new posture of China must have positive effects in the conflict ridden South Asian countries. Now it is democratic India's turn to respond to the present call for national reconciliation in deeds and actions and Nepal would be the most appropriate place to exhibit the same kind of spirit of regional

reconciliation," said the analyst. "China has emphasized very much about the common interest of the countries of the region to have coexistence and peaceful political process."

#### Pursuing Reconciliation

The previous China had aroused a revolutionary fever all over the world which has still some reminiscence in some dark corners of the world but the new China has new ideology in word and deeds to transform the traditional society into modern ones in a peaceful competition and cooperation.

"Pursuing the reconciliation between constitutional political forces, China stands with United States, Britain and Japan on Nepal's problems," said a senior diplomat of western country commenting on the new scenario.

A very small step with a very few words, the visiting Chinese statesman in Nepal Tang has initiated to bury down the past hostile attitudes to a new trend of reconciliation and cooperation between countries of both the sides of Himalayas. In that case, a peaceful, democratic and prosperous Nepal will really be a very convenient and beneficial transit country between the countries of central Asia as well as the South Asia.

"South Asia is close to China. We are glad to see that, thanks to the concerted efforts made by the parties concerned, South Asia continues to move in the right direction, marked by steady economic growth, deepening regional cooperation and growing international status. China sincerely hopes to see political stability, social harmony and economic prosperity in South Asia and amicable co-existence, strong cooperation and common development among South Asian Countries," said Tang.

"It is not too difficult to achieve the goal if reconciliation is responded by

reconciliation. It will be very unfortunate if reconciliation is responded by belligerence. Whether Nepal is called zone of peace or transit country or anything else, Nepal's independence is, in fact, a guarantee of peace and security of both the big neighbors," added the analyst.

#### Shift In Attitudes

One of the remarkable attitudes of the Chinese government leader's visit was to give significant importance to the leaders of opposition parties too without embarrassing the Palace and government considering the big gap existing between them. It was not an easy task to maintain same warmth for the King as well as for opposition leaders.

"We had a very friendly interaction with Chinese leader Tang. I briefed him about steps taken by seven parties mentioning that political parties are not against the dialogue but the King is not genuinely interested to hold it. The King is just making lip service half heartedly calling for dialogue," said former prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, who held half an hour meeting with Chinese leader Tang.

The government side is also satisfied with the outcome of the visit. "This visit was very successful and the Nepali government is satisfied with this visit," said foreign minister Ramesh Nath Pandey. "Tang's visit has proved that China-Nepal relations are all-weather relations."

By meeting with opposition leaders and calling for reconciliation, China has undone the past hangover from the mind of common people as well as Nepal's other neighbors. This visit has also helped the King by removing misunderstanding that the King's road map had a tacit backing of China.

"Chinese leader Tang explicitly said that Chinese people and government are with the people of Nepal. Despite several efforts to bar our meeting, Chinese leader Tang met us and conveyed the message that they want to see reconciliation," said acting general secretary of CPN-UML, Amrit Kumar Bohara. "This visit proved wrong for the Royal government officials who claimed that they are backed by China."



Tang welcomed by Bista: Journey of Friendship

#### Reconciliation Between Constitutional Forces

Like Americans and Japanese, Chinese leader Tang stressed for the reconciliation between constitutional forces to keep Nepal united and peaceful - giving a message to the Maoist leadership and representatives of seven parties reportedly holding dialogue in Indian capital New Delhi that China prefers first reconciliation between constitutional forces.

"In his meeting with Chinese leader, Nepali Congress leader Girija Prasad Koirala mentioned that there is a need to give a chance to illegal political force (Maoist) to join mainstream and peaceful politics citing the past experiences of such practice but Chinese leader Tang stressed the need for reconciliation between constitutional forces first," said Dr. Suresh Chalise, foreign policy department chief of Nepali Congress, who was included in the three-member Congress delegation that met with the Chinese leader. "Tang's message is that China wants to see initial reconciliation between constitutional forces," said Sujata Koirala, member of Nepali Congress and another member of the delegation.

Tang's visit has nullified alleged propaganda of mischievous motives of China. A small step for national reconciliation in Nepal taken by an

emerging super power has created hope for better regional relationship. Without departing from the historically evolved China's basic foreign policy towards Nepal, vice premier Tang reformulated the line and language of the foreign policy of China again in a changed context with an adequate emphasis upon regional peace and reconciliation.

"We sincerely hope that all constitutional forces in Nepal will set store by the fundamental interest of the country and people, and seek to appropriately settle the current difficulties and problems through dialogues, based on the maintenance of Nepal's independence, sovereignty and national unification. A Nepal of peace, reconciliation and amity, enjoying stability, development and prosperity serves the fundamental interest of its people and will promote regional peace, stability and development," said Chinese leader Tang.

At a time when some persons in politics and intelligentsia are suggesting the need for a mediation by international power to solve ongoing conflict, China takes a stand against involvement of any third party in Nepal. "Nepal is a sovereign country, and its internal affairs shall not be interfered with in any way by any outside forces. We believe that the Nepalese government and people have the political wisdom and



capabilities to solve their own problems," said Chinese leader Tang.

The pace of economic development accomplished in far east Asian countries Japan, Korea and Malaysia joined by China is gradually transforming the regional situation. There is also tremendous pressure upon India to catch up with China in economic development.

"Chinese leaders are clear in their thought that economic development is possible only in peaceful environment. This is the reason councilor Tang called for national as well as regional peace in his recent visit," said former Royal Nepalese ambassador to China Rajeshwor Acharya.

"In this most troubled era of our history, we seek the support of China, which is one of the cradles of the ancient civilization, a great world power with glorious history and miraculous achievements in the present era, is our most reliable friend and neighbor whose support for our sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity is unflinching. We also appreciate China's wish to see Nepal realize peace, stability, development and national reconciliation and its latest call to all Nepalese forces to narrow down differences through dialogue is the best suggestion a sincere friend can deliver," said Madan Regmi, chairman of China Study Center Nepal.

During his three day stay in Nepal, Chinese leader Tang met King Gyanendra, senior ministers, leaders of major agitating political parties including Nepali Congress leader Girija Prasad Koirala, Nepali Congress (Democratic) leader Sher Bahadur Deuba and acting general secretary of CPN-UML Amrit Kumar Bohara. "Nepal welcomes the suggestion given by Chinese vice premier Tang," said deputy premier Kirtinidhi Bista.

Despite pressure from all corners, the rightist extremists with the King and leftist extremists with liberal democratic parties have been making every effort to prevent reconciliation between the King and the political parties.

It is interesting to note here how a Chinese scholar Wang Zong in his recent book, held the view that reconciliation

between the King and Nepali Congress was necessary to avoid the foreign interference in Nepali politics. "After imposition of state of emergency by Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi in 1975, B.P. Koirala and Nepali Congress workers returned to Nepal with a slogan for national reconciliation. B.P. Koirala held the view that reconciliation between the King and him would secure Nepal. But, reconciliation between the King and Nepali Congress was foiled. India has again got opportunity to involve in Nepal's power politics," writes Chinese scholar Wang Zong in his book *Nepal's Defensive*

reconciliation between constitutional forces is necessary to bring stability in the country, senior ministers of King Gyanendra's cabinet and some leaders of opposition parties are harping the line of conflict and disunity. "I don't believe that unity between the King and the political parties will bring peace and stability in the country. If so, when the Maoists insurgency begun in 1996, the relations between the King and the political parties were cordial," said first vice chairman Dr. Tulsi Giri, addressing the convention of Nepal National Journalist Federation on (March 9, Gorkhapatra).



**Koirala (left) holds consultations with Tang: Message of reconciliation**

*Strategy and Nepal-China Relation*, published in July 2005 by China Study Center in Nepali language.

#### **Sound of Disunity**

Although King Gyanendra is leading a cabinet consisting of some extremist rightists who do not have any faith in present constitution, he never had any second thoughts over the use and importance of present constitution – which can still be a document to resume unity. The peculiar political quagmire seems to have put the King in a difficult situation having no effective option similar to the handicapped opposition politicians.

At a time when Nepal's western democracies including the United States of America and northern neighbor see

"There is no question to initiate a dialogue with the King. We will topple the present illegitimate government through mass agitations. The forthcoming people's agitation scheduled to begin on April 6 will be the final one," said Amrit Kumar Bohara, acting general secretary of CPN-UML.

Unlike 1960s era of cold war, senior leader of Nepal's northern neighbor China this time came with peace offensive. At a time when Nepal has been passing through a very critical phase of violent insurgency – the leaders of which is currently involved in negotiations in the capital of Nepal's southern neighbor India – senior Chinese leader's gesture is clear and unambiguous towards the need of peace and reconciliation. ■

# “Our Two Peoples Have Treated Each Other As Equals, With Trust, Respect And Sincerity”

By TANG JIAXUAN

I am very glad to visit Nepal, a beautiful country, at the invitation of Vice Chairman Kirtinidhi Bista of the Council of Ministers. This is my fourth visit to Nepal, and I've come to develop friendship, increase mutual trust, and expand cooperation. Over the past two days, I have held talks with the Nepalese leaders, and met with many friends. We had in-depth exchange of views on expanding the traditional and friendly relations between China and Nepal, and increased mutual understanding and reached common ground on a wide range of issues. These meetings and talks have left me with deep impression, that is, the Nepalese people cherish their friendly ties with the Chinese people and are eager to see Nepal-China friendship flourish.

Thus, I am all the more glad to meet you here, both to renew friendship with old friends and make new ones, and I do appreciate your interest in China and your commitment to China-Nepal friendship. I wish to take this opportunity to thank the China Study Center for co-hosting this event, extend my best wishes to all the members of the Center, and express my best wishes to all the Nepalese friends who were committed to enhancing the friendship between our two countries.

China and Nepal are close neighbors on the two sides of the Himalayan mountains and have a long history of friendly ties. It is said that more than two thousand years ago, Manjushri came all the way from the Wutai mountains in China to Nepal. He cut open the mountain with his sword and drained the water from the lake, thus creating the Kathmandu valley. This beautiful legend gives vivid expression to the ardent desire of our two peoples for friendship. Historical records show that the friendly exchanges of China and Nepal date back to as early as the mid-7th century. At that time, China and Nepal already started exchanging emissaries. Fahien, a Chinese eminent monk in the Jin Dynasty and Huen Tsang, another Chinese eminent monk in the Tang Dynasty, came to Lumbini, birthplace of Buddha, on pilgrimages. Songtsen Gampo, King of the Tubo Kingdom in the Tang Dynasty married a Nepalese princess Bhrikuti. The Nepalese artist Arniko built a Buddhist pagoda in Lhasa in the Yuan Dynasty. The White Pagoda in Beijing's Miao Ying Temple was also built under his supervision. All these stories and historical facts show that China-Nepal traditional friendship is solidly based.

The growth of China-Nepal friendship owes much to the commitment and dedication of several generations of Chinese and Nepalese leaders. Such friendship is a great asset of our two peoples. His majesty Mahendra, His Majesty Birendra, His Majesty King Gyanendra, Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, Deng



Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao and other leaders of our two countries, both past and present, have brought about the flowering of China-Nepal friendship with their wisdom, vision and unremitting efforts. Thanks to their untiring efforts made over half a century, exchanges and cooperation between China and Nepal in political, diplomatic, economic and trade, cultural, educational and other fields have borne rich fruit. Indeed, China and Nepal have become a model for countries of different social systems to live in friendship. President Hu Jintao and His Majesty King Gyanendra met last year. They reached extensive agreement on deepening China-Nepal friendship and cooperation, which will greatly boost the growth of China-Nepal relations.

What has enabled China-Nepal friendship to maintain its strong momentum of growth over the years? The answer is that our two peoples have treated each other as equals, with trust, respect and sincerity. The Chinese government and people firmly pursue the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, have never interfered with the internal affairs of Nepal and highly respect the mode of development chosen by the Nepalese people. We consistently support Nepal in its effort to safeguard sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. Nepal is a sovereign country, and its internal affairs shall not be interfered with in any way by any outside forces. We believe that the Nepalese government and people have the political wisdom and capabilities to solve their own problems. On our part, we appreciate the understanding, solidarity and support that the King, Government and people of Nepal have given to China in its endeavor for peaceful development. In particular, we highly appreciate the strong support Nepal has given to us over the years on the questions of Taiwan and Tibet and other major issues related to China's sovereign rights and interests. I am confident that as both China and Nepal are committed to abiding by the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, increasing mutual trust and maintaining close cooperation, China-Nepal friendship will continue to flourish.

As we look across the globe, we can see that peace, stability, cooperation and development are the calling of the times and the common aspiration of the mankind. Both China and Nepal face a historical opportunity to develop ourselves. We should seize the opportunity, build on the past achievements and press ahead to bring China-Nepal good-neighborliness, friendship and cooperation to a new height.

The Chinese government will continue to pursue a policy of friendship towards Nepal and place high importance on developing

## REMARKS

the comprehensive and friendly relation with Nepal. We are committed to developing friendship and partnership with our neighbors, and strive to become a good neighbor, partner and friend of them. This is a solemn and long term pledge of the Chinese government. China will never change its friendly policy towards Nepal irrespective of changes both internationally and in our two countries.

The Chinese government is committed to pursuing cooperation with Nepal in all areas. As developing countries, China and Nepal are both faced with the arduous tasks of economic and national development. Strengthening cooperation of mutual benefit and promoting common development are our shared aspirations and serve our mutual interests. China is ready to increase friendly exchanges with the Nepalese royal family, government, political parties and people of all walks of life, and expand bilateral exchanges and cooperation in politics, economy, trade, culture and tourism. China will continue to support economic and social development in Nepal to the best of its capacity. Starting from July first this year, the Chinese government will provide zero-tariff treatment to some export from Nepal.

Chinese President Hu Jintao explicitly declared at the 2005 World Summit last year that the Chinese government would pledge US 10 billion worth of soft loans to developing countries to help them with their economic development in three years to follow. Nepal has been listed as one of our target countries. The Chinese government and people sincerely wish to see peace and prosperity in Nepal. We sincerely hope that all constitutional forces in Nepal will set store by the fundamental interest of the country, people, and seek to appropriately settle the current difficulties and problems through dialogues, based on the maintenance of Nepal's independence, sovereignty and national unification. A Nepal of peace, reconciliation and amity, enjoying stability, development and prosperity serves the fundamental interests of its people and will promote regional peace, stability and development. What has happened in many other countries shows that stability is crucial in a country to achieve its goal of social and economic development and improving life for its people. This is something we in China have learned in our own development endeavor.

South Asia is close to China. We are glad to see that, thanks to the concerted efforts made by the parties concerned, South Asia continues to move in the right direction, marked by steady economic growth, deepening regional cooperation and growing international status. China sincerely hopes to see political stability, social harmony and economic prosperity in South Asia, and amicable coexistence, strong cooperation and common development among South Asian countries. We value our friendly relations and cooperation with all countries in the region and are working to advance cooperation and promote common prosperity with them on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. We support the regional cooperation process, and are ready to participate in this process at both the regional and sub regional level. We welcome the recent South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) summit decision to accept China as an observer to the organization. China is ready to establish formal ties with SAARC at an early date, and enter into cooperation with it on the basis of equality and mutual benefit, thus contributing to the regional cooperation process and common development.

By embarking on the reform and opening-up program over the past two decades and more, China has found a path of development suited to its national conditions and made remarkable achievements in social and economic development. We have thus accomplished a historic transition from ensuring basic living needs of our people to making them enjoy moderate prosperity. Still, China, a country with a huge population but a weak economic foundation, faces tremendous challenges in terms of employment, poverty alleviation, resources depletion and environmental protection. We are using a scientific outlook to guide China's overall social and economic development, promoting the comprehensive, balanced and sustainable development by adhering to the principle of putting people first in a concerted effort to build a harmonious socialist society. This will necessarily be a long-term process. In the foreseeable future, we will focus all efforts and resources on promoting development.

Just a few days ago, the fourth session of the tenth National People's Congress and the fourth session of the National Committee of the Tenth Chinese Peoples' Political Consultative Conference were concluded in Beijing. The central task of these two meetings was to deliberate on, for approval, the eleventh Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development (2006-2010). Premier Wen Jiabao delivered the report on the work of government, which included an explanation of the outline of the eleventh Five Year Plan. His report was endorsed by all those who attended the two sessions. China's annual average GDP growth is set over the next five years at 7.5 percent. By 2010, it is expected that China's per capita GDP will have double that of 2000 and reached RMB 19,270. At the same time, the Chinese government will focus more on energy conservation and environmental protection. In the next five years, China's energy consumption per unit of GDP will be reduced by 20 percent, and the emission of major pollutants cut by 10 percent. The Chinese government will also adopt major steps to improve rural infrastructure, narrow the gap between rich and poor, develop education and public health capacity, promote the balanced development of the eastern, central and western regions, strengthen the nation's capacity for independent innovation in science and technology, deepen reform and open up itself still further to the outside world. The ambitious goals that the Chinese government and people have set for themselves show that they are fully confident about and capable of implementing a scientific outlook of development, and put China's economy and society on a track of people-oriented, all-round, coordinated and sustainable development.

China has embarked upon a path of peaceful development and is pursuing a development model which is peaceful, inclusive in nature and is based on cooperation. It is not accidental that China has chosen this course of development. This choice is dictated by both China's national condition and its history and culture, and is in conformity with global trends. We will never stray from this course. We are convinced that China's development will bring more opportunities to Nepal and promote the common development of our two countries. And we look forward to working with Nepal to make greater contribution to world peace, stability and prosperity through our own development.

*(Excerpts of the address by Chinese State Councilor Tang Jiaxuan in Kathmandu on March 17. He delivered the address at a program co-hosted by Chinese Embassy and China Study Center, Nepal)*

## CAMP DELIBERATIONS

# Twin Troubles

On Nepal, the US is concerned with twin troubles – terrorism and autocracy

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

A week after he returned from a visit to Nepal, the US Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia and Central Asian affairs delivered a statement before the House Committee on International Relations Sub committee on Asia and Pacific, in the Washington DC, elaborating the US foreign policy considerations and concerns vis-à-vis the deteriorating situation in the South Asian country.

On March 15, Camp deliberated before the Committee highlighting the problems Nepal has been facing, particularly in the last one year since the royal takeover.

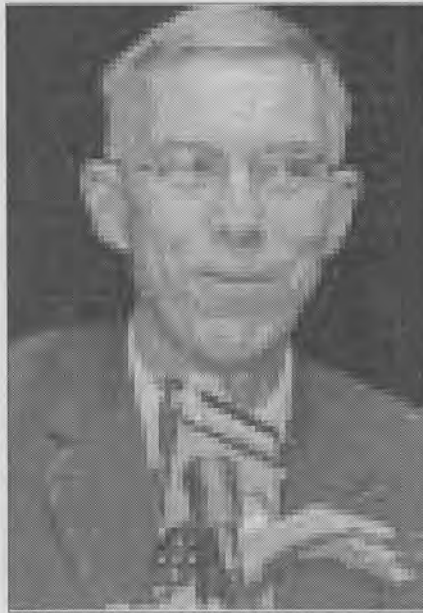
Time and again, the US officials including President George Bush, have been stating the twin concerns they have regarding Nepal – the rise of terrorism and fall of democracy. The succinct remarks President Bush made in New Delhi in early march underlines the basis of the American policy towards Nepal. "On Nepal, we agreed that the Maoists should abandon violence and that the King should reach out to political parties to restore democratic institutions," Bush said in a joint press conference accompanied by Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh in Hyderabad House, New Delhi.

Following Bush statement, Camp arrived in Kathmandu to relay the message to Nepalese domestic political actors including the parties and the King.

"The United States' primary objectives in Nepal are the restoration of multi-party democracy and the prevention of a Maoist takeover. We believe that reconciliation between the King and the political parties, and a return to democracy is the only path toward an effective counter-insurgency strategy and the

restoration of security, government services, exercise of political rights, and respect for human rights," Camp stated before the House Committee in Washington.

"At the same time, we are concerned that Maoists, who have refused to renounce violence, have gained a greater degree of legitimacy from their engagement with the political parties," Camp said.



Camp: US Concerns

The US concerns over the possibility of spill-over of violence in Nepal and disruption of regional stability was elaborated when Camp noted, "A Maoist takeover would almost certainly lead to instability in a region of great importance to the United States. Nepal nestles between China and India, the two fastest growing economies in the world. Our ability to advance our relationships with these two emerging powers will go far to determining the success of U.S. foreign policy in the coming decades."

The US has been watching with growing anxiety and apprehension the fast

deterioration of situation in Nepal following the royal takeover. Even as it continues to suspend military assistance to Royal Nepalese Army, the US is increasingly alarmed over the fast strides made by the Maoists who have been quiet adept at taking advantage of the widening gap between the King and the parties.

"It is clear the political crisis is now reaching an acute phase. Since assuming "temporary" authoritarian power on February 1, 2005, King Gyanendra and his government have become increasingly divorced from the political parties and population, while the Maoist insurgency makes steady advances in the countryside and continues its campaign of violence and intimidation. Fourteen months of palace rule have only made the security situation in Nepal more precarious, emboldened the Maoist insurgents, and widened the division between the country's legitimate political forces – the major political parties and the King."

Indication growing frustration at the lack of initiative by the King and the parties to reconcile, Camp stated that while "the King has not initiated a dialogue with the parties and he is losing domestic support, the seven major political parties have been equally reluctant to engage with the King and have entered into a "12 Point Understanding" with the Maoists. But we believe that the Maoists must forswear violence before they can be considered a legitimate political force. Moreover, the agreement is flawed in that it does not commit the Maoists to abandon their campaign of violence."

In yet another indication of growing US concern on Nepal situation, President Bush has listed conflict in Nepal among a series of unresolved challenges in the National Security Strategy report. "Regional conflicts can arise from a wide variety of causes, including poor governance, external aggression, competing claims, internal revolt, tribal rivalries, and ethnic or religious hatred. If left unaddressed, however, these different causes lead to the same ends: failed states, humanitarian disasters, and ungoverned areas that can become safe havens for terrorists," the report states.

# BRITISH MPs' VISIT Expression of Solidarity

The team of British MPs come on a 'listen and learn' mission to express solidarity with Nepali democrats

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

The picture of Speaker Taranath Ranabhat sitting in the Speaker's chair at the House of Representatives flanked by six British parliamentarians – which was splashed in front page of newspapers on Tuesday – presented a poignant image.

It was after nearly four years that the Speaker of the dissolved lower house of the parliament sat in the revered chair. "For a brief moment that I sat there, I longed to preside over a sitting parliament where people's representatives would discuss the difficulties faced by the nation and prescribe the solutions," Ranabhat told reporters.

"It was quite an important event in our visit," said Sir John Stanley, the leader of the team of six British parliamentarians who visited Nepal this week on 'listen and learn' mission and to express their concerns on terrorism, lack of democracy and violation of human rights. Sir John hoped that the Nepalese parliament would soon be functional.

Speaker Ranabhat entered the desolate parliament hall upon request from the British MPs. The empty hall with chairs covered by white clothes symbolized the 'silenced democracy' in the country.

After arriving in Kathmandu, Sir John Stanley, member of the House of Commons, told reporters that the team was here to express their concern over terrorism, suspension of parliamentary democracy and increasing cases of violation of human rights. Sir John said, "The deep concern of the British government (over Nepal) is shared in our Parliament by all the political parties."

Expressing the immense goodwill for a country with which Britain has had

over 200 years of ties, Sir John said, "Nepal is a sovereign country and the resolution of the problems the country is facing lies with the people of Nepal. However, if we can make some



British MPs with Ranabhat: Session adjourned

contribution to the peaceful re-emergence of stability and multiparty parliamentary democracy in Nepal, our visit will have been worthwhile."

Ties between Nepal and Britain dates back to Rana rule and recruitment of Gurkha soldiers.

"Nothing symbolizes Britain's support for parliamentary democracy in Nepal more clearly than the fact that the Speaker's Chair carved in oak in each House of your parliament were gifts from our parliament to yours here in Kathmandu," Sir John said.

The British MPs held a series of meetings with ministers, officials and political leaders early this week. They met with NC president Girija Prasad Koirala and acting general secretary of Unified Marxist Leninist (UML) Amrit Kumar Bohara. The British team also met with vice chairman of council of ministers Kirti Nidhi Bista. The team held a separate meeting with the chief of Royal Nepalese Army (RNA) General Pyara Jung Thapa.

## नमस्ते मोबाइलबाट पिक आवर समयमा हुने अन्तरदेशीय ट्रुडु कलमा विशेष छुटको अवधि थप

सम्बन्धित मिति - २०६२ वैशाख २५/२५

संख्या	मिति	अन्तरदेशीय ट्रुडु कलमा विशेष छुटको अवधि थप
१	२०६२ वैशाख २५/२५	१५%
२	२०६२ वैशाख २६/२६	१५%

नेपाल टेलिकम

# Expectations For Something Meaningful

By DR. TILAK RAWAL

Conflict-devastated Nepalese have started deriving some solace after listening to somewhat softened observations of stalwarts of current regime. It is gratifying to find conciliatory notes in the observations of people who until recently repeatedly suggested imposing a ban on political parties and their activities. The sharp criticism of political parties by them was reminiscent of pre-1990 three decades of party less panchayat system when political activities by parties were banned and anyone found sympathetic to leaders and parties was attacked as an anti national element. Indeed, a pleasant surprise that even some of the ministers, who never missed out on ridiculing leaders, have emphasized dialogue between the monarch and the agitating parties to resolve the crisis.

Notwithstanding incessant sharp criticism of current dispensation by political parties and declaration of further protest programs, it would not be too much to expect political leaders to declare moves of rapprochement and reconciliation. The monarch has shown flexibility and a remarkable change in the attitude of some propagandists of current dispensation is also observed. Indeed, one had to struggle to find conciliatory notes in the monarch's address given on the completion of one year rule, which was branded by parties as a futile attempt to justify the direct rule. The royal address of democracy day, however, abounded with conciliatory expressions and looked a positive departure from the earlier stand.

It seems the Narayanhiti doors are open to all political parties and their respective leaders. The big question, however, is how are these noble wishes going to be actualized? So that the sincere wishes do not remain a mere wishful thinking, concerted efforts from the concerned quarters are necessary to build further on the platform offered. Issues related to municipal elections have been rightfully forgotten as the parties in dispute have now many important agenda to concentrate on.

Indeed, a debate on whether the polls were successfully held or they ended in a fiasco does not merit attention of Nepalese who are desperately awaiting return of normalcy in Nepal. There are very good reasons to believe that the main object behind monarch's experimentation with different governments including the current one was to restore normalcy and hold much awaited elections. Since every government in the past was given time to fulfill the task that it was charged with, the current government's performance must also have been evaluated after passage of reasonable time period.

While peace thirsty Nepalese thought, encouraged as they were by the impressive speech of February 1, that direct rule would definitely bring peace to the country, the selection of people to discharge the challenging responsibility, however, prompted many to conclude that the monarch was trying to negotiate a stiff climb with a cabinet load of unhealthy subordinates on shoulder. The powerful impression that the takeover speech made on majority of Nepalese was momentary as the constitution of

government the next day and its periodic reshuffle thereafter contributed to the rapid erosion of confidence that the royal proclamation of February 1 had built.

Talking of the evaluation of current dispensation, it can be safely observed that it has a mixed story of failure and some success to reveal. On the peace front, the situation of relative quietness, no bombs and not much killing, that emerged soon after take over and is continuing till date in the Valley is definitely an improvement over the situation in the past. This situation of relative calmness, however, could not be extended to other areas where people experienced some semblance of peace only during the four months of unilateral peace declaration by the Maoists, the period that happily coincided with the annual festivals of Dashain and Tihar. Neither the Maoists have come to the negotiating table nor do they appear militarily weakened in a significant manner.

As the experience elsewhere in the world shows that force is used to bring parties in disagreement to agreement, which again is the result of table talks that are held after the military intervention. With the exception of a few cases such as British military intervention in Falkland to settle the ownership dispute with Argentina, in most cases use of force in recent times has not succeeded in providing the final solution to a problem. It may also be mentioned that NATO's firepower led to quick ouster of former dictator Milosevic who recently died in his cell while being tried for four years by International War Crime Tribunal in The Hague.

In the past, it took US forces only thirty days to effectively counter Saddam's aggression in Kuwait. More recently, American-led multilateral forces succeeded in dislodging Saddam quickly, contrary to the belief of many observers, but let us not forget that the Iraqi problem is far from over: formation of a unity government after the parliamentary polls has not been possible. The road that the Americans have decided to walk in Iraq is not a smooth one, President Bush has recently confessed. Iraq is bleeding, admits, US envoy to Iraq. Numerous examples can be cited to conclude that military intervention is only an intermediary tool.

Chief of the armed force of Nepal has gone on record in the past stating that army was constitutionally used to bring the rebels into mainstream politics. What can be inferred from this statement of general Thapa is that the goal of military intervention in Nepal is to help feuding parties reach a point of settlement and the object has never been to completely wipe out the rebels of Nepalese origin.

We have had enough of war and the time now is to talk and actualize peace. Let us refrain from sowing conflict and increasing confusion. Therefore, what is the harm in letting current ministers boast that they could hold municipal polls in a difficult situation, securing 20 percent turnout. Indeed, in the face of effective



boycott of polls by the agitating parties and Maoists vowing to make polls a total failure, it was an uphill task for the government to find adequate number of candidates for the positions lying vacant and to persuade people, no matter how small a number it was, into casting their ballots. Very rightfully, issues such as how many positions have been filled and how many elected officials have gone into hiding have now been relegated to oblivion. This issue does not merit serious attention of political leaders faced with more important challenges of conflict resolution and then mending the torn nation and the economy.

Convergence of divergent opinions can be made possible in the greater interest of the nation and its people. Of late, rebels have shown some flexibility of political nature, palace appears flexible and people would definitely expect their leaders not to lag behind in creating a conducive environment for restoration of peace. Let us also not take interest shown by friendly nations as interference in our internal affairs as long as the utterances and actions of our friends are well intentioned. If we had no problems, we would definitely not tolerate foreigners professing unnecessarily. Because we have serious problems at home, we need assistance, both technical and financial, from multilateral and bilateral fronts as has been the case in other trouble-torn nations such as Sri-Lanka, Afghanistan, Sudan, Congo, etc.

The Norwegian brokered ceasefire in Sri Lanka is still on, despite fear of collapse, but the huge money on offer is yet to be delivered by the donors because there has been no substantial progress in peace talks there. There is no harm in accepting conditional inputs as long as they augment welfare of the nation and its people, which can be possible through creation of assets and its justifiable distribution. To create wealth and welfare, we have to make sure that a proper environment prevails to effectively use available resources.

Notwithstanding some differences of opinion amongst friendly nations of Nepal such as US and UK on the twelve point pacts inked by the parties and the rebels, the unanimous opinion

of outside world has stood in favor of resolution of current problem through dialogue and negotiations. In retrospect, it is seen that these powerful nations have worked jointly achieving varying level of input (military intervention) output (restoration of normalcy) ratios in conflict-torn areas such as Afghanistan, Iraq and Darfur region of Sudan to name a few. Let us benefit from the inputs of friendly nations and agencies. What is the harm in getting meaningful inputs from a dozen friendly nations?

A rumor is also going on that the monarch is likely to offload the burden assumed in a difficult circumstance in favor of someone soon. Nepalese would be interested to see that the person chosen to lead the government has a clear vision and succeeds in bringing the parties and the palace nearer and then approach the rebels for a much longed meaningful result. The change this time has to be meaningful because Nepalese want no patch work: they are least interested in watching who succeeds in maneuvering his or her way into position of power and influence because they are tired and sick of such activities in the past. The attitude of indifference that is slowly but dangerously developing amongst people should not take alarming proportion.

Maoists may also wish to realize that they have established themselves as a military force, delivering crippling blows to ill-equipped government security personnel in the initial years of conflict and not easily succumbing now to the power of joint security forces. However, to be considered a political force nationally and internationally, they will have to shun violence and take resort to democratic norms and procedures. Maoists may also wish to refrain from activities that tend to make the life of common man miserable because guns can not be taken resort to indefinitely to garner mass support. With flexibility shown by different quarters and conciliatory notes flowing from some, it seems the opportune moment has arrived to start something meaningful this time. Therefore, without inordinate delay, a unifier is needed to bring different forces to the table. ■

*(Dr. Rawal is a former governor of Nepal Rastra Bank)*

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## BOOK

# A Memoir of History

Rimal writes a book describing his recollections of history

Having had a long association with a magazine that used to be published by then Embassy of dissolved Soviet Union, Arbinda Rimal knows many ins and outs of contemporary Nepal. This is what one can read in his recently published memoir.



1977 to 2017

A Study

By: Arbinda Rimal

Price: Rs. 500.00

Published by: Tanka Prasad

Acharya Memorial Trust

Pages: 568

Although he was involved in communist movement back in 1950s while studying in India, Rimal is now spending his retired life as a spiritual devotee. From the struggle for democracy to establishment of the communist movement in Nepal, Arbinda's book provides snapshots of many aspects of history of Nepal. Along with the trails and tribulations of Nepal Prajaparishad,

an oldest political party, to other political activities of the pre- and post revolution of 2007, Arbinda was a witness to that important part of country's history.

Following the revolution of 2007, the country passed through a very crucial phase of political instability. Arbinda has included events of all these troubled years. The frequent changes of government, activities of foreign interference, etc are described in his book.

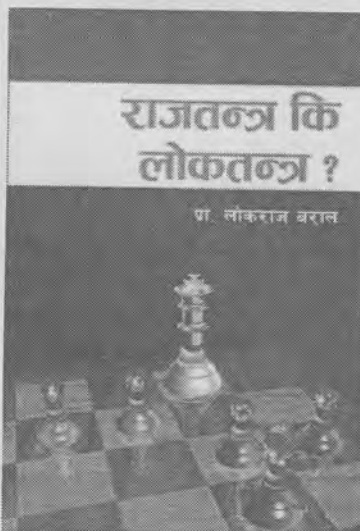
Rimal also worked for about half a decade in publication and information department in New Delhi publishing Soviet Bhumi, the dissolved Soviet Union's Magazine in Nepali language.

Working at an early stage with communist party of Nepal, he has also seen the break up of communist parties in several factions. As a senior Nepalese working in Russian Embassy, Rimal was also a part of the team that organized different visits of high-level delegation including King Mahendra's visit to Russia.

From student age to the latter half of his career, Rimal continued to associate with the democratic movement of Nepal. He also worked with the first privately owned broadsheet daily Kantipur. In his book, one can see political, social and other phases of Nepal. From Rana prime ministers to late prime ministers Matrika Prasad Koirala and Tanka Prasad Acharya, he has seen all of them work in the early stage of political modernization. His association with the founder of Nepal Communist Party Pushpa Lal and other members give enough idea about history of communist movement in Nepal. ■

## On Monarchy & Loktantra

Different political parties talk about different models of governance but it is the institution, which is vital for bringing out the results. Being a retired professor of political science, professor Lok Raj Baral has written a number of books regarding political process of Nepal.



Rajtantra Ki  
Loktantra

(Monarchy or Loktantra)

By: Professor Lokraj Baral

Price: Rs. 195, Pages: 216

Published by: Bhrikuti Academic  
Publication

Although this is a book based on compilation of articles, professor Baral throws some political lights on the contemporary academic debates on whether Nepal needs monarchy or not? The title of the book itself reveals the debate the author wants to generate.

Being a monarchical state Britain, Denmark, Sweden, Norway in Europe and Japan in Asia have produced best democracies in the world. But there are many republican states like African states where people had to pay high cost for replacing monarchy. Iranians replaced moderate monarchy only to confront religious tyranny in power. Similarly, Afghanistan was ruined following the overthrow of monarchy and has brought back its past monarch to legitimize the republican constitution.

Professor Baral's book Rajtantra or Loktratra is good for academic exercise for scholars and intellectuals but it is yet to discuss the ground reality of Nepal. ■



# Nepal-Britain Society: Cementing Bilateral Ties

By PRATEEMA PANDEY

The Nepal Britain Society is the oldest bilateral society and was established in 1964 with the objective of promoting understanding and fostering friendly relations between the people of Nepal and the United Kingdom. The members of the Society represent various professional groups such as doctors, engineers, economists, journalists, sociologists, management experts, banking and financial experts, entrepreneurs, artists, service holders, and British nationals residing in Nepal. The society presently holds over 300 memberships among which around 100 members are active.

In the early days, the society used to function as the elite movie club. Presently along with the entertainment programs, the society is organizing other social-oriented events providing charity to needy organization and people.

The Nepal Britain Society has made a major budgetary surplus in this period of time. In addition, the society had also donated a handsome amount of money to different social causes. The membership fee, substantial surplus from Annual Dinners, Plays and Piano Recital Program are the major factors behind this.

The Nepal Britain Society has been successful in establishing a theater group "The New Shakespeare Wallas" comprising both British and Nepali nationals. By this time, this group has already staged three plays all of which have been appreciated by the audiences. The plays helped the society to raise a substantial amount of money from which the society already has donated RS 150,000 to ASMAN for the scholarship of under privileged children at Mary Ward School and RS 80,000 to Mahendra Bhrikuti School for infrastructure development at the school. The New Shakespeare Wallas are busy producing a new play which is scheduled to perform on the 27, 28 and 29th of April at British Embassy Hall. The society is planning to establish a NBS Scholarship Fund from the surplus of past and future plays.

The society for the first time, successfully brought a world famous Pianist Mr. Anthony Peebles all the way from London to

Kathmandu. The society from the fund raised from this event is donating Rs 20,000 to Mahadev Stan Temple, Nagarkot, Rs 20,000 to KTPV for the preservation works of Jagatnath Temple in Kathmandu Durbar Square and Rs 10,000 to Leo Club of Kathmandu Bagmati for organizing a free health camp and Rs 20,000 to Mahendra Bhrikuti School. The Leo Club of Kathmandu Bagmati in association with Nepal Britain Society will organize a health camp during the month of April on the occasion of auspicious birth day of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth -II.

Similarly, the society had organized free health check up and medicine distribution for old aged people at Pashupati Old Aged Home and food and daily necessary items distribution program to the disabled people of Khagendra Nava Jeevan Kendra on the auspicious birthday of His Majesty King Gyanendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev in 2004 and 2005.

To mitigate the blood shortage caused by the ongoing violence in the country, the society had organized a blood donation program in association of Leo Club of Kathmandu Bagmati. We are also planning to organize another blood donation program in the near future, perhaps every six months due to the acute shortage in the hospital and due to the insurgency. The society has also built its new web site [www.nepalbritainsociety.org](http://www.nepalbritainsociety.org).

The friendship between Nepal and The Great Britain has always remained strong, and our society, from its very inception has been instrumental in strengthen the bond of friendship between the people of the two countries. I hope that the British nationals residing in Nepal have been enjoying their stay here and our society has contributed in some ways or other towards this. I would like to wish all the best to our members and hope that we organize various interesting programs in coming days. ■

*(Pandey delivered this address at the AGM of NBS on March 8)*

## Portuguese Film Festival To Be Organized

In an attempt to familiarize the Nepalese people with the culture and lifestyle of Portuguese people and strengthen the people to people relations between the two countries, the Consulate of Portugal in Kathmandu Mr. Rajendra Kumar Khetan is organizing the first Portuguese Film Festival in collaboration with Instituto Camoes, and Portuguese Embassy, New Delhi, in Kathmandu from March 23 to 25.

Among the three films to be screened at Russian Cultural Center; 'I am going Home' depicts the endeavour of a Portuguese to seek his national identity, 'Who are You' showcases the culture followed by a typical Portuguese family, and 'Rending' will project the lifestyles and trends of the Portuguese youth of this era. "The films are selected to represent all three generations," Khetan said.

Khetan informed that like Nepal, Portugal is a country with rich cultural heritage and is considered the most conservative country in Europe. "By organizing the festival we aspire to help Nepalese understand Portuguese culture, promote trade and tourism between the two countries and, open avenues for organizing similar festival of Nepali films in Portugal," he said.

According to Ms. Sophia, a Portuguese citizen, the films to be screened are films by the best directors and have won many international awards in various categories. The films are in Portuguese with English subtitles.

The screenings are open to all free of cost. The entry passes are available at the office of the Consulate at Hattisar, said Charan Gupta. ■



Khetan (middle) at the press meet: Bridging cultures

# NAGENDRA THAPA

## Evergreen Prose

Thapa is recognized by over a dozen songs recorded in mid 1960s

By THAKUR AMGAI

In the mid 1960s, a new trend was beginning in Nepali modern music. A trio of Nepali music drove the trend of trying melodious songs of different tastes. The two drivers- Gopal Yonjan and Narayan Gopal continued holding the steering for long. But, the third one banished from the center stage just as the trend was gaining momentum.

Still, based on the contribution he had made during the early years, Nagendra Thapa, is widely popular among the audiences. There are hardly over a dozen songs recorded with his lyrics. All of them are popular as evergreen songs among the Nepalese.

It shows that it does not take much to be recognized. The most popular song he has written 'Chinari Hamro Dherai Purano Bhaya Jhain Lagdachha' alone is enough to identify him in the domain of Nepali music. In addition, the songs like 'Birsera Pheri', 'Timro Jasto Mutu Mero Pani', and 'Sangala Ghumtoharu', 'Timi Dekhda Rahar Hola Jagera Aunchha', among others are equally popular even today.

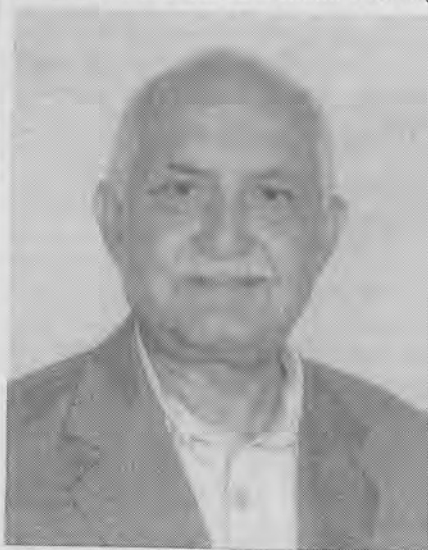
Those were the beginning days of the golden era of Nepali modern music. The trio would spend hours together composing and practicing songs in Himalayan Kala Mandir of Darjeeling. The dedication produced masterpieces that will last for hundreds of years.

Thapa was born in Dhankuta in 2002 B.S. in a well-to-do family. After his initial schooling at the school his father had established in Muga, he oscillated between Kathmandu and Darjeeling for his education. As he read literary books in Hindi and Nepali available in those days, he got inspired to write poems for himself. "I was of the nature who would

be inclined to art and literature since my early childhood," said Thapa.

As he entered teenage, he had already started writing poems. He wanted to take up arts and literature for his further education. However, his brother Surya Bahadur Thapa, wanted to make him a doctor. Thapa was admitted to study science at Amrit Science College.

Earlier during childhood he used to sing, but was not confident of his voice. In school days he and his friends formed an association called 'Bhanu-Morang



**Thapa:** Master of words

Cultural Association'. "I used to spend most of the vacations in Biratnagar performing theatres and organizing poetry symposiums," Thapa said.

"I plodded through the course in the initial months, but when came to the part of dissecting animals like frog and earthworms I could not bear it," remembers Thapa. "I had to find a way to get rid of it. So, I compiled the poems that I had written in the last four/five years and brought it out in book form."

The publication of 'Pratima' in 2019 did relieve him from the compulsion of

studying science and the high expectation of becoming a doctor. The inherent passion to 'dissect' intense human feelings won the family urge and his brother liberated him to pursue studies of his choice. "I gave the published book to my brother and told him strongly that I cannot continue studying science. I will go to Darjeeling to study arts," reminisces Thapa.

The musical and literary ambience of Darjeeling nourished his passion in writing poems. Co-incidentally veteran of Nepali music Gopal Yonjan happened to be his classmate in North Point College in Darjeeling. Thapa participated in poetry contests and won several awards. "After seeing my poems, Gopal encouraged me to write songs too," Thapa says.

In the subsequent months Yonjan and Thapa often joined by Narayan Gopal wrote, composed and sang songs. They also tried experimenting various ways to beautify Nepali music. Sometimes, Thapa would write songs and Yonjan would give music to it, at other times Yonjan would compose the music first and Thapa would fill in the words. In duet songs, Thapa wrote the male's part and Yonjan wrote the female's part or vice versa. 'Timi Dekhda Rahar Hola Jagera Aunchha', duet sung by Narayan Gopal and Dil Maya Khatri is one such song.

During those days he also published anthology of poems - 'Gopalko Bansuri' in 2024

'Hamro Priti Basyo Re' and 'Sinkauli Maya'.

It is this friendship that made Thapa a lyricist. "Gopal wrote better songs than I. If I wrote songs his songs would be displaced because there was only one recording facility in Nepal then," explains Thapa when asked why he stopped writing.

Despite the wide popularity he has earned, Thapa says that he thinks he has not achieved much in life. If his sayings are to be considered, to be born with a silver spoon in your mouth can be often detrimental to one's career. "In retrospect I feel that I contributed a very small fraction of what I could have in my life," agonizes Thapa. "However, what makes me satisfied is that people know me through the few songs I have written." ■

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