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SPOTLIGHT

Feb 09-15, 2007

Terai Turmoil

Economy Derailed

Special Report

Silent Moderation & Violent Extremism

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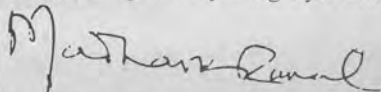
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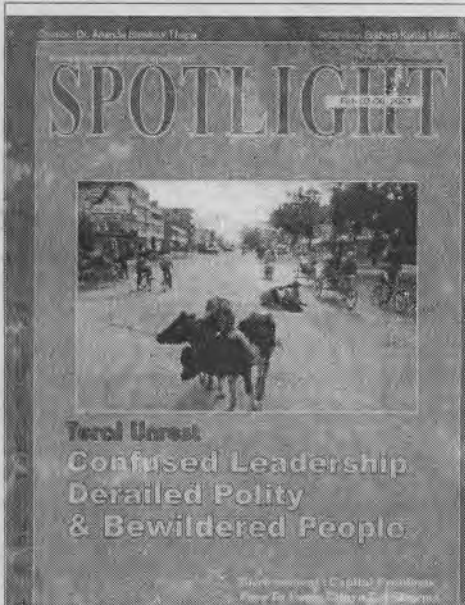
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The general outcry for the amendment of the interim constitution has vindicated our stance that the constitution must be scrapped as it does not meet the urgent requirements of the people or the country even halfway. It has been drafted by small insensitive men to please their employers by strengthening their illegal grip on the administration. The drafters, the legislators who approved it without even a proper reading and the government all have been badly exposed of their self oriented intentions. The interim legislators who try to pose more autocratic than an autocratic monarch have clearly demonstrated that they don't represent the poor people and should not be permitted to frame the sacred document if the country wants to avoid a highly volatile and dangerous situation. Naturally, it will cause some more delay in framing a new interim constitution. The delay must be accepted in good grace rather than pushing the country in the direction of a devastating civil war. And this is the most appropriate time when prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala can redeem his soiled image to some extent. It is about the most opportune time for him to atone for his past sins. If he has even an iota of love for his country or his poor countrymen, he must not fail to pluck the courage to put his foot down and save the country from going to utter ruin. At the fag end of his long life, let it be the one "better thing than any he has ever done before" that will definitely lead him to a "far far better rest than he has ever known." At the moment there is no other person in this wretched country who wields more authority than him. It is, indeed, a unique privilege to exercise such an authority in this twenty first century when the number one man in the world even does not exercise such authority. At par with Nero, Tamerlane or even our own Jung Bahadur, Koirala has to prove he is not made of any inferior mettle and must use that authority in the interest of the country at this critical time of its history.

The agitations the people of terai have started demanding their legitimate rights must not be permitted to go out of control. The Madhesiays have to understand that they are not the only one who have been victimized by the rulers of Nepal. Even the dwellers of the hilly regions, who were not fortunate to belong to the higher castes – the Brahmins, the Chhetris, the Thakuris or the Newars namely the Maguralis and other Janjatis too have been similarly victimized and discriminated. Consequently, it would not be right and in the interest of the country to try to characterize this agitation as that of Terai people only. Rather, the Madhesiyas and the Maguralis and other exploited segments of the society should unite and put up a joint front to oust the corrupt and unscrupulous politicians from power. Because we need no further proofs to prove that these politicians in power are interested only to safe guard their personal and partisan interests. Had it not been so, how could they keep on paralyzing the administration of the country for more than nine months? Why? Because they cannot agree how to share the spoils of the Jan Andolan II? As such, let all the aggrieved millions, whether they are from Terai or the hills get together and snatch their long deprived rights from the clutches of the discredited politicians. It is high time the aggrieved people clearly told our international friends and donors that they must stop patronizing the unscrupulous politicians and help the people to change the leadership if they really mean to raise their living standard and deliver them from their miseries. If not, the country will be embroiled in grave convulsions endangering its very integrity. Portents are clear to read unless one is blind.



Madhav Kumar Rimal
Chief Editor & Publisher



Terai Tantrums

The prolonged agitation in Terai is taking its toll ("Confused Leadership, Derailed Polity & Bewildered People SPOTLIGHT February 2). From scarcity of petroleum products to fast spreading disappointment and frustration among the people, the unrest is likely to have far-reaching consequences. As there are no signs of cessation of the unrest anytime soon, the people are getting anxious how the peace process will turn out to be.

*Jitesh Karki
Kumaripati*

Confused Nation

per your cover story ("Confused Leadership, Derailed Polity & Bewildered People SPOTLIGHT February 2), the whole Nepali nationhood seems to be headed towards grave trouble. The country itself is confused, not only the leadership. There are no sane voices coming out from any quarter these days. Everyone seems have their own idea of resolving the crisis. Some say the adoption of Proportional Representation system will do the job while others claim that federal restructuring is the answer. There are still people who claim that solution to all ills of this nation lies in the declaration of republic state. But none of their arguments hold any water. And none of these solutions could actually reverse the growing tide of frustration against this nation indicated by grievances put forth by ethnic communities, Janjatis, Dalits and so on.

*Grish Tamang
Ghattekula*

What's The Core Demand?

It is still unclear – as far as one studies comments made by so many analysts, experts and agitation organizers – what are the core demands of the Madhesi people ("Confused Leadership, Derailed Polity & Bewildered People SPOTLIGHT February 2). It does not

look likely that so many thousands of common people would come to the streets just on the basis of technical demands like proportional representation system. It is also highly unlikely that so many people could have been compelled to agitate by reactionaries or royalists. Therefore, one has to look deeper into the centuries-long discrimination meted out by mainstream society against Madhesi people. It looks as if the people of Madhes chose to organize mass uprising this time to end ethnic discriminations. As such, the people of Nepal must rise to the occasion and vow to correct their mistakes and weaknesses. In a new Nepal, no Nepali should feel discriminated based on caste, color or creed.

*Bikram Singh
Gairidhara*

Whither CA Polls?

The growing unrest in Terai has poured cold water over the preparations to hold the elections for the Constituent Assembly ("Confused Leadership, Derailed Polity & Bewildered People SPOTLIGHT February 2). The commissioners at the Election Commission are openly commenting that they still lack necessary legislative back-up to spearhead election campaign. They have been troubled by the strikes in Terai. It is quite clear that there would be delay in the holding of CA polls. But nobody

dares spell this much out in public fearing the Maoist backlash. Maoist leaders have publicly stated that they will launch nationwide revolt if there is any delay in CA polls. So, it is now very unpredictable what course the nation will take in the coming days.

*Nishant Joshi
Battisputali*

Capital Environment Woes

The report about the worsening situation of air and river pollution in Nepal ("Signs of Distress" SPOTLIGHT February 2) came out at a time when a global report has also been released, which states that man-made global warming is no longer a myth. It has now been scientifically attested that global warming is actually occurring and it is being caused by human activities. Nepal being a mountainous country with fragile environment, is at an unfortunate position. Global warming is likely to cause disastrous implications for Nepal such as glacial lake outburst floods or glacial recession or climate change. Although Nepal can do little to control global warming, it has to start studying about likely impacts on it. That way, may be we can prepare some plans to avoid dangerous effects.

*Kiran Rai
Sanepa*

Judiciary In Problem

The interview with the recently elected president of Nepal Bar Association Bishwo Kanta Mainali (SPOTLIGHT February 2) showed that there are big problems in the interim constitution as far as independence of judiciary is concerned. Like he said, one cannot imagine a democratic polity without independent judiciary. The independence of judiciary must be fiercely protected against any executive or legislative excesses. At a time when leaders are talking about amending interim constitution to address demands of Terai people, they would do well to change provisions to guarantee the independence of judiciary as well.

*Chet Nath Bhattarai
Sallaghari*

BJP Trashes Maoist Allegations

Indian main opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) spokesperson Prakash Javadekar has trashed the accusations made by the Maoists that there were hands of Indian Hindu extremists behind current unrest in Terai. The BJP spokesperson dismissed charges that it was supporting movement against the radical leftists in the Terai region. "It is not our ethos to interfere in the affairs of other countries. Since they (Maoists) are losing the battle against common people, they have started dragging the BJP and the RSS into their mess," Javadekar said. Instead, he accused the Maoists of attempting to derail the democratic process in Nepal. *Compiled from reports*

Forum Wants Sitaula To Go Before Talks Can Be Held

While welcoming the formation of talks committee by the government, Upendra Yadav, president of MPRF has said that Home Minister Krishna Sitaula must resign to create environment for talks. He said Sitaula must resign on moral grounds for deaths and injuries in Terai. The forum has also demanded action against those who killed Ramesh Kumar Mahato in Lahan on January 18 – which triggered further protests across Terai. It has also demanded immediate end of all atrocities in Madhes. Alongside, it has also revealed its talks team headed by Sitanandan Raya. Yadav said his forum would make the agitation in Terai peaceful. Condemning Maoist chairman Prachanda's remarks of using Nepali Army and Maoist Army to control Terai situation, Yadav labeled it as militarist thinking and warned that no military force could lead to any solution. He said his recent meeting with Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala was positive. He said the MPRF was a revolutionary political organization. *Compiled from reports*

NSP-Anandidevi Distances Itself From Eight Party Alliance

In a clear sign of growing fissures in

the ruling alliance, the Nepal Sadbhavana Party (Anandidevi) has decided to boycott regular meetings of eight parties till the government properly addresses the Terai demands. The meeting of the central working committee of the party held on Friday (Feb 2) made this decision. The meeting was chaired by party president Anandidevi Singh. Meanwhile, NSP-Anandidevi vice president Bharat Bimal Yadav welcomed the government's decision to adopt federal system. "Now our demand is to include people of Madhesi origin in all levels of state institutions. Likewise, the government should either go for full-fledged Proportional Representation system or if it wants to stick with mixed system then it should conduct fresh delimitation of constituencies based on population," he said. *Compiled from reports*

Terai Violence Affects Border Security

After the continuation of violence in Terai region, the administrations of bordering regions of India have announced strict security provisions. The District Magistrate of Bihar districts including Arariya have issued prohibitory orders banning gathering of more than five persons and banning carrying of any kind of weapon. They have invoked article 144 to prohibit the gathering from Raxaul to Kishangunj area bordering Nepal. The administration has urged people not to go to Nepal till the situation normalized. Likewise, the deployment of Indian SSB forces has been increased in the region. *Compiled from reports*

City-Centered Revolution In The Offing: Maoist Leader Gajurel

Maoist Politburo member Chandra Prakash Gajurel "Gaurav" Saturday (Feb 3) revealed that the CPN-Maoist's participation in the interim parliament and the recently thawing relations with India was "merely a stratagem" for declaration of a republic Nepal. Speaking at an interaction program organized by the Maoist affiliated Democratic Students Union (DSU) of

the Jawarlal Nehru University (JNU), Gajurel stated that his party's foray into mainstream politics was also a part of their "ongoing revolution." He disclosed his party's strategies in reply to the Indian Maoist affiliated intellectuals and leftist leaders who accused the CPN-M of being "unable to maintain its revolutionary image." He assured his supporters that Nepali Maoists had not "abandoned its revolution but were instead strengthening themselves to this end and that in the recent days, the party had managed to achieve a substantial increase in the PLA fighting force." "Since entering mainstream politics, we have increased our military strength from 10,000 to a 37,000-strong PLA. This in itself is a great achievement," Gajurel said. "We are now capable of launching a fresh *revolt* any time." Gajurel's comments have confirmed conflicting reports in that part that the Maoists had been busy recruiting PLA fighters even after entering mainstream politics. Gajurel, who is also the in-charge of the party's "international command", revealed that if the parliament failed to get results, they would also conduct a "city-based revolution." "We are going to the elections and make sure that the results are in our favor. If the oppositions capture one booth, we will capture five," he added. He also divulged that a "People's Volunteers" was being formed for the party's city-based revolutions, elections and other "strategic activities". He also said that the "People's Volunteers" would have around 100,000 members, adding that the Maoist Chairman Prachanda would soon make an announcement to this end. Gajurel further stated that the refusal by senior leaders to participate in the interim parliament was also part of the strategy. "Why didn't Chairman Prachanda, Baburam (Bhattarai), Badal and I himself go into the interim legislature? Because, once there, they (parliamentarians) must speak the language of revolution, something those who were there on frontlines are capable of." He also said, if necessary, the CPN-M parliamentarians would lead the street and city-centered revolutions. Disclosing that his party would take up guns as soon as peaceful measures failed to get results,

the Maoist leader further added that his party was capable of being "locked and loaded within an hour." Gaurav's claim of the PLA's "ability" to be armed and ready for combat has raised suspicions regarding the ongoing UN monitored Maoist arms and armies registration and storage. Union's former chairperson, Rona Wilson had chaired the interaction program that continued till midnight in the JNU's Sutlej hostel, in which around 100 leftist students and intellectuals were present. While Gajurel was busy giving away the party's internal strategy, members of his own Indian association, People's Right Protection Committee (PRPC), however, appeared "uncomfortable". Gajurel, who was the chief guest during the inauguration of a PRPC program recently, had faced criticism by representatives of Indian and international revolutionary forces who had accused his party of giving-in to a progressive outlook and forgetting the notion of class struggle. Although he did not reply to those criticisms in an open forum, he disclosed his party's "masterplan" to CPN-M's foreign well wishers that Friday night. During the program, he also claimed that 80 percent of Nepali territory was still "under the Maoists' control." He also stated that the cordial relations with Indian government was part of a strategy, adding that his party couldn't do its job while India remained incensed. *eKantipur reports*

OHCHR Concerned, Appeals For Urgent Talks

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR-Nepal) has said that it is deeply concerned about the violence in the Terai region and the rising toll of deaths and injuries both in the Central and Eastern Region. "It encourages all parties involved to urgently engage in a dialogue in order to prevent further violence and loss of life," states a press release issued by the OHCHR-Nepal. It said it is investigating cases of deaths and use of force by police also. "OHCHR-Nepal believes that law enforcement agencies must be given the support to carry out their functions impartially and professionally, and with

full respect for human rights," it said. It also expressed concern about violence on the part of protestors and others with destruction of property reported as well as serious injuries. Meanwhile, the OHCHR-Nepal has also noted the arrest and preventive detention of four former government officials, Kamal Thapa and Salim Mia Ansari in Kathmandu, and Badri Prasad Mandal and Ballav Prasad Dahal in Morang District. It has said that the preventive detention orders issued by Chief District Officers (CDOs) under the Public Security Act (PSA) are arbitrary and contrary to international human rights standards. *Compiled from reports*

PM Promises Federal State

In his televised address to the nation on Wednesday (Jan 31) afternoon, Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala has promised that Nepal would be a federal democratic state after the Constituent Assembly elections. In order to quell the growing fire of discontent in Terai region, PM Koirala also promised that the electoral constituencies will be redistributed based on population and geography. He said that in Terai region, electoral constituencies will be increased proportionate to the increase in population. PM said these efforts were aimed at ensuring participation of all in the task of nation building. He also invited aggrieved parties to resolve the crisis through talks. "My doors are always open. Anyone can come for talks. Let us solve the problems you may have," he said. Referring to the demonstrations, he said they could be attributed to transitional phase the nation was passing through. He said the momentous changes that had overtaken the nation resulted in simultaneous rise in aspirations and emotions. He said he had instructed Home Minister to initiate talks with the aggrieved parties by forming a special committee. "I had called for talks in the past, too. But this is my special invitation for talks," he said. Meanwhile, Koirala appeared very emotional when he addressed the nation. "This is my first and could well be the last address to the

nation given my age and health," he said.

Compiled from reports

Ethnic Bodies Impose Bandh

Ethnic organizations, including the Sanghiya Loktantrik Rastriya Forum (SLRF), Limbuwan Autonomous Forum, Limbuwan Rayjaparishad, Tamangsaling Rayjaparishad and Dhimal Rayjaparishad have imposed three-day bandh in Limbuwan, Tamangsaling and Khumbuwan areas from Wednesday (Jan 31). The organizations have been demanding a federal republican set up, ethnic autonomy and the right to self determination. They have warned of strict action against those daring to defy the bandh. "The government is hatching a conspiracy and trying to ignore the demands of janajatis," general secretary of the SLRF Kumar Lingden said.

Compiled from reports

Moriarty Doubts Locking Up Of All Maoist Arms

US ambassador to Nepal James F. Moriarty, on Tuesday (Jan 30), said he doubted whether all weapons of the Maoists will be locked in UN containers in designated cantonments. "I doubt if all the arms of the Maoists would go in the containers," Moriarty said, soon after inaugurating the expanded library at Kathmandu School of Law. He said this on the basis of his previous stance that the Maoists were still buying weapons from Bihar in India. He added that he would be the first person to express happiness if all the weapons of the Maoists were locked up. Asked about the American opinion on the current Terai unrest, Moriarty said the issue should be resolved by the government and the political parties together. He added that the Terai people's concerns should be addressed before the constituent assembly polls were held. Responding to a query, Moriarty said he had no information on royalists' hand in fuelling the Terai unrest. *The Himalayan Times daily reports* ■



Speaker Subas Nembang releases a book on PM Koirala Gorkhapatra

FOLLOWING UNABATED PROTESTS IN TERAI, the government has said that it is ready to amend the interim constitution. On Friday (Feb 2), government spokesperson and Minister of State for Information and Communication Dilendra Prasad Badu has said that the government is ready to amend the two-weeks-old interim constitution. "The government is willing to ensure the addition of electoral constituencies based on population and geography and adoption of federal system via Constituent Assembly by making necessary amendment in the interim constitution," Badu said. He elaborated further saying that the current number of electoral constituencies where elections will be held as per the existing First-Past-The-Post (FPTP) system will be increased to accommodate the increased population along with considering other factors like geography. "Similarly, the seats allocated for Proportional Representation-based election will also be increased in the same manner," he added. In his address to the nation on January 31, Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala had said that the CA will restructure the country on federal basis. Badu added that the PM has also stated that the government will go for inclusion of all communities including Madhesi and indigenous in all organs of the state including army. Badu informed that the government has expressed sincere regrets over the loss of precious lives in the ongoing unrest in Terai. "The government wants to appeal to all concerned to settle their grievances through talks and help in maintaining complete peace and communal harmony," he said. Meanwhile, in order to sort out the growing trouble, the government has formed three-member committee headed by Agriculture Minister Mahantha Thakur (including two other ministers Rajendra Pandey and Gyanendra Bahadur Karki as members) to initiate talks with the agitating groups of Terai. Thakur has been instructed by PM Koirala to immediately start the talks with Madhesi People's Rights Forum (MPRF) and Janatantrik Terai Mukti Morcha (JTMM).

THE OFFICE OF HIGH COMMISSIONER for Human Rights (OHCHR-Nepal) has asked the security forces to stop using lethal force. The Office issued a statement calling for the refrain following growing number of deaths and injuries due to police firing in Terai unrest. "The OHCHR-Nepal reiterates its call for urgent measures to be taken to stop the violence and prevent further death and serious injury in the Terai. Today (Feb 4), an OHCHR-Nepal team has again

witnessed the serious consequences of the use of lethal force by the security forces during a curfew in Birgunj, Parsa District, which has resulted in life-threatening injury after police fired at a crowd. Sixteen deaths and a high number of serious injuries have been confirmed by OHCHR-Nepal since 19 January, many shot by police. OHCHR is continuing its investigations into the circumstances of the incidents in which they were shot," states a press release issued by the Office.

THE UNITED NATIONS WORLD FOOD PROGRAM (WFP) in Nepal has appealed to all concerned to ensure free passage of its vehicles and trucks transporting food aid in the Terai. The world body's regular food aid deliveries have been affected due to the ongoing unrest in the region threatening the livelihood and health status of hundreds of thousands of people. "It is unfortunate that during this historic time of peace in Nepal, our humanitarian operations are being disrupted, which prevents us from providing an adequate supply of food aid to needy beneficiaries," the statement quoted WFP Nepal's Deputy Country Representative, Dominique Hyde, as saying. "Despite bandhs and political instability during the years of insurgency, WFP was able to transport enough food aid to continue all of our programs. I appeal to all parties to ensure safe passage of WFP food convoys and the free and safe movement of WFP staff so we can continue to provide humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable populations in Nepal," Hyde added. In Nepal, nearly 1.5 million people receive WFP's food assistance. WFP's programs include supplemental nutritional support to 64,000 breastfeeding women and their children, mid-day meals to 450,000 school-going children and vegetable ghee rations for girls' families, daily rations to over 100,000 Bhutanese refugees and supplemental rice rations through food-for-work programs to over 800,000 people.

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN NEPAL, commodities can now be brought and sold like trading of securities in the stock market, thanks to an initiative of Commodities & Metal Exchange Nepal Ltd (COMEN). COMEN, Nepal's first and only commodities exchange center, provides a platform for investment where consumption asset converts into investment asset, said Vijay Satyal, executive director at COMEN, which began trading in agro products from Monday. "It's a platform where a wide range of commodities will be available for trading as financial instruments," he added.

New Cooperatives Launched

With the objective of serving the financial needs of consumers, Birat Saving and Credit Cooperatives Limited has been set up. A group of like-minded professionals including doctors, engineers and bankers have come together to float the company, which started its formal transactions beginning February 3. The company was jointly inaugurated by Saroj Devkota, president of Nepal Engineers' Association, and Dr. Sudha Sharma, president of Nepal Medical Association. According to member of board of directors of the company Pralhad Raj Panta, the share capital of the company stands at Rs 60 million. He said in future, the company will venture into other financial areas by launching Birat Finance Company, Birat Development Bank, and Birat Commercial Bank. The company plans to invest in hydropower and public health, according to chairman Dr. Durga Prasad Sangraula. ■

“The government is willing to ensure the addition of electoral constituencies based on population and geography and adoption of federal system via Constituent Assembly by making necessary amendment in the interim constitution.”

Dilendra Prasad Badu, Minister of State for Information and Communication and government spokesperson, addressing a press meet.

“His resignation is now linked with the sentiments of Terai people. He must step down by owing up the moral responsibility of deaths of so many Madhesi people.”

Upendra Yadav, president of Madhesi Janadhikar Forum, demanding that Home Minister Krishna Sitaula resign to create environment for talks, addressing a press meet.

“Home Minister must resign to facilitate urgent resolution of Terai crisis.”

Sujata Koirala, Nepali Congress MP, speaking at the Reporters' Club.

“The resignation of any individual is no solution to the problem.”

Hishila Yami, Maoist MP, speaking at the Reporters' Club.



“It is not our ethos to interfere in the affairs of other countries. Since they (Maoists) are losing the battle against common people, they have started dragging the BJP and the RSS into their mess.”

Prakash Javadekar, spokesperson of Indian main opposition Bharatiya Janata Party, dismissing Maoist accusations that BJP and RSS are engaged in instigating Terai unrest.

“The government should either go for full-fledged Proportional Representation system or if it wants to stick with mixed system then it should conduct fresh delimitation of constituencies based on population.”

Bharat Bimal Yadav, vice president

of Nepal Sadbhavana Party (NSP-Anandidevi).

“We are going to the elections and make sure that the results are in our favor. If the oppositions capture one booth, we will capture five.”

C.P. Gajurel, chief of the foreign affairs cell at the Maoists, speaking at a program at Jawahar Lal Nehru University in New Delhi, in Kantipur.

“While recognizing that security forces have a difficult task in ensuring law and order, the imposition of a curfew does not justify the use of live bullets in non-life threatening situations.”

Lena Sundh, Representative of the OHCHR-Nepal, urging security forces to refrain from using lethal force to control demonstrators.

TRANSITION

FORMED: Three-member high level team headed by Agriculture and Cooperatives Minister Mahatha Thakur along with two members including Local Development Minister Rajendra Pandey and Minister of State for Water Resources Gyanendra Bahadur Karki, to initiate talks with the agitating parties, by the government.

A team headed by Sitanandan Raya, by the Madhesi Janadhikar Forum

(MJF), to hold talks with the government.

SWORN IN: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Khadga Prasad Oli as MP of the interim parliament by Speaker Subas Nemwang.

LEFT: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Khadga Prasad Oli, for Bangkok, Thailand, for medical treatment. He is suffering from jaundice and has been hospitalized for past few weeks.

Ramesh Lekhak, Minister of State for Labor and Transport Management,

for New Delhi, India.

SET UP: Commodities & Metal Exchange Nepal Ltd (COMEN), Nepal's first and only commodities exchange center, as a platform for trading in commodities.

HOSPITALIZED: Hridayesh Tripathy, general secretary of Nepal Sadbhavana Party (NSP-Anandidevi), who recently tendered resignation from the position of Minister for Industry, Commerce and Supplies. He is suffering from jaundice.

CHINESE EXPERIENCE OF HIGH DAM ENGINEERING:

(*Highly Valuable to Develop Nepal's Water Resources*)

By Dr. AB Thapa

Sedimentation of storage reservoir has ever since been a big problem in development of water resources. Usefulness of the storage reservoir is almost totally diminished once the storage reservoir is filled up with sediments. Thus, we talk about the life of a reservoir or its half life which virtually means the life of the project. Now Chinese experts have revolutionized the concept of the life of a storage reservoir by boldly applying it in the design of the "Three Gorges Project" which is the world's largest hydropower. They have proved that the life of the storage reservoir could be extended virtually in perpetuity if the dam is properly designed.

In future Nepal would be facing serious sedimentation problems if our storage dam projects are not properly designed. Certainly Chinese experience would prove to be immensely valuable to our country.

Finite Life of a Reservoir

Dr. A.N. Khosla, the then Chairman, Central Water Commission of the Government of India, who was a renowned scientist in the field of Hydraulic Engineering, had reviewed the work of reservoir sedimentation in Fifties based on data available for 200 reservoirs all over the world including the USA, China and Africa. He had developed curves for annual sedimentation rate for major as well as minor catchments. He has concluded that silting is taking place in both types of reservoirs with slight variations. It was evident that after a certain period those reservoir would be filled up with sediments.

Dr. K.L. Rao, Minister of Water Resources of the India's Central Government has written in his book *India's Water Wealth* to caution that the useful life of a storage reservoir could be considerably shortened " Silting of reservoirs reduces their useful capacity. The deposition of silt in Nizamsagar, in the course of the last 40 years, has reduced the live capacity of the reservoir from 725 million cu.m. to practically half."

What Chinese Scientists are Now Saying.

The following is the conclusion of an article published by Jiahua Fan et al in the *Journal of Hydraulic Engineering* of the American Society of Civil Engineers:

Experience in China has shown that reservoir sedimentation is neither an irreversible nor uncontrollable process. Various design, operational, and reconstruction strategies can be used to balance sediment inflow and outflow across impounded river reaches, thereby protecting a significant amount of useful storage against sedimentation. The provision of

properly sized low-level sluices is the key structural element for sediment management in reservoirs. The next major step in the development of this technology is the refinement of generalized computer simulation techniques for analyzing sediment management problems in reservoirs, and the testing of these techniques against field data from reservoirs where sediment management is being practiced.

It is reported that the problem of reservoir sedimentation in China had been particularly acute in the Yellow River basin which drains an extensive area of highly erodible soils.

Sediment concentrations of as much as 941 kg/cum have been measured on the main stem of the Yellow River, and as much as 1,500 kg/cum on tributaries. The sediments are predominantly silt. Without control methods, reservoirs fill quickly with sediments in this environment. These conditions have necessitated to conduct for more than 30 years research works in China on stabilization of reservoir capacity.

Research on Sedimentation

The total capacity of the TGP reservoir amounts to 39.3 billion m³, only accounting for 8.7 % of the yearly runoff at the dam site, and its effective capacity 16.5 billion m³, accounting for 3.6 %. Therefore, the reservoir is of a seasonal regulation one with low run-off regulation capability.

Sediment is one of the major technical problems of the Three Gorges Project(TGP) to be tackled. Since 1950's, many research institutes and experts at home have conducted extensive studies on this issue. The successful experience gained from the Gezhouba Project on the sediment management has laid solid foundation for the sediment study of the Three Gorges Project.

Comprehensive research methods, such as prototype observation, mathematical model computation, physical model tests, and analogue analysis on existing projects have been adopted for TGP's sediment study. The results show that the sediment problem of TGP is resolvable based on the examinations and authentication organized by sediment experts at home and abroad.

Sediment Load - Based on the 40 plus years' observation at the Yichang Hydrologic Station, the sediment discharge of suspended load averages about 526 million tons per year, with a median diameter of 0.033 mm. The annual bed load including 0.76 million tons of cobbles is about 8.6 million tons, which takes up only a small proportion of the total sediment load.

The water discharge at TGP's dam site is large, amounting to 451 billion m³ annually with an average sediment concentration

of only about 1.2 kg/m³, whereas the sediment discharge at Sanmenxia Project on the Yellow River is 1.6 billion tons annually with an average sediment concentration of 37 kg/m³. The water discharge at TGP dam site is 10 times that at the Sanmenxia Project, while the annual sediment load is only one third of it. The sediment problem of the Yangtze River, therefore, is quite different in nature from that of the Yellow River.

In recent years, some experts deem that the sediment yield in the Yangtze River is in a tendency of increase based on the data of the early 1980's. However, it is not true. According to the long term observation and the checking results there from, the sediment load in the Yangtze River changes periodically below or above the average level on a random basis, and there is no obvious tendency of increase. The amount of sediment load at the dam site was far below the average for several times in the late 1980's and early 1990's. This is an evident proof.

Physical Sediment Modelling -Owing to the complexity concerning hydraulics and sediment deposition problems in the dam area and in the fluctuating backwater region, which makes the computation of mathematical model almost impossible, 14 physical sediment models (5 for dam area and 9 for different sections in the fluctuating backwater region) have been established for detailed study.

A great progress had been made in the physical sediment modeling in China during the construction of Gezhouba Project. Now Gezhouba Reservoir has been in operation for 16 years, comparisons have been made on field observation vs. model testing results and these comparisons, generally speaking, are quite consistent. The physical sediment modelling of TGP has adopted basically the same methods for the Gezhouba Project with a model scale generally of 1 by 100 to 1 by 300.

Permanent Use of the Reservoir

The Yangtze River is abundant in runoff. The Three Gorges Dam is to be equipped with 23 large bottom discharge outlets at low elevation (90 m). Meanwhile, the reservoir level in the flood season will be maintained at a fairly low elevation (145 m). These two characteristics allow the application of a new strategy of reservoir operation Summed up in China as **discharging the turbid and impounding the clean**. During the flood season from June to September, when the river carries 84% of the annual sediment load and 61 % of the annual runoff, the reservoir draws down to a low level(145m) that creates a condition in favour of sediment sluicing, allowing a large discharge of sediment out of the reservoir from the bottom outlets. At the end of the flood season (October) when there is less sediment content in water, the reservoir will be impounded to NPL (175 m) for enhancement of power generation and navigation. In this operation manner, most of the sediment will be discharged, the large part of sediment deposited will remain in the dead storage of the reservoir, and most part of the effective storage can be preserved permanently.

The length of the TGP reservoir is over 600 km and its average width is only about 1, 100 m, looking like a ribbon in the plain. So it is still a river-like, rather than a lake—like reservoir. The whole reservoir is quite uniform in width and

for the most part less than 1, 000 m, only one seventh of the reservoir is about 1, 000 to 1, 700 m wide. The morphology of the reservoir is favorable for the removal of sediment. Since the estimated width of the equilibrium channel is 1, 300 m corresponding to the hydrological conditions of the TGP reservoir, little flood plain is expected to be formed along the main channel in the TGP reservoir. Thus, large percentage of effective storage can be preserved permanently.

In Conclusion

The silt deposition in the TGP reservoir has been analyzed numerically by mathematical modeling. According to the calculation results, after a century operation when the reservoir sedimentation already comes to the balanced state, the reservoir's effective storage capacity could still remain at 86—92 %.

It is believed that the conclusions are reliable, not only because the mathematical model is developed based on a large amount of research and observation and verified by many experts at home and abroad, but also because it is based on several successful engineering practices. ■

(Dr. Thapa writes on water resources)

TALK PROGRAM BY PAK EMBASSY

Embassy of Pakistan organized talked program on Regional Peace and Security in South Asia to mark Kashmir Solidarity day on February 5. Pakistan's ambassador to Nepal Sohail Amin addressed the seminar highlighting the role Pakistan played to maintain peace and stability in the region.

“Unless we resolve the core issue of Kashmir, we cannot generate the momentum for economic development that other regions of Asia have. Unfortunately, South Asia is one region which is out of the loop of development in Asia. This century is set to be the century of Asia. But South Asia is losing out on progress and economic development due to outstanding disputes between Pakistan and India,” said ambassador Amin addressing journalist, intellectuals and former diplomats in Kathmandu.

Highlighting Nepal-Pakistan relations, ambassador Amin said, “Pakistan, Nepal enjoy excellent cordial relations, which date back to several decades. Our two countries share many commonalities. Home to world's highest mountains, rich heritage of Lord Buddha, and many cultural similarities, our peoples enjoy a unique kind of fellow-feeling. These parallels enrich our bilateral relations which are based on the principles of respecting each others' territorial sovereignty and independence and non-interference in internal affairs.”

Pakistani ambassador stressed the need to increase the trade relations between the two countries. “Given these excellent relations and the shared desire to expand mutually beneficial co-operation, several agreements have been signed between the two countries in various fields, the latest being the agreement on cooperation in the field of agriculture signed on 25 January 2007,” said ambassador Amin. “Trade relations between our two countries used to be comparatively high during the 1990s but gradually it started decreasing primarily due to transit difficulties. In last financial year, the total formal volume of bilateral trade was around 8 million US\$. Exports from Pakistan totaled 4.6 million US\$ whereas, exports from Nepal were 3.4 million US\$.” ■

TERAI TURMOIL

Economy Derailed

At a time when people expected Nepal to start reaping the peace dividends, the nation is embroiled worst possible conflict that has virtually paralyzed its economic spinal chord. As turmoil in Terai continues unabated, the nation's economy lies thoroughly derailed. Industrial units located in the region have simply shut down. Amid curfews and violent protests, the eastern and central Terai region – the pocket where most of the industrial and manufacturing units are concentrated – lie disrupted. Forget about doing business, people have been stranded for over two weeks in these places due to constant bandhs and blockades in major sections of east-west highway. From trade to manufacturing and from transport to supplies, the economy is facing an all-out assault. Businessmen are too demoralized even to speak out their woes. As authorities frantically search for alternative routes to bring in essential supplies, people in Kathmandu valley and elsewhere across the country watch, with trepidation, the events unfolding in the plains

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

Udaya Pandey nervously watches the development in Terai. Pandey, who is a reputed garment exporter, has been compelled to shut down his unit of manufacturing in Kathmandu and shift to an Indian town in Andhra Pradesh.

Having helplessly watched spiraling down exports due to a plethora of reasons including phase out of Multi Fiber Agreement, higher cost of production and union problems, he finally held up his hand when even after the end of conflict, the bandhs and strikes continued leading up to the huge unrest in Terai.

"It was simply impossible to keep with the timelines of importers. You never knew when there would be transport strike at some part of the highway. I was forced to lease out the production to an Indian factory since there were still some importers interested to buy the goods," he informed.

Pandey's plight is shared by many businesspersons in the country today. Renowned industrialist Rajendra Khetan goes to the extent of saying that the whole business community lies thoroughly demoralized and disillusioned by the

disturbing developments.

As the major industrial hub of the country through which the major highways link main Indian border points with the capital has remained totally paralyzed due to unrest for the past three weeks, the economic activities have shrunk considerably.

Paralyzed Economy

Regions of eastern and central Terai can be said to be nerve center of economic activities of Nepal. The Bara-Parsa corridor near Birgunj and Tankesinwari-Duhabi corridor near

Biratnagar are major industrial hubs.

The Birgunj-Raxaul and Biratnagar-Jogbani are two of the biggest transit points between Nepal and India.

With Birgunj and Biratnagar both under severe unrest, the whole industrial and business activities in the region have been thrown out of gear.

s former vice chairman of the National Planning Commission (NPC) Dr. Shankar Sharma says, the unrest has hurt all the sectors of economy including trade, transport and manufacturing.

Trade, including exports and imports, has come to a grinding halt. "For the last three weeks, all the industries in the region have shut down along with cessation of normal transport system," said Khetan.

This indicates that not only the trade but the manufacturing as well as transport sectors have been disrupted. These three sectors make lion's share of contribution to the country's GDP. It does not, therefore, need a Sherlock Holmes to deduce the likely impact of the current unrest in the short-term and long-term on economy.

Economists like Dr. Sharma and Dr. Bishwambher Pyakuryal, president of Nepal Economic Association, agree that the unrest will trigger a series of implications on the national economy.

In short-term, the unrest could trigger supplies derailment and push rise in inflation. The livelihood of daily wage



Vehicles vandalized: Economic loss

earners will be jeopardized the most as they will face lack of earning coinciding with sky-rocketing market prices of essential goods.

The revenue collection will be sorely hit. Reports of attack and vandalism at the custom revenue offices in border points in the region have aggravated the concern whether the government will be able to gather adequate revenue this year – if it is unable to collect adequate revenue that will have cascading effect on other areas of economy.

In long-term, the impact will be profound on Nepal's ability to attract investment. Development projects will

also suffer. "This is going to have a substantial impact on all sectors of economy. The economic activities have gone into contraction. The confidence that was restored after the signing of peace agreement is fast dissipating," said Dr. Pyakuryal.

He said that prolonged unrest will erase the confidence witnessed in the post conflict situation. "These unrest will further hurt the FDI prospects. The joint venture companies who had not backed out during the decade-long conflict and who were planning to expand in the post conflict period will be faced with a situation where there is a greater degree of unpredictability in the economy," he added.

The concerns for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) have risen at a time when a recent report by the Department of Industry had revealed that despite peace agreement, the investors have not started to have faith in Nepal yet. As per its report, in the first six months of the current fiscal year, the FDI approved by the government has declined by 80 percent compared to the same period previous year.

The Department for Industry has informed that this year the total FDI commitment worth Rs 250 million has come compared to Rs 1.25 billion during the same period previous year. During this period, various companies like Bottlers Nepal Limited, Himalayan

"Unrest Will Have Significant Impact"

Dr. Shankar Sharma

Dr. Shankar Sharma is a renowned economist. Former vice chairman of National Planning Commission (NPC) spoke to SPOTLIGHT on the likely impact of Terai turmoil on national economy. Excerpts:



What kind of impacts will the current turmoil in Terai have on economy?

It will have significant impact. At present, most factories have shut down due to unrest. Since non-agriculture sector contributes 60 percent to our GDP, this will have serious impact.

What kind of immediate impact do you foresee?

Trade is at standstill. Both exports and imports have been affected. Transport sector is also paralyzed. Likewise, manufacturing sector is also disrupted.

And, what about long-term impacts?

This will hurt our investment prospects. New investments will be hard to come by. Development projects will also suffer.

Will it affect estimations of 4 percent growth this year?

If this unrest prolongs then definitely growth will be affected. But there are other factors as well. Anyway, contribution from transport, trade and manufacturing sector on growth have been affected. Revenue has also been severely affected.

“Economy Now Will Have Greater Degree Of Unpredictability”

Dr. Bishwambher Pyakuryal

Professor Dr. Bishwambher Pyakuryal is the president of Nepal Economic Association. He spoke to SPOTLIGHT on the economic implications of unrest in Madhes. Excerpts:

What kind of implications will the unrest have on economy?

This is going to have a substantial impact on all sectors of economy. The economic activities have gone into contraction. The confidence that was restored after the signing of peace agreement is fast dissipating.

How will it affect common people?

Already our minimum wage was unable to sustain livelihood of wage-earners. This episode will hit at livelihood at micro level and hurt local economic growth. Delivery of essential goods will be affected. This will lead to rise in inflation further putting pressure on the wage earners.

What about impact at macro level?

The confidence will vanish. Investment opportunities would be lost. International experiences have proved that in post conflict situation the transaction cost of economy is nearly double than those at normal times. These kinds of unrest will further increase those costs.

Will it hurt prospects of FDI?

Definitely, it will. Even a recent report had said that the level of FDI had dramatically come down by 80 percent this year. These unrest will further hurt the FDI prospects. The joint venture companies who had not backed out during the decade-long conflict and who were planning to expand in the post conflict period will be faced with a situation where there is a greater degree of unpredictability in the economy.

Can the economic growth be satisfactory then?

The estimation of growing by 4 percent may not be achieved.



“At a time when the tourism industry is finally showing signs of revival and foreign clients are planning to come to Nepal, this crisis is posing as a major setback. If we do not forever forego these demonstrations and strikes immediately, we will never be able to improve the tarnished image of Nepal and promote Nepal as a safe tourist destination,” the NATO warned

Derailed Supply Unit

Two weeks after the protests broke out in Terai, people in the capital valley and elsewhere have already started to feel the pinch.

The serpentine queues in front of empty petrol stations, reports of rising inflation and stalled supply system have begun to take their toll.

The authorities have scrambled to put the supply system in order. The meeting of high-level Supplies Committee, including representatives from the Ministry of Home; Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies; as well as representatives of private dealers held recently decided to impose quota on petrol distribution. As per the quota system, motorcycles will be entitled to get two liters of petrol while four wheelers will

Snacks and Dabur Nepal had to shut down their operations for some time due to pressure from Maoist-supported workers. Of the FDI commitments of Rs 250 million, around Rs 128.9 million is for the service sector. In terms of commitment volume, China leads the lack with Rs 94.6 million followed by South Korea (Rs 48.8 million), Japan (Rs 36.7 million) and India (Rs 21.3 million).

Then, there will be the obvious negative impact on the sector of tourism, which was just limping back to normalcy from years of conflict.

A few days ago, the Nepal Association of Tour Operators (NATO) issued a statement expressing serious concerns about the rising instances of protests and strikes in the Terai region that is showing no signs of subsiding. “On one hand NATO is worried about the fuel shortage that has hit the tourism industry hard while on the other, the increasing number of casualties and the unrest in the region has left us shocked,” it said.

The NATO informed that the tourism

industry is facing hardships due to this problem as “cancellations from various groups have already started pouring in.”

“Business Sector Is Totally Demoralized”

Rajendra Khetan

Rajendra Khetan is a renowned industrialist. He spoke to SPOTLIGHT on how the business community is watching the worsening situation in Terai. Excerpts:

How is the mood of business community these days?

The business community is totally demoralized. The business sector was already hard-pressed due to pressures from the trade unions. With the sudden unrest in Terai, the community is really demoralized.

How has the unrest affected business sector?

Since past 21 days, most industries are totally shut down. This will have tremendous impact on economy. After the success of 19-day-long Jana Andolan, there was a new sense of recovery. But the business sector has been neglected and we don't see the presence of state in many areas.

How will this impact the economy?

This will incur big loss to the country in terms of revenue and in terms employment, among others. Daily wage laborers are under huge stress. Due to strikes, unrest and power cuts, the cost of production has also shot up.

What happens once the Terai situation comes back to normal?

Even after it is resolved, there will be persisting feeling of fear and unpredictability. Earlier there was only one conflicting party but now it seems there have been fractions of them.



ALARMING TRADE DEFICIT

Recently, the government secretary Bharat Bahadur Thapa had revealed the astounding and unsustainable trade deficit the country is suffering from. Secretary at the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies, Thapa said that in the last fiscal year, Nepal conducted total trade transactions worth Rs 222 billion. "Of that, our exports totalled Rs 60 billion while our imports stood at astounding Rs 162 billion. And nearly 70 percent of the transactions were with only one country (India)," he said. Secretary Thapa revealed that data of the first few months of the current fiscal year, too, were indicating the continuation of the same trend. "Our exports have further declined in the first six months of the current fiscal year," he said. Speaking at a program, held in Kathmandu titled "Trade Policy and Export Diversification" organized by South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment (SAWTEE), ActionAid Nepal in association with the UNDP Regional Centre, Thapa said that Nepal was lagging far behind in trade growth at both global as well as regional level. Secretary Thapa also expressed apprehensions over the likely fall out of the recent reduction in tariff line of some products by the Indian government. "Traditionally, our exports have flourished by taking advantage of preferential arrangements. Such preferences are fast eroding at all level and in all sectors. As countries are moving ahead with bilateral agreements, there is a need to identify our strengths," he said.



Tourists: Lack of confidence

get five liters at a time.

The committee has also decided to use security escorts to ensure smooth supply of petroleum products and essential goods. But past experiences during Maoist-imposed blockades show that such measures are not very effective.

The Nepal Oil Corporation (NOC) has started using the alternative route through Sunauli-Bhairahawa and Rupediya-Nepalgunj points to bring in the petrol supplies. But these are, at best, measures to prevent public panic since these points are far away from nearby petrol depots in India and, therefore, very costly and unfeasible.

For a corporation that is already bleeding financially, to bring in petrol from costly routes would be very

difficult, if not impossible. The NOC was already facing supplies cuts from its sole supplier Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) by as much as 30 percent since it failed to pay back outstanding dues that have crossed Rs 10 billion.

The IOC is unlikely to continue supplying fuel to NOC in a normal manner for a long time. Recently, there was a news report in Indian media that India's petroleum minister Murli Deora had expressed inability to continue supplying oil to NOC without settling

outstanding dues. According to a news report published in The Indian Express daily, Deora had turned down the Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee's request for continuing normal supplies of petroleum products to Nepal, saying that the Ministry of External Affairs should pay for the losses if it wanted to extend the goodwill gesture. "If the MEA considers that uninterrupted supplies are to be made for strategic reasons as a gesture of goodwill to the friendly people of Nepal, it may consider supporting the financial losses to the extent of the under-recovery," Deora wrote to Mukherjee. The letter added, "IOC is a commercial entity, and cannot continue making supplies in the absence of full payment. IOC would be constrained to cut supplies."

This makes clear that woes of Nepalese consumers are unlikely to be addressed anytime soon.

Terai unrest is steadily having spillover effects on economy. The actual magnitude and extent of the effects can be known once the unrest ends and dust settles. For the time being, people have no option than to keep their fingers crossed hoping for the swift end of the unrest and restoration of durable peace. ■



Bombed factory: Incessant problems

“Vehicle Emissions And Smog Emitted By Brick Kilns Are Two Major Polluters Of Quality Of Air”

Bal Krishna Prasai

BAL KRISHNA PRASAI, Secretary at Ministry of Environment and Science and Technology, is a career civil servant. A science graduate, Prasai has served at various ministries before he joined the Environment Ministry at the last leg of his career. Prasai spoke with KESHAB POUDEL on various issues regarding the government's present environment policies. Excerpts:

Yes, it has damaged a lot. Since we have effective and modern system to analyze and collect the air quality, we have already distributed it in different areas.

What do you say about the recently published international report terming Kathmandu valley as a worse place in terms of quality of air?

There is no doubt that Kathmandu valley's air quality is not good and it is one of the cities in Asia with high level of pollution. So far as the recent report published by Asian Development Bank terming Kathmandu as a worse city in Asia in terms of quality of air is concerned, we don't agree with it. Our studies have also shown that the air quality is not bad as the report stated.

What do you say then?

I told you that it is not true. Even the data quoted in the report are old. Senior officials of the Ministry who were attending the meeting in Indonesia immediately raised objection to the report. The report pointed out that Nepal's environmental management was poor. It is also completely wrong.

Has the government obtained the ADB's report?

We have not read the whole report yet. We don't know how the consultants working in such a prestigious organization like Asian Development Bank prepared the report terming Kathmandu as one of the worst cities in Asia in terms of air quality.

For a city with tourism significance, the report has already sent bad message around the world. What plan does the government have to counter the argument presented in the report?

Yes, it has damaged a lot. Since we have effective and modern system to analyze and collect the air quality, we have already distributed it in different areas. Our efforts will pay as the report does not consist of authentic information. We are disseminating the information through our website.

How do you say that your environment management is effective and air pollution control program is effective?

In the areas of air quality control, we have been launching some very effective programs. The quality of air is measured from different places. Nepal is one of the countries in South Asia with a good system to monitor the air quality.

Don't you think Nepal needs to take some necessary steps?

Of course, we need to take some measures to improve the quality of air in Kathmandu valley. From vehicle emissions to the smoke coming from

brick kilns, all are adding different particles into the air. We are planning to introduce certain mechanism to improve the quality of air by reducing the level of emissions. Vehicle emissions and smog emitted by brick kilns are two major polluters of quality of air. The poor quality of roads in the valley is also contributing to deteriorate the air quality. Our recent studies have shown that various kinds of particles including dust are very high in the air. We have set an ambitious standard for the quality of air. The level of air pollution is still higher than our own standard and we need to take steps to improve them.

What is the ministry doing now?

Our ministry is now in the process of collecting information regarding the quality of air. We will take necessary measures after studying the report. We are also taking initiative to reduce the level of smog coming out from brick kiln. The ministry is now preparing a pollution standard for brick kilns. Most of the brick kilns in the valley have introduced modern technology by reducing the level of emissions but it is still higher. We are now promoting a new technology of VS nickey. This is a very costly technology and all brick kilns cannot afford it. We must, however, switch from old system. Even Supreme Court has directed us to take necessary steps to reduce the level of pollution from brick kiln. As we don't have any standard of pollution prepared for brick kiln, we cannot remove brick kilns randomly. Even we don't have report regarding the level of pollution emitted by various brick kilns. After completion of our study, we will take necessary actions.

When will you set the emission standard for brick kilns?

We have directives given by the Supreme Court. Thus, we must prepare an emission standard for brick kilns. We will release it very soon. After that we will close the brick kilns, which do not comply with emission standard.

What steps are you taking to control the vehicle emissions?

We have set standard for vehicle emissions but it is still higher. As long as we cannot supply high quality petroleum products, it is impossible to reduce vehicle emissions. We are now talking with Nepal Oil Corporation regarding the issue. As it is related to supply of quality petroleum products, NOC also has an important role to play. We have set Euro I as an emission standard. The total emission of carbon is .025 which is very negligible. In those terms we are in good position.

How do you see the state of air quality in Kathmandu?

This is a fact that the air quality of Kathmandu is deteriorating. The green areas are depleting and the present system of carrying the construction materials is also contributing to increase the air particles in valley.

As it involves many organizations to reduce

the level of air pollution, how do you see the response from other ministries?

We have been organizing series of meetings with various organizations and ministries. They are bringing some positive results. From transport management to road and water resources to industry, trade and commerce, we need support from all of them to reduce the level of pollution.

What are other environmental problems in Kathmandu valley?

The river pollution is another major problem of Kathmandu valley. In the last one decade of urbanization, all the rivers in the valley turned into a sewerage. The water is so contaminated that it is like poison for its eco system.

Do you believe that the air pollution and river pollution of valley have immediate solutions?

It needs to have a long term solution but we have to work now to make the situation better. Like in the area of air pollution, we also need the support of local population to clean the river. As most rivers are polluted due to direct release of sewerage to the river, there is a need for a system to clean the sewerage before they are released into the river. There is technology around the world to clean the river. As a water treatment plant in Bagmati river has been already cleaning the water, we are considering to add such plants in various areas so that we can clean the water.

What plans the ministry is formulating for long term solution in cleaning the water?

First of all, we are doing study on sewerage system of valley. We can build the water treatment plants in various places and release the water after cleaning through them; then river water will automatically clean.

How viable is this kind of plant?

We have seen such plants operating in various parts of the world. We can also do it. The business of treating sewerage also generates gas of various kinds which will ultimately produce the energy. There is possibility to do it. In my recent observatory visit to South Korea, I had seen how landfill sites produce electricity making garbage collection profitable.

Have you made any specific study on that?

With the support from the World Bank, we are carrying a country environment analysis on existing environmental problems. The study will identify the environmental problems faced by the country and ways to address it. It will also suggest what kinds of support Nepal needs for long term programs as well as capability of our ministry.

How do you see the institutional capability of the ministry to implement the environment related programs?

Our institutional capability is still weak since environment component was added just two years ago in the Science and Technology ministry. The ministry has to execute environmental acts and regulations but it does not have adequate manpower or mechanisms. Even now many industries are releasing emissions but we don't have institutional capability to observe them. The ministry is now working to bring the change in policy matters so we don't have time to follow the implementation side. We are now considering establishing an institution



with capability and institutional mechanism to address these problems.

How do you see the implications of global warming on Nepal?

We have just recently signed an understanding with WWF to prepare a new policy. As a country with enormous glaciers, the global warming will have a very long term implications for a country like Nepal. As some of the glaciers are already in the process of outburst, they could destroy our infrastructures in hydro power as well as irrigation sector. This is the single most challenge in a country like Nepal. We have not done any study but we can see changes in the environment even in the valley as well as in terai. New phenomena are evolving with the rise of temperature. Among more than 2000 glacier lakes, 30 are in the list of potentially dangerous. Himalayas are sources of water. Any disturbance there will have negative implications in Nepal. From hydro power generation to irrigation, it will affect us in all sectors.

How is Nepal benefiting from Kyoto protocol?

Nepal is taking the advantage through the carbon trade. Although it is still in initial stage, we are already in the process of developing projects so that Nepal can trade the carbon. Under the CDM projects, Nepal is now registering bio-gas plants, community forestry, solar and micro-hydro plants can be traded in the world. They will generate money for us. There are many areas where Nepal can reap benefits. As our carbon production level is very low, we can trade our carbon surplus with other countries, we can annually earn Rs.50 million. India, China and Brazil are making a lot of money selling carbon. Now the World Bank is buying our carbon credit. It costs about 12 to 15 dollar per ton but Nepal is now selling it at US\$ 7. Our alternatives energy program is selling bio-gas. Per biogas plant now generates Rs.3500 through carbon trading. We have already registered 19,693 plants. The World Bank has carbon trading project which can buy our carbon and sell them to other countries. We are now registering micro-hydro also.

Are there opportunities for Nepal in carbon trading?

There are great opportunities for us in the carbon trading area. There are many buyers in the world but we don't have any capacity to sell them. India has even private companies capable to develop the projects. They are also showing interest to develop projects. Germany, Japan and Korea also have shown interest to buy our surplus. It will generate resources for years. ■

Under the CDM projects, Nepal is now registering bio-gas plants, community forestry, solar and micro-hydro plants can be traded in the world. They will generate money for us. There are many areas where Nepal can reap benefits.

Silent Moderation And Violent Extremism

As the saying goes extremism breeds extremism, numerous new extremist groups are now competing with each other. Silent moderation will have to see extremism tendency in Nepalese politics for a long time to come

By KESHAB POUDEL

* "In Loktantra, every one has the right to express their desires and expectations but they must follow the peaceful means," said prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala in his first national address. "We can find every solution through the peaceful means," said Koirala, who became prime minister following 19 days long Janandolan II in April 2006.

* "Though the demands of Madhesi community are genuine, royalists and Hindu fundamentalists are behind the present rampage and destruction in Terai," said Maoist leader Prachanda in his recent press conference. "If violence and destruction continues, the government has to mobilize army and Maoist militia to quell it," said Prachanda, who led agitation for 12 years which killed more than 13,000 people and destroyed enormous infrastructures.

* "If Seven Parties Alliance and Maoists justified all destruction and devastation to achieve their goals, they don't have moral authority to advise Madhesia people what they need to do when people reacted against the suppression of brutal police force," said Upendra Yadav leader of Madhesi Janadhikar Forum in a press conference organized by Everest Press Club. Yadav, who was associated with the Maoists in the past, is now leading Madhesi andolan.

Whether a person has democratic, communist or communal commitment,

all are competing with each other in senseless and suicidal extremism. Maoists have not only reached to their ideological goal of absolute power but they established a convention of violent means to gain political concessions. All political parties in Seven Party Alliance - which entered into the politics of parliamentary elections with experience of three subsequent parliaments - too have nothing left for that competitive democratic process other than harp the slogan for extremism.



Political leaders: Tilting towards extremism

As end is the power, anything is justified to the leaders of all those parties to achieve their goal. Violence of Maoists has been amply rewarded by two major political parties sharing equal

power with it in interim parliament.

When power sharing arrangements were made through the violent and destruction and not through the electoral process, recent agitation in terai is also a continuation in the process of extremist politics.

Derailment of Parliamentary Procedure

Though there were failing and foul plays even in parliamentary period, it had its in built process of correction in parliamentary polity. When violence was rewarded with power, nobody will have the patience to go through the long process of competitive politics. Although the extremism was there in the past in Nepalese politics, the parliamentary system somehow had sidelined it during its twelve years long experiments. Even Maoists could not challenge it as long as parliament functioned properly.

"The most unfortunate turn of events took place after the surprise dismissal of Deuba government and postponement of general elections on October 4, 2002. That was a very serious step as short sightedness and miscalculation by the King against parliamentary

democracy was counterproductive to the respectability and the position of monarchy," said a political analyst. "Soon after that step, the King was surrounded by persons of doubtful

backgrounds which made him much ambitious and over confident of his steps. That extremist experiment was not at all expected under the constitution of that time and subsequent events made the King almost a total loser."

As soon as the King dismissed elected prime minister, a new phase of an extremist experiment of one nature began. Forces with enough of democratic commitments with a promise to revive the constitutional process, too, were not free from undesirable alliances external as well as internal to promote another brand of extremism.

"As long as there was no strong backing from an invisible center, the agitation led by seven party alliances had very little influence upon the people and their mobilization. A compromise was made with Maoists in a series of meeting in New Delhi which involved them in the agitation with seven parties without relinquishing violence and arms. In fact the agitation had a powerful backing of armed persons who were declared terrorists by the same parties when they were in the government," said the analyst. "It was such a strange alliance which had many secrets yet to be revealed to the people. In recent book on prime minister G.P. Koirala, he had confided to his interviewer Sital Koirala that his first meeting with Prachanda was held on May 5, 2001."

"If that date is correctly mentioned, that was 25 days before the Royal Palace massacre when Koirala was himself the prime minister. The interviewer did not mention whether then prime minister Koirala discussed with late King Birendra or not but that was a beginning of a new crisis in Nepal which has not yet come to an end," said the analyst.

Compared to invisible forces active around the country, Nepalese politicians, from King Gyanendra to politician like Girija Prasad Koirala with six decade long political experience, all have appeared as too much of simpletons and ignorant of the machinations and manipulations.

"King Gyanendra had a major contribution for this tragic development but other major political parties have no less contribution in the development of



Madhesi Andolan: New phase of extremism

present situation."

Revived Parliament

Had the revived parliament worked under the spirit of constitution of 1990, the present crisis would have been averted. After the revival of parliament in April 24, 2006, there was abrupt declaration from the parliament by which the constitution of 1990 was subordinated to that. All the state power of the King was removed and the parliament established a practice of almost a government of decree like that of any military take over.

"All the previous norm and practices of constitutionalism and the rule of law were flagrantly discarded. People were not sure about their rights. This alliance in the government ultimately promulgated interim constitution. It was produced in the parliament but no amendment was allowed," said the analyst. "The members of the dissolved parliament were permitted simply to raise their hands in its support. Even a substantial minority of a few political parties like RPP were forced to support the interim constitution."

Terai's Upsurge

After the promulgation of new interim constitution, common people had a great hope that this new change would restore peace and stability very soon as they need it very much. But others' needs are more in priority than that of the country.

Little more than 24 hours after the promulgation of constitution on January 15, another violent agitation mysteriously erupted in Southern parts of the Nepal. In the name of Madhesis, three major groups have appeared in the leadership till now. The nickname of the prominent leader of the group is Jwala Singh (Volcano). In fact, this denotes the mystery and suddenness of eruption of violence in almost half the southern part of Nepal adjoining India.

Having a porous border, it is easy for any force to manipulate such kind of agitation but it is difficult to control. "Some of the political leaders including Maoists who were operating from that territory till last few months have now started accusing the neighbor in a vague but in meaningful terms," said the analyst.

Even CPN-UML leader Madhav Kumar Nepal sees the royalists and Hindu Fundamentalists from across the border behind the riot in terai. "The demands of Madhesis are genuine but Royalist regressive forces and some foreign elements are behind the present violent agitation in terai," said CPN-UML leader Nepal.

It was Maoists in the past who found a safe sanctuary for violent activities in Nepal. As they are in the power now, others have replaced them doing the same. How long and far this game of violent extremism will continue in the country is difficult to predict.



Indigenous community: Coming up with new set of demands

“Politics of ideological commitments and higher ideals have been lost somewhere in this prolonged instability which has made the violent extremism as the rule of the game. It is not only the upholders of communist ideology who preach and practice violence and extremism. In fact there rarely appears any moderate and peaceful person to be effective alternative,” said the analyst. “If an octogenarian fighter for pluralist democracy does not hesitate to accept the leadership of self-nominated oligarchy in power who are free from the accountability to any constituency of the people, what one can expect from communists of varied brands.”

Hope for Moderation

But the population is not fully politicized and involved into the active polity. Even the urban centered and enlightened people who have their own opinion in the public matters have been sidelined by the situation of an organized threat of extremism.

“Anything uttered in moderation is denounced as a voice of reactionary or revivalist force implicating that as a conservative view. There is mass hysteria generated in the society in such a way that for prestige and social status, too, one has to use changed vocabularies such as Loktantra for Prajatantra (in English both means Democracy). Even prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala, who has 60 years long political background and

emotional attachment with the word Prajatantra, too, switched over to Loktantra,” said the analyst.

Similarly, the southern part of Nepal was popularly known as a Terai till recent week but all of a sudden, the old and outmoded term Madhesh has been revived and the whole country has to switch over to a new word for the same identity for the region. Besides, the euphoria of Maoism has been completely wiped out in eastern part of terai by a regional sentiment of non-ideological sense.

“It is puzzling for thoughtful persons how mass of the people or the people of a certain regions belonging to certain ethnic or linguistic group suddenly outburst through the diktat of invisible agency. But ultimately one has to find out purpose behind all these painful destructive and dangerous trends of extremism. Analyzing the changing behaviors, one reaches to the conclusion that there are no stable symptoms in the crisis. Had there been a genuine and interest-based upsurge of the people there would have been stable phenomenon to identify. Till few years back, it was the general phenomenon that the people wanted to ameliorate all their miseries through multi-party democracy despite threat of arms from Maoists,” said the analyst.

Soon after the Royal Palace massacre in 2001, a dramatic turn took place in the

Nepalese politics. The challenges of Maoists were so imminent and widespread that even communist China was puzzled over the upsurge of communist ideology of Maoist brand in Nepal.

The world had seriously believed that Nepal was under the threat of communist takeover. All the western friends of Nepal, the UN experts and NGOs have taken it on the face value and were changing their strategies to deal with that accordingly before all these readjustments took place. A few weeks of dramatic events in south of Nepal have seen the cleaning operation directed against the Maoist influence.

None of the Maoist leaders are in terai to share the new crisis. The same kind of operation has begun in piecemeal basis in the hills in Nepal in the name of different ethnic identity.

“For serious analysts, all these appearances are superficial. The realities of the country remain the same. All these problems are the reflections of the readjustment of geo-political situation. People in Nepal have various problems of underdevelopment which were sometimes used and exploited for strategic gains or ulterior interest of invisible powers. In the modern days that is done under the cover not owned or accepted officially,” said the analyst. “Countries in South Asia are quite familiar with the machinations and manipulation of unseen hands. It requires wisdom and capability in the leadership of the country to expose and oppose them. Unfortunately, Nepal was never so poorer in the matter of upright but poorer in the leadership to ventilate its grievances and stand for the national interest.”

Is violent extremism the convinced alternative of the people? Ask any Nepali of ordinary prudence, the reply will be completely negative. Has politics of moderation become irrelevant? Ask anybody in Nepal, their reply will again be negative. Then why, the rule of the game has been violent extremism? Why the moderation has been silenced? ■

“India Has No Major Security Concerns In Nepal”

- Ambassador Mukherjee

In recent years, India is being seen as an emerging global power. Emergence of the South Asian giant as a major power on the world stage is bound to have its fallout on its neighborhood including Nepal. Against this background, SUSHIL SHARMA of the BBC Nepali Service spoke with the Indian ambassador to Nepal, SHIV SHANKAR MUKHERJEE. Excerpts of the interview which was broadcast last Sunday:

There has been a lot of talk about India rising in recent times. What does the Rising India mean for neighboring countries like Nepal?

Inevitably, it will have a positive impact. Already two-thirds of Nepal's import and export trade is with India. More than a third of Nepal's tourist arrivals are from India. So, as the economy of India grows, one can see enormous benefits that should accrue to Nepal.

Could you be specific?

Nepal has immense potential of producing power from its huge water resources. Right next to Nepal is India, which, with a growing economy, is very thirsty for energy. If Nepal produces, let's say, five to six thousand megawatts of power and export to India, which it can in a matter of a few years, Nepal's per capita GDP will rise by the multiples. May be by seven or eight times.

But the past has not been encouraging for Nepal. Take, for instance, the bitter experiences of Koshi, Gandak and lately, the Mahakali projects.

I fully agree. The hydro power potential has not been utilized in the past. That is not because of technological reasons, but purely because the issue was politicized unnecessarily particularly on the side of Nepal. But both have realized the past mistakes and that they should be forgotten and that such mistakes should

not be repeated.

Talking about the Mahakali project, in particular. Ten years have passed since the treaty was signed, but it has not taken off yet. Many in Nepal see India as the villain of the piece in the non-implementation of the treaty. That indeed is the case, isn't it?

No. It has more to do with the internal political developments in Nepal such as the Maoist insurgency and the royal takeover. So, a lot of things went into the backburner.

You mentioned about the opportunities to Nepal from a Rising India. But there are fears and apprehensions as well from the Big Brother.

This business of Big Brother apprehensions in Nepal are exaggerated one. They are baseless and not shared by the vast majority of the people. I have visited sixty of the seventy-five districts in Nepal.

Your visits across the country have also been seen with suspicion. It has run into a controversy, sort of.

I do not recall any controversy. In fact, it is very humbling when I go out to the districts in rural areas.

The controversy is regarding how can a foreign ambassador travel to the nook and corner of the country and dole out money to projects there, instead of doing the same through the finance ministry.

In my two and a half years of stay here, I have not heard, seen or read any report, anything remotely like that. In fact, the projects that we do are recommended by the communities, by community leaders. Indeed that is one the most satisfying parts of my work. Ten per cent of Nepal's populations have benefited from them. Today, we are doing one-hundred-sixty projects in sixty-five countries with an



outlay of over two thousand crore rupees.

India has always been saying that it wants to see peace, stability and prosperity in its neighborhood. But its neighborhood has been anything but peaceful, stable and prosperous over the past fifty years. How do you explain it?

You are right. Our neighborhood has not enjoyed the kind of peace, stability and prosperity that it should. We hope, that will change. We stand ready to do whatever we can through bilateral relations with neighbors and through regional forums like SAARC.

If in the past, your neighbors could not benefit from your development, how can they, in the future?

Through greater connectivity, through better and more positive and free regional trade arrangements and through freer movement of people as already is the case with Nepal.

Coming back to the issue of India's official policy on the region. Despite you wishing to see the region peaceful, stable and prosperous, the region has been the just opposite. Is not that a failure of India's diplomacy?

No, I would not say that. Diplomacy and relationship between countries are not a question of arithmetic. They are the

creations of a host of factors - very complex factors - particularly in South Asia. It is the inequitable distribution of wealth — and, poverty in many cases - that is the root cause of the anger and the lack of stability that a country should enjoy.

India had always been sensitive about its security concerns in the region. Now that India is on the march to becoming a major power, what would be your security concerns in the next twenty/thirty years especially vis-à-vis Nepal?

With Nepal, we do not have any major security concerns. Particularly now, as it moves towards a democratic new Nepal, those concerns will be minimal.

Will you envisage measures like sealing off the open borders and scrapping the 1950 treaty to address the challenges?

The open border is a great advantage to Nepal and to both countries as a matter of fact. As far as 1950 treaty is concerned, it has served well both countries. But India is perfectly open to discuss any review of the treaty or renewal of the treaty or for that matter the termination of the treaty. We will have completely open mind on that.

The treaty is almost sixty years old. You still do not see any need for changes?

Not really. It has stood the test of the time. But if there is a feeling that it should be reviewed to bring it to the line of contemporary realities, we have an open mind on the issue.

Lastly, how do you see the future of Nepal from the perspective of an emerging power?

I see a very bright future for Nepal, if you look at all those potentials. And with wise governance in terms of developing its human resources, I see no reason why Nepal can not become the richest country in South Asia within, say, ten years' time. ■

PRACHANDA DEPLORES PM'S ADDRESS

Two days after Prime Minister's address to the nation on January 31, Maoist chairman Prachanda organized a press meet terming it as incomplete and inadequate. Addressing a press meet in Kathmandu, Prachanda expressed support and solidarity with Madhesi agitation for proportional representation, federal system and right to self-determination.

"Since the Madhesi people want proportional representation, federal republic and right to self-determination, yesterday's speech of the Prime Minister does not adequately address these issues. It has created more confusion," Prachanda said, adding that these demands should be addressed directly. He argued that

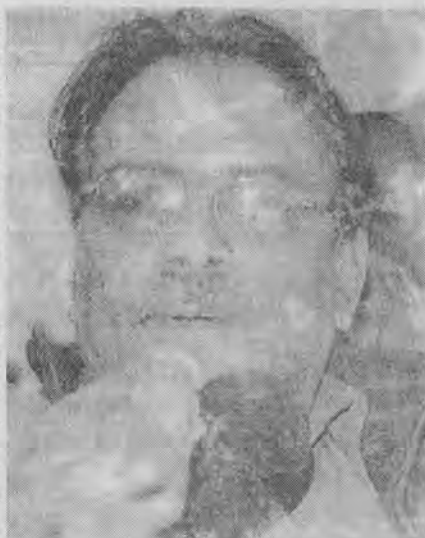
proportional electoral system, federalism and republican set up were inter-linked. "We are firm on these agendas," he said, adding that the Maoists had not backtracked from any of the political agendas they raised during the armed movement.

Conceding his party worker's wrongdoing in Lahan incident, which sparked angry protests by Madhesi groups, Prachanda pledged to investigate into the case and make the probe report public. He, however, reiterated the claim that royalists and foreign elements had infiltrated into the agitation of the Madhesis to create communal strife and derail the peace process.

"The Indian government has so far been supportive of the peace process in Nepal, but some [Indian] fundamentalist elements are trying to play in the Terai protests. Some of these elements might also have links with the establishment in one way or the other. And, there is the American ambassador who has been openly making provocative statements," he said. Prachanda further said his party was not in favor of dialogue with "groups which have been falsely projecting themselves to be the leaders of the ongoing agitations in Terai", but would have no objection if the government reaches out to these groups including the Madhesi Janadhikar Forum (MJF) and two factions of the Terai Janatantrik Mukti Morcha (JTMM), which is a breakaway faction of the Maoists.

Prachanda also revealed that there was discussion among the eight parties about jointly mobilizing the army and the Maoist People's Liberation Army (PLA) in Terai if the situation there grows into a full-blown anarchy. "The PLA would be mobilized, along with the Nepal Army, proportionate to its strength," he said. "But such an option should be executed only after the eight-party consensus and the government decision." The Maoist supremo also made it a point to blame the seven-party government for its lack of focus on holding the constituent assembly elections in the stipulated time.

"The recent government appointments, the dillydallying in providing basic facilities to the PLA cantonments which is necessary to facilitate the arms management process and the indifference towards forming laws demanded by the Election Commission indicate that the SPA government is not serious about holding constituent assembly elections in mid-June," he said. (Courtesy: nepalnews.com)



BHAKTI SANGIT UTSAV

Show of Unity

Sharma Bandhu (India) performed their concert showing how cultural similarities bind Nepal-India relations

By A CORRESPONDENT

After years of violence and devastations, lord Pashupatinath, the god of destruction and creation, must have finally found time to heave a sigh of relief when a renowned Indian musical group performed their religious musical festival at Kailash, just above Pashupatinath Temple.

Renowned musicians, Sharma Bandhu from India won the hearts and minds of people when they sang their popular devotional songs sending a thrilling wave of eternal feeling to the listeners of Bhakti Sangit Utsav.

When Sharma Bandhus started their performance praising lord Shiva, Rama and all other gods, the sound rejuvenated people inside the stage - as the musical program provided listeners with relief as well as salvation. Performed at Kailash, regarded as an abode of lord Shiva, the musical program brought about a sense of calm in Pashupati area.

"It was amazing. The songs were so powerful that I was completely lost in the devotional music. Had Shivaji been around the Kailash, he would have felt similar experience," said Jagnath Shrestha, a resident of Jayabageswori. Their songs were so sweet and so touching, every body enjoyed it."

When Sharma Bandhu chanted *Jai Shree Ram*, or *Jai Shiva*, the crowd followed them. One of the major attractions of Sharma Bandhu was the combination of music, devotional songs and words.

From timing to place, the devotional musical festival was very appropriate as it was the second day after full moon when Pashupatinath temple performed one of its important rituals. For devotees, the Saturday of month of Magha itself was a good day to visit the temple of Pashupati and the musical program was additional advantage. As the entrance

was free, many devotees saw this as a great opportunity.

Whether it is *Ganesh Stuti* or song dedicated to lord Rama and lord Shiva, the devotional songs were familiar for a large number of Hindus as well as other communities in Nepal. Nepal which is known as a land of pilgrimage consists of all important temples. From glacier lake of Gosaikund to Pashupatinath temple in Kathmandu and Janaki temple in Janakpur to Muktinath in Mustang, there are important pilgrim sites in the country.

For Hindus of Nepal and India, they are well known as both the countries have



Sharma Bandhu: Enthraling audience Kantipur

similar foundation of their religion and culture. From religion to culture and religious epics, people of both the countries have many commonalities. For many Hindus in India, lord Pashupatinath symbolizes one of the important pilgrimages. Similarly, most devout Hindus consider visiting Kashi (Varanashi) will open the gate of heaven for their ancestors.

Participating in the Bhakti Sangeet Utsav, Sharma Bandhus, Gopal Sharma, Sukhadev Sharma, Kailash Sharma and Raghvendra Sharma and Nepalese musicians Gurdev Kamat, Batuk Raj Mishra, Narendra Pyashi and Iswor

Amatya showed religious commonalities of both the countries.

Political relations may have many ups and downs but the cultural and religious relations are eternal as they maintain similar course. This is one of the major strength of Nepal and India relations. It flourishes from official to people to people level. By organizing the program at Kailash, Indian Embassy and B.P. Koirala India Nepal Foundation also indicated the same thing.

For quite a long time, the Pashupati Area has hardly seen any devotional musical concerts. Sharma Bandhus and Nepali musicians showed that though they speak different language but their devotional flavor is same. Language, geography and other man made boundaries cannot limit the devotional and religious songs.

Inaugurated jointly by Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation Pradeep Gyawali and Indian ambassador Shiva Shanker Mukherjee, the program lasted for whole day on Saturday where Satya Raj Acharya and Swaroop Raj

Acharya, sons of Bhakta Raj Acharya also performed their songs.

"This is the first time that B.P. Koirala India Nepal Foundation and the Indian Embassy have come up with a devotional event which has artistes from both the countries performing on the same stage. As Magh is considered a very important month religiously and the songs are of Hindu devotion, we decided to have it on this auspicious month," said Gopal Bagley, counselor of the Indian Embassy. Stage managed by Kaalbhairav, the Bhakti Sangeet Utsav won the hearts and minds of people. ■

Who wants blood?

- By Madan Regmi

Some part of Nepalese Terai has been badly hit by violence. The undemocratic demands motivated by separatist agenda are in the fore. Thus the "democracy" appears being carried away by the anti-Nepal external force in the false premise of the down trodden Terain Nepalese which the terrorist and its protectors of different political wings, external and internal, are projecting as Madhesi. The nature of this disorder in the Nepalese Terai is not in the pattern of spontaneity, rather a foreign orchestration well designed and worked upon for years is bearing the fruit of its investment. The extra territorial activities of Indian outfits and its Diplomats are going unabated in the entire segment of the Nepalese society. The Indian Ambassadors since 2002 has been funneling cash amounts directly to the educational institutes and various rural projects in nook and corner of Nepal and particularly in the Terai region. This perpetration is in contravention to Nepal's rules and regulation and a brazen violation and undermining of Nepal's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. The Indian move behind it is clearer than ever before. Wherever this Indian money has moved in, the riot has broken out.

Thus the ongoing chaos and violence in Terai is very much attributed with the extra territorial Indian activities which the Government of India cannot perform even in the States under its domain. Plainly speaking Delhi's claim of playing the role of a detached and friendly neighbor is not true. India imposed Nepal-India open border has been a conduit to India's forward policy. Through it Delhi perpetrates its anti-Nepal schemes to overrun Nepal's identity and demographic position, its economy, social and political structure. In the ongoing violence in the Nepalese Terai the Nepalese security post near to the border has been attacked by India in the cover of the so-called Jana Tantrik Mukti Morchas led by non-Nepali terrorists Jay Krishna Goit and Jwala Singh in alliance with the so-called Madhesi Janaadhikar Forum, an anti-Nepal outfit whose very motive is to eliminate the Nepalese and their identity. These outfits in the name of Madhesi have destroyed the statues of the Martyr of 2007 revolution B.P Koirala and the Adi Kavi Bhanu Bhakta. They have burned the state property, destroyed the house of the civilians and have tried to hound the genuine Nepalese from their homeland accusing them as Pahadias.

Thus to define it, any independent analysts can see quislings multiplying like hydra, Lendups and Hari Singhs who have

remained at our helm of the affairs and also in the so-called opposition since many a decades. So the loyalty of these goes for their alien master; and this master is creating terrorists to perpetrate the ethnic cleansing and to twist the arms of its cronies for further subjugation. Thus flows the comments, "the alien Madari (the Monkey trainer) appears more comfortable than ever before. It has dumped the rejected one and is making the new group of monkeys to dance and destroy." This apt portrayal of the situation speaks in clearest term that the "Jana Aandolan" is not as it is being claimed. So it could be easily stolen away by the foreign master which has been robbing Nepal since its birth in 1947 and now the fleets of this undeclared master are bent upon to terminate the sons of the soil. But why the sons and daughters of this Nepalese soil have fixed themselves for a non reacting existence? Continuation of suffering and endurance does not ensure their security neither their serenity nor sobriety can receive admiration in this dangerous world where goodness has no place but gallantry is, of course, the strongest deterrent.

Political force in Nepal perhaps fails to understand that the Indian political parties, which have been in power, whether they are secular or non-secular, have single objective of grabbing Nepal - though they apparently by tactical reason stands for different parties.

The poor Nepalese all over the country are suffering from centuries. But which of these suffered the most can be easily traced. Millions of Nepalese died in the battlefield of Asia, Africa and Europe in the World Wars fighting side by side with the army of the Allies for a noble cause. But their valor and sacrifice was not the subject of celebration for those who used them to the hilt. Rather it is tantamount to the sacrifice of goats in the altars of gods and goddesses. If one goes to the hills of Nepal, he or she will find how profusely the mountains had bled and are still bleeding. The veterans of the World Wars still hang on the hills and keep on moving with sticks in their hands and they live in a small hatch with a bed, a few empty glasses, a dirty sugar container, some black tea in a paper packet, some milk in the pan and biscuits antique, and the cigarette, Parbat (Mountain) was all that was for, consumers and the stories of the Great Wars will follow. The British medals already decolorized nailed on the wooden walls were oscillating in the Himalayan winds oozing from the unevenly set wall planks. These old soldiers will never be tired of speaking about the stories of how they went to the war, how

they fought and fell. This reminiscence was all they had. It was immortal for these mortals. They have perished like pelicans in the oils slicked sea just to be washed away and at times they had to become the cannon fodder or buried in the African deserts. They fought with Rommel the desert fox and were under the command of Montgomery, Macarthur and host of well known commanders of the World War II. They had stopped the advancing Japanese army in Kohima under the Nepalese banner. Their gallantry "well honored" and are still remembered as "the bravest of the brave".

In the World War II, the British herded every lads of the mountain in the battlefield of Asia, Africa and Europe. They spared only the old, children and women. Historians have given different figures of Nepalese casualties. The conservative records of the World War II illustrates that millions of Nepalese lost their lives died. American Historian Leo E Rose writes in his book Nepal strategy for survival (page 177) writes, "The durbar faced the problem of rehabilitating perhaps two hundred thousand veterans whom the British demobilized quickly and with minimal financial assistance". These "bravest of the brave" were hundred percent from the hills and were comprised of Magar, Gurung, Rai, Limbu, and Tamang community and Khas Bhamins, Chhetris and others who migrated from Central Asia. A British account of the World War says, "well over 200,000 Nepalis served in British units during the war, primarily on the Burmese, Middle Eastern and North African fronts, where they again proved their magnificent fighting qualities at the heavy cost of life." (Nepal Foreign Office Records Jan 22, 1944)

The sacrifice of these sons of Nepal for a peaceful word order is not a mere memory is but a sincere sacrifice of the breed of the Himalayan civilization. What is happening to these people today? The alien invaders are hounding them from their own homeland. This is what is happening in today's Nepalese Terai, a developed part of the country which is linked by highways, furnished by industries, farms and fisheries. According to an authentic study, life expectancy in hill is 37 and terai is over 60. The scions of these brave soldiers dwell in these ancient land of theirs, their living standard far below than that of the illegal immigrants who have outnumbered even the indigenous community of Tharus, Sattars, Mushars, Dahares, Mandals, Rajbansis etc. which along with the clans of the hills has been living in Terai since many a centuries. ■

“Ours Is Purely Madhesi Andolan”

Dr. Upendra Yadav

Dr. UPENDRA YADAV, president of Madhesi Janadhikar Forum (MJF), recently organized a press meet in response to the government's call for dialogue. Excerpts of what he said at the press meet:

On Madhesi Andolan

This is purely a Madhesia's andolan. People are spontaneously coming to the street to press their demands through peaceful means. We don't want to see any violence in our agitation. The government is instigating violence through the use of excessive force. Police are brutally beating our workers in Madhesh and they have already killed more than 19 people - more than the number killed in Janandolan II. Maoists are also responsible for it. It was Maoist workers who instigated the violence by killing our party worker in Lahan. The Home minister Krishna Prasad Sitaula is another responsible person who detained us in prison under draconian law. Our peaceful movement will continue till legitimate demands of Madhesi people are met. MFJ activists have not engaged in looting, or vandalizing of government offices. MJF would identify the infiltrators, if any, and punish them.



On His Demands

We want proportional representation system to ensure proper representation of Madhesi population. The electoral constituencies have to be reconstituted based on population and there should be federal restructuring. Madhesis must get fair share in all organs of the state along with Janajatis and Dalits.

On Precondition

Home Minister Krishna Prasad Sitaula must resign to create environment for talks. His resignation is linked with the sentiments of Madhesi people. We are ready to start negotiations with the government but we want to see resignation of Sitaula first who is responsible for all these crimes. It is a precondition to initiate the dialogue. Madhesis are demanding just equal share in Nepal.

On Accusations of Infiltration

There is no foreign or palace hand behind our agitation. Our people are sacrificing their lives - not a single citizen from across the border has been killed. The Maoists always want to exaggerate things. That is typical Maoist propaganda. Some forces who ruled Nepal for 237 years are now trying to label our agitation as foreign-sponsored agitation. The aim of such accusation is just to tarnish our image.

Book List

Bayung Rai: A socio-linguistic by M.B. Lee/R.B.Rai/ B.K. Rai and C. Boone Rs. 200.00

Business and Law in Nepal J. Adams/ B.K. Maskey/ S.D.Tuladhar Rs. 200.00

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A Compendium of Medical Plants in Nepal Baral and Kurmi Rs. 1200.00

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ATTACK ON JURNOS

Hard-Pressed

In a recurrence of pre-Jana Andolan situation, independent media is facing growing attacks

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

*J*ournalists displaced; media houses attacked; reporters thrashed; publications stopped; and independence of media compromised.

Nepalese journalists had thought that with the ushering in of democracy after the successful Jana Andolan II, their nightmare was over for good. Unfortunately, events of past three weeks have suggested that press freedom is as fragile these days as it used to be in the past.

Worse, the attack against journalists have continued with heightened frequency and deepened intensity.

Just on February 4, a section of agitators belonging to Madhesi Janadhikar Forum (MJF) – which is spearheading the Terai agitation – severely thrashed journalists in Biratnagar.

In a naked breach of press freedom and freedom of expression, the protesters were seen searching journalists wearing jackets signifying their profession and attacking them with precision.

“They asked me to get off the motorcycle and started beating me with sticks,” said Bikram Luitel, a reporter belonging to Nepal FM and Nepal Samacharpatra daily.

Five journalists were similarly thrashed by the workers of MJF when they were trying to cover a peace rally near Tankesinwari area. The victims informed that the workers of the Forum surrounded and thrashed them. The journalists who were injured by the beating include Bikram Luitel of Nepal FM, Mohan Manandhar of Nepal Television, Shambhu Bhandari of Nepal-I Television, Binod Bhandari of Kantipur daily and Bijaya Pathak, editor of Birat Darpan, Bijaya Pathak. A motorcycle belonging to Luitel was also vandalized. The injured journalists were later rushed to a local hospital. The journalists were reportedly beaten for “not favoring news about the Forum.”

On January 28, protesters in Birgunj city targeted media houses and reporters. According to reports, the protesters

even went around the city looking for particular journalists belonging to Kantipur publications, the biggest media house in the country. On the same day, a section of protesters vandalized the station of Radio Birgunj. The FM station was targeted by the protesters who set fire to a generator as well as four motorcycles belonging to radio workers. According to Dipendra Chauhan, news coordinator of the FM, the protesters continued to rampage the station for 15 minutes. This led to obstruction of its broadcast for a while.

It was only after police arrived that the protesters fled. They also unsuccessfully tried to attack Narayani FM station. They tried to attack the Parsa chapter of Federation of Nepalese Journalists.

The mob not only tried to attack media houses but also physically thrashed some reporters. One photo journalist named Ram Sharraf had to be rushed to hospital after he was badly beaten by the mob. Other journalists including Dhruva Shah and Bhuvan Jha were also beaten.

Shocked by the sudden burst of targeted attack against the media community, the editors of daily newspapers of Birgunj decided to stop publishing their newspapers from January 30. They have asked the demonstrators to apologize and compensate.

In another Terai district of Rautahat, too, Shiva Puri, a journalist working for Kantipur daily, was threatened by a protester called Ram Krishna Gupta. He was threatened with his life if he did not publish news in demonstrators’ favor.

For the past two weeks, parts of eastern and central Terai (also known as Madhes region) have been going through violent unrest triggered by movement launched by a little-known Madhesi Janadhikar Forum (MJF). The forum had called the movement demanding amendment in the interim constitution to introduce provisions on federalism and fresh delimitation of electoral constituencies based on population.

Nearly one-half of Nepal’s

population resides in plain areas known as Terai. The people of Terai have said that they are suffering from discriminatory policies of the central government. Although many other political parties and organizations have supported the demands raised by MJF, they have been taken aback by the violent mode of the protests that have paralyzed the entire eastern and central Terai.

According to the Federation of Nepalese Journalists (FNJ), in recent days, the situation of press freedom has become fragile in districts like Jhapa, Morang, Sunsari, Siraha, Saptari, Dhanusha, Sarlahi, Rautahat, Bara, Parsa and Kapilbastu.

In many districts, publications of some newspapers have been stopped owing to threats and obstructions in movement due to constant curfew. FNJ president Bishnu Nishthuri said Morang-based journalists were receiving regular threats where publications of three dailies have simply stopped. The FNJ added that dozens of papers have suspended publications.

In Bara, two journos have been displaced from their area of work. Similar situation is faced by journalists in Birgunj. On February 1, photojournalists Nitesh Mathema of Bypass daily and Ram Sharraf of Annapurna Post daily were attacked by Armed Police personnel in Birgunj when they tried to cover news during curfew. Later the APF issued a statement instructing its officers to facilitate journalists.

Following these incident, the FNJ has drawn the attention of everyone concerned towards the deteriorating plight of independent media. The federation has already dispatched various teams to monitor the situation of press freedom in the districts wracked by violent demonstrations.

The Federation has expressed grave concern over the unabated and targeted attack against media persons amid the ongoing agitation in Terai. FNJ president Nishthuri, who recently returned from a field trip to Terai, revealed that journalists there were “facing attacks from the agitators who accuse them of writing less news about agitation.” The FNJ has appealed to the organizers of protests and agitating community to keep their promise of not hurting media personnel or media institutions.

Due to continuing and blatant attack against media houses and journalists, the situation of press freedom and freedom of expression has worsened. ■

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