

# SPOTLIGHT

April 04-10, 2008

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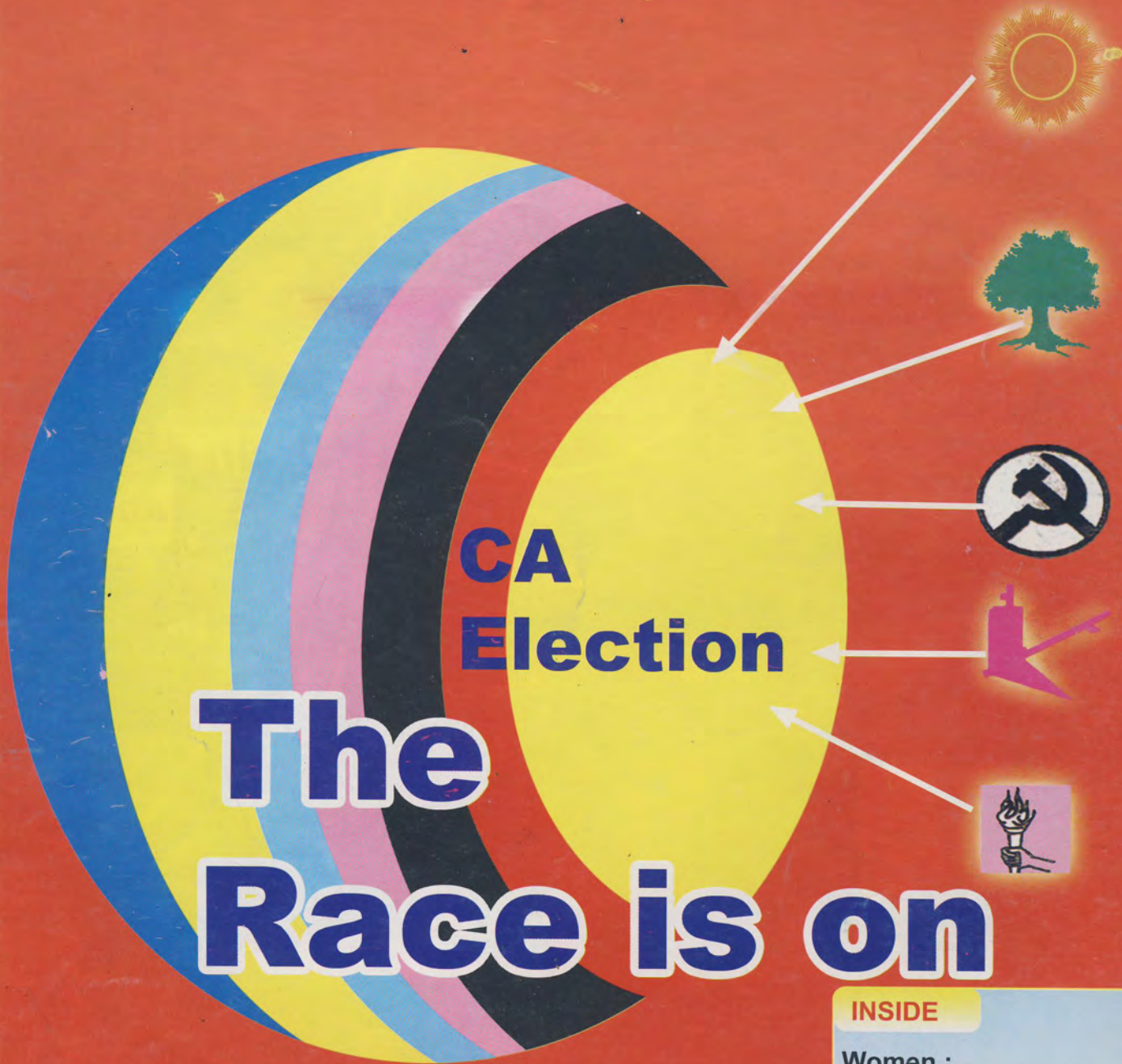
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**CA Election**

**The Race is on**

**INSIDE**

**Women :**  
Disappointed Lot

**Election:**  
Logistics on the move

**FNCCI:**  
New Leadership



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जिउ जिन्दगी रमेर





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**COVER STORY: Knocking At The Door** Given the present scenario, the election appears right in hand. The twice-postponed poll is now almost a reality



**POLL PREPARATION Logistics On The Move** election materials including 40 million ballot papers have been transported  
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**FACE TO FACE: NC leader Sushil Koirala and RPP leader Jog Mehar Shrestha**, speak on contemporary issues

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**SPOTLIGHT**

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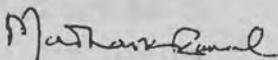
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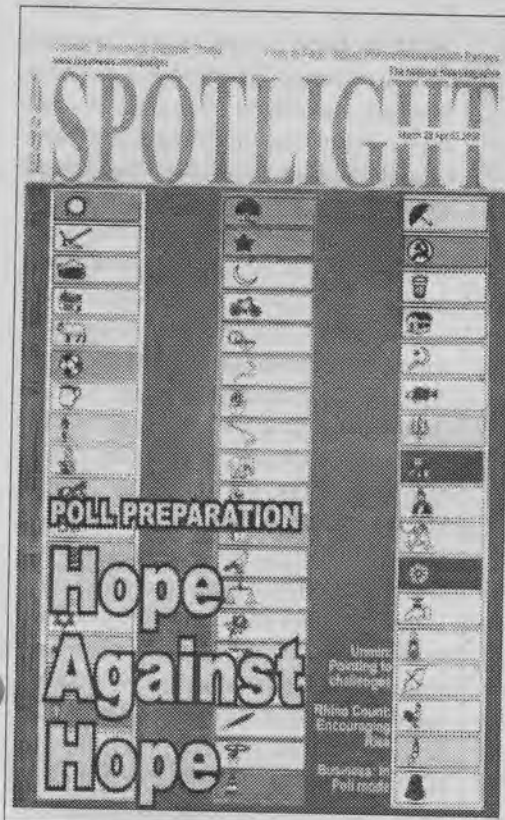
**T**he election to the constituent assembly in Nepal, if it is accomplished without any mishaps, is going to be historic in many ways. Many might be surprised at our pessimism or misgivings at this juncture. But those few who know the art of eliciting news in the making would agree with us *in toto*. As it is, elections to the constituent assembly, wherever that be, would always be quite historic events. Here in Nepal, however, there are other factors that also make them historic. The first factor is the extraneous influences that are dominating not only the whole election process but even the behavior of the local statesmen and administrators who are merrily dancing to their invisible and inaudible tunes. Another important factor here is that it is a contest between evil forces only and whoever becomes victorious is going to spell disaster for the country and the people. The third important factor is the size of the proposed constituent assembly for a small and perhaps, the poorest country of the world, which is sure to crack under its weight despite liberal alms by charitable benefactors. If the size of the constituent assembly is not a clear manifestation of the evil intentions of the ruling parties, what is it? The ominous portents looming over the horizon for the last two years do presage the destruction of age old long social and political fabrics and total annihilation of cultural and religious heritages which are our ineradicable identities for which our nation is acclaimed by the world. Democratic advancement does not entail obliteration of all moral and social values which these evil forces are bent to do. And this is another important factor. And the last factor is the apprehension that the country might lose its dignity, its pride and even its sovereignty. Written constitutions are the norms of modern states for smooth functioning of the governments and must be drafted by wise, learned, experienced and patriotic citizens and not by *Lendhup Dorjis* and *quislings*. We do trust we have enough patriotic citizens who will rise up to the occasion and preserve our identity. And above all, we can rest assured as long as our national army is dedicated and strong enough to thwart the impious motives of all anti-nationals.

★★★★

The demonstrations staged by the Tibetan refugees and their handful of supporters in front of the Chinese embassy in Kathmandu are only the outcome of sinister machinations. It is needless to pinpoint the authors as it is as evident as the daylight. The pitiable and perplexing phenomenon is the unabashed collaboration of some high ups in the establishment in exchange for some minor profits. The Chinese have been quite patient whenever there have been anti-Chinese demonstrations in Nepal which have been very few and very uncommon and they know who pulls the strings on such occasions. Even though such incidents don't affect the steadfast bilateral relations between Nepal and China, people in both the countries must be on guard and crush the mischief makers in the bud before they spread their wings.

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





## Confusions Increase

After reading the interviews of CPN-Maoist leader Prachanda and Nepali Congress leader Govinda Raj Joshi, I drew the conclusion that the goons used by Young Communist League are not associated with CPN-Maoist led by Prachanda. If they are not his cadres, why are they attacking the leaders of opposition parties? The time has come now for CPN-Maoist leader Prachanda to admit that he doesn't have any command and control over the YCL. Nepali Congress leaders, too, have similar kinds of problems. In many cases, Nepali Congress youth wing worked against the direction of party just like the YCL does. Unfortunately, Nepal does not have leaders who can call a spade a spade.

**Jasmin Lama**

*Via-email*

constitution produce better results? We have been wasting time in unnecessary issues of constitution making through the election of CA. I don't understand any rationale behind the arguments of political leaders who see the constitution made by Constituent Assembly as a panacea to all the problems. Many countries like Sikkim, Kashmir have lost their independence after holding the CA election. Political leaders must be cautious about the experiments of these countries.

**Ramesh Chettri**

*Via-email Melbourne*

## Whose Baby Is It?

Although the CPN-Maoist leaders Prachanda and Dr. Baburam Bhattarai have been claiming that Constituent Assembly is their own baby, the history shows otherwise. The decision to hold the election for Constituent Assembly was taken on both the occasion in 1950 and in 2005 in the Indian capital New Delhi under an India-mediated peace agreement. In 1950, India was a mediator among the King, Rana and Nepali Congress. In November 2005, India was again the mediator for 12 point agreement between the CPN-Maoist and Seven Party Alliance. If that is the fact then how can Maoist leader Prachanda claim that CA is his agenda?

**Madhushudhan Bhattarai**

*Via-email*

## Parking Problem

Knowing Bhaktapur as the cleanest and safe place to see many elite family come to see the traditional monuments with their family. Being rich they come in their private vehicles like car pajeros and bikes. Bhaktapur municipality has separate Tourist vehicles parking both for international and national tourists. The national tourists do not park their vehicle in park. But they use the area inside Darwar square as their parking spot, where parking is prohibited. The so called civilized tourist from capital city of Nepal is not following the rules in Bhaktapur.

Being the No parking Zone in the square the municipality has no its staff to collect parking charge. Because of unmannered parking inside the heritage zone it seems like something dirty in traditional places.

The visitors had no rights to violets the rules. Why the visitors who wish to see beautiful Bhaktapur are making its hazardous place by parking in peaceful area of square.

So please any one traveling in Bhaktapur are requested to park only in parking area by making the payments.

**Rabin Rachalica**  
*Green Team Bhaktapur*

## Hope Is Alive

Your cover story Poll Preparation: Hope against Hope (March 28-April 03) was very interesting. I agree with you that majority of voters don't want to vote simply for making a new constitution as Nepalese people have already experimented with six constitutions in the span of sixty years. People want peace, development and prosperity through the election of CA. This is a very important testing time for all the political parties whether they will bring peace and development in the country or not.

**Saran Pradhan**

*Via-email*

## Enough Expertise

Nepal has enough of experiences and expertise on constitution making. I don't understand why political parties have been undermining this fact. Even the constitution of Kingdom of Nepal 1990 was drafted by the leaders of agitating political parties led by Nepali Congress. From Nepali Congress leader Girija Prasad Koirala to CPN-UML general secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal are still there who were involved in one or the other way in the constitution making process. If the constitution made by them failed to produce good results, how will another

## Insincere Lot

Like in the past, leaders of political parties have shown that they are not sincere towards the concerns expressed by the people. If one reads party manifestoes of country's major political parties, one can find out the lack of clarity in their vision. As a communist party, CPN-Maoist tries to distribute the false promise with the target of 22 percent growth rate annually for ten years. CPN-UML's vision paper is another bunch of populist slogans. Nepali Congress too is not serious about the issues of public concern. At a time when the common people in general wants peace, stability and economic prosperity, no party has any concrete vision for that. This means they will inevitably face another round of rebellion. I hope political parties will seriously address the problems related to common people.

**Aita Bahadur Gurung**

*Dubai, Via-email*



### Political Accident If Parties Fail To Cooperate, Says PM

Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala has said that there would be political accident in the country if the parties fail to cooperate with each other during the election. Talking to reporters in Biratnagar, Saturday (March 29), PM Koirala said that Nepal had never received such a huge amount of help and good wishes from the international community. He warned all that could vanish if election is not held. He made these remarks in reference to growing discord among seven parties and poll-related clashes and violence. Earlier, he instructed security officers based in eastern region to tighten the security in view of the nearing election. He gave the instruction following a briefing by heads of police agencies in eastern region at his residence in Biratnagar Saturday morning. Regional chiefs of the Nepal Police, Armed Police Force and National Investigation Department attended the meeting with Koirala. PM Koirala also asked them to provide security to the election candidates. *Compiled from reports*

### Armed Terai Outfits Announce They Won't Talk With Govt

Stating that the government did not release their cadres during the ultimatum they had given till 3 pm, Saturday (March 29), the four armed outfits based in Terai have announced that they would not sit for talks with the government. The talks between the government and four Terai-

based armed outfits had become uncertain after the latter issued ultimatum to the government to release their cadres detained by police by 3 pm Saturday. While the armed outfits had said they will not sit for talks if their cadres are not released by then, the government talks team comprising seven party representatives had said

it will not be possible for the government to release the detainees before the talks. The four armed outfits – Samyukta Janatantrik Terai Mukti Morcha, Terai Cobra, Madhesi Mukti Tigers and Janatantrik Terai Mukti Morcha – had earlier agreed to hold talks with the government. They had even formed their talks team headed by Sanjay Gupta and including Jagadish Adhikary, Rajiv Jha and Binay Lal Das as members. The four outfits, however, do not include Janatantrik Terai Mukti Morcha (JTMM-Jwala Singh) and Akhil Terai Mukti Morcha led by Jai Krishna Goit – the two most active armed outfits in the region.

*Compiled from reports*

### Bandh In Three Districts; Prachanda Asks Govt To Clarify Arms Episode

The Maoists enforced bandh (shutdown strike) in Rupandehi, Nawalparasi and Kapilvastu districts on Tuesday to protest what they call clandestine import of arms from India Monday night. Main bazaars, educational institutions and highways in these three districts were closed as the Maoist cadres staged angry protests at several places. Butwal particularly remained tense with the cadres of the Maoist-aligned Young Communist League (YCL) clashing with riot police during their demonstration. Reports said YCL's street protest started early morning in Butwal and continued till evening. The Maoists were angered by the "mysterious import of arms" by the police force at a time when the nation is preparing for a crucial vote on April 10.

Their anger intensified after police forcefully freed two trucks from Yogikuti area at around 3:30 am in the morning from the clutches of YCL. YCL cadres led by Maoist central leaders Devendra Poudel and Bamdev Chhetri had seized the trucks on Monday night. The trucks were coming from Sunauli border point into Nepal. Officials have claimed that it contained logistics for Armed Police Force (APF). Meanwhile, talking to reporters in Biratnagar, Maoist chairman Prachanda has asked the government to clarify about the arms import episode. He said he has already talked with Home Minister regarding the issue. Home Minister Krishna Sitaula, on the other hand, said the government will sort out the issue at central level. Home Secretary Umesh Mainali urged all concerned not to create any disruption over this episode since the trucks were only carrying logistics for police personnel. The Indian Embassy, in Kathmandu, said that the supplies consisting of riot gear had been made on Nepal government's request. "The supplies consist of items required by the Armed Police Force in the context of their responsibility for augmenting security for the forthcoming CA election," said Gopal Bagley, spokesperson of Indian Embassy. The supplies include riot gear, tear gas shells and communications equipment.

*Compiled from reports*

### TMLP, SP Announce Electoral Alliance; MJF Opts Out

Following days of negotiations, the Terai-Madhes Loktantrik Party (TMLP) led by Mahantha Thakur and Rajendra Mahato's Sadbhawana Party (SP) have announced their electoral alliance. Organizing a press conference in Kathmandu Wednesday (Mar 26), the heads of the two Madhesi parties disclosed their agreement to forge electoral alliance which, they said, is meant to ensure that the rights of Madhesi people get due place in the new constitution to be drafted by the constituent assembly. According to the arrangement, the SP will support TMLP candidates in Jhapa constituency no. 6



and 7, Morang 2, 3 and 6, Sunsari 4 and 5, Siraha 2 and 6, Dhanusha 1, 3 and 5, Salahi-6, Banke-3, Bardiya-1, Dang 1 and Kanchanpur 1, 2 and 3. Likewise, the TMLP will support SP candidates in Jhapa constituency no. 1 and 4, Morang 4, 5 and 7, Sunsari 1, 2, 3 and 6, Siraha-1, Bardiya 2 and 3 Dhanusha-6, Banke 2 and 4, Udaypur 1 and 2 and Kailali 3, 5 and 6. Meanwhile, Madhesi Janadhikar Forum (MJF – led by Upendra Yadav) – the third party in the United Madhesi Democratic Front that jointly launched Madhesi agitation – has not been included in the alliance. *Compiled from reports*

### Prachanda Deplores Media For Writing News Against Maoists

Maoist chairman Prachanda stepped up his criticism at what he called big



media for writing news against the Maoists. Addressing a program in Itahari, Tuesday, Prachanda accused that media was writing against them guided by 'foreign money.' "What are these journalists writing? What do they think of themselves? Writing news against Maoists by pocketing foreigners' money? Who gave such right to these journalists?" he thundered at the program. He further accused that the

media did not give enough coverage to the killings of one dozen Maoist cadres but highlighted 'even petty' interventions by YCL. Amid the continuous criticism by the Maoist chairman, the journalists covering the event walked out of the venue. *Leading dailies report*

### Forty EU Observers In Nepal

Forty European Union long-term election observers have arrived in Nepal to join the EU's Election Observation Mission (EOM). The observers are from 15 different EU countries as well as Norway and Switzerland, the EOM office said Monday (Mar 24). After an extensive briefing in Kathmandu, the long-term observers will be deployed throughout Nepal in two teams on 25 March. They will cover 62 out of the 75 districts, with

two mobile teams traveling around other less accessible districts. "The fact that we have such a large number of observers, who will be staying in the field for several weeks after election day, shows our commitment to transparent elections and democratic reform in Nepal," said Deputy Chief Observer Thomas Boserup. According to the EOM, which is led by Jan Mulder, a Dutch member of the European Parliament, further 70 short-term observers are due to join the mission on 1 April. They will be deployed to the districts before election day in order to observe the voting and counting processes. In total, the mission will be made up of 120 people from 22 EU countries as well as Norway and Switzerland. "All EU observers are bound by an internationally accepted code of conduct as well as the Nepali code of conduct for election observation. This means that they maintain strict neutrality in the course of their work and cannot interfere in any way in the electoral process," the EOM statement stated. *Compiled from reports*

### Logistics For Election Almost Ready, Says EC

The Election Commission (EC)

spokesperson Laxman Bhattarai has said that the task of printing the ballot papers has completed. "Ballot paper printing has finished. 20.4 million ballot papers for the first-past-the-post election and 20.8 million ballot papers for proportional representation based election have been printed and are being transported to districts," said Bhattarai, at a press meet, Sunday (Mar 30). "Likewise, all the 61 different kinds of election materials have been transported to districts," he said. He said that the EC has written to political parties to correct 'some' mistakes in age and citizenship of some candidates. "We have asked them to respond by April 2," he said. There will be 20,888 polling centers in 9821 places. Bhattarai said 234,000 polling staffs will be deployed to carry out the election. "In the FPTP category, of the total 3947 candidates, there are 367 women. Of the total 6000 candidates under PR category, there are 3068 women," Bhattarai said. *Compiled from reports*

### Baidya Blames India And US For Leftist Alliance Not Materializing

Influential Maoist leader Mohan Baidya has claimed that the leftist alliance didn't materialize because India and the US didn't want it to happen. Addressing an election assembly organized by the party in Butwal Saturday (Mar 29), Baidya said India and the US used their influence to avoid this scenario because they were afraid that if there were a leftist alliance then there would be a "huge miracle" in Nepal. He also accused Unified Marxist Leninist (UML) of making sure that there was no leftist alliance during the election. Baidya, who is often referred to as the mentor of Maoist chairman Prachanda, remarked that UML was not a leftist party and that it didn't have even a least bit of morality in it. He also said that although UML general secretary Madhav Nepal has been talking about leftist alliance during the polls his party is in reality against the idea. *Compiled from reports*



**Chinese President Receiving Olympic Torch Light**

**THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL** has urged all political parties in Nepal to uphold public security and create an atmosphere that is conducive to successful holding of election. Welcoming the progress towards Constituent Assembly election, the members of the Security Council in a press statement Thursday also said they looked forward to elections being held in a free and fair manner on April 10 while reiterating their full support for the United Nations Mission in Nepal.

**THE ELECTION COMMISSION (EC)** has expressed concern over reports of the Maoist People's Liberation Army (PLA) members coming out of their camps in combat uniforms. Election commissioners today sought clarification from UNMIN chief Ian Martin regarding these reports and urged the mission to effectively carry out the monitoring process. During a meeting held at the EC, Martin assured the commissioners that the UNMIN would keep the PLA combatants under strict monitoring.

**TIBETAN EXILES STAGED YET** another demonstration outside the United Nations premises in Pulchowk, Lalitpur, on Friday (March 28), demanding that the world body exert pressure on China to stop 'brutal crackdown' on pro-independence protesters in Lhasa. Dozens of Tibetans including monks in saffron robes displayed placards and banners emblazed with "Free Tibet" slogan while some 20 Tibetan school students apparently jumped into the UN compound at around 10 am and handed over the banners and pamphlets to UN officials. The police intervened into the demonstration outside the UN office, rounding up at least four dozen protesters.

**MAOIST CHAIRMAN PRACHANDA HAS SAID** that there would be economic revolution in the country within ten years. He said the economic progress will gain speed once the

Constituent Assembly (CA) is successfully held. Addressing an election program in Birtamode, Jhapa, he said, "Currently the per capita income of Nepalis is just \$300. In ten years, this would be increased to \$3000." He said developing tourism and mobilizing internal productions would be adequate to bring about change in the face of the nation. He said annually 10,000 Tibetan tourists should be lured in the country. Speaking at a separate program in Itahari, he said that if his party wins the election, the railway up to Lhasa will be brought to Kathmandu in ten years. He also said there would be railways linking Pokhara, Lumbini and Terai region.

Nepal Samacharpatra daily reports

**DURING THE THREE YEAR INTERIM PLAN PERIOD**, the government plans to invest Rs 32.4 billion in hydropower development. The government plans to invest Rs 10.3 billion in power generation, Rs 11.22 billion in transmission, Rs 8.95 billion in distribution and rural electrification and Rs 1.93 billion in conducting surveys and studies. The three year interim plan period has started from the current fiscal year 2064/65 (2007/08) and will end on fiscal year 2066/67 (2009/10). In this period the government plans to bring into operation projects worth 105 MW from government and private developers. This include 70 MW-strong Middle Marsyangdi and 14 MW strong Kulekhani III by Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) and smaller projects totaling 20 MW from private developers.

**ALTOGETHER 810 INTERNATIONAL** election observers from 29 organizations are scheduled to monitor the April 10 CA election across the country. Earlier the Election Commission had stated that there would be some 550 international observers from 14 organizations and has already issued accreditation cards to 101 observers. The deadline for filing applications for observer accreditation has already elapsed but the EC said it would make rules flexible. "We will not accept new applications for observer accreditation but still the EC will exercise flexibility while dealing with the new organizations who have shown deep desire to engage in Nepal's CA election process," said an officer at the Election Observer Resources Centre. Of late, the embassies of Canada, Britain, France, Malaysia, Japan, Finland, Norway, Australia, Bangladesh and Thailand have shown interest to deploy poll monitors and have contacted the EC in this regard. ■



# HUNDRED AND NINETY THIRD ANNIVERSARY DAY REMEMBERING DEOTHAL BATTLE AND BHAKTI THAPA

•Mrs Laxmi Thapa

**T**he coming April 16, 2008 is the hundred and ninety third anniversary day of the DEOTHAL BATTLE. The battle fought on that day against the British has left a distinctive mark in the world history that has demonstrated the outstanding bravery of our ancestors and their supreme sacrifice for the country.

It was early 1810s., the Great Britain was the most powerful country in the whole world. Its vast empire stretched across all five continents. At that time the Great Britain was ruthlessly expanding its empire in the South Asian Sub-continent. It was tempted to make Nepal also its colony. Nepal was attacked without formally declaring war. Britain hoped that Nepal could be quickly subdued in a blitzkrieg invasion. The battle front stretched over a distance of about 1500 km. between the Teesta River and the Sutlej River.

Needless to say that those were the worst days in the history of our country. The war stretched over a period of three calendar years in sharp contrast to the expectation of the British Government. Nepal fought bravely. Britain was forced to abandon its grand design to enslave Nepal though we lost some of our territories.

### Significance of Deothal Battle Day

The 16<sup>th</sup> April, 1815 marked in the history of the whole South Asian Sub-continent as a day of great sacrifice in the struggle against the European domination. It is also a day when the bravery of Nepalese people became a legend in the world. The courage and gallantry shown on that day by Nepalese

had badly shaken the determination of the enemy to subdue Nepal and turn it into an European colony. It was this very day when the 74 years old Bhakti Thapa led a counterattack against an enemy far superior in strength at Deothal to protect the honour of Nepal and its proud people.

### The Battle

In the morning of April 16, 1815 Bhakti Thapa at the age of 74 led a kamikaze type counterattack against the British force entrenched at Deothal. Historians have presented the description of this battle at great length. It was 3.15 a.m. when a force of 400 under Bhakti Thapa marched out of the Malaun fort, to a slow but steady beat of drums. The British column under Thompson had taken position at Deothal on reverse slopes. The cannons of 6 pounders were properly concealed. There were two Indian battalions, the Grenadiers companies of the Light Battalions and some 1000 Irregulars. The British strength was up to about

3,500 troops and weapons.

Bhakti Thapa and his followers in the counterattack appeared to have vowed to fight to the death. Bhakti Thapa had even handed his infant grandson in the custody of the Amar Singh Thapa just before going to the battlefield. It was a bloody battle. It would not be wrong to imagine that the Khukri charge and the battle cry of the Nepalese fighters might have shaken the enemies with fear. RP Ochterlony, the author of "Sketches Of The Goorka War" has written. A body of Gorkhas advancing to charge bears no resemblance to a European column. Several huge trumpets putting up a harsh but stirring noise, set the multitude in motion who, except some carry shields, grasping each a matchlock in his left hand and a broad sword in his right, rush on, disregarding all regularity, very like a pack of hounds in full cry.

Bhakti Thapa laid down his life in the battlefield. Every one who fought from the Nepalese side was either killed or wounded. The British casualties were also very high. The British have praised their officers and soldiers for their bravery in the battle. According to one account the British casualties of dead and wounded in Deothal battle were 384 as against 390 Nepalese casualties -

almost a ratio of one to one, under the most adverse conditions to the Nepalese.

### A Legend in World History

"A quite elderly person already at the age of 74 years is bravely fighting in the battlefield. He has already received several wounds and

his clothes are soaked in blood. But he continues fighting. Finally he lays down his life for his country fighting in the battlefield. This is the description of a scene of the Deothal Battle and the elderly man is none other than Bhakti Thapa. Even the enemies were full of praise of the bravery of Bhakti Thapa. They returned with honour the dead body of Bhakti Thapa wrapped in expensive shawls for cremation when the fighting stopped. One deserves to be called a real brave if his bravery is admired even by his foes. ...." These are the sentiments expressed by Nepal's national poet Madhav Prasad Ghimire in one of the books to portray the outstanding bravery of Bhakti Thapa.

Needless to say any further that the British commanders were thoroughly shaken by the bravery of Bhakti Thapa in the Deothal Battle. Bhakti Thapa became a legend even in the eyes of British historians. One of the recent historians CB Khanduri writes quoting various contemporary British historians "The euphemism of the BRAVEST OF THE BRAVES had



been used by Napoleon for Marshal Ney, whose bravery during the retreat from Moscow in 1812 was one of the highest. BRAVE LES BRAVE, said Napoleon of him. British then used this citation for the Gurkhas during and after the Anglo-Nepal War. Such was the bravery shown by Bhakti Thapa that the next legend of the Bravest of the Braves had been created on the day - 16 April, 1815 at Deothal."

**Why Bhakti Thapa Laid Down His Life.**

Bhakti Thapa must have firmly believed that the Nepalese force fighting in the west must continue to engage British force in the battle fields until Nepal reaches an honourable settlement with the British Government to end the Anglo-Nepal War. It was not difficult to predict that the British force would be able to build more pressure on Nepal to accept their terms and conditions to end the war if the Nepalese force fighting in the west capitulated. Thus it was absolutely necessary that Nepal should have continued to engage the British force in the battle field. He must have been determined in his conviction that Nepalese should not bear the sufferings of being enslaved by colonial power. At that time the people in South Asia were subjected to extortions and cruelties after being enslaved.

**Dark Age of British Expansion**

Historian HG Wells has written about the British rule in India at great length. The text from his book {History of the World} has been reproduced here. **Englishmen at home were perplexed when presently the generals and officials came back to make dark accusations against each other of extortions and cruelties.** Upon Clive, Parliament passed a vote of censure. He committed suicide in 1774. In 1788 Warren Hastings, a second great Indian administrator, was impeached and acquitted (1792).

The Marquis Wellesley became in 1798 the next British Governor-General of India. In 1798 the French fleet was defeated by the British admiral Horatio Nelson significantly weakening its strength. After the 1798 naval victory British rulers in India must have felt that France would not anymore be able to pose a serious threat to expansion of the British Empire in South Asia. Britain started the task of further expansion of its territory.

Governor General Wellesley played decisive role in the expansion of the British Empire in India. Colonel Wellesley, the younger brother of the Marquis Wellesley, had also come to India. Colonel Wellesley had fought under General Harris in the battles to defeat Tippu Sultan.

Colonel Wellesley defeated Marathas at Assaye in 1803. He again defeated them at Argaum the same year.

Colonel Wellesley afterwards became Sir Arthur Wellesley, and then Duke of Wellington who defeated Napoleon in Waterloo Battle. Later on he became the Prime Minister of the Great Britain.

**Oude Nawab Cedes Do-ab to Britain**

Governor General Wellesley used every possible means to expand British Empire in South Asia. Wellesley asked the Nawab of Oude to agree, like the Nizam, to cede to Britain some of his territories in exchange for British protection. At first the Nawab would not agree, but at length, when he saw there was no use of trying to resist, he gave in. British army was sent to Oude, and to pay for it the Nawab gave up the Do-ab or the country between the Jamuna and the Ganges. Meanwhile Wellesley turned his attention to Delhi. In 1803, General Gerard Lake captured Delhi and Agra.

**Indian Sufferings Continued Until Independence**

Jawaharlal. Nehru has expressed in an extremely touching way the pitiable condition of Indians under the British rule in this famous book "The Discovery of India" first published in 1946. He has written that the Indians were living in enslaved condition in their own country until 1947 when India became a free country. The text from his book is presented hereinafter.

*It was not difficult to predict that the British force would be able to build more pressure on Nepal to accept their terms and conditions to end the war if the Nepalese force fighting in the west capitulated.*

"In Bombay there is a well-known club which did not allow and so far as I know, does not allow, an Indian (except as a servant) even in its visitors' room, even though he might be a ruling prince or a captain of industry."

"Racialism in India is not so much English versus Indian; it is European as opposed to Asiatic. In India every European, be he German, or Pole, or Rumanian, he is automatically a member of the ruling race. Railway carriages, station retiring-rooms, benches in parks, etc., marked "Europeans Only". This is bad enough in South Africa or elsewhere, but to have to put up with it in one's own country is a humiliating and exasperating reminder of one's enslaved condition."

"Bengal had the first full experience of British rule in India. That rule began with outright plunder and a land revenue system which extracted the uttermost farthing not only from the living but also from the dead cultivators."

"A gold lust unequalled since the hysteria that took hold of the Spaniards of Cortes' and Pizarro's age filled the English mind. Bengal in particular was not to know peace again until she has been bled white. It was pure loot. This process was called trade later on but that made little difference. And it must be remembered that this lasted, under various names and under different forms, not for a few years but for generations."

**Dominant Role of Bhakti Thapa**

"Until there was life in the body of Bhakti Thapa Nepal's territory was in a state of great expansion. Soon after his death the Great Nepal crumbled." This is an excerpt from the *sainikitihas* which is based on the book "Vikramjit Hasrat, History of Nepal (Punjab: V. V. Research Institute, 1970)".

The Great Nepal crumbled soon after the death of Bhakti Thapa. However, a big proportion of the Great Nepal continued to remain free. Perhaps Britain must have dreaded that many more brave Nepalese of the Bhakti Thapa type would come forward in future to fight against the British expansion if Nepal is further squeezed. ■





Election Commission : Final preparation

## POLL PREPARATION

# Logistics On The Move

*Movement of electoral logistics near completion, election materials including 40 million ballot papers have been transported*

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

**T**he elections, generally, involve the movement of huge quantity of logistics up to the remotest corners of the country.

This time as the Constituent Assembly (CA) will be conducted in two categories – the first-past-the-post (FPTP) and proportional representation – the quantity of election materials have also increased.

The Election Commission (EC) spokesperson Laxman Bhattarai, on Sunday (March 30) announced that printing of all the ballot papers have been completed.

He said that 20.4 million ballot papers of 240 different kinds (for each constituency) for FPTP and 20.8 million ballot papers of single kind for PR have been printed and are being transported

to respective constituencies.

The government-owned Janak Educational Material Center had printed all the ballot papers.

“Helicopters have been used to transport the ballot papers to the remote constituencies – in 44 constituencies of 27 districts,” said Bhattarai.

He said all the 61 different election materials have been dispatched to the districts. “In districts, they are now packing materials for constituencies therein,” he informed.

There will be 20,880 polling centers in 9829 different places in this election. Each center will have between 5 and 13 polling staffs. In total, 234,000 polling staffs will be deployed.

The district with maximum number of polling centers is Syangja-1 with 131 centers.

There are 17.611 million voters in total – 8.888 million male and 8.73 female. The constituency with maximum number of voters is Gulmi-2 with 104,888 voters. In a polling center in Lali Gurans primary school in Chame VDC of Manang district, there are only 23 voters.

Total of 74 parties had registered with the EC but only 55 are taking part in CA election. 54 parties submitted closed-list for PR election.

Of them, only 11 parties have fielded PR candidates in more than 30 percent seats. Only those parties fielding in more than 30 percent need to abide by the rule of reservation for women, Madhesis, Dalits, Janajatis, backward regions and other groups.

Total of 3970 candidates – 367 women and 3580 men – are in the fray for FPTP election.

Six thousand candidates including 3068 women, 1981 Madhesis, 680 Dalits, 2138 Janajatis, 183 from backward regions and 1750 from other groups are in the fray for PR election. Here the sum of individual groups exceeds the total number of candidates because one individual candidate could represent multiple groups.

There will be over 80,000 domestic election observers representing 148 different organizations at national and local level.

Likewise, 880 international observers will also be deployed across the country.

“The EC has invited the election commissioners from South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries to observe the election,” said Bhattarai.

In Kathmandu-1 constituency, the EC will for the first time in nation’s history, employ Electronic Voting Machines. The constituency includes ward numbers 10, 11, 32 and 34 of the Kathmandu metropolitan city.

“In present estimate, the EC will spend Rs 2.73 billion to conduct the election – from the announcement of election till declaration of results,” Bhattarai informed.

The EC has set up a Media Center in Kantipath to facilitate all the information-related activities and smoothen the flow of information to national and international journalists. ■



## ANTI-CHINA DEMONSTRATIONS

# Northern Concern

*Organized by Tibetan refugees based in Nepal, anti-China demonstrations worries Nepal's northern neighbor*

By A CORRESPONDENT

After silently watching the well planned and well orchestrated anti-China demonstrations in front of their embassy for more than three weeks, Chinese ambassador to Nepal Zheng Xianglin publicly expressed worries and concern about growing activities directed against China.

For the past three weeks, about five dozen Tibetan refugees including some monks have routinely gathered in front of Counselor section of Chinese Embassy in Naxal chanting anti-China slogans. Instead of preventing them from organizing these acts, Nepalese police has performed routine duty by detaining them on the spot and releasing them after few hours in police custody.

These acts of Tibetan refugees have attracted huge publicity in western world enough for international human rights organizations to condemn China. Although Nepalese government supports one China policy and has committed not to allow anti-China activities in its soil, recent activities show that Nepal is unable to monitor Tibetan refugees' activities hostile to China.

Raising all kinds of slogans against China, refugees are roaming freely inside Nepal as well as crossing the open border existing between Nepal and India to travel to Dharamshala, India where Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama is based.

In a first public appearance through a press conference, Chinese ambassador to Nepal Zheng Xianglin expressed his government's stand that China will not tolerate any attempt to destabilize Tibet. "Any secessionist attempt to sabotage Tibet's stability will not gain public support and will fail," said the Chinese ambassador. "The recent riot was the result of a conspiracy by followers of the Dalai Lama and it is the conspiracy jointly made by domestic and overseas separatists who are advocating 'Tibet independence'."



Chinese envoy Zheng Xianglin: Security concern

Chinese ambassador revealed that they are watching very closely the anti-China activities in Nepal organized by 'Dalai's clique' in Nepal and said that Nepalese government has given clear assurance to China that they will not allow the use of Nepalese soil against China.

China had already fought a decade of armed insurgency in Tibet launched from the bases inside Nepal. The nuns and monks seem to have taken the new base in Nepal, which China sees as a serious threat to its security.

As Beijing Olympics approaches, Tibetan refugees living in Nepal are making efforts to put pressure on China using various methods. Making noisy demonstrations regularly is one of them.

Under Nepal's One China policy, Nepal is firm to act against any anti-China activities. But Nepalese government is in difficult position to contain Tibetan thanks to the growing pressure from western countries and western human rights groups.

Nervous by the response from China, home ministry officials said that they have been making all out efforts to contain anti-China activities. "We are closely monitoring activities of Tibetan refugees. It is the policy of the government not to allow anti-China activities in Nepal," said the official. "As a refugee, they have to abide by the law

of the country."

After nearly three weeks long demonstrations, Chinese ambassador-who rarely addresses the press meet - has expressed his government's concern at the well orchestrated and well planned demonstrations.

Till now, only Nepal's southern neighbor India had expressed its security concern pointing to ISI activities in Nepal showing the presence of Kashmiri population here. Now, Chinese, too, have pointed their growing concern through activities of Tibetans.

Tibet is known as a soft belly of China and the growing activities of Tibetan exiles in Nepal have already generated security concern of Nepal's northern neighbor.

With the intensification of Maoist insurgency and prolonging political instability, Tibetan refugees have opened a number of monasteries in and around the valley and close to northern border. As monasteries run by Tibetan monks remain major forces of recently orchestrated agitations and demonstration, they may create many worries in future.

"The Dalai clique masterminded, well planned and carefully organized severe violence on March 14 in Lhasa," said Chinese ambassador citing that the rioters' activities were "crime".

The riots in Lhasa caused heavy losses of life and property, and seriously disturbed social order. According to Chinese officials, rioters in the regional capital set fires at more than 300 locations, including homes and 214 shops, and smashed and burned 56 vehicles. Thirteen innocent civilians were burned or stabbed to death, he said, citing two cases of what he described as brutality.

The message of ambassador of Nepal's northern neighbor is clear regarding its security and Nepal, too, does not have any choice. It is not in a position to tolerate this kind of hostile activities against its northern neighbor by just detaining refugees for few hours. "Nepal has to tell frankly to Tibetan refugees that they have to respect the law of host country," said a China expert.

"Nepal cannot play double game permitting demonstration and showing certain restraints, using police for other's consumption. When China expresses a strong support to Nepal's integrity and sovereignty whenever Nepal is in crisis, Nepal has to reciprocate by doing similar things to China," said the China expert.

## UNMIN

## Cautious Enthusiasm

*In its second election report released early this week, the UN body cautions about increasing incidents of violence*

By A CORRESPONDENT

**T**he United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) has said that even though in most of the places, the election campaigning has been peaceful, the growing incidents of violence have worried it.

"Across much of the country, campaigning has continued in an enthusiastic and relatively peaceful manner, but a significant number of districts have experienced a surge in incidents involving clashes between different political party supporters," it reports.

It pointed out that the main threats to peaceful campaigning were continuing acts of violence by armed groups in the Terai, and obstruction, intimidation and violence carried out by supporters of political parties against candidates and supporters of competing parties, as well as intimidation of voters.

"The gravest incidents during the past week were the killings of two cadres of the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-M) in Kapilvastu and Solukhumbu, which bring the total number of violent deaths of Maoists since 5 February to at least seven; and the bomb attack at a mosque in Biratnagar which left two dead on 29 March. While the full details of these incidents remain unclear, the killings, violence and intimidation are stark reminders of the responsibility of the authorities and the political parties to create and maintain a conducive environment for the election," it said.

The UNMIN report also gravely notes the "widespread reports, confirmed by UNMIN and OHCHR monitoring and investigation, of continued Maoist intimidation of rival parties and voters, with clashes between the CPN-M and the

and intimidation are widely reported. UNMIN and OHCHR have received numerous reports that during door-to-door campaigning voters are being told by political parties - particularly the CPN-M - that their vote will not actually be secret and that voters will face reprisals if they do not vote as instructed. Reports of this behavior were particularly prevalent in Gulmi, Kalikot and Agharkhanchi," it states.

The UNMIN report recommends there should be strict adherence to the Agreement on Monitoring of the



NC Candidate Bal Bahadur K.C.: Victim of violence

Unified Marxist-Leninist (UML), Nepali Congress and Rastrya Prajatantra parties becoming frequent."

"There has been little or no reported progress on implementation of commitments in the SPA's 23-point agreement regarded by different parties as of importance in the pre-election context, including compensation to victims of the conflict, return of property and investigation of disappearances."

"UNMIN has intensified its monitoring of arms and armies during this crucial period, but there have been cases of Maoist combatants leaving their cantonments to engage in political campaigning, and in some instances in uniform and with perimeter security weapons to provide security for senior party leaders," it said, urging the Maoists to immediately stop doing that.

"Lower-level yet damaging threats

Management of Arms and Armies, an arrangement intended to prevent interference by either army in the electoral process. "The suspension of leave during the election period should be enforced, and the armies should cooperate with UNMIN in respecting notification procedures and enhanced monitoring arrangements. There should be transparency, especially among the parties represented in the Interim Government, regarding the transport of supplies for the Nepal Police and APF, as well as for the Nepal Army. The Maoist army should end the repeated incidents of temporary departure from cantonments to participate in rallies or other election activities, as well as the use of uniformed personnel and perimeter security weapons from cantonments for the protection of leaders and events." ■



## CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY ELECTION

# Knocking At The Door

Hundreds of foreign election observers have arrived from various parts of the world and the election fever has gripped the whole nation. The much awaited election for Constituent Assembly is a week away. Because of prolonged political instability and inexplicable political conflict, there still prevails distrust and mistrust among the people about the election. This psychology of uncertainty will haunt the minds of the people till the date of election. Given the present scenario, the election appears right in hand. The twice-postponed poll is now almost a reality

By KESHAB POUDEL

*"The period from today (March 31) will be extremely sensitive. A small incident could lead to serious consequences. Therefore, I request you all not to make any offensive statement,"* said prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala at the Election Commission.

*"Don't talk any negative thing about election. There will be election for CA on April 10,"* said CPN-UML general secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal. *"Don't go after rumors."*

*"There is no question of disrupting the CA polls. I don't say that some of our friends have not committed mistakes. Maybe, we still have hangover of yesterday's war. We will try our best not to repeat the mistakes,"* said CPN-Maoist leader Prachanda.

At a time when prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala, CPN-UML leader Madhav Kumar Nepal and Maoist leader Prachanda were summoned to the Election Commission (EC), which asked

them to rein their cadres, CPN-Maoist cadres attacked Nepali Congress workers and candidate of constituency no 1 of Tanahun district Govinda Raj Joshi.

Along with former home minister and Congress central committee member Joshi, some two dozen NC workers were injured when Maoists attacked them. Similarly, Maoist cadres and CPN-UML cadres attacked the party office and followers of Nepali Congress in



**PM Koirala (Centre) Nepal and Prachnda:** Commitment against election violence

Dadeldhura district, the constituency of Nepali Congress leader and former prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuba.

"We must hold the election at any cost as almost all preparations have already been completed on our part. Only thing we now need is to set up the polling booths which will begin from Thursday," Chief Elections Commissioner Bhoj Raj Pokharel told Spotlight. "After my meeting with three top leaders, I am confident the situation will improve a lot."

Although Maoist leader Prachanda, who has already abandoned his nationwide election campaign because of personal safety, repeatedly urged his party cadres not to indulge in violence, the cadres of Young Communist League have been launching the crusade against the leaders of other parties.

Along with Congress leaders, CPN-UML leader K.P. Sharma Oli, Speaker of interim parliament Subas Chandra Nembang, Rastriya Janashakti Party leader Surya Bahadur Thapa and RPP leader Pashupati Sumsher Rana, all of

them faced atrocities from YCL.

"Maoists are not serious about election. YCL cadres are forcing my supporters and voters not to go to poll issuing threats of physical actions," said former prime minister Surya Bahadur Thapa. "Whatever they do, they cannot postpone election now."

Despite intensification of violent clashes between the workers of major political parties and Maoist sister organization, YCL, the statement of leaders of three major political parties show that the election is now inevitable.

"Prime minister Koirala told us that the all of Nepal's friends from neighborhood and outside want to see the election. There will be election at any cost," said one of the close colleagues of prime minister Koirala who met him on Tuesday morning in Baluwatar.

The situation has changed after the meeting between Maoist leader Prachanda, CPN-UML leader Nepal and Civil Society members in Baluwatar on Monday. "Election is the issue of prestige for all of us," said Koirala.

"Maoists will come to their term and size."

#### **Election Is Reality**

Others, too, argue that the postponement of election at this juncture is unthinkable. At a time when international election observers from various parts of the world including Cater Center of USA, European Union, Japan and other international organizations have already arrived in the country and local human rights organizations have mobilized the local observers, the postponement is improbable.

According to the European Union Election Mission, they will have 120 observers from 22 different countries including Norway and Switzerland. This mission is made up of a core team of 10 election experts. Providing all necessary logistic support, western democracies and USA have shown that they want to see the election for CA in Nepal at any cost.

The United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) has been monitoring the election process. The UNMIN chief Ian





**Communist Leader Prachanda** : Feudal culture

Martin has been traveling throughout Nepal to look at the election preparations.

When all preparations are at the final stage, there are no reasonable apprehensions to about the postponement of the election. Internal cause cannot postpone the election. If it is postponed, it will be because of external factor - particularly the distrust among Nepal's neighbors.

As Nepal's two neighbors- who are marching ahead with high economic growth- too are pursuing the policy of accommodation and adjustment for peace and stability in the region, it is not in their interest to push Nepal into a failed state. Nepal has a space for peace and stability. This is the space where the forthcoming election has greater importance.

Looking at the recent statement of India's security advisor M.K. Narayanan, India has a clear stand regarding the stability in Nepal as he pointed out his preference of a political party, which can guarantee the political stability in Nepal. For India, Nepal Congress is first choice, he said..

At a time when communist parties still rely on radical political agenda, Nepali Congress is a centrist party which

can accommodate all different forces to guarantee the stability in Nepal.

"Making of the constitution could be easy or difficult depending on helping or hostile role of Nepal's immediate democratic neighbor. It will be very unfortunate and unpleasant situation in the history of Nepal in case a biggest democratic

country of the world in Nepal's neighborhood plays a destructive and obstructive role. There is no other country which has that kind of leverage in Nepal's political order," said a political analyst.

#### Uncertainty Over Election

As the election process is on the final stage, internal forces do not have the strength to postpone it. Although external force has the capability to postpone the election, it has its own limitation. "At least, one can see there is wisdom in Nepal's neighbors that they would not transgress their tolerable limit."

If the situation is such, why people have still confusion over the election process? One of the reasons is the prolonged political instability, which has created the fear and uncertainty in the minds of the people.

Since October 2002 when the date for election for the House of Representatives was postponed, country has seen postponement of election several times. Even the election for CA were postponed three times in the last two years.

"Because of inexplicable conflicts, there still exist distrust and mistrust. This psychology will haunt the minds of people till the date of elections," said the analyst.

"So far as indicators show, one can reasonably hope that election will be held even in a situation of sporadic violence," said the analyst. "Compared with many states in third world, situation of Nepal is better. It is not like in Afghanistan, Sudan and East Timor. We still have organized political parties playing a lead role since the political change of 1951 despite reversals in political experiments."

According to the analyst, one may dislike particular politician in the leadership and their style of functioning but one cannot rule out their country wide access with the people through broad based organizations. That is a positive side of the political situation in Nepal despite failing of the leadership.

In fact, leadership gets energized through its involvement in periodical elections, which make them responsive to the popular opinion. The important aspect of the present election is that political parties have revived their contacts with the people at the grass root.

In realistic assessment, candidates have the first and foremost priority to get elected and voters' prime motivation is to see his/her interests met. In a way, it is a realist way of fulfilling each others' interest.



**Joshi of NC asking for votes: Time to beg?**

"Neither this election nor coming elections are going to fulfill all the needs and aspirations of the people. Nepal has been dragged into a politics of instability in which several constitutional experiments have already failed. And few more may meet the same fate. Knowing this, many people in politics and particularly candidates don't bother about the forms and contents of constitution. What they consider more important is the way to reach to the power preferably on popular voting and voters in Nepal have become wiser by their past experiences and therefore they don't look about high sounding ideals but select from best possible choices," said the analyst.

#### For New Political Order

The campaigns are in full swing. Despite violence and threat, all the candidates are concentrating their efforts to woo voters. Almost all candidates in all the parts of the country are now in the doors of voters with package of promises.

Whether former prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuba or Maoist leader Prachanda, CPN-UML general secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal, all of them are knocking the doors of sovereign voters.

Now CA has become a fait accompli as the country has to undergo the pain and turmoil of bringing out a new political order through the Constituent Assembly. It will depend on the tolerance and foresightedness of our political leaders.

The Constituent Assembly will take a fresh look and it could dismantle all the imperfect tasks carried out by previously nominated interim parliament. Whatever they say, the elected parliament can change the priority and leadership.

If everything goes normally, there will be election in the country after the lapse of nine years. It will be the test of wisdom of the people. The candidates are under the discipline of political parties but the common people while exercising their franchise are, in fact, exercising their sovereign rights to choose their servants for given period.

Country will be under the threat of disintegration and survival even after the election for CA but the sovereign people have no other alternative other than to face the consequences of the election. ■

## "No One Has Taken Action Against Attackers."

Govinda Raj Joshi

*Former home minister and Nepali Congress central committee member GOVINDA RAJ JOSHI had a close shave when Maoist cadres affiliated to Young Communist League attacked him on the way to a mass meeting in his constituency of Tanahu district. Along with him 50 others were injured when YCL attacked his elections rally. Joshi spoke to SPOTLIGHT about the incident:*



#### How did incident occur?

When I was addressing the election rally, YCL cadres with gun, stick, bottles and Khukuri attacked us from all sides. My supporters had no option other than to flee. Most of the injured have their legs broken and head injuries.

#### Wasn't the security is enough to prevent this situation?

Although I informed district administration office, 16 days ago, nobody was there to rescue us when the attacked occurred.

#### What about the security force?

They didn't come to rescue us. Maoists even thrashed and abducted some of our cadres.

#### How about the situation of others injured?

Parbati Thapa, a woman candidate for proportional representation, who has sustained head injury, is in critical condition. My bodyguard and other two are also in serious condition.

#### Didn't you complain that to prime minister?

I called prime minister, home minister and the police chief, but I didn't get any support from them.

#### What about the international and local election observers including UNMIN?

Although it is quite close from capital

and close to highway, I have not seen presence of UNMIN or any other international observers. You can understand how terrible the situation might be in remote parts of Nepal. UNMIN, election commission and other international organizations have to press the Maoists to improve their behavior.

#### Has any one been arrested?

I have already filed the complaint and no one is arrested yet.

#### But Maoist leaders are saying that they were angry local people who attacked you. What do you say?

This is a typical communist style of propaganda. I know people of each household. All the YCL cadres were brought from nearby districts like Gorkha, Kaski and Chitwan.

#### What do you expect from Elections Commission?

Election Commission must act against the violators of election code of conduct. If EC does not penalize those involved in the incident, they will start to kill the candidates. This time, I survived but I am unsure about the safety of myself and my supporters. At a time when Maoists attack common people in broad day light in a place nearby capital, how can we say that the election will be peaceful? ■



# “If There Is Any Threat To The Election, It Is Just From The Maoists”

-Sushil Koirala

Acting president of Nepali Congress (NC), **SUSHIL KOIRALA** is contesting from constituency no 3 of Banke district. He faces multiple competitions from candidates of CPN-UML, Maoists and Madhesi parties. He spoke to **SPOTLIGHT** about the various aspects of election. Excerpts:

## What is the state of election?

The election is in final stage, party candidates are in door-to-door campaign. I have been taking part in election campaigns since last one month.

**Still a large number of people have doubts whether the election will be held. What do you say?**

I don't think the election is reversible now. If there is any threat to the election, it is just from the Maoists.

**How do you see Nepali Congress' position?**

We will secure majority as there is no other party with such a long and prestigious democratic credential.

**Do you mean your party will form a single party government?**

Despite winning the majority, we will form a national government with all the political parties in the parliament. We need support from all the parties like now. Girijababu has also said there is a need for seven party unity for a long period of time.

**After the election, do you believe all the problems will be solved?**

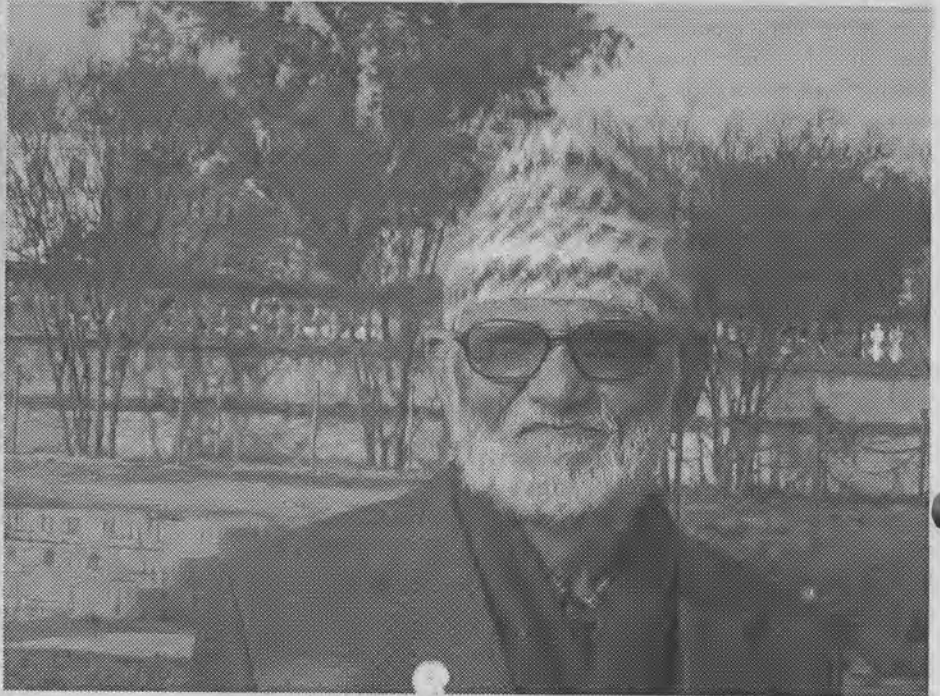
The CA is not a panacea that can resolve all the problems. It will definitely solve many political issues. The coming challenge is for economic development. We need to work together for economic development. However, as Nepali Congress is a centrist, liberal democratic party, only this party can bring about a democratic constitution.

**How do you visualize the post election scenario in the present context of increasingly deteriorating relationship among three major parties of the seven party alliance?**

We don't have any other option other than working together till the drafting of new constitution. Of course, the Maoists have been encouraging violent acts by threatening candidates and our supporters but that will not last. Had the Maoists controlled their YCL cadres, the situation would not have gone so bad.

**What is the law and order situation in your district?**

Although armed groups killed one of the candidates in Banke district, the situation has not gone completely out of control. The police administration needs to act promptly against



anybody who tries to take the law in their hand. Police administration must show that there is no one above the law.

**Have you faced any obstruction from the Maoists?**

We have very friendly competition with other political parties. So far as my constituency is concerned, Maoists do not have strong presence. I have been receiving complaints from my party colleagues contesting from other parts of the country that Maoists are resorting to terror.

**Maoist leaders are, however, charging that Nepali Congress and CPN-UML are making false accusations against their cadres. How do you look at it?**

Incidents speak for themselves. Maoists have physically attacked two of our candidates recently. There are widespread incidents of violence all over the country.

**As you are contesting election from southern plain where regional parties have strong presence, do you feel any threat from them?**

As a large party, Nepali Congress has representation from all groups and regions. During the tenure of the government of NC, we have fulfilled all the demands of Madhesi community. Since our party has shown complete commitment to settle the problems of Madhes, people will vote for me like in the past.

**What differences do you see in contesting this election compared to the past elections?**

Since this election is for constitution making, it is different. But, majority of people want peace, development and prosperity. ■

# “People Will Vote Us To Challenge SPA”

-Jog Meher Shrestha

Veteran politician and Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) leader **JOG MEHER SHRESTHA** has had a long innings in politics. This time Shrestha is now contesting the election under proportional representation. Kathmandu-based leader Shrestha spoke to **SPOTLIGHT** on the position of his party. Excerpts:

## How do you see the overall election campaigns?

There is a completely one-sided election campaigns. Our candidates from various parts of the country are threatened by Young Communist League (YCL). In many districts, our party offices were vandalized but the administration remained a silent spectator.

## In the context of growing violence and intimidation, how do you see the prospects for peaceful and impartial election?

If the government does not control YCL, I don't think the election will be peaceful and impartial. At a time when candidates of Nepali Congress and CPN-UML are unsafe in the hand of Maoists, how can I claim that our party candidates are safe and how can I see the possibility of peaceful election?

## Have your party leaders received any threat?

Our party president Pashupati Sumsher Rana was attacked a few weeks back. Our supporters were kidnapped in Sindhupalchowk, Chitwan and other districts. Our supporters have been receiving threats from Maoists who have threatened them not to vote.

## Have you filed complaints against such acts?

We have filed a number of complaints but the concerned authorities do not take actions. Election Commission needs to be more vigilant over growing acts of violence. The EC must ask political parties to abide by the code of conduct.

## At a time when there is a division among your former colleagues, how do you see the position of RPP?

Rastriya Prajatantra Party is the mainstream party and all others are splinters. We will secure a good position in the election. Our position will be much better than that of others. This party was formed 15 years ago and it has nationwide influence.

## Is there any possibility for electoral alliance?

The time is already past for such alliance. We have to now rely on the wisdom of voters.

## Don't you think that division among parties with same ideology may reduce the possibility of winning the election?

Of course, it will reduce our percentage of votes but it is not going to make any major difference to our party. We will have comfortable position in coming assembly.

## As your party is contesting the election raising similar stand on monarchy like other mainstream parties, what remains there for voters to support your party?

We are still neutral about the issue of monarchy. We believe



that there is a need to hold the referendum to take decision on future of monarchy. The question should be decided on the basis of opinion of the people. So far as ideology of our party is concerned, it is a centrist, liberal and democratic party. At a time when there is hegemony of seven party alliance, who are contesting the election by misusing state machinery, people will vote us to challenge them. People are responding very positively to our party. If we are allowed to campaign freely and our party supporters are not threatened, we will have much better position.

## How many seats do you expect to win?

Our party will win a large number of seats in first-past-post system as well as in proportional representation.

## What is the basis of your assumption?

It is based on response of the voters.

## When three major political parties NC, CPN-UML and Maoists are dominating the election campaigns, how do you find your space?

Publicity given in the newspapers is very biased and they are just focusing on three parties. If you judge political outcome on the basis of media coverage, you will be on the wrong side.

## What is going to be the priority of RPP?

Our priority will be to bring peace and stability in the country as well as give equal opportunity to Madhesi, Janjatis and Dalits. After the election, the country will not be similar again as it will be divided on the basis of federalism. We don't want to impose anything on people. Now it is up to the people to choose their own destiny.

## How do you see the election in a different kind of political set up?

Election is always election. It is unpredictable as people are the supreme to decide the fate of election. ■





Joshi (left) with Dhakal: Change of Guard

FNCCI

# New Leadership

*The new leadership of business community faces multi-pronged challenges*

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

**A**s it came just on the eve of Constituent Assembly (CA) election, the election of new leadership of business community is set to face a multi-pronged challenge.

Apart from regular business issues, the new leadership of the community will have to face new issues such as federalism and inclusion.

The elected CA will redraw the contour of the nation not only politically but also socio-economically.

The CA is expected to complete the writing of a new constitution within two years. As such, the business community will need to play an active role in giving their inputs during the whole process.

The Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) – the umbrella body of private sector – had held its 42nd Annual General Meeting on Wednesday (March 26), which elected its new leadership.

Kush Kumar Joshi has been elected as the new president of the federation. Joshi will head the business community for the next three years. He succeeds Chandi Raj Dhakal whom he defeated on Wednesday's election by over 100 votes.

Dhakal, seeking fresh tenure, and Joshi, a sitting second vice president, had contested the election for the position of FNCCI president. Likewise, three vice presidents and 42 executive committee

members, too, have been elected. Krishna Prasad Tamrakar, Pradeep Jung Pandey and Bhaskar Rajkarnicar have been elected as vice presidents.

Suraj Baidya, a leading businessman, was later elected, unanimously, as the senior vice president of the FNCCI, by the meeting of the new executive committee.

The newly elected president of FNCCI Joshi has said his major focus will be the well-being of the business community. "The trouble today is that you can't even come out of your house to conduct business fearlessly," he said.

"The issue of security is the major agenda for the business community," he said.

Joshi said the government must fulfill its commitment on forming the Industrial Security Force (ISF). "There can be private-public partnership in forming such force," he said.

The ISF had been mooted since a long time back. The government had been promising to set up the force to address the issues of insecurity in business sector but has not formed it as yet.

Inaugurating the AGM, Finance Minister called on the business community to help conduct the Constituent Assembly (CA) election successfully. He assured the business community that no force in the country can go beyond what he called as some vital democratic elements including pluralism, rule of law and human rights.

"The problems of business sector are the national problems," he said, adding that economy must be given top priority for the development of the country. "Even amid instability our macroeconomic indicators including inflation, deficit, are all in stable condition. Our revenue has grown handsomely to help us cater to the rising election expenses and oil deficit. If there had been total peace, I am sure, the country would have witnessed 7 to 8 percent of growth," he said.

Meanwhile, on the occasion of its AGM, the FNCCI also, posthumously, honored four prominent businesspersons - Gopal Rajbhandari, Mohan Gopal Khetan, Hulas Chand Golchha and Raj Bahadur Chipalu. ■



Nepalese Women: Disappointed Lot?

## WOMEN

# Crashed Hopes

*Women leaders express disappointment over the lack of enough women candidates*

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

**A**lthough the top leaders of all the major parties have promised a new Nepal with full inclusion and participation of women as well as other disadvantaged groups in all sectors of national life, the composition of candidates fielded by the major parties indicate otherwise.

"Due to the legal compulsions, they have fielded big number of women under proportional representation category. Even in PR, hardly more than 23 percent of the women will be elected. In the first

past the post system, less than ten percent of the candidates are women," rued Uma Adhikary, president of Inter Party Women's Alliance (IPWA).

She added that even those ten percent of women in electoral fray have been fielded in places where their position and organization strength is weak.

"Women have not been given the chance to fight election from their own region and constituency where they have good strength. They have been tossed aside in places where they cannot expect to win," she said.

She said that male candidates have grabbed constituencies where they expect to win but women are forced to accept whatever is left over.

"Worse, they have been compelled to contest nationally influential leaders. A woman is made to contest election against influential leaders like Prachanda, KP Oli, Krishna Mahara and Bamdev Gautam. Male candidates perhaps fear of losing and have registered their names in PR system instead of contesting against influential leaders," said central Nepali Congress (NC) leader Adhikary, who herself was not allowed to contest the election from her preferred constituency in Chitawan and was compelled to opt for PR candidacy.

The IPWA, which consists of central level women leaders of major parties in the parliament including NC, Unified Marxist Leninist (UML), among others, has decided to appeal for votes in favor of women candidates everywhere in the country.

"Since it is extremely important to have enough women representation in the Constituent Assembly, we are appealing the people to vote for women wherever they are in the fray irrespective of parties they represent," she said.

According to Election Commission, of the total 3947 candidates in FPTP system, 367 are women. "There are 16 districts where there is not a single woman candidate," said EC spokesperson Laxman Bhattarai.

Under the Proportional Representation (PR) system, of the total 6000 candidates, the parties have fielded fifty percent women candidates due to legal compulsions. It is not certain, however, how many of them will actually be elected.

"The parties always promise but never fulfill those promises as far as women's right is concerned," said Sita Poudel, general secretary of IPWA and a UML leader.

Adhikary and Poudel believe that since this is not a normal parliamentary election, women cutting across parties need to come together.

"For the time being, we will fight together from different parties. But if there is a need, we can think about forming a separate party for women," they said in unison. "Lets hope that our issues are addressed by our respective parties." ■



## Violence should have no place in this Constituent Assembly Election

- IAN MARTIN

As there is concern over growing violence in the country, IAN MARTIN, special representative of the secretary-General in Nepal, has been traveling in different parts of Nepal. Excerpts of his recent press meet of Nepalgunj.

### How do you see the growing elections violence?

The first is that violence should have no place in this Constituent Assembly election. I am conscious that it is here in Banke that the killing of an election candidate, Mr. Kamal Adhikari, took place, and I extend my condolences to his family. And I equally deplore the deaths of Maoist cadres and all too many other injuries that have taken place in clashes during this election campaign. I can assure anyone that those who are responsible for these acts, whatever cause they are trying to promote, will lose all sympathy from the international community.

### How about the elections code of conduct?

All political parties should respect the electoral Code of Conduct and, in particular, the right of other political parties to campaign freely in any district or village of the country in which they wish to do so. That message was of course given strongly by the Chief Election Commissioner to leaders of political parties yesterday, and I support him and the Election Commission in his insistence that the Code of Conduct should be observed. So far as the international community is concerned, this is going to be the most observed election ever in Nepal, with more than 700, I think now more than 800, international observers present by polling day itself.

### UNMIN monitors the weapons inside the camps. But it has been seen that weapons from Rolpa?

The weapons that you referred to in Rolpa were two rifles that had been retained at one of the cantonment sites for perimeter security. It appears that they had been taken by a group of three people who were providing security to Deputy Commander Pasang. But it was a breach of agreement for those weapons and those individuals to be outside the cantonment sites. Just as it was also a breach of agreement for additional personnel from the cantonments to come out to the rallies held by Chairman Prachanda and provide additional security at those rallies.

### The incidents of attacks and killings have increased in this process. Various leaders are saying that if Maoist atrocities are increasing, the Nepal Army can be mobilized. How do you look at it?

I think I have already made it clear that it is not for UNMIN to say whether or not the Nepal Army should be used, but if it is to be used outside the existing agreements, then those agreements have to be re-negotiated. But I am not going to speculate about an increase in incidents of violence, there have been too many acts of violence, as I have made clear, many indeed involving Maoist cadres but some involving cadres of other political parties amongst themselves.

### What is the overall security situation throughout the country?

### Another question is, the UNMIN report says Maoists have violated the Code of Conduct - what has Prachanda got to say about this?

Well, we have tried to present now in two reports a balanced



assessment of the conditions around the country, and I believe that we have done that in as an objective a way as possible, based not just on allegations by one political party against another, or even on media reports, but based on monitoring of our own personnel and OHCHR's human rights officers. I have had two opportunities to discuss our assessment with Chairman

### Incidents of violence and highhandedness are increasing. How does UNMIN study and make the reports?

Well, the manner in which we are trying to assess the situation is, as I say, by investigating for ourselves as many as possible of the incidents that take place or are alleged to have taken place. As I have made very clear, there are too many incidents of violence that have taken place in this campaign, but I think it is important at the same time to recall that there are large parts of the country, many constituencies and districts, where peaceful campaigning is going on in an atmosphere of harmony amongst the political parties and enthusiasm on the part of the voters.

### Incidents of violation of the election Code of Conduct have been increasing. The EC has also urged UNMIN to monitor on this. How are you monitoring the election Code of Conduct?

I think I have already made it clear we are as actively present as we can be in different parts of the country, not only ourselves but the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Out of that we are putting as much pressure as we can on the political parties to improve their adherence to the Code of Conduct, particularly as regards allowing other political parties to campaign freely. At the end of the day, UNMIN has no enforcement authority. The Election Commission does have enforcement authority, and it will be up to the Election Commission to decide how to act in relation to: The credibility of the international and national observers is being questioned. Will ■

# “Code Of Conduct Must Be Fully Respected”

-Krishna Man Pradhan

**KRISHNA MAN PRADHAN**, member secretary of General Elections Observation Committee, has a long experience in the election monitoring. At a time when his own organization alone is dispatching 880 observers throughout country, Pradhan spoke to **SPOTLIGHT** on challenges of election observation. Excerpts:

**How many observers are you sending to observe the polls?**

GEOC is sending altogether 880 observers throughout the country. This includes 35 national, 35 district, and hundreds in municipalities and village development committees.

**Are there other organizations carrying out similar observation?**

Democracy and Elections Alliance Nepal (DEAN) is also mobilizing 12,608 observers. This includes 50 national observer, 3 regional, 75 district, 480 constituency level and 12,000 at booth level. There are also other 148 domestic organizations involved in observation.

**Do you have any observer alliance at the central level for coordination?**

We have alliance of five national observers like DEAN, GEOC, NEOC, NEMA and CAEOF. We are mobilizing about 65,000 observers throughout the country.

**How do you see the level of coordination?**

Frankly speaking, one of the major challenges for us is to have coordination at the district level. There is virtually no coordination at the district level.

**What are the challenges of selecting the observers?**

According to Code of Conduct, only the persons passing SLC are eligible for becoming observers. Other organizations are facing difficulties in finding such persons.

**Do you appoint any one affiliated with some political parties?**

We cannot appoint anybody who has political affiliation. Even we cannot appoint teacher as an observer.

**How do you see the level of preparation?**

DEAN and GEOC have already prepared preliminary reports. According to our report, there are still many gaps. For instance, large number of voters are unaware about Constituent Assembly. Voters believe that the CA election is like parliamentary election. Even candidates have been talking about development rather than constitution making. Political parties are violating the code of conduct

**How do you see the role of international observers?**

International observers are just confining to urban areas. They have not shown interest to go to villages and remote parts of Nepal.

**How do you see the role of EC?**

Election Commission has failed to press political parties to abide by the election code of conduct.

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



The government is unable to maintain the law and order situation in the country. The government machinery is unable to enforce rule of law. There is no guarantee of rule of law.

**How many observers will be there on April 10?**

There will be 85,000 national observers and 1000 international observer who will perform the role of election observers.

**How do you suggest making the election observation more effective and efficient?**

There needs to be coordination among election commission, government and observer groups. They must set up a broader alliance between all the stakeholders.

**How do you see the level of awareness among the voters?**

There is still confusion about the voting pattern. Voters are unaware about the ballot papers. There are two ballot papers - one for proportional, another for the first past post system. We still have time to supply model ballot papers to voters so that they can rightly use them.

**Don't you think there requires a monitoring from Election Commission to see whether observers are abiding by code of conduct?**

I have been demanding that kind of system for long. As you know, there is possibility of violation of code of conduct by observers in absence of a team from commission. We hope election commission will set up such kind of group.

**At a time when the election code of conduct violation is rampant, what can be done to reduce this number?**

Political parties need to express their commitments as well as they need to translate their commitments in reality. ■



## BOOK

# More Than Mountains

*Prominent Swiss scholar Toni Hagen's book, which is translated into Nepali, reveals many important things about Nepal*

By A CORRESPONDENT

**F**rom Kirk Patrick to Silva Levi and from Brian Hudson to G.H.D Gimlette, many foreigners who visited Nepal and who came here on special missions, have made immense contributions by writing on socio, cultural, political and other events of Nepal.

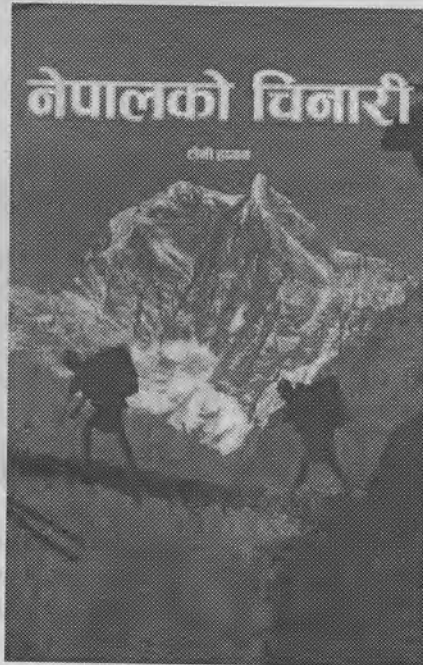
Even the account of German Prince Waldemar highlighted the contemporary power politics, socio-cultural development and other things about Nepal. After the Anglo-Nepal War of 1814, a number of British came to Nepal on official business and they contributed written commentaries on Nepal.

Swiss scholar Toni Hagen also maintained the tradition of western scholar writing the personal account about their visit. Nepal: The Kingdom in the Himalayas is one of them. Originally written in English language, the book is a resource material for scholars who want to know about Nepal.

Although the book is about Nepal, a large number of Nepalese speakers didn't know about this. Thanks to Himal Book and financial support by Toni Hagen Foundation, this book has been translated into Nepali. As Hagen traveled extensively across Nepal, this book deals with Nepal's social, political and geographical aspects.

When Tony Hagen arrived in Nepal on 24 October 1950, he was the guest of then Rana prime minister Mohan Sumsher but six months after his arrival, new political upheaval uprooted Rana regime and established a democratic system.

When Hagen first came to Nepal as a member of Swiss technical team – which was a first foreign aid team- to launch development program, Nepal was



## Nepal: The Kingdom in the Himalayas

By: Tony Hagen

Price: Rs. 250.00

Pages: 111

Published by:

Himal Book

completely cut off from the rest of the world. One had to use various modes of transport, including one day trek from Bhimphedi, to reach the capital of the Himalayan nation.

At that time when Swiss technical team began work in Nepal, Hagen saw the drama of revolution orchestrated in

Nepal. He describes how Indian embassy was involved in the revolution of 1950 from behind. Hagen also describes Indian ambassador C.P.N. Singh's role in bringing King Tribhuwan into Indian embassy for political asylum in November 1950. His description of political drama of 1950's revolution as an eye witness will be useful for scholars to take the stock of history of Nepal.

He initially worked here as a member of Swiss Technical Assistance Team but he later worked under the United Nations Technical Assistance Administration (TAA). One of the key functions of TAA was to carry out a survey of Nepal's mineral resources. As an expert, Hagen covered a distance of about 14,000 kilometers on foot.

This book is all about his study between 1950-1958 when he studied the general geography of Nepal. His exploration of various places was taken in accordance with the popular rumor or the opinions of former governments. However, the writer was able to carry out a systematic geological survey of Nepal.

This book includes all his experiences, encounters, socio-cultural and ethnic description of Nepal. When Hagen came to Nepal, the country had virtually no schools, hospitals, roads and other basic facilities. However, he had seen drastic transformation in all these areas. Just 265 primary schools in 1950 increasing to 21,473 in 1995 and literacy rate jumping from 4.6 to 60 percent. Similarly, there were no university for higher education when he came here. From 600 km gravel road to 9534 kilometers of blacktopped road, Hagen's book gives detail description of drastic transformation of Nepali society.

From Kirkpatrick to Hagen and just recently, Francis G. Hutchins, a professor of Harvard University, who has written a book Democratizing Monarch, A Memoir of Nepal's King Birendra, western scholars have maintained their tradition of note-keeping and cataloguing.

For Nepalese readers, Hagen book is very worthy as it describes geography, geology and other social and cultural aspects of Nepal. Although Hagen died about five years ago, his contribution to Nepal remains immortal. ■

“There will be a political disaster if the clashes among parties continue.”

*Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, talking to reporters in Biratnagar.*

“I have seen from east to west and in Madhes that there is huge public wave in favor of Maoists. So Maoist victory in the election is certain. Only conspiracies can defeat us now. And if there are such conspiracies, people will revolt.”

*Prachanda, Maoist chairman, in Nepal FM.*

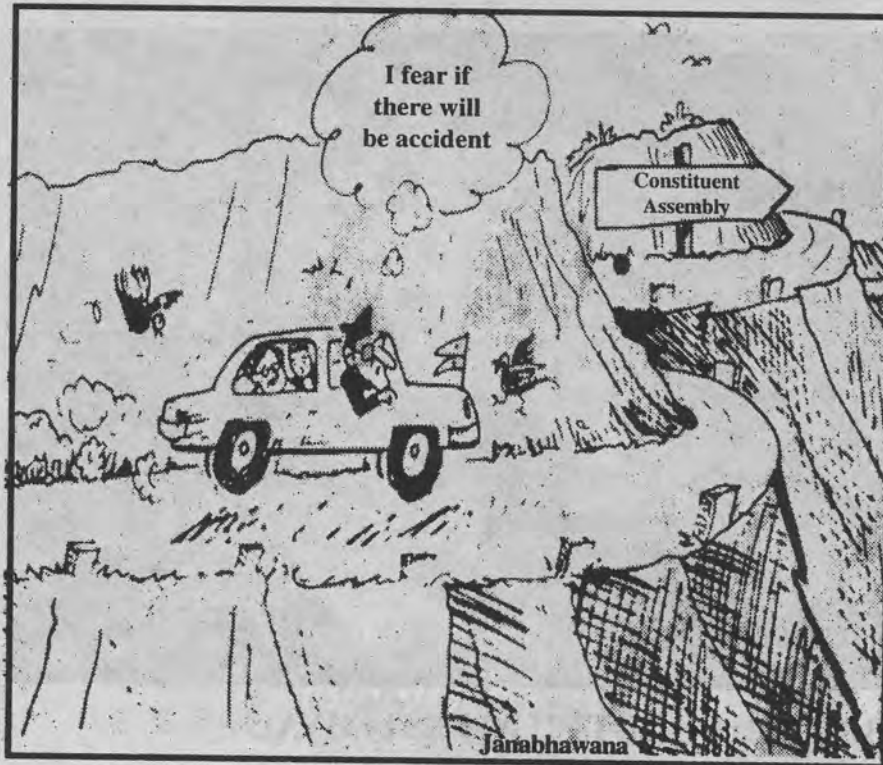
“Efforts at undermining the morale of Nepali Army and police are not acceptable for UML.”

*Madhav Kumar Nepal, general secretary of the Unified Marxist Leninist (UML), addressing a program in Khula Manch.*

“The heads of the cadres of UML are not footballs that the YCL can kick around at will.”

*Khadga Prasad Oli, senior Unified Marxist Leninist (UML), addressing a program in Khula Manch.*

“The victory of the people would be ensured only with the victory of the Maoists.”



*Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, senior Maoist leader, addressing election rally in Gorkha.*

“If there had been total peace, I am sure, the country would have witnessed 7 to 8 percent of growth.”

*Dr. Ram Sharan Mahat, Finance Minister, addressing the AGM of Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI).*

“The main agenda of the business

community, now, is (lack of) security.”

*Kush Kumar Joshi, newly elected president of Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI).*

“They have fielded women candidates in places where they are weak and against big fishes.”

*Uma Adhikary, central leader of Nepali Congress and president of Inter party Women Alliance.*

## TRANSITION

**KILLED:** Two persons Firoz Khan and Parwez Iraqi in a bomb blast in a mosque in Biratnagar.

A Maoist worker Ganga Bhujel in a clash with Nepali Congress workers in Solukhumbu.

**ABDUCTED:** Raj Kishore Mandal, a candidate belonging to Dalit Janajati

Party, from Saptari 2 constituency, by cadres of Akhil Terai Mukti Morcha.

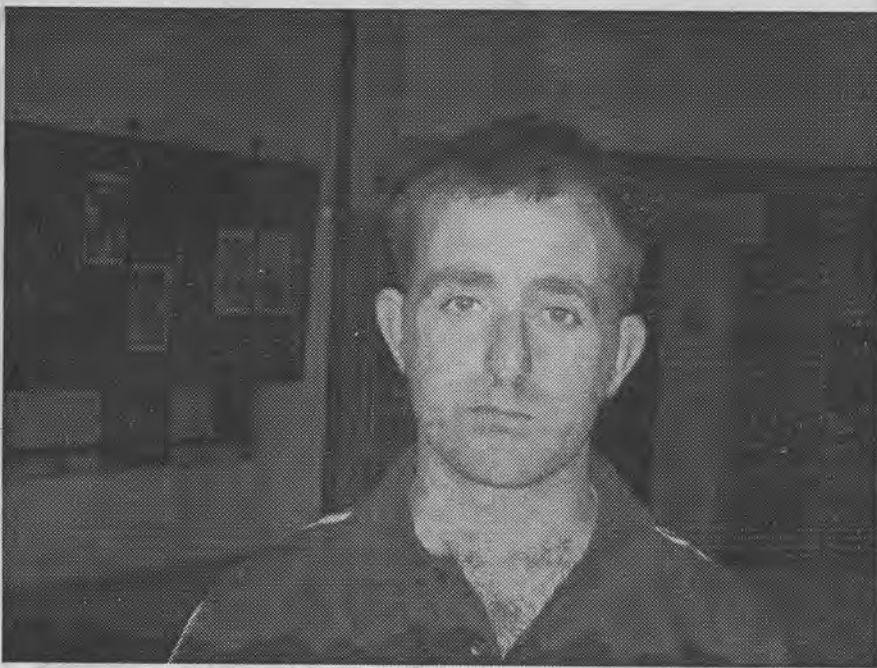
**DISSOLVED:** A talks team formed by four armed outfit based in Terai – Samyukta Janatantrik Terai Mukti Morcha, Janatantrik Terai Mukti Morcha, Madhesi Mukti Tigers and Terai Cobra – after they withdrew their offer for talks with the government.

**RECOGNIZED:** 810 international

election observers, by the Election Commission (EC). Likewise, over 80,000 national election observers will also be deployed for the Constituent Assembly election.

**INVITED:** Election Commissioners from South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries, to observe the April 10 Constituent Assembly election, by the Election Commission.





BRITISH SHORT FILM FESTIVAL

# Different Taste

*Organized by Rare Films in association with British Council, Brit Short Film Festival brings many interesting films to Nepalese audience*

By A CORRESPONDENT

**F**or many Nepalese audience, films mean spending up to three hours time. From romance, to action and then thrillers, one can find everything in films. But, the British short films show that even films with short duration can bring about a complete story.

Unlike commercial movies, the short British films are based on real stories and portray the real life of people.

The Sheep Thief – which was based on an Indian story – was full of meanings. Directed by Asif Kapadia, The Sheep Thief was Kapadia's graduation film at the Royal College of Art and was shot in Rajasthan, India.

From professional to amateur, all kinds of people are involved in the short film making. These films have combination of professionalism and immaturity. But as they are based on real

stories of human life, they always produce strong message.

"This is a good opportunity to show these kinds of films to Nepalese audiences. Short films are rare and they have their own characters," said Murray Kerr of Rare Films. Having lived in Nepal for about a year, Kerr is making a Nepali film Sick City. Based on the story of drug users, this film is shot around Thamel. "My film follows the life of drug dealers under the hold of the City's dark."

The theme was short as the films. The British short films at the exhibition - which ranged from 4 minutes to 27 minutes - have shown that it is the theme of the film which matters the most than the timing.

Other films like Joyride by Jim Gillespie had its own character. Before making Joyride, director Jim Gillespie had directed a number of documentaries for

television for several years. The short film led him to directing his first feature film "I know What You Did Last Summer."

Another documentary UK Images related to innovative imagery. Directed by Martin Parr, the documentary was produced for the BBC. This was a very interesting documentary which also includes the social message.

The short films are very impressive and meaningful. Unlike long films where the directors and producers add many flavors from romance to mystery, the short films portray the reality as they are.

Directed by Christopher Nolan, Doodlebug was another interesting film. Doodlebug was made at the Film Society of University College, London when Christopher Nolan was studying English Literature. The Boy and Bicycle was another interesting Black and White film.

Directed by Ridely Scott, the director uses his mother and father as actors in this film.

Telling Lies is just a 4 minute film. Written, produced and directed by Simon Ellis, this tale of modern manners and communication breakdown is told entirely in animated captions that invite the viewers to share the truth behind the soundtracks, excuses and lies.

The festival showed 16 great films. ■





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