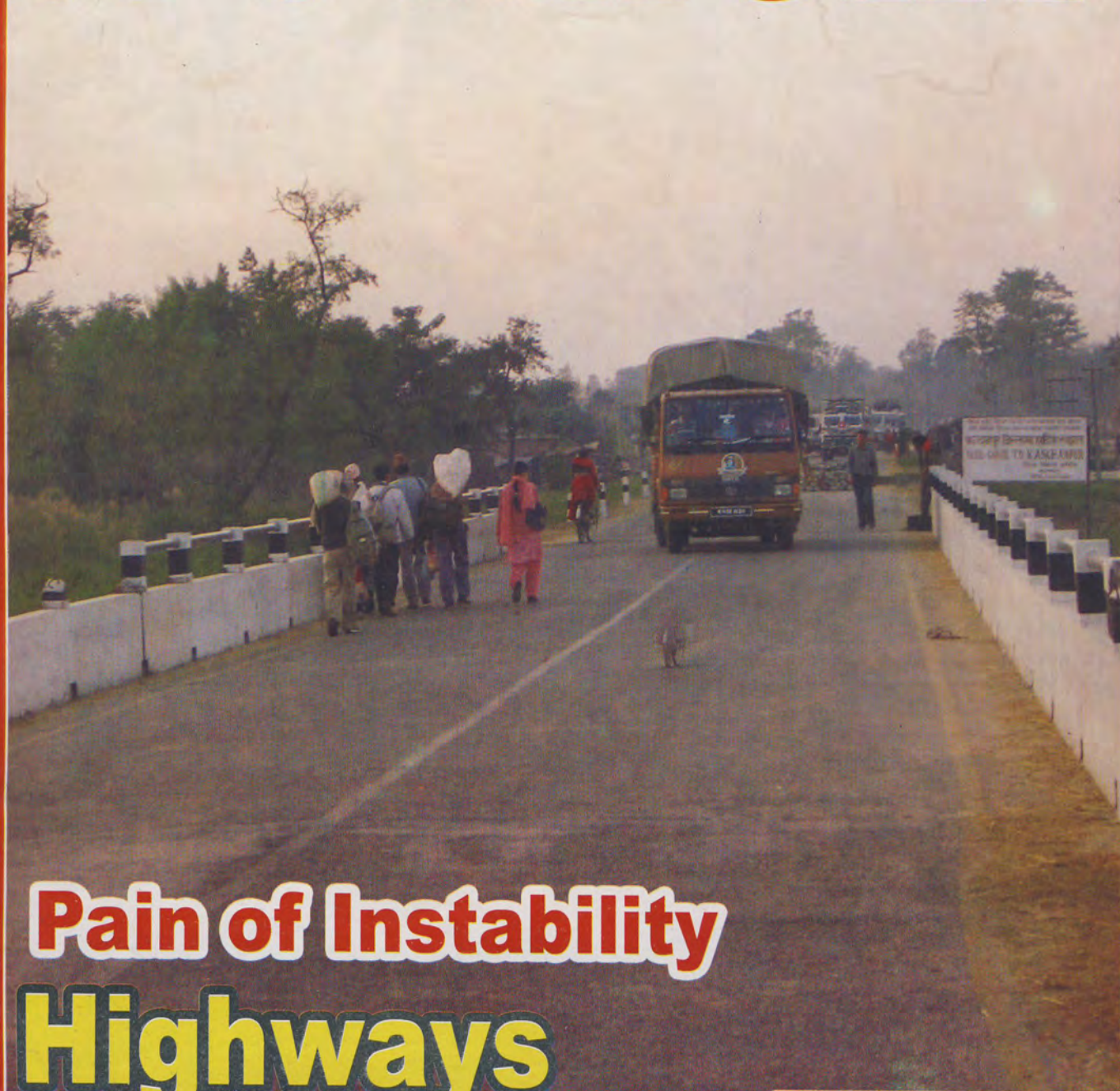


# SPOTLIGHT

Dec. 12-18, 2008



## Pain of Instability Highways Under Siege

**INSIDE**  
UML: Comrades In Conflict  
GLOBAL CRISIS: Hitting Home  
NEPAL-INDIA WATER  
RESOURCES : Challenges Ahead

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# *Come together* *with San Miguel*

*My journey into music and recently into acting, has been one that has been both exciting and fulfilling for me. I know that this journey has been as smooth as it has only because of the trust and support of my friends and listeners – and I am grateful for this.*

*In my personal as well as professional life I seek smoothness – like San Miguel, a drink that reminds me of friendship.*

*- Nima Rumba  
Singer/Actor*



**San Miguel BEER**

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**SPOTLIGHT**

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**Chief Editor And Publisher**  
Madhav Kumar Rimal

**Editor**  
Sarita Rimal

**Managing Editor**  
Keshab Poudel

**Senior Reporter**  
Sanjaya Dhakal

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

**Layout**  
Jyoti Dangol (Singh)

**Photographer**  
Sandesh Manandhar

**Legal Advisor**  
Advocate Lok Bhakta Rana

**Marketing**  
Navin Kumar Maharjan  
Madan Raj Poudel

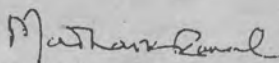
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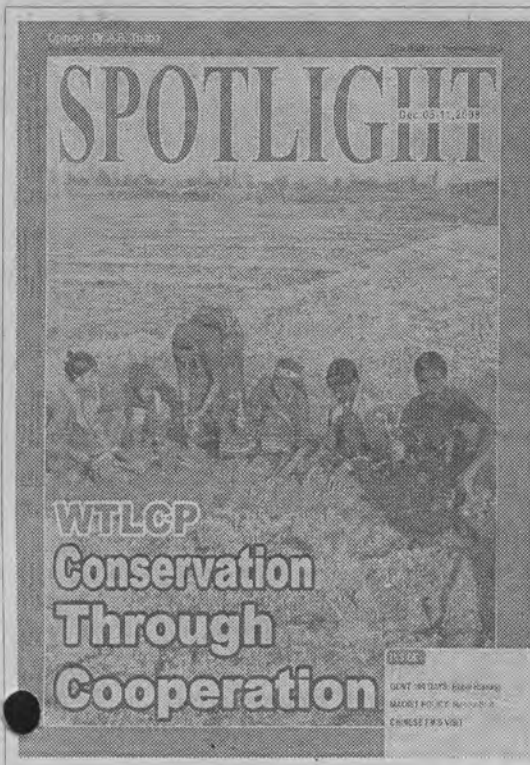
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**Q**uo Vadis Nepal? The leading power in the government wants to take it to totalitarianism, dreaming of ruling the country *ad infinitum*. Another leading party, out of the government, wants democracy but does not give democracy even to its own party members. There are other parties who want to turn the history upside down regaling in the thoughts of looting the country once again. The small intellectual community should have taken the burden of educating the poor uneducated mass in nationalism and patriotism to safeguard the country's stability and identity. But they have proved to be even greater culprits of catering to their own vile interests at the cost of the nation's. By playing into the hands of sinister national and international organizations whose inner motives are to convert the hungry and sick people into their thoughts and beliefs and running after the power centers, the handful of Nepali intellectuals has perpetrated biggest injury to their country by failing to rise up to the occasion to lead the country's illiterate masses. Even the Nepali media are so depraved that they only run after cheap profits whether it comes from nationals or anti-nationals, totally ignoring their journalistic ethics and their most noble function of reporting: only the truth to the people. It is very strange to see that the Nepali media have yet to learn that they are the people who are capable of making or marring any politician, exposing his or her nefarious acts to safeguard the interest of the country and the people. Media is no longer only the fourth estate. No government anywhere can run successfully without an honest and dedicated media. As such, media has become supreme and must function without fear, favor or prejudice. No authority, howsoever, powerful can suppress the voice of an honest media. We are aware, as there would be black sheep any where, there are some in our media who cater to alien interests. That must not bother our thinking and behavior to do our duty. Consequently, at a time, when the country is facing great uncertainty for its integrity, holding on, most precariously, to the edge of the precipice, it becomes the bounden duty of all patriotic media and intellectuals to forget past and make firm resolution to work together to save our mother land from going to utter ruin. It is the media's responsibility and prime duty to expose corrupt and anti-national politicians so that they may do no more harm to the country and meted out just punishment. Our country has lost all directions. It has become a crow in the deep fog. After all our bitter experiences, we must be able to distinguish who are our honest and patriotic leaders and who are our sincere friends. The situation demands immediate action. We cannot let the country remain directionless. If twenty five million Nepalis gird up their loins nothing could be impossible because we know where there is will, there is a way.

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



### Wrong Focus

It was interesting to read the story (WTLCP Conservation through Cooperation December 05-11). Even as Nepal's political parties have been fighting each other in the center undermining the difficulties of common people living in remote parts of Nepal, Nepal's friendly countries and organizations like UNDP have made very significant works supporting a program to uplift the life of people. This is very commendable job. I hope Nepal's friendly countries will implement these kinds of program in other parts of the country also.

*Jas Bahadur Gurung  
London Via-email*

### Conservation Story

First of all, I would like to congratulate Spotlight for bringing these kinds of story (Conservation through cooperation December 05-11) by visiting hinterlands of Nepal. These kinds of story help readers like me to know about the state of Nepal's rural parts. I agree with you that the participation of the local communities is one of the important parts of conservation. We have made significant achievement in the past in the areas of nature conservation. However, the program misses the human component as well as landscape management balancing conservation and livelihood. Western Terai Landscape Conservation Program (WTLCP) has shown the way to balance livelihood and conservation. Like other parts of the world, growing human pressure continues to threaten the successful conservation model. Nepal can make a difference by implementing this project.

*Kristi Lama  
Via email*

### Wild And Free

It is very unnatural to stop the movement of wild animals like elephants and rhinos from their own natural habitat. All of us know that most of the land used by local population around the national park is illegally encroached. Whether in the name of landless or under the cover of land mafia, these people were settled around the national park where these helpless wild animals used to roam. If people grow rice and other products for their livelihood in the habitat of endangered wildlife, it is natural that they will face problem of grazing. I find it strange to know that the wildlife, which cannot defend their case, are penalized by putting the electric fencing around the national park to stop their movement. Instead of electric fencing, WTLCP needs to find out other alternative ways so that animals can move freely in their own territory. Is it not the violation of rights of endangered wildlife? It is very unfortunate to say that we have been rewarding the people who illegally

encroach the land. While striking balance between conservation and livelihood, the rights of wildlife should be protected.

*Krishna Chaudhari  
Via email  
Washington D.C*

### Poor State

It is very shameful to know that over 65 percent of population or over a billion people in South Asia do not have access to sanitation or toilet. However, the countries of the region have been spending huge amount of their budget to purchase military hardware. Although India has made tremendous progress in science and technology and its economic growth rate is also surging, the social reality is that its over 60 percent population do not have toilet. Similar is the situation in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal. Despite political and other differences among the countries of the region, the recent outcome of regional ministerial meeting SACOSAN III is historic as the ministers of the region agreed to accept sanitation as a basic human rights. This is the right beginning. However, looking at their past history, I cannot believe that they will make any major difference.

*Janardan Pujari  
Via- email*

### Self Help

As long as we rely on western foreign country to make our homes clean. I don't think there is any sense of pride of development. One of the tragedies is that we cannot unite ourselves to promote this genuine cause to make universal coverage of sanitation in our region. If we are really sincere, we must increase our budget spending in the areas of sanitation coverage. We need to spend more money in these areas.

*Garima Shrestha  
Banasthali Via email*



## VP Jha Dissatisfied Over Offhand Talks With Terai Rebels

Vice President Parmananda Jha on Thursday (Dec 4) expressed his dissatisfaction over the government for carrying out negotiations with the armed struggle groups active in Terai without necessary homework. "Many issues would have been resolved if only the government had held the dialogue after carrying out homework," said the vice president. "I have felt that the armed groups have been treated with lesser respect," Vice President Jha said at a program organized in Birgunj Thursday. Jha was of the opinion that it was inappropriate to say that action would be taken against those who do not come for dialogue while calling them for talks. Various quarters including President Dr Ram Baran Yadav have suggested VP Jha not to make political remarks since he fell into controversy. Earlier, he had criticized the army integration committee formed by the ruling coalition partners and later started expressing his confusion about what his role was. *Compiled from reports*

## Chinese FM Returns Home

Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi met with President Dr Ram Baran Yadav at Shital Niwas Thursday (Dec 4) morning. The 40-minute meeting primarily focused on improving Nepal-China relations and increasing material assistance from China for the peace process and economic development of Nepal. During the meeting, Jiechi is learnt to have expressed China's support for protecting Nepal's territorial integrity. On Wednesday as well when he met with Prime Minister Pusha Kamal Dahal, the Chinese minister had said his country was ready to extend all possible support

for protecting Nepal's 'sovereignty'. Jiechi left for Myanmar later in the afternoon, completing his three-day tour to Nepal.

## *Compiled from reports* Govt Should Request Soon For UNMIN Term Extension: Martin

United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) has said the government of Nepal must request the UN at the earliest if the latter is interested in extending its mandate. In an interview with Kantipur FM on Thursday (Dec 4), UNMIN Chief Ian Martin said the government should immediately appeal to the UN Secretary General as a long process has to be followed to extend the UN body's term. "The actual expiration of the mandate is 23 January 2009, we would have liked to have had a request by now so that we could send recommendations to the Secretary General which he would pass on to the Security Council," said Martin, adding, "The very latest date for decisions is January and for that we need to request very soon indeed." The UNMIN Chief opined that the peace process, however, will not reach to a logical end unless the fate of the former Maoist combatants is decided. He also underscored that the Army Integration Special Committee should initiate the process of integration through consensus at the earliest. Martin said the monitors will have to play their part until the combatants are integrated and rehabilitated although the UNMIN does not want to extend its term. "We wanted to see that discussion move forward because it's the ex-strategy for UNMIN, some people think that UNMIN wants to stay in the country," said the UNMIN chief, "We want to complete our task but the task of arms monitoring logically is completed when decisions are made about the future of combatants." The UNMIN, a special political mission to monitor the peace process in Nepal, was established on 23 January 2007 in response to letters to the Secretary-General sent on 9 August 2006, in which the then Seven-Party Alliance

government and the CPN-Maoist had requested UN assistance in creating a free and fair atmosphere for the Constituent Assembly election and the entire peace process. At the request of the government, the UN Security Council had extended UNMIN's mandate for six months on 23 January 2008 and for another six months on 23 July 2008.

*Compiled from reports*

## NC Dangles Its Conditions To Sit In Special Committee

The opposition party Nepali Congress (NC) has reiterated its conditions before joining the special committee on army integration. Senior leaders of the major four parties including three of the ruling coalition – Maoists, UML and MJF – and main opposition Nepali Congress (NC) held talks Tuesday (Dec 2) morning in Baluwatar, focusing on expanding the special committee. Emerging out from the talks, NC vice president Ram Chandra Poudel said that his party reiterated its demand that the special committee on army integration be reconstituted by involving two members from it, among others, before the party can consider joining it. Poudel also demanded that the government first fulfill its nine-point memorandum before it can extend cooperation to the government. The process of initiating army integration has been in limbo since NC declined to be a part of the special committee. Currently, the committee consists of two members from Maoists and one each from UML and MJF. *Compiled from reports*

## Maoists-Led Govt A Failure: Opposition

The main opposition party Nepali Congress (NC) on Tuesday (Dec 3) accused the Maoist-led government of being completely unsuccessful. Speaking at the legislative session of the Constituent Assembly (CA) Tuesday, NC leader Dr Ram Sharan Mahat remarked that the culture of impunity has flourished, law and order situation has deteriorated and the properties confiscated have not been returned yet even after the government completed its

initial hundred days of functioning. Dr Mahat, the former finance minister, went on to claim that the government has failed to take the leadership of the committee to draft the new constitution. "Not only the rampant killings and violation of the right to live have occurred but also a clear involvement of the government has been seen in these cases," said the NC lawmaker, adding, "None of the culprits has been detained even after those murders." "The Maoist cadres themselves have been found to be involved in the killings and yet they are living freely as normal citizens, but the home minister is unable to take action against them," he said. The NC leader said that the government failed to create the environment for investment and the national capital is flying away. Likewise, Rastriya Janashakti Party leader Dr Prakash Chandra Lohani flayed the government for failing to apply law in an unbiased manner. Expressing concern over the growing anarchism, Dr Lohani said that the commitments made by Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal have not been implemented. He remarked that there is no point making pledges if those made in the past are not implemented. Similarly, UML lawmaker Dambar Bahadur Khadka alleged that the home minister is secretly releasing the culprits.

*Compiled from reports*

### **Koirala Is NC PP Leader Unless Otherwise Notified: NC**

Seven months since the election of Constituent Assembly election was held, the main opposition party, Nepali Congress (NC), remains still undecided over naming its parliamentary party leader. A meeting of the NC parliamentary party (PP) held on Monday (Dec 1) to decide on the election of the PP leader ended inconclusively. However, the Congress party is also known to have written a letter to the government saying that party president Girija Prasad Koirala will be the member of the Constitutional

Council as the opposition leader unless otherwise notified by the party. There was discussion on whether to elect PP leader or simply nominate one, but no conclusion was reached, leaders said. Some women PP members made strong demand for choosing a woman deputy parliamentary leader. Much to the chagrin of some hopefuls like senior party leader Sher Bahadur Deuba and vice-president Ram Chandra Poudel, party president Girija Prasad Koirala has repeatedly proclaimed himself to be the parliament leader. The NC is not only the sole political party that has not chosen its parliamentary leader it has also not been able to adopt the constitution for the parliamentary party. *Compiled from reports*

### **West Seti Seeks One Year Extension To Arrange Finances**

The West Seti hydro has sought for one more year to arrange finances for investment in the 750 MW West Seti hydropower. In the earlier agreement with the government, the West Seti Hydro had been asked to complete financial arrangement within December of 2008. But it has again sought for one year extension to do so. The hydro has already extended its tenure or changed agreements eight times. According to Himalaya Bahadur Pandey, director of the Hydro, this time they are seeking the extension as per the recommendation of the Asian Development Bank (ADB). As the ADB is said to be preparing to approve the decision to invest in the project through its board in March, it recommended for the extension. The ADB is proposing to invest 15 percent in the project, whose total cost is said to be \$1.6 billion. The government has also decided to invest 15 percent in the project. These apart, West Seti Hydro will invest 26 percent, China National Machinery Import/Export Corporation will invest 15 percent, India's Infrastructure Leasing and Financial Services will invest 15 percent and Special Purpose Vehicle will invest 14

percent in the project. Of the total investment, 75 percent will be as loan and 25 percent as share. Meanwhile, Pandey said that they are reviewing the Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) with Power Trading Corporation (PTC) of India. The PPA conducted in October, 2003 stated that power would be sold at 4.95 US cents per unit but the PTC is said to have agreed to increase it given increase in inflation. The West Seti is a totally export-oriented project. *Kantipur daily reports*

### **UML Presses Maoists To Become Flexible To Bring NC In Special Committee**

The Unified Marxist Leninist (UML) has asked the Maoists to rope in Nepali



Congress (NC) in the special committee on army integration. The UML is a major ally in the ruling coalition led by the Maoists while NC is the main opposition. A delegation of UML led by its general secretary Jhal Nath Khanal met with Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda,' Wednesday, and made this request. The UML team told the PM that without the participation of NC, the committee will become meaningless. Although the government had formed the committee led by UML leader and Deputy Prime Minister Bamdev Gautam a month ago, the NC has stayed away from it demanding equal participation and implementation of past pacts. The committee has two members from the Maoists and the NC has also demanded two members from its side. The NC has also demanded that terms of reference of the committee be same as was agreed in earlier pacts. *Compiled from reports* ■



**PM Pushpa Kamal Dahal shaking hand with Ma Xiaotian, Lieutenant General Chinese People Liberation Army**

**THE VISITING CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTER** Yang Jiechi signed an agreement to provide Rs 1.2 billion aid to Nepal this year. Jiechi signed an understanding with Foreign Minister Upendra Yadav at Shital Niwas, Wednesday (Dec 3), agreeing to help Nepal in economic development efforts. "The Chinese side has shown willingness to help in road development, bringing railway line up to Nepal border, increasing scholarship quota for Nepali students for education, encouraging Chinese tourists to visit Nepal and to provide necessary training and equipment to strengthen Nepal's security," Foreign Minister Yadav told reporters. He said that Chinese government has agreed to provide Rs 1.2 billion aid to Nepal this year. Yadav added that Chinese side also showed interest in the peace, prosperity and nation-building process in Nepal.

**THE NEPAL OIL CORPORATION (NOC)** slashed the prices of petroleum products on Wednesday (Dec 3). The decision comes in the wake of constant decline in the price of crude oil in the international market. A meeting of the NOC board decided to lower the price of petrol, diesel, kerosene and aviation fuel each by Rs 5 per litre. Petrol will now cost Rs 85 per litre, aviation fuel Rs 90 and diesel and kerosene Rs 60 per litre respectively. However, the price of cooking gas remains same. Likewise, the NOC has levied 50 paise 'pollution tax' on per litre of petrol, kerosene and diesel for Kathmandu Valley. Earlier, the NOC had reduced petroleum prices twice within a couple of months.

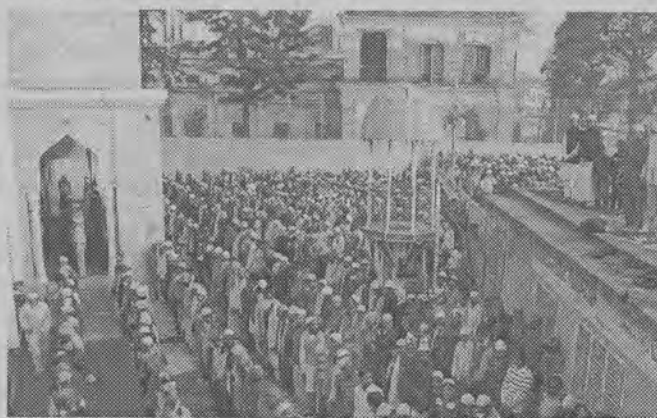
**THE NEPALELECTRICITYAUTHORITY (NEA)** has decided to increase the weekly load shedding hours with effect from Wednesday (Dec 3). The increase would be upto 45 hours from the present 35 hours in parts of the country. As per the new calendar, there will be seven hours of power cut every day (morning and evening) for six days a week. And on one day every week there will be three hours of power cut during daytime. The NEA Systems Operation Department chief Sher

Singh Bhat has said that the receding water level in rivers due to onset of dry season has brought down the power generating capacity of projects resulting in short supply. While the peak load demand exceeds 700 MW, the actual output has been less than 400 MW, it is said.

**THE UNITED NATIONS CENTRAL EMERGENCY** Response Fund (CERF) has allocated about \$3 million to aid nearly 1.5 million people in rural Nepal suffering from rapidly increasing food and fuel prices, the destruction of food stocks and crops by recent floods, and the effects of long-term conflict. The funding will ensure that vulnerable families continue to receive critical aid from the UN World Food Programme (WFP) and partners as well as creating quick-impact opportunities to help restore family livelihoods through community construction and infrastructure projects. The CERF was established in 2006 with a goal of reaching \$500 million annually to provide rapid relief for sudden-onset emergencies such as floods and earthquake disasters and for longer-running under-funded crises.

**THE CABINET HAS ENDORSED THE PROPOSAL** forwarded by the Finance Ministry for the upward revision of allowance of government employees working in customs and taxes. These staff members, as per the new policy, will be entitled to an extra payment of up to 200 percent of basic salary depending on their performance in collecting revenue. The cabinet meet decided to implement the increment from November 16. The new policy will be implemented at all 22 custom offices under the Inland Revenue Department (IRD). Nevertheless, it is learnt that employees working at the central level of the IRD and the Department of Customs (DoC) will not be enjoying this performance-based incentive as they are not directly engaged in collecting revenue.

**THE CABINET MEETING**, Wednesday (Dec 3), has formed a 15-member taskforce to study the prospects of generating 10,000 MW power in ten years. The panel will be headed by Somnath Pokharel. According to government spokesperson and Minister for Information and Communication Krishna Bahadur Mahara, the government will proceed with its target of harnessing 10,000 MW hydropower in ten years after receiving recommendations from the taskforce. The cabinet has also formed a committee to probe the killing of journalist Jagat Joshi in far western Nepal. The three-member probe panel is headed by advocated Umesh Prasad Gautam. The meet also decided to carry out program to eradicate illiteracy within two years. The program will take off on December 16. ■



**Nepalese Muslims praying on the occasion of Eiduzzah**



# ARE NEPAL AND INDIA AIMING TO KILL KOSI HIGH DAM PROJECT?

Dr. AB Thapa

Very recently the Kosi river has again started to show its ugly face by unleashing a reign of terror against the peoples living in the vast flood plain of this river. The present shifting of the Kosi channel to the east could be the beginning of a new cycle of Kosi flood disasters. All top experts on Kosi agree that it is indispensable to provide large storage dams to regulate the Kosi river if the life and property of millions in Nepal and India are to be protected. But it is terribly shocking that we are now going to kill the Kosi dam projects.

## Indo-Nepal Joint Team

In 1997 an agreement was signed between Nepal and India to conduct detailed feasibility studies of the storage dams to control the Kosi river, along with detailed feasibility study of a navigation canal linking Nepal with the seaport. Already a joint Indo-Nepal technical team is conducting feasibility studies. Amidst all these activities the

Government of Nepal is now seen deliberately moving in the direction to preclude forever the possibility to implement the Kosi dam projects. A complete silence from the side of the Government of India on this vital issue at this time, when the Indian water experts stationed in Nepal already for quite some time know every detail of the Kosi basin dam projects, leads everybody to believe that the Indian side too sees nothing wrong with our Government's decision. It is explained hereinafter how the Kosi dam projects would be permanently obstructed

if our Government's decision is not reversed. It is hoped that all concerned authorities will take this matter very seriously.

## Permanent Obstruction

Arun, Tamar and Dudh-Kosi are tributaries of the Kosi river. Our Government is soon going to give license to private developers to implement the Lower Arun and Tamar-I projects. Similarly private developers are being repeatedly invited to apply to obtain license to implement the Dudh-Kosi project.

The floor level of the 308 MW Lower Arun hydropower station will be 311 m, similarly the floor level

*In 1997 an agreement was signed between Nepal and India to conduct detailed feasibility studies of the storage dams to control the Kosi river, along with detailed feasibility study of a navigation canal linking Nepal with the seaport. Already a joint Indo-Nepal technical team is conducting feasibility studies. Amidst all these activities the Government of Nepal is now seen deliberately moving in the direction to preclude forever the possibility to implement the Kosi dam projects.*

of the Dudh-Kosi hydropower station will also be around 304 m. The maximum water level of the Kosi storage reservoir located further downstream based on Indian proposal would be 334 m. If the Kosi dam is designed according to the criteria applied to the Karnali dam, the maximum water level of the Kosi storage reservoir could reach to 390 m. Thus the hydropower stations of above mentioned two projects would be completely submerged into the Kosi storage reservoir.

The Tamar-1 is a storage project. This project must be designed and operated to fulfill the need for Kosi flood control side by side with power generation. It is explained hereinafter why it is necessary to implement in near future the Tamar-1 project and the Sun-Kosi project ahead of the Kosi dam project to resolve the Kosi flood problem. Unfortunately our Government has recently granted license to a private developer to conduct feasibility study to implement the Tamar-1 project exclusively for power generation.

The Dudh-Kosi project has been planned to discharge the Dudh-Kosi water after power generation directly into the Kosi reservoir bypassing the Sun-Kosi intake structures. As a result the power generation as well as irrigation coverage of the Sun-Kosi project would be significantly reduced.

**Forerunners of Kosi Dam Project**

There are four compelling reasons why the Sun-Kosi Dam Project along with comparatively very small Tamar-1 Storage Project, instead of Kosi dam project should be immediately implemented to prevent the Kosi flood disasters.

(1) Sun-Kosi

Project and Tamar-1 Project can be quickly implemented within five to six years if it is decided to build them on war footing. These two projects can completely resolve the Kosi flood problems at least for a period of next 50 to 60 years.

(2) The mammoth Kosi Dam Project would be comparable in volume of works and complexity in engineering studies to China's Three Gorges Project. It took China thirty years to complete the latter part of the studies and implementation of the Three Gorges Project. It would be immoral to let the people affected

by Kosi flood to suffer for such a long period if there are other quick alternatives.

(3) Immediate implementation of the Kosi high dam would have devastating flooding in the lower reaches of the Kosi in Bihar due to extensive retrogression of the river bed immediately after the dam as was seen in Boulder Dam of the USA, Danjiangku ( a tributary of Yangtze) dam etc.

(4) It is not technically possible to implement the Sun-Kosi Dam Project if the Kosi Dam Project is implemented first but it is possible to implement the latter if the Sun\_Kosi Dam Project is implemented earlier.

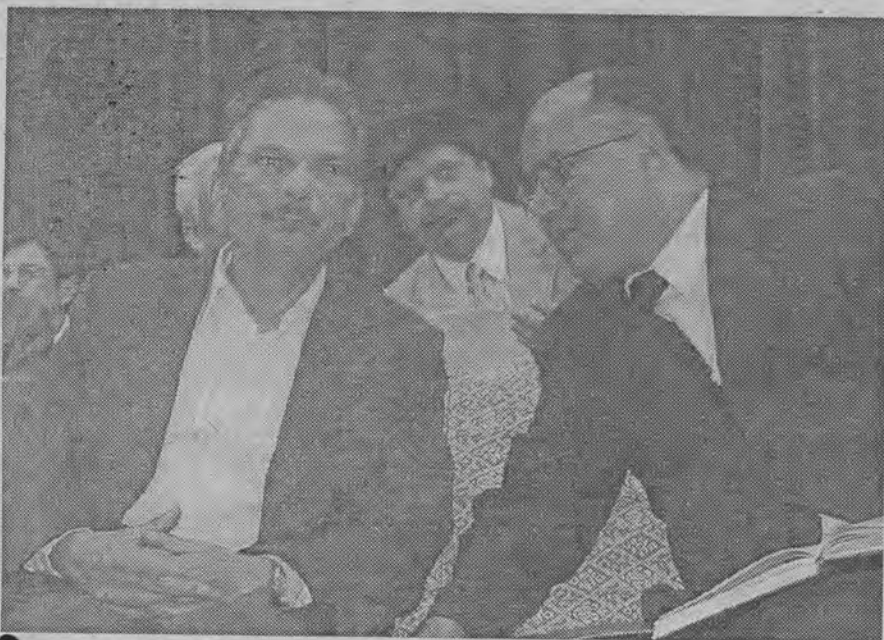
**Sun\_Kosi and Tamar-1 projects**

*Sun-Kosi project* - Three alternative dam heights have

***The mammoth Kosi Dam Project would be comparable in volume of works and complexity in engineering studies to China's Three Gorges Project. It took China thirty years to complete the latter part of the studies and implementation of the Three Gorges Project. It would be immoral to let the people affected by Kosi flood to suffer for such a long period if there are other quick alternatives.***

been proposed for the Sun-Kosi project. They are 147m, 169m and 195m. Installed capacity could be 660 MW at 85% capacity factor. Annual firm energy output will be about 5,000 GWH. The total construction cost would be around US\$ 1.5 billion.

*Tamar-1 project* - The height of the proposed Tamar-1 dam would be 153m. Initially the installed capacity could be reduced to 400 MW and in course of time it would be raised to 800 MW. The annual energy generation would be about 2,500 GWH. The total initial investment cost could be around US \$ 1.0 billion



Finance Minister Dr. Bhattarai : Facing crisis

## GLOBAL CRISIS

# Hitting Home

*The global financial crisis is gradually showing its impact on Nepal*

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

**T**he first signs of global financial crisis hitting the Nepali economy have emerged.

In the last couple of weeks, Nepali businessmen have lost over Rs 5 billion due to sudden decline in the price of industrial raw materials.

"Our investigations show that 102 companies had opened LC to import materials like plastic granules, MS billet, soybean oil, crude palm oil whose prices fell suddenly by over 50 percent. If we calculate their losses, that comes to around 1.5 billion," said Krishna Bahadur Manandhar, acting governor of Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB).

He said that the NRB has also decided to help the losing businessmen. "We have decided to extend the period for payment of their bank loans from 90 days to 180 days," he said.

Other than that, the authorities are saying that Nepal has not yet felt any

problem from the global meltdown.

The government has also formed a taskforce headed by National Planning Commission (NPC) vice chairman Dr. Pitambar Sharma to study likely consequences of global crisis to Nepal and suggest ways to face them.

Manandhar, who is a member of the taskforce, said that they have not yet found problem in sectors like banking, real estate, foreign employment and tourism.

"We have examined the exposure of our banks to the investment in real estate. It has been found that of their total loan disbursement only 13 percent has gone to the real estate, which is not staggering," said Manandhar.

He also said that the problem has not yet been seen in remittance. "The flow of people to countries like Gulf states have not decreased and neither has the flow of remittance earning," he said.

Earlier, Finance Minister Dr. Baburam Bhattarai had said that the ongoing global financial crisis will have minimal impact on Nepal.

Speaking at the Constituent Assembly (CA), Thursday (Dec 4), FM said that since Nepal was neither too much linked with the global market nor totally aloof from it, the impact will be very negligible.

He said that since the government has already formed a panel to study the likely consequences of global crisis on Nepal, the government will proceed based on the panel's recommendation.

On Thursday, CA member and an industrialist Binod Chaudhary had tabled a motion of public importance drawing the attention of the government on the global crisis and its likely impact on Nepal.

Speaking at CA, FM said that the government was encouraged by the growth of revenue collection by 34 percent in the first three months of the current fiscal year. He also said that remittance earning has increased by 80 percent in this period to reach Rs 50 billion. Foreign exchange reserve has rose to Rs 228.3 billion, which can sustain imports for ten months. The exports to India, he said, rose by 10.1 percent against 0.6 percent in the same period last year.

Likewise, export to third countries also increased by 58.3 percent compared to 11.9 percent in the same period last year. He conceded that the importers of petroleum products and their by-products, crude palm oil, soybean oil, MS Billet and plastic granules had suffered losses due to worldwide economic crisis.

However, businessmen are feeling nervous that the global crisis, which has already affected the economic growth rate of China and India, would have devastating effect on Nepal.

"There is no question that the crisis will affect us. But it could take few months or a year," said Suresh Kumar Basnet, acting president of Nepal Chamber of Commerce (NCC).

Experts have suggested authorities to keep a close tab on the global happenings to avoid catastrophic impact on Nepal. ■



Koirala : Pressing for constitution

## Constitution Making

# Nobody's Baby

*The Constituent Assembly was constituted to draft a new constitution. However, it seems that making constitution is nobody's priority*

By KESHAB POUDEL

**"T**his government is not serious to draft a new constitution for Nepal. What the government wants is to continue in power and pursue its agenda of complete tyrannical rule," thundered former prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala, before he was hospitalised in the Gangalal hospital on Sunday.

"I will not die till the formulation of new constitution."

"If Nepali Congress doesn't support this government, I will resign and go to the people," said prime minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal. "It is impossible to make constitution without consensus among all major political parties."

These two statements of country's two powerful politicians indicate that the constitution making is yet to receive their priority. They speak all political jargons of new constitution but their real quest is power, say analysts.

Along with wooing Nepali Congress, prime minister Dahal also needs to satisfy his alliance partners as well as his colleagues within the party. Prime minister Dahal can pre-empt his enemy and former prime minister Koirala. Prime

minister Dahal's challenges now are to survive from his party colleagues and his alliance partners who can sabotage him from within."

Despite his offer to lead a high level political coordination committee to oversee the government affairs, CPN-UML leader Madhav Kumar Nepal declined to chair it. However, As the government is accountable to elected CA and president is there as a guardian of constitution, the formation of such committee, constitutional experts argue, is itself unconstitutional and violation of the spirit of accountable government.

As Nepal's internal players are competing for power and neighbours are competing for their security interests, elected representatives are dancing in constitution making drama with new rhetoric.

"The new constitution will be promulgated within two years," said Chairman of Constituent Assembly Subhas Chandra Nembang. "As we have already passed the Constituent Assembly Regulation, the process will begin soon."

Chairman Nembang has asked all parties to nominate their representatives

to various constitution drafting panels by mid December but bigger parties have not yet done so.

Altogether 14 committees-constitutional committees, 10 subject and 3 procedural committees- have been envisaged, which are expected to work in close harmony. As per the CA schedule, the committees have to be formed and their chairpersons elected by December 15. The new Constitution has to be framed within coming 81 weeks.

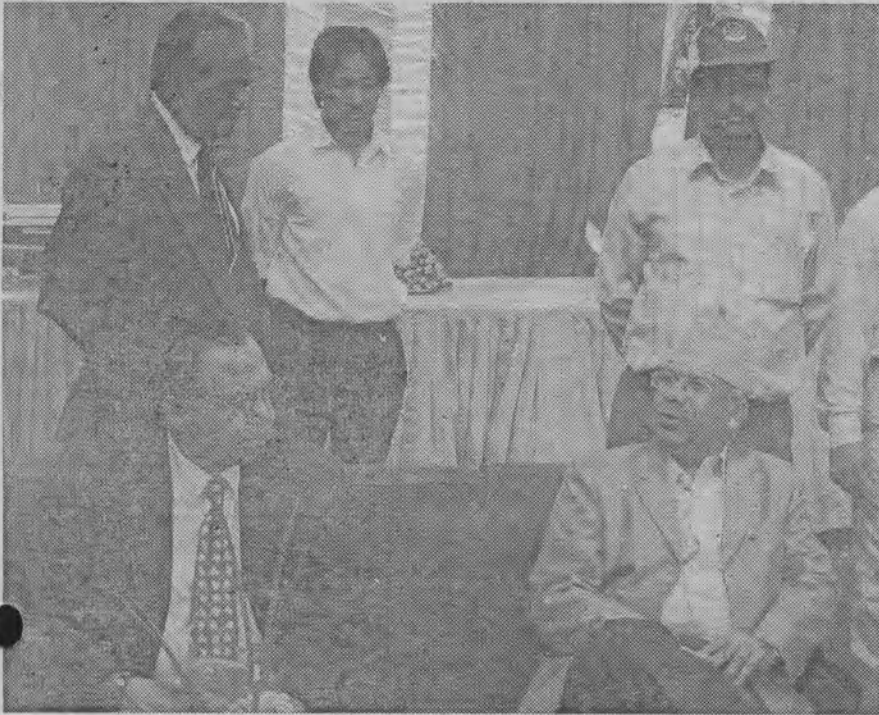
Seven months have already passed since the formation of Constituent Assembly, whose sole responsibility is to draft a new constitution for federal, democratic republic Nepal. But political parties which are more interested in power politics are yet to form a committee to draft a new constitution.

According to article 64 of Interim Constitution, unless otherwise dissolved by a resolution passed by the Constituent Assembly, the term of the Constituent Assembly shall be two years from the date of its first meeting. Provided that the term of the constituent Assembly may be extended for up to six months by a resolution of the Constituent Assembly, in the event that the task of drafting the constitution is not completed due to the proclamation of a state of emergency in the country.

As six months have already passed, there remains about one and half years to draft the new constitution. The articles of the interim constitution has made the constitution making so lengthy that every article needs to be ratified by two thirds of its members.

The article 70 of Interim Constitution states (1) the Constituent Assembly shall, in order to pass a bill relating to the constitution, vote on the Preamble and each article of such a bill introduced before it. Article 70 (2) says to vote according to clause (1) at least two-thirds of total members of the Constituent Assembly must be present and must pass the motion unanimously.

As all political actors are busy in power game, the constitution making is nobody's priority. In the last five decades, Nepal has already produced half a dozen constitutions but they were neither part of solution nor part of problems. Nepal's geo-political reality will have nothing to do with new constitution. ■



UML Leaders Khanal (Left) and Nepal: Comrades in conflict

## UML

# Comrades In Conflict

*The refusal by former general secretary Madhav Nepal to join the political coordination committee exposes rift within the second biggest ally in the coalition government*

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

**T**he conflicts within the second biggest ally in the coalition government, the Unified Marxist Leninist (UML) have started to emerge. And, that, too, in a very dirty manner.

The comrades are engaged in slinging mud – even if they are sugar coated till now.

The most tell-tale sign of the conflict in UML came to the fore when its former general secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal made a surprising decision to decline to be member of the high-level political coordination committee.

Although his name along with Surendra Pandey was forwarded by UML general secretary Jhal Nath Khanal, Nepal refused to be its part.

With his refusal, the much-touted

high level political coordination committee fell flat the same day it started its formal job. Nepal who was to take over the committee as its coordinator claimed that he was not informed about its formation.

“I hear they have included me as a member. I won’t be a member of a committee where there is no participation of Prime Minister,” he said speaking in Jumla on Thursday. “We will also send our representation at the similar level,” he added.

Instead of taking part in the first meeting of the committee, Nepal left Kathmandu – where he had arrived on Wednesday (Dec 3) after foreign visit – for Jumla showing his lack of enthusiasm over its formation.

But his claims were refuted by Surendra Pandey, said to be close to

general secretary Khanal. “In fact, the Prime Minister himself had gone to his residence seeking his consent to head the committee and he had agreed,” Pandey said.

The contradictions in their statements expose the growing rift between Nepal and Khanal. On the sidelines, the war of words is also taking place between two other powerful UML leaders. A day after Deputy Prime Minister Bamdev Gautam claimed that country could face civil war in absence of army integration, KP Oli called that statement ‘nonsense’ and asserted that Maoist combatants cannot be integrated into national army.

Meanwhile, the first meeting of the committee held without Nepal’s participation had set its working guidelines and jurisdiction Thursday (Dec 4). The meeting of the committee held at parliamentary party office of the CPN (Maoist) in Singha Durbar adopted the guidelines prepared by big three parties with minor amendments.

The committee will immediately look into efforts made towards improving security situation, implementation of the agreements reached with various agitating groups in the past and ongoing negotiation with the Terai armed groups.

The committee will meet again on Friday to chalk out its initial works. The committee has been formed to coordinate with government to ensure common minimum programs announced during the formation of the new government are implemented effectively.

The committee has 12 members – two each from the six ruling parties. The meeting of the committee, in absence of UML leader Madhav Kumar Nepal, named Maoist leader Dev Gurung as its chief for the time being.

The UML will be represented by Nepal and Surendra Pandey, CPN (Maoist) by Gurung and Barsha Man Pun, Madhesi Janadhikar Forum by Upendra Yadav and Sarat Singh Bhandari, Sadbhawana Party by Laxman Lal Karna and Ram Naresh Raya, Janamorcha by Lila Mani Pokhrel and Girijaraj Mani Pokhrel and CPN (United) by Chandra Dev Joshi and another member yet to be nominated. ■

## HIGHWAY UNDER SIEGE

# Pain Of Disorder

Common people as well as political leaders have endorsed all radical political agenda including declaring Nepal as a federal, democratic republic with a hope that all these would bring a long lasting peace. Even people voted Maoists, who had committed all kinds of atrocities and destroyed public property, hoping that they will give up all violent activities. However, people found neither peace nor order. Even prime minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal, who led the country's most violent struggle, threatens to resign because of his inability to meet the aspiration of people and control the disorder. The extent of disorder is such that highways and roads are constantly under siege by various factions. Fed up with the frequent strikes and deteriorating law and order situation, people are now asking themselves: Has the change brought pain or gain? If prime minister Dahal, who is backed by two third majority of constituent assembly, accepted his failure to deliver goods, what course is left now?

KESHABPOUDEL  
Tikapur Dhangadhi

*"Don't you know there is strike in Kailali? The road will not open until and unless the police arrest a culprit involve in the killing of a journalist," said Krishna Singh Thagana, 19-years-old boy with a headscarf at Godavari river in Kailali district to a passenger who is going to Kanchanpur town ,800*

*kilometre west of capital.*

*"We will allow you once the district administration nabs the criminals involved in the case."*

Mother of three children Mata Devi Okhadi, 30, a resident of Rauteli Bichawa Village Development Committee of Kanchanpur, who came from Doti by bus

to go home, silently listened to the diktat by the teenage who was sitting atop a pile of stones placed in the road to block it.

"What do I feed my three children at night and where do I stay?" asked Okhadi. "We voted the Maoist candidate in the last elections who committed us



**East West Highway in Tikapur : Road under cease**

to end the atrocities, violence and road block," said Okhadi with gloomy face.

As soon as the skeleton of journalist, Jagat Joshi, who was disappeared three months ago, was found at nearby jungle, local people formed a struggle committee demanding legal probe of the slain journalist. The first thing the committee did was to stop the vehicle movement in east west highway.

This resulted in stranding of hundred of buses, trucks and passengers like

Okhadi. After tedious hours of waiting, the protest committee agreed to allow the transport movement following 12 hours of blockade. However, passengers like Okhadi are uncertain whether their buses will move freely again.

#### **Negotiations Drama**

Although the negotiations between the struggle committee and local administration were going on, district Maoist office issued another announcement on November 30 that

there will be indefinite strike in Kailali. The Maoist called this strike to counter other parties' efforts to involve them in the incident.

After this announcement, from foreign aid workers to local people who were preparing to travel to hill districts of Mahakali and Seti Zone had restless time. "I have to reach to Dadeldhura tonight to participate in a district level development plan," said a senior official of Ministry of Local Development. "If I will not reach on time, the whole program will suffer."

This kind of tendency is not only in the far western and mid-western region but it has escalated all over Nepal. All the people have learnt that the road block is most effective way to compel the administration to accept their demand.

#### **Strike In East**

Similarly, day to day life in Mechi, Kosi, 500 kilometres east of capital came to standstill on December 6, 7 and 8 after Upper Kirant Limbuwan National Forum UKLNF called a general strike. The demand of UKLNF is to release two of its cadre Narendra Tubahamfe and Santosh Limbu, who were arrested by police on the charge of vandalizing vehicles in Jhapa district.

Maoist affiliated Young Communist League, a semi-militant organization, also called a general strike in Biratnagar on December 7 demanding to release their party workers who were held by police on the charge of illegally felling tree.

Although ruling Maoist party, which encouraged youths for extra judicial and illegal acts, now wants peace and tranquility as it is leading the country, there is no sign of peace and tranquility returning any time soon.

Just a little more than three months in power, CPN-Maoist leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal, who was hailed as a new visionary leader of twenty first century a year ago in a program organized by Hindustan Times leadership Summit, has also become frustrated. Addressing a public rally in Dhangadhi (December 7) prime minister Dahal, who was given a big



**Chinese Military Delegation : Security concern**

garland by common people, revealed that he will resign because of his failure to meet the aspirations of the people.

#### **PM's Woory**

"I am unable to fulfill the aspirations of people because of non-cooperation of foreign forces and main political parties like Nepali Congress. I will resign in case these forces do not cooperate with me and then I will go to the people," said prime minister Dahal.

Prime minister Dahal is not alone to blame the foreign forces meddling in Nepal's internal affairs. His senior minister and Minister of Law, Justice and Constituent Assembly, too, blamed external forces for creating troubles to Maoist government.

"The government is just in the signboard only and powerless. We are not in a position to take any decision. Because of foreign imperialist forces, this government is powerless. This government is dancing to the tune of external forces. From making constitution to drafting law and signing agreements, nothing can happen without signal from foreign forces," said Gurung addressing District Convention of Tamu National Liberation Front. (See Kantipur 5 December)

Prime minister Dahal and his senior minister Gurung admitted publicly that they are unable to fulfill the wishes of

common people because of unseen powerful external force. As the general strike and road disruption is way of life despite holding the elections of CA and forming the government with two third majorities, people's elected representatives have failed to bring change.

From voting them to power to welcoming with all warmth, common people have given everything to prime minister Dahal. Although people are still suffering from atrocities and difficulties at the hands of his cadres of semi-military organization Young Communist League, they don't mind to support

prime minister Dahal, under whose leadership Nepal has faced all kinds of devastations.

"The agony Prachanda expressed as a prime minister is not new for Nepal. Since the revolution of 1951, none of the prime minister was comfortable with power and none of them were able to complete tenure of their office. Previously, king was blamed for those kinds of unstable position of prime minister. Now, Prachanda, second prime minister after the removal of monarchy, is too talking about unsafe position in power like his predecessor Girija Prasad Koirala," said a political analyst. "Prime minister Prachanda appears to be outspoken to point out external forces mainly for his crisis. The lesson of Nepalese peculiar politics has spared neither the king in power nor the government without king."

#### **Geo Politics**

Nepal's geo-political situation is such that its own internal players and other western forces are not decisive in Nepal's internal politics. "As Nepal is closer to soft belly of security of both the neighbors that is cause of its political instability as well as its guarantor for survival as a free nation. Nepal's neighbors India and China cannot afford to stay away from this critical political development in Nepal."



**Market in far west : No vehicle please**

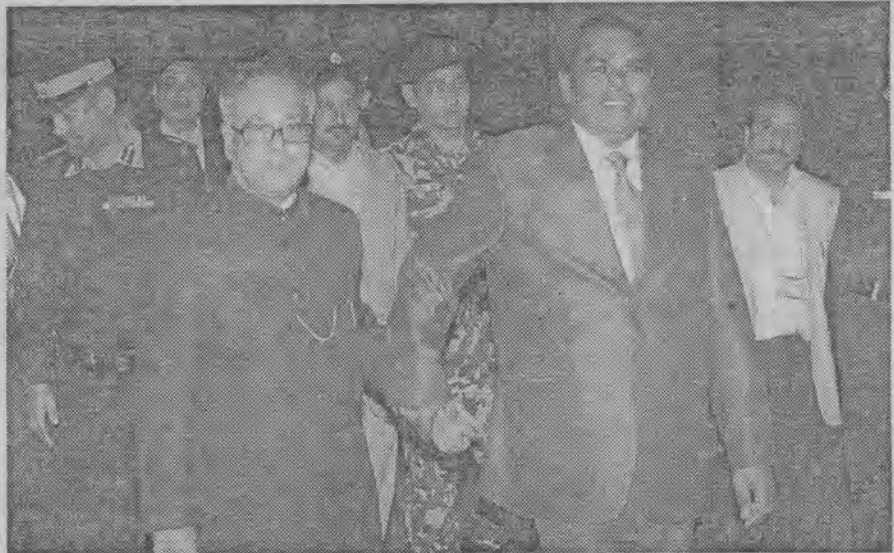


"Its location in the geopolitical underbelly of China's Tibet and India's hinterland states Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal constitutes its strategic geography vital to their security, stability, progress and peace. An increasingly open and democratic Nepal in the future is more likely to be swayed by the ongoing geo-strategic competition between them and the great powers for their influence," writes Dev Raj Dahal, in his article National Security.

People voted them to power hoping that Maoists will bring peace and order containing the disorder championed by them. However, prime minister Prachanda tried to escape from responsibility declaring that he will resign.

Even Girija Prasad Koirala, who promised the people that he would bring absolute peace and democracy in the country if they sided with him to remove the monarchy and bring Maoists in the main stream, has made a U-turn now and is gunning for Maoist policies. Common people have failed to understand this U-Turn of former prime minister Koirala, who is now lying in the hospital bed. Koirala declared four months ago from the Constituent Assembly that period of instability was over. Even his party colleagues are amazed by his tirade against Maoist leadership.

Although there is change of stands between the leaders of political parties,



**Indian External Affairs Minister Mukherjee (Left) and Nepali FM Upendra Yadav : Visit with purpose**

what people have not found is peace and tranquility to move. "I will assure you that I will bring out an economic package and peace package to bring peace and prosperity in the door steps," said prime minister Dahal inaugurating Far Western Festival in Dhangadhi.

As the number of younger population continues to increase and there is lack of employment opportunities, the local youths find easy to join the political violence. With the support from political parties, they run their own affairs in the district and villages.

General strike and road blockade is almost normal phenomenon in East-west high way and all other roads. According

to Traffic Police at Atariya, more than 15 local level and central level strike halted the road in November. According to police, the local level dispute ends with negotiations at local level but indefinite strike by political parties last for longer period of time.

Maoist party and its affiliated organizations were responsible for more than eighty percent of general strike and road blockade in the far western region. Despite the calling from district level leaders to end this culture, local level Maoist leaders undermine it.

Looking at Nepal's geo political situation and increasing tendencies of violent culture among young people, peace and tranquility seems to be difficult to achieve. Whatever political system and political parties rule the country, the fate of country will remain same.

Although people sacrificed everything to bring peace but the change ended with painful results. This is what is exactly happening to the rural folks of Nepal living in the far western region of Nepal. One can see the disorder and anarchy in the highways. At a time when political leaders in Nepal have been talking about the need to achieve high economic growth to make Nepal prosperous, nobody seems aware how Nepal's east west high way which is the artery of nation's economy is under siege ■



**Demonstration at street : Violence rules**

# Nobody Has Noticed the Dangerous Trend Of The Encroachment

-GOPAL PRASAD UPADHYAYA-

*With the backing of various forces, some people are illegally encroaching the land deep inside the conservation area. Several hundred temporary huts have already been built.*

**GOPAL PRASAD UPADHYAYA**, chief conservation officer of Shuklaphanta Wildlife Reserve, has long experience of working in conservation area. He led the national parks and conservation area in the entire crucial period of political crisis. Upadhyaya spoke to **KESHAB POUDEL** at his office Kanchanpur, Mahakali zone recently. Excerpts:

**How is the state of Shuklaphanta reserve?**

The situation is very challenging now. If we continue to allow people to encroach land deep inside the conservation area, there will be no Shuklaphanta conservation area left within a decade. With the backing of various forces, some people are illegally encroaching the land deep inside the conservation area. Several hundred temporary huts have already been built.

**What is the number of encroachers?**

There are about 2500 people illegally living in encroached land challenging the entire conservation efforts. If we do not remove them, the land mafias will start to encroach the land in other parts of national park also.

**Are they really landless?**

All of them have land outside the park and nobody is landless. The tradition here is to encroach the forest land whenever there is political instability and weak government. The encroachment is well planned and intentional in Dhaka, Tarapur and Barnekhola.

**Haven't you made any effort to evict them?**

I have already called all party meeting several times but political parties are yet to back the effort to evict them. Since so called landless people who are encroaching the land deep inside national park and conservation areas are so powerful that they can shake the government from here to capital Kathmandu, nobody wants to take risk to protect the

conservation areas. Although protected areas are very important in terms of conservation of biodiversity and endangered species, there is no one to speak in defending it. Endangered wildlife and plants cannot speak and vote.

**If they are illegally encroaching the land deep inside the protected areas, don't you have authority to remove them?**

I have authority to evict by force but this is not a permanent solution. I want all political parties, civil society to take lead and support us to settle the matter peacefully. Local people, politicians and civil society members must realise the importance of protected areas in overall natural conservation process.

**Don't you get enough support?**

It is very unfortunate to say that some non-governmental and International non-governmental organizations are supporting these illegal settlers. They even support to construct the huts, toilets and water pump in this illegal settlement. In the name of human rights, they completely ignored the rights of endangered species. Even some agencies back this illegal encroachment.

**At a time when large number of people are homeless and landless, what is wrong to give small piece of land to landless?**

If the government decide that their priority is to settle the landless than to conserve the protected areas, I don't have anything to say but I will pack my baggage and leave the area. If government finds that wildlife reserve and national park are important for bio-diversity conservation, they must take the actions to protect it.

**How do you see the response of conservation groups?**

It is very unfortunate to say that nobody has noticed the dangerous trend of the encroachment in Shuklaphanta Wildlife Reserve. From newspapers to conservationist, all remain tight-lipped. Had they built public pressure at national and international



level, the situation would have settled a long time back. Of course, there are numbers of NGOs and INGOs working in Nepal to protect the national parks but I have hardly heard any reaction from them.

**What benefits this conservation areas have given to country?**

The recent flash flood in far western region have shown the importance of this conservation area to control the flood and minimize the effects. Thanks to the forest of Shuklaphanta, devastation in Nepal and India were vastly reduced. Once the size of this park reduces, one cannot imagine the level of damage the flood is going to create in Nepal and India. Along with the flood, Shuklaphanta also provides the space for the wildlife protected in India's Dudhia National Park. Shuklaphanta Wildlife Reserve has given enormous benefits to local people. The project like Western Terai Landscape

Program is here to help local population because of this park.

**What is the level of poaching in Shuklaphanta?**

Thanks to the strong coordination between Nepali and Indian officials and active participation of local communities, the problems of poaching are virtually non-existent. Communities living in the buffer zone of the Reserve are very active. Similarly, the official and security personnel deployed in Indian side of border, too, are very cooperative. We regularly hold trans-boundary meeting.

**What are the main species of this reserve?**

We have largest herd of swamp deer and other endangered species including Rhinos, Royal Bengal Tigers and Wild elephants. The area is dominated by wetland and marsh vegetations. The reserve provides habitat for about 350 species of birds and 21 species of fishes. ■

*Thanks to the strong coordination between Nepali and Indian officials and active participation of local communities, the problems of poaching are virtually non-existent. Communities living in the buffer zone of the Reserve are very active.*

## NEPAL-INDIA WATER RESOURCES

# Challenges Ahead

*At a time when the country's new rulers are trying to define Nepal's water resources, the new book gives real shocks on how challenging it is to implement*

By KESHAB POUDEL

Whatever one says, Nepal-India water resources relations is always a matter of political controversy in Nepal. Being close neighbors of South Asia, Nepal and India have no option other than to live together and share Nepal's water resources benefiting people of both the countries.

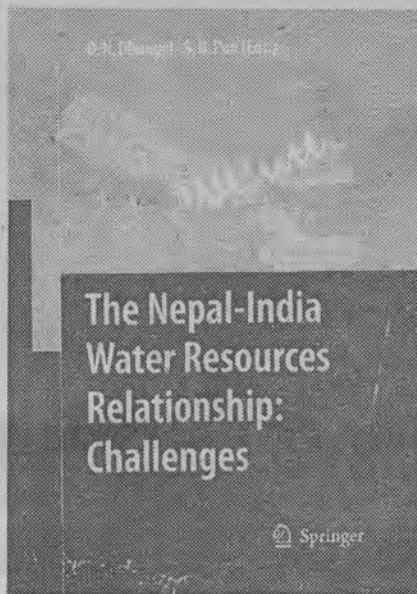
However, Nepal and India have failed to do so. There is no lack of leaders who don't mind to harp statements that suit their interest. Instead of looking at the ground reality and complications involved in it, political leaders try to see the issues as simple agenda.

Numbers of books have already been written regarding Nepal-India Water Resources Relationship but there are only a few books which deal comprehensively about Nepal India water resources relations.

Although it is released, the book edited by D.N. Dhungel and S.B. Pun, *The Nepal-India Water Resources Relationship: Challenges* is yet to available in the market.

Highlighting about the book, Dipak Gyawali looking at the last five decades experiences, said the problems related to water resources between Nepal-India remain unresolved. "This book is very useful since this is a compilation of experiences of various people who were involved in the dealing with India on water resources," said Gyawali, who also served as a minister of water resources.

Although the book is yet to available in the market, the synopsis presented by various authors during the course of unveiling the book shows that the book is interesting to read and includes many



interesting contributions from Nepal's renowned authors.

Divided into 11 different chapters, the book intensively discusses various aspects of Nepal-India water resources agenda. The book is published by Springer Publication of the Netherlands.

"Even I have not seen the book. I have only glanced the book as you all have," said Subhash Nembang, chairman of Constituent Assembly, unveiling the book.

"So far as the issues raised by book on Nepal-India water resources is concerned, it will be both interesting and tricky," said Nembang.

"The very geography of Nepal and India is such that these two countries must live together and engage with each other in many spheres: social, economic and political. Of all the issues that these two countries have to deal with, water resources is not only the most important one but also the one that has become a

very sensitive matter," writes Dwarika Nath Dhungel, Santa Bahadur Pun, Niva Shrestha and Anil Shrestha in the preface.

Regarding the relationship in water resources of Nepal and India, it exists at both people-to-people and official level. The people-to-people relationship has been there since time immemorial. At the official level, based on available records, the relationship is more than one hundred and thirty years old. According to introductory chapter distributed after the launching of book, the book is divided into 11 different chapters contributed by various prominent water resources experts who served in various positions in Nepal's water resources sector.

Edited by renowned water resources experts D. N. Dhungel, S.B. Pun, and Dipak Gyawali, academicians of Nepal Academy of Science and Technology, have contributed an Epilogue: (Reimagining Nepal's Water: Institutional Blind Spots, Developmental Blind Alleys and the Lessons of the Country's Past). Other contributors include water resources experts like Bhubanesh Kumar, Dr. Ananda Bahadur Thapa, Dwarika Nath Dhungel, Hari Man Shrestha, irrigation expert Som Nath Poudel, former managing director of Nepal Electricity Authority Santa Bahadur Pun, former deputy managing director of NEA Prachar Man Singh Pradhan, and experts Niva Shrestha Anil Shrestha and Basistha Raj Adhikari.

"As country is in the process of making a new constitution under a federal structure, there is a need to generate the debate over sharing of water resources among various groups and region. This is right time to debate on the issues related to water," said country representative of Water Aid Nepal.

Sharing water resources is always a matter of controversy. "Voices are echoing from Nepali side regarding the amendment of Kosi and Gandak treaty. I think Nepal will gain nothing in this juncture when we go for amendment with India," said Santa Bahadur Pun.

Chairman of IIDS governing body Dr. Mohan Man Sainju and Arun Dhoj Adhikari also spoke about the book. ■



Imtiaz Ahamed, ambassador of Bangladesh to Nepal addressing press

## BANGLADESH SINGLE COUNTRY TRADE FAIR

# Promoting Bilateral Trade

*Bangladesh trade fair helps to explore the market to increase the bilateral trade*

By A CORRESPONDENT

**W**ith the opening of Pulbari trade and transit route, the trade volume between Nepal and Bangladesh increased by many folds as Bangladesh became Nepal's major importer of lentils, rice, wheat and other agriculture products.

From a few million rupees, now the trade volume has crossed about Rs.300 million (US\$ 500,000) a year.

Inaugurated by Foreign minister Upendra Yadav and Minister for Commerce and Supplies Rajendra Mahato, Bangladesh Single Country Trade Fair 04-07 December, 2008 was able to attract a large number of Nepalese traders, businessmen and common people.

"Bangladesh Single Country Fair 2008 would encourage the business community of Nepal and Bangladesh to move ahead and accelerate the trade and economic cooperation between the two countries as this fair had offered an

opportunity to Nepalese people and the business communities to have glimpses of the quality of products at internationally competitive price. The fair would further promote understanding among the people of the two countries," said Imtiaz Ahamed, ambassador of Bangladesh to Nepal.

Participated by 37 Bangladeshi business firms, the fair has products ranging from saris and Handloom products (Jamdane, Silk and Moslin Sarees), readymade garments, Jute products, food products, melamine products, handicrafts, bed cover, wall mat, jute bag, artificial flowers, leather goods, knit woven items cosmetic, herbal beauty products and others. For the four days, United World Trade Center in Tripureshwor was full of visitors who came to see the single country fair.

"In this second visit to Nepal, I found more interest in the products of Bangladesh. There is a good possibility

to export our products to Nepal," said Bilkis Islam, Abbas Boutiques Enterprise of Dhaka. "This is the place for negotiation rather for sale of our products."

Nepalese, too, find good opportunities. "Their sarees and handloom products are comparatively better than what are available in the market now," said Sangita Dhungel, who came to visit the trade fair. "I bought the goods worth of about Rs. 8000 (US\$100)."

Business entrepreneurs to see there is possibility of increasing the trade volume between the two countries. "We need to explore more market. There are a lot of possibilities to find market in both the countries," said Laxmi Bahadur Shrestha, president of Nepal Bangladesh Trade and Commerce. "Even there are possibilities to have joint venture in Hydro-power sector."

After the opening of new trade route via Phulbari, the trade volume between Nepal and Bangladesh has gone up and the trade is in Nepal's favour now as there are huge demands of Nepalese agriculture products in Bangladesh.

Organized by Embassy of Bangladesh, the trade fair helps Nepalese to know about Bangladesh. Although Nepal and Bangladesh are very close, major of Nepalese people are yet to know about it.

"This is a good opportunity to further promote the existing trade relations between the two countries. We can learn a lot from the experience of Bangladesh in industry sector," said Rajendra Mahato, Minister for Commerce and Supplies. "The government is giving high priority to diversify Nepal's trade with Bangladesh," Minister Mahato told Spotlight.

In the context of all South Asian countries' agreement to implement South Asian Free Trade Agreement, Bangladesh Single Country Fair is significant in exploring trade complementarities. ■



## INDIGENOUS RIGHTS

# Right Upheld

*A UN expert advocates right to self determination to promote rights of indigenous communities*

By A CORRESPONDENT

**A** senior UN official has advocated right to self determination to safeguard and promote the rights of indigenous communities.

As the country prepares to write a new constitution through the Constituent Assembly (CA), Professor S. James Anaya, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on indigenous peoples, said that right to self

determination is necessary to safeguard their rights.

He, however, said that the right to self determination should not be seen as a right to secede from the country. He said it should reflect the human rights of the indigenous people.

He said so at a press meet held as he wrapped up his nine-day visit to Nepal last week.

He pointed out that the Nepal government has a lot to do to implement its commitments on rights of indigenous.

"This is a critical moment to respond to the many challenges that indigenous peoples of Nepal face," Anaya said in a press release issued at the end of his trip.

"While I am encouraged by expressions of commitment by the Government of Nepal to advance the rights of indigenous peoples, much needs to be done."

He further said, "A long history of oppression and marginalization has excluded indigenous peoples from political representation and decision-making, full citizenship, and economic and educational opportunities; and their distinct cultures and languages have been continuously threatened."

Anaya noted that indigenous communities in Nepal have been forcibly displaced from their ancestral lands and denied property rights, and they often lack access to justice. Indigenous women have suffered additional forms of discrimination and abuse," he added.

During his stay, the UN Special Rapporteur held interactions with senior government officials, representatives of indigenous peoples' organizations, members of civil society, and various representatives of the United Nations. In his visits to the districts of Ilam, Jhapa, Chitwan and Kailali, Anaya also consulted with indigenous communities and local authorities.

While stressing on the actions on indigenous rights, the UN rep also observed with satisfaction the Nepal government's commitment to international standards upholding the rights of indigenous peoples, in particular its ratification of ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples and its support for the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Nepal is the first Asian country to ratify the convention, which commits states to securing indigenous peoples' distinct cultures and ways of life, rights over lands and natural resources, as well as the right to meaningfully participate in all decisions affecting them.

**Children's Rights**

Meanwhile, Radhika Coomaraswamy, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict also visited Nepal to inspect the situation first hand.



At the end of her six-day visit, she told that the Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal had agreed to move forward on the

discharge of nearly 3,000 Maoist army elements disqualified as minors remaining in Maoist army cantonments, in cooperation with UNMIN and the UN Country Team in Nepal.

"The commitment of the Government is in line with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and responds to Security Council recommendations within the framework of resolution 1612 on the issue of children and armed conflict. All children should have been released immediately after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2006," states a press release by UNMIN.

During her visit, Coomaraswamy had also interacted with children in a cantonment site. "The UN country team stands ready to support former CPN-M child combatants to resume civilian life as they look to their future in a new peaceful Nepal," said the Special Representative, referring to the reintegration packages developed by UNICEF and UNDP which would be tailored to the children's needs, skills and long-term aspirations, in collaboration with civil society and in compliance with international standards and guidelines including the Paris Principles.

Coomaraswamy also welcomed the readiness of the Government to address and prevent the misuse of children for political purposes, particularly their use in political violence. Both the CPN-M and the UML told the Special Representative that they were beginning discussions on how to work together to deal with the problem of political violence by youth wings.

The Special Representative also raised concerns regarding the impact of the continuing unrest on children in the Terai. Armed groups and criminal gangs act with total impunity in parts of this region. Coomaraswamy said that during her visit she met with children who had been forced to flee the ongoing violence, and had become displaced as a result. Other children had run away from their homes, fearing recruitment by armed groups. They were also afraid of threats against their families if they refused to join.

"Impunity for violence must stop and the rule of law must return to Nepal for peace to be given a chance and for children to live in security," stated Coomaraswamy. ■

SPOTLIGHT / December 12, 2008



GNP leader Sharma addressing the rally

**GREENNEPAL PARTY**

**Fight For Cause**

*Green Nepal Party (GNP) organizes a demonstration opposing Maoist party's intention to impose their tyrannical rule*

**By A CORRESPONDENT**

As the Maoist government has slowly and gradually rebuffed the democratic process, many other political parties have started to oppose them. Green Nepal Party too organized a march past and public meeting against the Maoist party on Monday (8 December).

The protestors carried placards with various slogans including making the city green, corruption free clean government, no more nepotism and familism, protection of democratic

impose tyrannical rule in the country," said Kuber Sharma, president of the party. "This is just a beginning and we will organize more such protest programs to generate public awareness."

In the last one hundred days, Maoist government has been taking various steps to derail the democratic political system. Although the Maoists are in the government, their semi military organization Young Communist League continues to carry out terror activities throughout the country.



The huge mass at the rally

"There is virtually no law and order situation in the country. Every one is feeling unsafe. There is rampant misuse of state resources and nepotism," said Sharma. "The country's sovereignty and

rights and preservation of Nepal's independence and sovereignty.

After taking out protest march around the city, GNP's rally converged into the mass meeting in the open theatre where the GNP leaders addressed the meeting. "GNP opposes any move of Maoist to

integrity is under threat."

Organizing the rally, the GNP urged the people to take cautious approach against dangerous trends aimed at undermining the democratic process by all major political parties. ■

## BOOK

# Floating Issues

*Ajaya Dixit's new book discusses Nepal and India's long journey in the utilization of water resources*

By A CORRESPONDENT

**P**rojected as a country rich in water resources, Nepal has over six thousands small and big rivers as well as major snow-fed rivers which are major sources of Ganges river system of the Indian subcontinent.

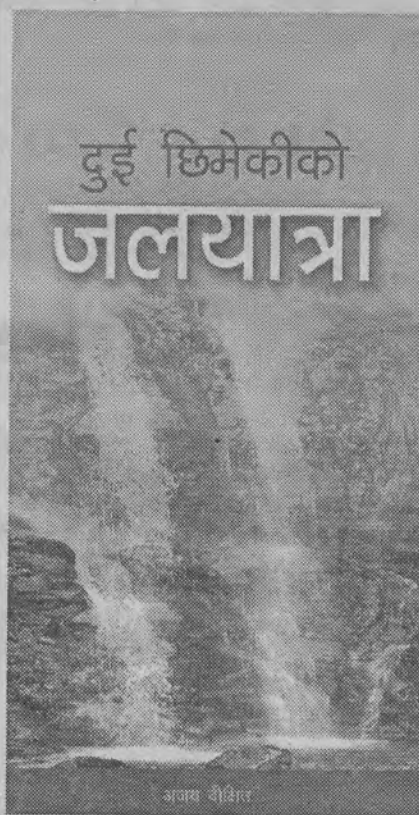
From livelihood of local communities to livelihood of the people living across Nepal's border, Nepal's rivers are sources of irrigation, power and drinking water for hundreds of millions of people.

The issue regarding the utilization of water remains a major political hot potato. Whether in the case of internal politics or in bilateral matter, the use of water figures dominantly. Since the man cannot survive without water, the issue regarding the use of water affects broader area.

All Nepalese rivers end their journey after reaching India and joining Ganges but Nepal's river passes through various valleys and plains of Nepal and India on its way to join Ganges. For centuries, people living in the river basins used the water of these rivers for various purposes. As soon as introduction of modern techniques like dam, irrigation canals, the controversy of sharing of water and benefits of water came to the fore.

In the name of making Nepal rich by exploiting water resources, Nepal's politicians have been selling a dream to the people. Although the millions of hectares of land in Nepal are yet to get the water for irrigation, politicians have shown little concern to this component and are harping the slogans of selling power to India. Even the recently

formed "revolutionary" CPN-Maoist government pronounced an ambitious proposal to generate 10,000 MW of power to export to India.



**Dui Chhimekiko Jalyatra  
(Two Neighbour's Water  
Journey)**

**By: Ajaya Dixit**

**Published by: Action aid-  
Nepal and Nepal Water  
Conservation**

**Foundation: Phone 977-1-  
5528111, 977-1-5542354**

**Price: Rs.495**

**Pages: 178**

At this state of debates and discussions, Ajaya Dixit, Nepal's water resources expert, has come out with a timely book describing Nepal's real state of water resources and history of very long journey between Nepal and India.

As most of the people representing the government do not know what is the real situation of the country, Dixit's book can provide abundant knowledge.

Dixit has also made the effort to write a book in Nepali vernacular language. He has also tried to make difficult technical jargons understandable.

Having long experiences working in the water resources sector, Dixit has an extensive knowledge and idea about Nepal's water resources including Nepal-India relations on water resources. Along with technical matter, Dixit also discusses all different kinds of political issues related to water resources between Nepal and India. He also discusses important and controversial agreements between Nepal and India on water resources.

The book is useful for politicians, academicians and students interested in the water issues particularly the sharing of water between Nepal and India.

Supported by Action Aid Nepal, the book is based on in depth study of all the issues involved in water resources of Nepal. From Sarada, Kosi, Gandak, Tanakpur and Mahakali river agreements, the book also discusses Nepal-India bilateral issues on water sharing till now. The author stresses that Nepal's interests must be protected and priority should be given to Nepalese in making any decision of water utilization. He also discusses the constitutional and legal issues related to ratification of treaties.

Dixit's book will enlighten even those revolutionaries Maoists who want to turn Nepalese prosperous by exporting hydropower to India. ■



“I feel pain for having failed to institutionalize new thoughts and new values.”

*Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal ‘Prachanda,’ addressing a function, in Janadisha.*

“I want to call on the democratic forces to unite against anti-democratic forces.”

*Girija Prasad Koirala, president of main opposition Nepali Congress (NC) and former prime minister, addressing a party rally in Kanchanpur district.*

“The NC will miss the bus if it lingers on joining the special committee on army integration. The process will start even without its participation if it continues to be adamant.”

*Ram Bahadur Thapa ‘Badal,’ Defense Minister, speaking at a program.*

“If the army integration process is not initiated, it will invite civil war in the country.”

*Bamdev Gautam, Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister, speaking in Sindhuli.*

“There is no way Maoist combatants can be integrated into national army. They want to infiltrate the army and grab the power.”

*KP Oli, senior leader of Unified Marxist Leninist (UML).*

“Many issues would have been resolved if only the government had held the dialogue after carrying out homework.”



*Vice president Parmananda Jha, criticizing the government approach in holding talks with armed groups of Terai.*

“I hear they have included me as a member. I won’t be a member of a committee where there is no participation of Prime Minister. We will also send our representation at the similar level.”

*Madhav Kumar Nepal, former general secretary of UML, declining to join the high level political coordination committee formed to guide the government.*

“The government is there for name only. It is powerless to take decisions. It is powerless due to foreign imperial powers. Everything is dictated by foreigners including petty matters like

formulating laws.”

*Dev Gurung, senior Maoist leader and Minister for Law, Justice and CA Affairs, speaking at a program in Lamjung.*

“The actual expiration of the mandate (of UNMIN) is 23 January 2009, we would have liked to have had a request by now so that we could send recommendations to the Secretary General which he would pass on to the Security Council. The very latest date for decisions is January and for that we need to request very soon indeed.”

*Ian Martin, Special Representative of UN Secretary General for Nepal and chief of UNMIN, urging the government to quickly make request for term extension of UNMIN.*

## TRANSITION

**RETURNED:** Yang Jiechi, Foreign Minister of China, after completing three day visit to Nepal.

Radhika Coomaraswamy, Special Representative of UN Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflict, after a study tour of Nepal.

**ARRIVED:** Lieutenant General Ma Xiaotian, deputy chief of General Staff of People’s Liberation Army (PLA) of China, leading a ten-member delegation, for a four day visit to Nepal.

**FORMED:** A 12-member high-level political coordination committee to

guide the government.

A 15-member taskforce led by Som Prasad Pokharel to look into the prospects of generating 10,000 MW of electricity in ten years.

**DECLARED:** Public holiday on Bakr-Id, by the government.

KOREAN FILM FESTIVALS

# Sharing of Culture

*The Korean Film Festival 2008 showcases films depicting the life of Korea*

By A CORRESPONDENT

**F**ilms are the way to express the culture, life, human relations and state of religion and values of particular countries. One can get enough ideas about particular country from a film, which one may not get from reading dozens of books.

This is what one can see in four Korean films depicted recently in the Korean Films Festival. Organized by Korean Embassy, the four films demonstrated at four days film festival narrates the way of life and cultural, social and other order of Korea.

Although Nepal and Korea are far from each other, what they have in common is the cultural, social and religious life. Despite being a developed country, one can see commonalities in the intricacy of social individual relations.

Whether one lives in developed or underdeveloped country, all humans have similar kinds of nature. The human nature is unpredictable and complicated

as no one can say how the relations will turn. This is what four Korean films depicted in Kathmandu show.

As a follow up of the Korean Film Festival that was held last year at the Russian Cultural Center, the Korean Embassy introduced four additional Korean films welcoming this year's autumn, the season of harvest and festivals.

Like Korea, the autumn season is also harvesting season in Nepal when one can see hectic life of farmers and the



festivals linked with their culture and social life. The harvesting season is also season of folk songs.

"This film festival is expected to serve as a good chance to have an insight into Korea. Its language, life styles, politics, society and culture. I hope this film will help all the viewers better understand the country, thus contributing to fostering the friendly relationship between the people of our two countries," said Hang Sungmog Ambassador of Republic of Korea.



Displayed at Administrative Staff College, the four films represented various ways of life of Korea. The films describe social relations, way of life and complicacy involved in the period of transformation of society. The selections of films are best in terms of depicting Korean society and culture to people of Nepal.

Directed by Lee Chang-dong, the *Secret Sunshine* is a film based on a life of a woman whose husband dies with a son leaving behind.

While she was returning to her home in village, she finds other men who help her to find a light in dark life. This film shows the social life of a woman who saw tragedy briefly to find sunshine again.

*Pounds Beauty* is another interesting Korean film which depicted the intricacy and complexity of social life. Directed by Kin Yang-Hwa, this film tells about the beauty.

*King and Clown* is another interesting film which depicted the history of Korea. Directed by Gam Wee Song, the film narrates the story of early 16th century during the rein of King Yeonsan, two street clowns and tightrope walkers.

Similarly, another film *Beyond The Year* also depicted the life of Korea. Directed by Im Kwan, this film evolves in the love and social intricacy of the relations. ■



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