

## **India not blocking trade with Nepal: Envoy**

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**Kathmandu:** With hundreds of Nepal-bound cargo-bearing trucks halted at the border, Indian Ambassador here Ranjit Rae on Friday assured the Nepali authorities that India had not imposed any restriction on trade with the Himalayan nation.

After hundreds of freight-carrying trucks and fuel tankers remained halted on the Indian side of the international border following concerns about violent protests in Nepal in the wake of the promulgation of the new constitution the Nepal government summoned the Indian envoy on Friday at the foreign ministry.

At the meeting, the envoy said India has no intention to block trade tied with Nepal. He also clarified that the obstruction to the Nepal-bound cargo was due the unrest, protests and demonstrations on the Nepali side.

The envoy also held separate meetings with top leaders of major political parties of Nepal, including K.P. Oli, chairman of the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) and the country's former prime minister Madhav Kumar Nepal.

Ambassador Rae expressed the hope that the tension and violence in the southern plains of Nepal would be resolved ahead of the Bihar assembly polls in India beginning next month.

The Indian envoy said the government's deputing Forest Minister Mahesh Acharya, a close confidant of Prime Minister Sushil Koirala, for talks with the agitating Madhes-based parties was a welcome step, aides close to Oli and Nepal told IANS.

The agitating Madhesi parties from the Terai region maintain that the Terai-based people and ethnic groups fail to find adequate representation in the country's new constitution that was promulgated on September 20.

They have intensified protests at the border entry points to build pressure on the Nepal government to meet their demands for amending the constitution.

Nepal Prime Minister Sushil Koirala has cancelled his visit to New York to attend the UN General Assembly session. He was to fly to New York on September 23 with an 18-member delegation.

But as the situation in the Terai has become volatile, Koirala is set to hold parleys with the disgruntled parties over the constitution. Deputy Prime Minister Prakash Man Singh will now lead the Nepali delegation to UNGA.

- IANS