

Opinion: Dr. Ananda Bahadur Thapa

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SPOTLIGHT

Sept 15-21, 2006

Conflict Mares Women's Health

BP Koirala : Legendary Leader
Economy : Power Prospects

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COVER STORY : Mired In Conflict

Because of decade-long conflict and insecurity, the basic health services and health network were derailed further worsening the situation of women and children

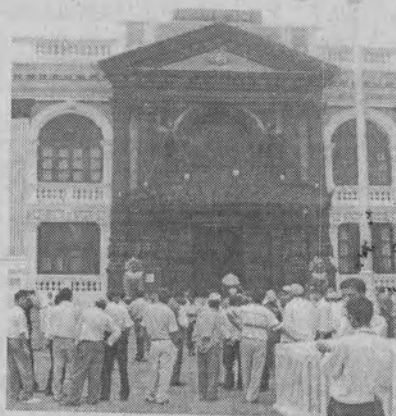
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BP KOIRALA: Legendary Leader

Even two decades after his death, BP Koirala is remembered for his foresight and political wisdom

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CONSTITUTION: One Step Forward, Ten Steps Backward

Nobody is clear about the status of the 1990 Constitution

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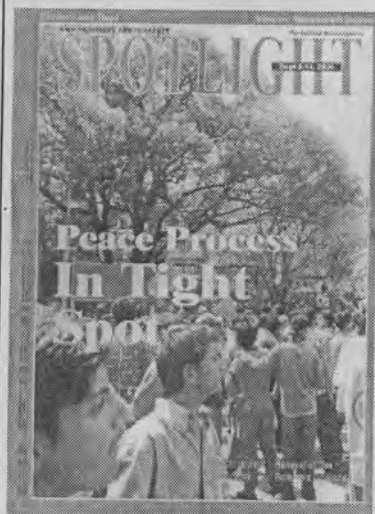
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It is learnt the Seven Party Alliance government has passed the new citizenship bill and they are ready to present it in the House of Representatives for turning it into an act. And the House, which has no opposition, is supposed to pass it into law without much fuss, almost unanimously and without delay. What could be a greater misfortune for the country that such an historic bill that has all the potentials of changing the character of the nation is being put to vote in such a rush in a House that has no constitutional validity and that has practically no opposition. If it is the people who have given the mandate to the House, let the people rise again and withdraw the mandate that is being used by the proxy government against the interest of the nation. The people have to see and realize that the SPA government has not only outlived its lifespan but also betrayed the confidence of the people. Indeed, all genuine Nepalis have the birthright to become citizens of the country and a large number of people, mostly living in the southern belt contiguous to a foreign country, have been denied this right for a long time. It is sheer injustice and must be redressed at the earliest. But the geopolitical constraints of Nepal too, cannot and should not be overlooked. The open border with no restrictions whatsoever, millions of people on either side of the international border criss-crossing for centuries with no record, at all, how many came and how many stayed behind demands a thorough debate all over the country on this issue. With a giant neighbor with a population of 1.2 billion, a small country like Nepal will be totally swamped in no time, in the changed context and experience, if proper care and safeguard is not taken. Doesn't such an act of SPA government and the forcibly reinstated House of Representatives generate undeniable misgiving that they are acting under some kind of pressure they are unable to duck? Such a citizenship act imperatively needs the concurrence of the whole nation. A small section of discredited politicians neither can have the mandate nor the authority to enact such a law, which ultimately can take the country toward disintegration. What a great pity that even the House does not have one true patriotic politician who can raise his/her voice against such an anti-national behavior. How can they sit quiet when the country might confront total annihilation in the coming days? As such, it has become indispensable that all patriotic Nepalis did raise their voices in unison against such behavior of the government. There is no time for procrastination. Even our brothers and sisters living in the south, who are themselves struggling to acquire their birth right, must rise against such an anti-national bill. Since every Nepali may lose his identity if this bill is passed, it is high time all the Nepalis came together and prevented such an unpatriotic bill from being presented to the House. Whether a politician or a layman, a farmer or a trader, a businessman or an industrialist, a bureaucrat or a security forces personnel, a civil society member or an intellectual, it is the real time they all sank their differences and joined hands to defend the integrity of the country by opposing this bill. Is their memory so short that they have forgotten what happened to Sikkim? Haven't they read the writings on the wall for the last fifty-nine years? Can't they see through the Grand Design? What a shame King Gyanendra has no authority when he needed it most? Isn't this his own doing? Hasn't the country come to this dangerous situation because of his failure? Why are the Maoist leaders also quiet? Are they too in the same bandwagon like the SPA? Don't they realize the consequences of this bill? This is a time when every Nepali will show his real character whether he or she is a quisling or a patriot. As such, we will, once again, appeal to the wisdom of the SPA leaders to give second thoughts to the citizenship bill and not do anything in haste. They must be able to foresee that this bill will never be passed. So, why antagonize the patriotic Nepalis? We want them to become as patriotic as the rest of us. But, we cannot help if they choose to become proxies or vassals. Anyway, we will not let them endanger the integrity of our poor nation. Since we still possess the last arrow in our quiver, the "Ram baan", we are pretty confident the quislings cannot harm the poor small country. And our Ram baan is our Supreme Court. We do appeal to the conscience of our Chief Justice and other judges of the Supreme Court to rise to the occasion and use their power and authority to issue an injunction to the SPA government, if necessary, to withdraw the citizenship bill till a properly elected House of Representatives under a new constitution starts functioning. We know our Supreme Court justices are neither proxies, nor vassals nor quislings. They all are honorable and patriotic Nepalis and will never let down their people and their beloved motherland. We also exhort our real good friendly neighbors and other friends to rally behind all the poor patriotic Nepalis and help them in their distress by using their good offices to advise the SPA government to desist from their mad behavior. Even more important than this citizenship bill for Nepal, if she wants to preserve her independent identity, is to close the international border without delay. And as long the border is not closed, there can be no change in status quo. So, let the SPA government start working in that direction. ■

Madhav Kumar Rimal
Madhav Kumar Rimal
Chief Editor & Publisher



Sorry Episode

It is my pleasure to comment on article 'Peace Process In Tight Spot' (Spotlight Sept 8). At a time when SPAs, Maoists, Civil Society and even some members of the drafting committee are not content with the product originated from a 16- member committee, who took about nine times longer time than the previously fixed two-weeks to finalize the 'best constitution', why does the so-called hero of the drafting committee Laxman Prasad Aryal look very satisfied? How dare he ignore the reactions from all corners against the draft? An authorized personality speaking in such a very irresponsible way is regrettable. He was made the chairman to address the national

interest but not to change himself to the extent of introvert. What are these people made of? How long can they be allowed to play with the sentiments of poor and innocent Nepali people? Traitors like Aryal must be immediately side-lined in the interest of all Nepalis and Nepal.

Dil Bahadur Basnet
Balaju

Who is responsible?

It would be better to walk even two or three km rather to get on vehicle these days. On the one hand, vehicle fare can be saved and, on the other hand, there is possibility to reach the particular place on right time. If one decides to hop onto some vehicle, there is no saying what lays in store for him. If there is a traffic jam, which has become a commonplace incident these days, it would be very boring and mentally tortuous to go through the grinding transport. Its very ridiculous and irritating to notice that everyone resort to obstructing traffic even when there is not any kind of reason to do so. So, who is responsible for this, the agitators, traffic police, drivers or pedestrians?

Dilmaya Aryal
Jorpati

I found different taste in it. Janandolan-II has been just over. It seems that the third Janaandolan is going to be held if the demands of Maoists are not fulfilled. Maoists have their own way of interpreting the situation and so do the political parties. That's why last week the central committee meeting of the Maoists was held in Kamidanda, Kavre and decided to launch urban revolt to press the government to meet its demands. But it doesn't mean that they are going to engage in violent revolt, rather they would engage in peaceful revolt. On the other hand political parties are not ready to go with them if there is no arms-management. If so, how Nepalese people can bring peace in the country. Now, the people are in trap, whether to follow Maoists or Parties.

Sajina Basyal
Kirtipur

Political Paper

Spotlight magazine is itself qualitative and informative magazine. It has included political issues in a good way so that the readers who are interested in political scenario find it one of the best papers around. But, does it target only for such readers? As I am its

reader, I find lots of information of politics, here, but very rarely I find social issues, business news, sports etc. And most of the time you make the political story as cover story. Why don't you cover social issues so that different varieties can be tasted by the readers? So, I request you to make balance for all issues and the numbers of readers can be increased by that tactics also.

Alisa Tandukar
Maitidevi

New Taste

I found new taste while I read the review of Australian film in (Spotlight Sep8). Before there used to be review of books, most of the time. While reviewing the books, it would only be more interesting for those persons who have keen interests in reading. But this week, there is the review of films that have caught the attention of filmmakers and audience, too. I think it is good to review all kinds of books, magazines, films and so on. So that different varieties can be presented in the same magazine. This may also help the magazine widen its readership. Through the review, we readers got new information about the particular country too. Thus, filmmakers from a developing country also could find some good aspects while making films. Such reviews really help to know about the culture and tradition of other countries.

Roji Kayasta
Naya Bazar

Too Short Profile

To give priority on profile is very nice. While reading the profile, readers can fulfill their curiosity about certain personality. They can find information in detail about the personality. In profile on Spotlight's September 8 edition, I found the length of the article too short. Such short articles are not enough to inform about personalities. I think it has not given much information of the article. So, I request the reporter to be more hard working so that you can get lots of information.

Kumar Guragain
Gaushala

Trapped People

Despite having different principles in different parties, the ultimate goal for them is to bring peace in the country. Whatever happens in the meeting and the seminars, the sole purpose should be to concentrate to fulfill the demands of people of the country. But, while I read the article 'Peace Process In Tight Spot'

Floods Wreck More Havoc

Following the two days of incessant rainfall, six more persons have been killed – four in Tanahun, one each in Chitwan and Nawalparasi districts. In Chitwan, 30 houses were swept away by landslide in Kabilas VDC. Over 600 villagers have taken refuge at a local school. Police have rescued members of 11 households in Sagarpath in Hetauda after they were stranded due to swollen Rapti river that submerged their locality. The highway between Mugling and Narayangadh, which was obstructed by landslides, has been cleared. Tribhuvan Highway was also obstructed for six hours due to flooding in Baghjhora river. *Kantipur daily reports.*

20 Companies Propose For Dozen Projects

Over 20 companies, including Indian ones, have registered their proposals to develop one dozen hydro power projects including Arun, Karnali and Gandaki. The Upper Karnali project, which has been studied to be the most economical one, has attracted the largest number of proposals. According to the Department of Electricity Development (DoED), seven companies have proposed to develop 300 MW Upper Karnali. Three companies have shown interest in Arun III – the 402 MW project which was cancelled in 1995. Likewise, one company has expressed its intent to develop 600 MW Budhi Gandaki. Indian companies such as Avantika Group, GMR, Jaypee, Reliance and Larsen & Toubro have proposed to develop Upper Karnali along with a Norwegian company. In the past, India's government-owned National Hydro Power Company was involved in Upper Karnali project but later on its proposal was rejected by royal government. Likewise, GMR and Reliance of India and a Norwegian company has proposed to develop Arun III. A Turkey-based company called Nepal Energy ES has also proposed in Arun project. A Singapore-based Norwegian company called SN Power has proposed to develop Budhi Gandaki. The Department sources said that Indian companies have also registered

proposals to develop nine other hydro projects between 30 to 40 MW strength. *Kantipur daily reports.*

Kulekhani Reservoir Level Increases

Following incessant rainfall in the watershed areas of Indra Sarovar – the reservoir of Kulekhani hydro project, the water level has increased by 8 meters in past two days. The reservoir, which has the capacity of collecting water up to the level of 1530.5 m above from sea level, has now amassed water up to 1514 m from 1506 m till Thursday (September 7). Kulekhani is a crucial project for Nepal. Being the only reservoir-type project, its electricity is utilized in winter when rivers dry up and run-of-the-river projects fail to generate power. The Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) has already announced that due to receding water level in Kulekhani reservoir, it would be forced to impose load shedding in coming months. *Leading dailies report.*

Maoists Torture One Person To Death In Lamjung

A civilian was tortured to death by Maoists in Lamjung district on Wednesday (September 6). Santa Bahadur BK, 26, was abducted, along with his wife, daughter and sister-in-law, from his residence in Ishaneshwore on charges that he was involved in robbery. They were taken to neighboring village in Laxmi bazaar. His family members were later asked to return by the Maoist cadres who promised to send him back the next day after interrogations. Once the family members returned, he was subjected to brutal torture. Hearing his cries for help, the villagers had gathered in the place and demanded that the Maoists stop torturing. The Maoists said they would not torture him again but after two days the villagers found his badly bruised dead body in the same house where he was kept in captivity. The enraged villagers have taken 13 Maoist cadres under their control. The Ilaka in-charge of the Maoists Sadhu Ram conceded that the victim died due to torture. Human rights organizations

have condemned the incident. Meanwhile, in another violent incident, one person died when Maoists and villagers exchanged fire in Devapurteta village in Bara district. Armed Maoists barged into the village and opened fire inviting retaliation from the villagers on Friday night. In the ensuing clash, one person named Naresh Yadav, 16, died. The Maoists claim Yadav to be their cadre. Earlier, the villagers had captured Aas Mohammad Mansuri, 28, - a sub-regional member of the Maoists – who was accused of brutally beating a local woman after failing to rape her. The villager later beat him to death. This led the Maoists to attack the village, reports say. *Kantipur daily reports.*

Hotel Booking Touches New Height

The hotel bookings have touched a new height after they registered around 85 percent booking for the coming autumn tourist season. Because of peace process and ceasefire, tourists have shown huge interest in visiting Nepal this season. The airlines coming to Nepal also have registered full booking of tickets for the next three months. "Hotel booking is around 85 percent for the season beginning from October," said Prakash Shrestha, president of Hotel Association of Nepal (HAN). Added Prasan Adhikari, marketing director of Hyatt Hotel, "The booking rate is very encouraging. Almost 85 percent of rooms have been booked for October and November." Adhikari said that actual booking and occupancy would be clear about two weeks before the season starts. "We are waiting for that day when it becomes clear," he said. Surendra Thakuri, spokesperson of Hotel Yak & Yeti said that if the current trend continues, all rooms will be booked. Not only the big and five-star ones, the smaller non-star hotels in Thamel also hope for 80 percent occupancy during the season. After a long time, hotel entrepreneurs are feeling optimistic. Trekking agents and other tourism service providers are also encouraged by the trend. "It is important how we can gain maximum benefit from this optimism," said Shreedhar Acharya, managing director of Godawari Resort. He

added, "We could have sent out even better message had there been cordial industrial relations and business environment." Acharya regretted the incidents of Maoist cadres' forceful unionization and extortion. *Kantipur daily reports.*

"No Need Of UN": Bijukchhe

Even as the United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan has already dispatched his Personal Representative to facilitate the peace process in Nepal as per the identical requests made by the government and the Maoists, one of the members of the ruling Seven Party Alliance has spoken against the need of the world body. Narayan Man Bijukchhe, president of Nepal Workers and Peasants Party (NWPP), said there is no need of UN or any other foreign body in Nepal's peace process. Speaking at a program in Biratnagar, Bijukchhe claimed that American army specialist or its retired army personnel could come in the guise of UN expert or advisor. "Under any guise, American army should not come here because wherever US army has entered it has never returned from there," he claimed. "If the top leaders of rebel party who had been launching insurgency from jungles can visit Baluwatar (Prime Minister's official residence) and hold summit talks there, why can't we cooperate on peace process (on ourselves)?" he asked. He added that arms management and constituent assembly negotiations can be held in Nepal without the involvement of the UN. *Nepal Samacharpatra daily reports.*

Girls Students Continue To Faint In Pokhara School

In a strange case which the psychiatrists have referred as 'mass hysteria', teenage girl students of Laxmi secondary school in Lekhnath, Kaski have continued to faint for the past three days. Since last three days, around two dozen girl students have displayed erratic behavior by jumping, crying, shouting and fainting. The school has been closed but the girls started shouting and fainting even

in their residences. They demanded they be taken to the school, according to worried parents. As doctors have termed the case as that of 'mass hysteria' the parents have turned to faith-healers and tantriks (shamans). "Neither doctors nor tantriks have been able to solve the problem," said Rajendra Mani Lamichhane, a member of the school management committee and a guardian. An idol of serpent king has been erected in the school premise as demanded by the schoolgirls, said headmaster Shree Bhadra Baral. Reports say the problem began with a schoolgirl Pabitra Gurung, fainting all of a sudden after students killed a snake in the premises sometime ago. *Compiled from reports.*

"Another Rebellion For Peace": Pasang

Addressing the fourth national convention of pro-Maoist All Nepal Trade Union Federation (ANTUF), Nanda Kishore Pun aka Pasang, the deputy commander of Maoist People's Liberation Army said another rebellion will be launched for the sake of peace. He said, "The pressure must be continuously applied to this government. Even though we are serious, conspiracies are afoot. We must be ready for another rebellion for peace and progress," said Pasang, who had appeared in the public for the first time. Pasang expressed anger for shadowing the political issues and projection of 'arms issues.' He added that the Maoist will abandon arms after political settlement. Pasang has been named as one of the member of the ten-member summit talks team headed by Prachanda. *Kantipur daily reports.*

US Can Absorb Up To 70,000 Bhutan Refugees

Leader of the US Congressmen's delegation, Jim Kolbe, who visited Nepal recently, has told Bhutan that America could absorb up to 70,000 Bhutanese refugees languishing in various camps in eastern Nepal. "The US has agreed to take up to 50,000 or up to 70,000 of these people. Australia and Canada have also agreed to take in smaller numbers," Kolbe has been

quoted as saying in a report posted in Kuenselonline, Bhutan government's official website. Kolbe is reported to have said that there "needs to be some show of good faith on the part of the Bhutanese government to return or repatriate even a small number of those who they have agreed are citizens." The rest, he said, could either be reintegrated into society in Nepal, India, or if they believe Bhutan is their homeland and they are not able to return, be resettled in third countries like the US. "The issue of the 100,000 Bhutanese refugees in the camps in Nepal was one of the easier issues of the world today to resolve, said Republican Congress member Kolbe. He had led a US Congressional delegation to Bhutan on a three-day visit from August 28-31. "I realize that Bhutan questions the use of the word refugees and would argue that they are truly people who are from Nepal who came illegally to Bhutan and now have returned and don't qualify to be refugees," said Kolbe, who is also the Chairman of the sub-committee on Foreign Operations. "Nonetheless they are still in camps and some of them, may be many of them, are people who do qualify to come back to Bhutan because they are and were citizens of this country." *The Himalayan Times daily reports.*

Congress Not To Dump Monarchy

Reiterating the stance taken by his party president and Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, Nepali Congress (NC) general secretary KB Gurung has said that the party will support ceremonial monarchy and will face any kind of challenge for the same. Addressing party workers in Pokhara, Gurung said that since NC had traditionally supported ceremonial monarchy, the party president was voicing the same thing. He urged the workers to also follow the party principle. "Political problems would not be resolved by sacking the King and replacing him with some other 'Bahadur.' Congress cannot embrace republic," he said. He added that the party will not toe the republican line in the coming CA elections. Gurung said that the King should remain as the head of state to safeguard the existence of the nation even. *Compiled from reports.*



PM Koirala presents insignia to Chief of Army Staff General Rukmangat Katawal

Gorkhapatra

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HISTORY, PRIME MINISTER PRESENTED insignia to the Chief of Army Staff of Nepalese Army. In a ceremony held in Singhdurbar, PM Girija Prasad Koirala presented the official insignia to newly appointed COAS of NA General Rukmangat Katawal. In the past, the King used to present the insignia to the army chief. The ceremony was not attended by ministers belonging to the Unified Marxist Leninist (UML), People's Front (PF) and Nepal Sadbhavana Party (Anandidevi). After the ceremony, General Katawal told the reporters that the "NA would never betray the democracy." He expressed full commitment of the NA towards democracy. When asked about his views regarding the process of democratizing the NA, General Katawal said, "The NA would perform its duties as per the government's order." Born in Thulachhap VDC of Okhaldhunga district in 2005 BS, General Katawal has received training from National Defense Academy and Indian Military Academy of India along with Rangers and Special Force training from the United States, according to a statement issued by the NA Public Relations Directorate. Meanwhile, some MPs have deplored the government for appointing General Katawal as army chief. They said it was wrong to appoint a person facing allegations of repression against the people's movement. Speaking at the parliament, PF MP Lilamani Pokharel said it was an irony that the PM who had no time to come to the parliament was finding enough time to present insignia to General Katawal. He said Katawal's appointment went against the spirit of the people's movement.

BEFORE THE DASHAIN FESTIVAL, A NUMBER OF FOREIGN HIGH- level delegations are scheduled to make a trip to Nepal. According to sources at the Foreign Ministry, a delegation led by Danish Assistant Minister for International Development Ulla Tornas will visit Nepal from September 19-22. Likewise, Britain's Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Dr. Kim Howells is scheduled to make a weeklong visit to Nepal from September 24-October 2. Both the British and Danish ministers are expected to meet with Prime Minister Koirala, ministers, political leaders and civil society representatives. Furthermore, a team of three parliamentarians from France is also set to come to Nepal on a weeklong visit beginning September 19.

THE SUPREME COURT, ON SUNDAY (SEPTEMBER 10), ISSUED an order to the government asking to prohibit the exploitation of child domestic workers in the name of "kamalari system" which is rampant in mid and far western regions of Nepal. The SC has also asked the government to include child rights law in the school curriculum. "Include child rights laws and international conventions along with the Child Rights Act, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and Convention on the Rights of Child (CRC) and other child rights conventions in school curriculum," the division bench comprising judges Sharada Prasad Pundit and Bal Ram KC stated in a verdict responding to a writ petition filed by Friends of Needy Children, an NGO and a group of lawyers. The

apex court has also ordered the government to set up a national level fund to rehabilitate those children working as kamalari. Leading dailies report

WHILE STATING THAT THE SITUATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS HAD vastly improved compared to previous royal regime, a report published by a leading rights organization expressed disappointment over the continuing incidents of rights violations. The report by INSEC assessing the hundred days of restoration of democratic government states that 11 people were killed by the Maoists and nine by the state during the period. INSEC president Subodh Raj Pyakurel said the incidents of rights violations by the Maoists were more during the period. He accused the Maoists of continuing to kill, abduct, intimidate and engage in extortion. The report said Maoists' student wing was forcefully recruiting kids in its committees in villages. Likewise, the Maoists were involved in abduction of 33 persons, confiscation of properties of two households, among others, during the period. The report also accuses the state of continuing with the culture of impunity.

THE INDUSTRIAL SECURITY GROUP (ISG), HAVE EXPRESSED grave concern over the increasing reports of Maoist excesses. A press statement issued by the ISG said, "The ISG noted with concern the many reports of increased Maoist extortion and threats made to employees, employers and entrepreneurs engaged in commercial, industrial and tourism activities since the government and Maoist cease-fires were announced." During its meeting held on September 5 to discuss the deteriorating law and order situation in Nepal, the ISG strongly urged the Government of Nepal to take immediate steps to restore law and order and to end Maoist intimidation, forced unionization and extortion. The ISG, which comprises representatives of the Embassies of France, Germany, India, the United Kingdom, the United States and the Delegation of the European Commission, along with bilateral Chambers of Commerce and industry associations has said, "Maoist extortion demands, coupled with aggressive efforts by the Maoists to intimidate employees into joining Maoist unions, are pushing enterprises toward bankruptcy and putting entire sectors of Nepal's economy at risk," adding, "Maoist demands threaten to cripple Nepal's struggling economy." The ISG also demanded the Maoists to immediately end all such activities, which are in direct violation of commitments they have made to the Seven Party Alliance, the Government of Nepal, and the people of Nepal. "These actions contravene international human rights standards. They are also incompatible with the Maoists' stated aspirations to join the democratic process," the ISG added. Maoists have been continuing excesses despite their commitment with the ruling seven party alliance and the government not to do so.

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE (SAC) has unanimously decided to scrap Clause 2 and other clauses in a bill on public document authentication, thereby, curtailing the King's power to issue any order for enacting new acts, regulations and government decisions. "Scrapping of the clause has scrapped all powers vested in the King. The government-appointed person would have the right to receive credentials of foreign diplomats," said Hridaya Ram Thani, chairman of SAC. The enactment of the new Act would transfer all constitutional, executive and legislative powers of the King to the Council of Ministers, said MPs.

THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAM (WFP) WILL PROVIDE FOOD grain worth Rs 30 million to the victims of flood and landslide. The WFP, as per Red Cross standards, would provide assistance to the victims in Banke, Bardiya, Achham and Mugu districts. Four hundred and ten grams of rice and 60 grams of pulse and one packet of salt would be provided to a person everyday. This assistance would be provided to the victims in Banke, Mugu and Achham for a month and for 37 days to the victims in Bardiya, said spokesperson of Nepal Red Cross Society (Banke), Rupan Gyawali. The Lutheran World Federation (Banke) has also agreed to provide food and other materials in Banke and Bardiya. Save the Children (US) a charitable organization, has agreed to provide 500 blankets, tents and utensils to the victims in Bardiya, said Gyawali. According to him, food would be distributed to 38,350 persons of 6387 households in Banke in the first phase. ■

"In view of my poor health and old age, I want to solve the Maoist problem as soon as possible. I have told the Maoists that we have to solve it while I am still alive."

Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, while talking to school children, at his official residence at Baluwatar.

* * *

"We still stand by our agreements but we are not ready to lock up our arms first and start dialogue for political settlement. We want to settle the arms issue as part of a comprehensive political package."

Prachanda, Chairman of the Maoists, during live question-answer program in BBC Nepali Service.

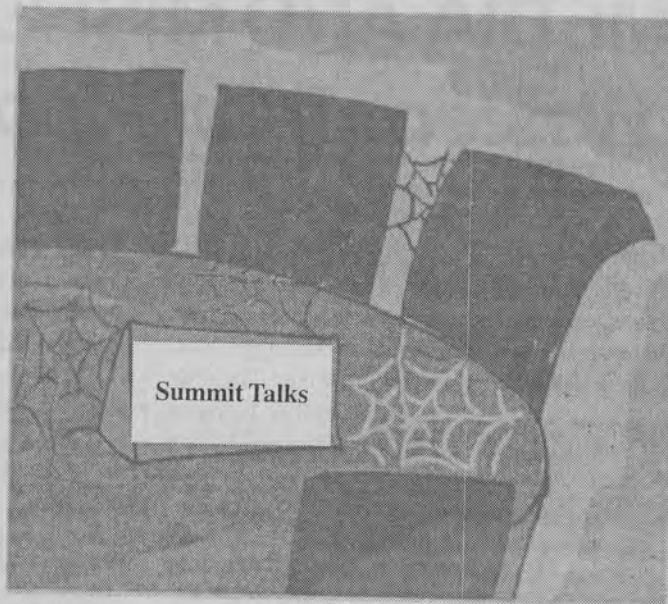
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"If the Maoists are not ready to lay down their arms and place their armed forces inside cantonments as per the past understanding, what do they want to do then?"

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs KP Sharma Oli, in The Kathmandu Post.

* * *

"The nation cannot find a solution by considering our arms as a serious blem."



Bimarsha

Krishna Bahadur Mahara, Maoist Spokesperson, addressing the national conference of the Maoist-affiliated All Nepal People's Cultural Union.

* * *

"The Nepalese Army would never betray democracy."

General Rukmangat Katawal, Chief of Army Staff, NA, talking to reporters, after receiving official insignia from the Prime Minister.

* * *

"If the top leaders of rebel party who had been launching insurgency from jungles can visit Baluwatar (Prime

Minister's official residence) and hold summit talks there, why can't we cooperate on peace process (on ourselves)?"

Narayan Man Bijukchhe, president of Nepal Workers and Peasants Party (NWPP), saying that there is no need for UN involvement in peace process here, in Nepal Samacharpatra.

* * *

"Political problems would not be resolved by sacking the King and replacing him with some other Bahadur. Congress cannot embrace republic."

K.B. Gurung, general secretary of Nepali Congress, in Pokhara.

* * *

TRANSITION

APPOINTED: Lt. General Rukmangat Katuwal, as the Chief of the Army Staff, Nepalese Army, by the cabinet.

Purna Bahadur Ranabhat, as the Controller of Examinations, by the Ministry of Education and Sports.

RETIRED: General Pyara Jung Thapa, from the position of Chief of Army Staff, Nepalese Army.

ELECTED: Nine members including Gokul Pokharel, Shova Gautam, Dr Piyush Raj Mishra, Hem Raj Gayawali, Suresh Acharya, Mahesh Prasad Adhikari, Kedar Sharma, Lal Deusa Rai and Nila Kantha Upreti, as members of working committee of the Nepal Press Institute (NPI).

EXTENDED: The tenure of the High Level Investigation Commission headed by former Supreme Court justice Krishna Jung Rayamajhi, by another 45 days, by the government.

NOMINATED: Nepali writer Manjushree Thapa, to the final list, for the 2006 Letter Ulysses Award.

RELEASED: Geographic Vision, a journal published by Nepal Geography Student Society T.U, Kirtipur.

APPOINTED: Madhav Ghimire, Secretary at Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, as chairman of board of directors of Nepal Airlines Corporation.

MEDIA AND MISLED PUBLIC: *Western Terai Flood Problem*

By AB THAPA

At present the natural drainage of the Western Terai is blocked by a network of canal system which have been built just across the border in Indian territory. The canal system running almost parallel to our border starts from the Lower Sarda Barrage in the west and ends up in the Banganga (Rohini) River. The total length of this canal system is 258 km. There are five barrages along this canal system in Indian territory. They are Lower Sarda Barrage, Karnali Barrage at Girjapur, Saryu (Babai) Barrage, West Rapti Barrage (Laxmanpur) and Rohini (Banganga) Barrage. This canal system has been built in anticipation that the regulated flow of the Mahakali and Karnali or the West Seti rivers would be soon available after the completion of the proposed storage dam projects. The canal network has been designed to draw water from various rivers like the Babai, West Rapti and Banganga also apart from conveying the regulated flows of the Mahakali and Karnali rivers. It appears that the canal alignment has been moved as far as possible to the north to increase the irrigated area and also to reduce the submergence area in India. The faulty layout of the canal system has already started to result in widespread flooding inside Nepalese territory despite the fact that it is still not fully operational.

The Himalayan Times has very recently reported a sad news on September 2, 2006 "Rapti changes course, spurs mass migration". It is further reported "Flood-hit residents of Holiya VDC's Chauferi village are migrating to Uchuwa in Betahani's Jhora jungle some eight kilometers west of their ancestral land following soil erosion caused by the Rapti River which has also changed its course."

It is unfortunate to note that one of the main causes of the submergence of the Western Terai is our reckless disregard for the safety of our local inhabitants while pushing ahead plans to implement major storage dam projects. Nepal has embarked on a plan to launch three major storage dam projects in Western Nepal completely disregarding how the vast quantity of regulated water is going to be utilized in India. The feasibility study report of the Karnali Project carried out at an enormous cost provides in depth information on downstream uses, but we are not interested to look into them. Our concern is only electricity.

The Tip of The Iceberg

Last year it had been reported in one of the local English dailies dated July 21, 2005 on clarification of the Indian Embassy what is causing recent flooding in Banke district. "The Embassy reiterates that Laxmanpur Barrage, which is located 8 kilometers downstream of the India-Nepal border, is not yet operational, and the gates are never lowered and remain open at all times. There is, therefore, no question of Laxmanpur Barrage obstructing the flow of water in the Rapti River" It was further

stated "The Embassy understands that heavy rains in recent days had led to water logging in this region, including in adjoining areas in India..." It is clear based on the reporting of the Indian Embassy that the present widespread excessive flooding in Banke district could be primarily due to narrowing of the Rapti River course after the construction of the upstream guide bund which is an integral part of the Laxmanpur Barrage. Thus the present Banke district flooding problem might be only the tip of the iceberg. A vast area of the Banke district would remain all the time submerged during the wet seasons as soon as the Laxmanpur Barrage would be operational. It is explained hereinafter that the construction of Laxmanpur Barrage is an essential part of an overall plan to utilize the regulated flow of the Karnali and the West Seti rivers for irrigation in India. Thus this plan would be dependant on Nepal's decision to implement the Karnali or the West Seti Storage dam projects. Nepal must conduct through study to convince India to amend the design of the Saryu Canal if we want to resolve the Western Terai submerision problem.

High Level Saryu Canal

The Girjapur barrage across the Karnali river is located 1.2 km downstream of the confluence of the channel Girwa and Kauriala and 8.8 km downstream of Katarnia Ghat railway station of North Eastern Railway in India. The site of the barrage is about 16 km from the Nepal border along the River Kaurila.

There are two irrigation canals taking off from the Girjapur Barrage. On the left is the Saryu Canal running to the east beyond the Banganga River and on the right is the Link Canal connected with the Lower Sarda Barrage planned to irrigate about 2 million ha of lands. At present only the right bank canal is operational because the dry season flow of the Karnali River is insufficient for both the canals and there are technical difficulties to utilize the monsoon flow of this river. The year round operation of the Saryu Canal depends entirely on availability of the regulated flow from the proposed storage reservoirs in Nepal. The construction of the Saryu Canal, that started a long time ago, is still continuing at a snail's pace perhaps due to uncertainty about the date when the West Seti Project would be ready for operation. Nevertheless, it appears that the Saryu Canal could be made operational at short notice after the completion of the West Seti Storage Project because most of the structures of the Saryu Canal might be already ready. After that our people near the border area would be forced to live virtually in swamps throughout the year.

The Saryu Canal Project consists of a canal network that connects the head regulators of the barrages across

the Saryu (Babai River), West Rapti and Rohini (Banganga River). A link channel 48.4 km long taking off from the left bank of the Girjapur Barrage outfalls into the Saryu River just upstream of the barrage across it. Similarly a link canal 56 km long taking off from the left bank of the Saryu River outfalls into the West Rapti River just upstream of the Laxmanpur Barrage. Beyond that a 125 km long canal taking off from the left bank of the West Rapti River extends right up to the Banganga River.

How the Submersion is Caused

The total length of the Saryu canal running almost parallel to Indo-Nepal border is about 230 km. In the original design the barrage across the Saryu river was at a location about 328 meters to the south of the railway bridge at Nanpara. Later, the design was modified and the location of the barrage was shifted 10 km to the north from the original site. Now the location of the Saryu Barrage might be only about 10 km downstream from the Indo-Nepal border. The longitudinal gradient of the Saryu canal has been reduced to a minimum. It is only one meter on a stretch of 9 km. The adoption of such extremely mild slope permitted the alignment of the canal to be pushed as far as possible to the north very close to Indo-Nepal border specially in its middle and lower reaches. This year's severe Babai flooding in Bardia district also might have been triggered by poundage from the Saryu Barrage built in India.

A Lake Instead of Siphons

Normally siphons are provided to deliver canal water across a river. A much higher average slope of the canal is required for the operation of this type of cross drainage structure, which has to operate under pressurized condition. A free flow hydraulic regime needs to be maintained at the river crossing if the average gradient of the canal is to be reduced. For reducing the average slope of the Saryu canal an altogether a different type of structures has been devised. Barrages have been built across the rivers to elevate the river water to such a level that would allow free passage of canal water across the river into the canal taking off from the other side of the river. The contentious Laxmanpur barrage is one of such structures devised to deliver the water from the Girjapur barrage across the West Rapti river.

It would be necessary to maintain all the time pond water upstream of the barrage above certain fixed level to keep the Saryu canal running at desired capacity. Thus the pond would always be full, with the result that a sizeable area of lands in Nepalese territory could remain perpetually submerged. When the river is in flood, the water would be spreading out onto the lands that were never before regarded prone to flooding.

The Saryu canal is expected to cross innumerable small rivers and drains on its way. Embankments and dikes are needed to train these drains and small rivers for the protection of the Saryu canal. These river training structures could also result in widespread flooding inside Nepal where the canal route is close to the border.

Similar High Level Kosi Canal

India had proposed Nepal to build a canal similar to the Saryu canal to deliver Kosi water drawn near Chatra to irrigate lands as far as Birjung in the west. Instead of such Indian proposal, Nepal indicated its decision to implement the Sun-Kosi diversion project. The Indian proposal was dropped. The following is the excerpt from the Indian proposal.

"The Project, therefore, envisages the construction of a new barrage at Chatra which would be 8 km downstream of the proposed Kosi High Dam, with two high level canals, one on each bank in Nepal. These canals are expected to serve one of the most fertile areas of the terrain in Nepal. Preliminary assessment on the basis of data available shows that it may be possible to cover a gross command of 11.05 lakh ha on the right bank and 4.17 lakh ha on the left bank (both in Nepal and India). Another major advantage of providing Kosi waters to the high level canals in Nepal would be that, dependence on smaller rivers which are crossed by these canals would not be necessary and it may be possible to develop these rivers in an integrated manner along with Kosi water which would provide irrigation needs both in Nepal and India and at the same time release waters below Chatra for intensifying irrigation in India."

Media and Public Awareness

At present we are about to take final decision to grant permission to a private developer to build the West Seti Storage Dam Project to generate electricity completely disregarding the fact that the regulated flow of the West Seti River would play havoc in the Western Terai to the east of the Karnali River. Our media can play very important role in generating awareness of the danger to local people if the Pancheshwor, Karnali or West Seti water resources projects are implemented without resolving the Western Terai Submersion problems.

India is very much interested to avail itself of the opportunity to use regulated flow of our rivers. Nepal could use further progress in implementation of storage dam projects within our country as a strong bargaining chip to dissuade India from realizing the projects such as the Laxmanpur Barrage, Saryu Canal etc that threaten the life and property of a large number of Nepalese people.

In Conclusion

A through study should be carried out based on confirmed data to determine exactly the adverse impact of the Saryu Canal on Nepalese territory. It would also be necessary to determine how far to the south the Saryu Canal must be shifted once it is established that the proximity of the Saryu Canal alignment to the border is the cause of the present flooding in Nepal. It might be desirable to involve renowned water related institutions such as the Delft, Grinoble to help us to conduct the proposed studies.

Nepal should not commit a blunder by sticking to the decision to implement the West Seti Project before resolving the present flood problems in the Western Terai. ■

(Dr. Thapa writes on water resources)

B.P. KOIRALA

Legendary Leader

Even more than two decades after his death, B.P. Koirala is remembered as a legendary leader earning wide respect and regard

By KESHAB POUDEL

The more days are passing in Nepal, the more B.P. Koirala is gaining his height because of his well-prophesized political principles that still have familiar echo in the rough and tumble of today's politics. As usual, all political leaders representing from extreme leftist to rightists paid respect to him on the occasion of his birth anniversary.

Although he was prime minister for a very short period of time, there are no leaders in current day Nepal to match him in terms of popularity. The more the country is facing challenges, the more he is being remembered for his foresight and judgments.

For two Nepali Congress parties and their leaders, B.P. Koirala's statues and portraits have become more important than the ideology of national reconciliation propounded by him. Although both the parties have already deviated from B.P.'s own ideology of national reconciliation, his portraits still adorn their party offices and continue to lure workers.

Divided without any political difference, two Nepali Congress parties celebrated B.P. Koirala's birth anniversary vowing to the workers and common Nepali that they are genuine followers of B.P.

"I am following the way shown by B.P. Koirala. I have been following the national reconciliation propounded by him. That is still important," said prime minister and BP's younger brother Girija Prasad Koirala.

Unlike B.P. Koirala, who consistently stood for reconciliation with the monarchy, junior Koirala is leading communist-dominated

alliance watching helplessly the efforts made to humiliate the traditional institution of monarchy.

"B.P. Koirala is remembered for his judgment and his emergence in Nepalese politics as a theoretician, activist and humanist. Embedded into one made him a unique personality. In the formation of his personality, the contemporary major political trends have their impacts," said an analyst. "He grew under Gandhian impact in the initial days when he was young. Later on, in his student days, he was influenced by the revolution of

Russia. As he has inquisitive mind and habit of reading history and philosophy, he synthesized his political views as a social democrat and he remained a social democrat all his life."

At a time when his party colleagues and followers are harping a new version of Loktantra or democracy, he had his own interpretation of that idea of democracy as a universal liberal political system. "I have no new model for democracy in my mind. No new model but a model for others to watch and imitate. I have dreams for my country – one of them is to present to the world how a democracy is to run. The basic elements of democracy are – 1. the principle of elections, 2. which to be meaningful, will have to accept the principle of multi-party, 3. which again means the principle of all the democrat and civil rights to be made available to the people, 4. the principle of the primacy of a popularly elected body to

which the government is responsible, 5. the principle of equality before law, 6. the principle of independent judiciary etc, etc. Any system, by whatever names you call it, is democratic if it incorporates these elements in its basic structure," said Koirala in his interview to National Star fortnightly in July 1979 answering about his model of democracy.

Though he was internationalist in his general outlook his politics was deeply rooted in national situation. His attachment for the nation was based upon sound philosophy and deep emotion. B.P. used to illustrate the animal instinct for the attachment with the land one resides in.

From left to right, Koirala is now a legendary figure. "Koirala was a great leader of this century as his ideals of social democracy is most suitable for Nepal," said CPN-UML leader Pradeep Nepal. Former prime minister Surya Bahadur Thapa sees B.P. Koirala as a leader with moral guts and strong political will power.

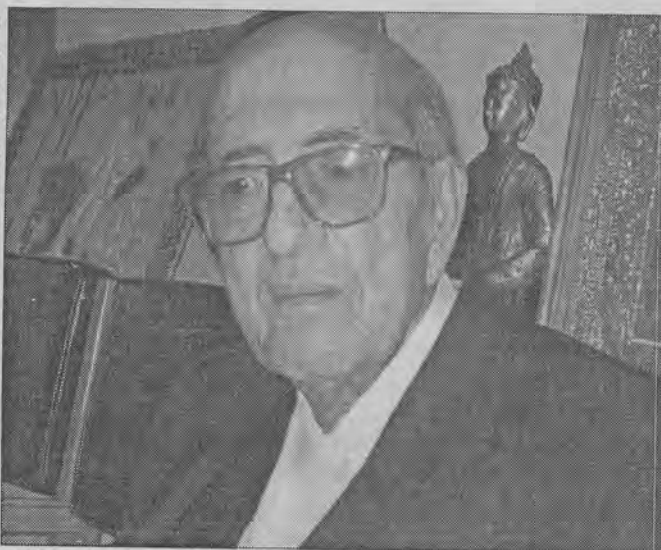
The sentimental attachment of common people with the nation got truly reflected in his political



BP Koirala: Lasting impact

judgment whether he was in power, prison or exile. As a prime minister, his assessment for the independence of judgment was historic one while disagreeing with the Indian prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru in the matter of national security.

"Nepal is a fully sovereign independent nation. It decides its external and home policy according to its own judgment and its own liking without ever referring to any outside authorities," said Koirala who was reacting to the statement of 27 November 1959 by Indian prime minister Nehru. Indian prime minister Nehru had then



PM Koirala: Whither 'reconciliation'

said, "May I just repeat what we have declared that any aggression on Bhutan or Nepal will be considered by us aggression on India."

"I don't know about the international status of Bhutan and its relations with India. But Nepal is an independent sovereign nation and there can never be any doubt with regard to this fact. No one need ever have any doubt about our sovereignty and independence," BP Koirala had reacted to Nehru's remarks.

His reaction prompted Indian prime minister Nehru to correct his original claim as a guarantor of Nepal's security.

Nehru, through his statement on December 3, 1959, said, "I think what the prime minister of Nepal Mr. B.P. Koirala has said is completely correct."

Though he was a prime minister for a very short time, B.P. Koirala had vision to infuse the democratic contents in the foreign policy. "Perhaps it was this episode also which culminated into the removal of B. P. from the power and having to suffer prolonged detention of eight years. But Koirala did not follow the confrontational course as followed by then Sheikh Abdullah of Kashmir despite many such instigations," said the political analyst. "Instead of succumbing to Sikkimization, he risked his life and safety to return back to Nepal with a unilateral call of national reconciliation.

Though he was put into the detention under Kafkaesque, he was much relaxed the day he returned from his exile on 30 December 1976."

Although Koirala was charged under several counts of cases with demands being raised for death penalty, he felt relaxed and relieved to return to his home country. He recorded his mental relieve in his recently published jail diary "Again Sudarjial."

"I felt relieved and relaxed today," BP writes on his return from exile in India where he said he was held hostage by Indira Gandhi's deceit and double standard.

Koirala's return from exile changed the political equation. "After his arrival from exile, the political pressure was shifted from Koirala to King Birendra. Enough of facts are yet to come to public knowledge but King Birendra, who was known as a despot, was very considerate. In the word of B.P Koirala King Birendra "a well meaning person" was handicapped by his own seen and unseen networks," said the analyst. "That despotism was imposed upon that well meaning person. Ultimately, B.P. was superb in understanding King Birendra which was proved by the role of King Birendra, who preferred to face any consequence in upholding the commitment he made in the last - at latter stage. His assassination was shrouded in mystery but not difficult to apprehend," said the analyst.

During his last days, B.P. Koirala, after the reversal in national referendum in 1980, was in conflict of interest. His commitment for independence of the country was so strong that he preferred to call himself closer with the King in issues of national interest. Therefore, he had not gone in confrontation with the King but his abhorrence of the undemocratic structure of Panchayat system was such that he vowed not to bend in its support. There was a popular statement from him that "no confrontation with the King and no surrender to the

Panchayat autocracy."

Because of Koirala's own judgment and stand, the conspiracies - which were beyond the control of King and Koirala - failed in its attempt to put them in collision and thus dictate terms to Nepal. B.P. died as a relaxed and fulfilled person having no regret for his past. B.P. was an optimistic politician and this optimism was his greatest strength.

"You see, Bhola, I am not a pessimist. If we have to exist as a nation, if we have some role to play in this part of the world, this is the line and there is not any other line. So I don't have any alternative to the present line in my mind," said B.P. Koirala answering a question of Indian journalist Bhola Chatterjee who had asked - If what you say, that is, reconciliation between the Palace and democratic force does not take place, what do you propose to do?

Koirala lived an exemplary life of a patriot and confirmed democrat. The legacy of Koirala is not a monopoly of any person, family or groups but it is shared commonly as a national inheritance by all. "B.P. is being remembered more and more since he departed from us. For ages to come, he will have impact upon ideas and actions of upright and honest persons of the country. How many politicians of present time will be remembered after twenty five years for what contribution? This question has no answered at present," said the analyst.

Women's Health Mired In Conflict

As a country with the notorious record of one of the highest maternal mortality rates, Nepalese women have suffered a lot in the last 12 years of conflict. The beginning of the peace process has injected certain hope among them. Following the devastation and disruption in health service, the overwhelming numbers of women have been denied the basic services. Large numbers of women are surviving amid taxing circumstances where they fall prey to various illnesses including the uteral prolapse, which is causing a high percentage of morbidity among them. After the ceasefire, the process of revitalization of health services has already begun. If basic health services are restored, lives of many women can be saved and their social status will change. Although the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has already launched the mobile reproductive health camps to provide primary health services in rural areas, it is yet to be seen how effective they will be.

By KESHAB POUDEL

Kamala Gurung, 22, a resident of Sikles Village of Kaski district about 250 kilometer west of capital, died due to complications during the delivery at midnight a year ago. Although the medical assistant had advised Kamala's family to take her to Pokhara hospital, the family members could not carry her at mid-night because of fears emanating from the insurgency.

Lukiyadevi Ram, 24 - a resident of Ramgunj Balgachiya village of Sunsari district - 500 kilometers south-east of capital Kathmandu - died of complications in

pregnancy. Had she been taken to hospital on time, she could have been saved.

Kamala and Lukiyadevi are not the only ones who have died following simple complications in delivery. There are hundreds of thousands of women who have lost their lives in the last 13 years of insurgency due to unavailability of primary health services and disruption of transport networks due to insecurity.

"Had health workers and medicine been available at midnight, she could have been saved," said Chhote Ram, husband of Lukiyadevi. "Because of fear of land mines and cross firing, we could not take her to hospital. She died asking for help," added Ram, a Madhesi dalit (untouchable).

The case of Ratna Kumari, 35, from Sarlahi who suffered from Uterine Prolapse or fallen womb as it is commonly known, is not too different. Her fallen womb, though it can be treated with just a minor surgery, has become a matter of discrimination in her family.

"Uterine prolapse best described as fallen womb is one of the most widespread reproductive health and social problems in Nepal. It has become a national tragedy. All over Nepal, hundreds of thousands of women are suffering from uterine prolapse. Its prevalence among women at reproductive age exceeds 10 percent and is as high as 24 percent among women

between the ages of 45 and 49. Altogether more than 600,000 women are in urgent need of medical care," said Junko Sasaki, country representative of UNFPA to Nepal. "What is even more tragic is that uterine prolapse is a preventable and treatable condition? But, unaware of this information and getting little support from the health workers around them who have equally little knowledge of the condition; the women cannot take preventive measures to avoid the condition."

Thanks to the insurgency, a large number of country's primary health posts and sub-health posts are either non-functional or destroyed making the large parts of Nepal devoid of basic health services.

According to the Ministry of Population and Health, over 60 percent of health posts and sub-health

posts in the rural parts of Nepal either were destroyed or without a good physical condition. Many remaining health posts are without trained health workers.

According to the Nepal Millennium Development Goals Progress Report 2005, over 80 percent of deliveries take place at home in Nepal. After the intensification of insurgency, the possibility of taking pregnant women to health posts came to an end and most of the births had to be assisted by family members and neighbors.

Prepared by the United Nations Development Program and National Planning Commission, the Report reveals that only one-fifth of deliveries are attended by health workers. Births attended by skilled birth attendants (doctors, nurses and auxiliary nurse midwives) are as low as 11 percent. Another 10 percent of births were attended by traditional birth attendants,



Girls: Trauma of conflict and poor health access

who may be trained or untrained; however, they do not qualify as skilled birth attendants.

Conducted by the Ministry of Population and Health, a study report shows that the cause of maternal deaths are severe bleeding, sepsis, toxemia, obstructed labor and the consequences of abortion. Most maternal deaths can be prevented if women have access to essential obstetric care service.

As most of the health assistants, auxiliary nurses and mid-wives have deserted the health posts due to the threat of conflict, antenatal attendance is low. According to the Department of Health Services, only 14 percent women are attending the recommended four antenatal visits, and only about one seventh of adolescent mothers attending the antenatal clinic. Only 17 percent of women receive a post natal check within 48 hours.

In recent years, the conflict has impeded progress leaving many health

facilities vacant or unsupervised. The abduction of health workers and insurgents looting medicine from health posts were common. The conflict left many impacts on the safe motherhood.

The health sector is yet to study its total cost of physical devastation in last one decade. According to the Asian Development Bank's Measuring the Economic Costs of Conflict published in July 2005, economic performance has been affected through different channels. More than 12,000 lives have been lost and physical infrastructures worth at least US\$ 250 million have been destroyed. The development expenditure declined at a rate of 4.2 percent during FY 2002-2004 compared with a growth of 10.4 percent during the period between 1991 and 2001.

Hopeful Signs

Although it will take years to rehabilitate the rural health systems and health networks, the ceasefire gives an opportunity to implement a new program to provide basic health services to women. This is a hopeful sign.

The past experiences have shown that reducing the maternal mortality depends on a functioning health system that provides skilled delivery services and essentials obstetric care.

As the country requires huge investment and time to make all health institutional functional, the government has already designed the short term programs including the mobile health service and temporary health camps in different parts of the country.

With the financial support from European Commission's Humanitarian Aid department, the UNFPA has launched mobile reproductive health outreach services to conflict prone areas. The UNFPA launched the program in six

districts of mid-western and far-western region.

"In a poor, mountainous country with Asia's second highest incidents of maternal mortality death, pregnancy and childbirth are made even more dangerous by the disruption of health services and transport," said Sazaki.

As in any insurgency, women caught up in Nepal's low intensity war often bear the heaviest burdens but receive the least attention. The maternal mortality rate of 539 in 1000,000 live births is one of the highest in Asia.

"Nepal has seen substantial improvement in RH status in terms of life expectancy at birth rising from 41 to 60 years during the last three decades, however, maternal mortality rate is one of the highest in the South Asia i.e. 539 per 100,000 live births. About 10 percent of women of the reproductive age are suffering from uterine prolapse which affects social and reproductive life of women," said Dr. Mahendra Bahadur Bista, director general of Department of Health Services.

Other major causes are the insufficient number of trained reproductive health care service professionals, its facility at the periphery as well as unsatisfactory level of health care seeking behavior among the people occupied with poor socio-economic status. Only 13 percent of all presented deliveries are conducted by skilled health professionals with more than half not receiving any prenatal visits, and 92 percent of the births delivered at home where skilled birth attendants may or may not be available. Nepal also poses huge disease burden due to reproductive health disorder and related diseases and infections among reproductive age



Women in Terai village: Cut off from basic health services

females in comparison to males. "Over 80 percent of Nepal's population lives in rural areas where basic health care service remains limited. According to the United Nation Population Fund, in addition to 10-years armed conflict has jeopardized the provision of basic health care services, exacerbating the lack of health workers, health facilities and medial supplies. As a result, the burden of the most common diseases including maternal illnesses which are estimated to grow by 100,000 new cases per year remains almost unattended," said Junko Sazaki.

Along with other infrastructures, Nepal's health facilities, too, suffered a lot during the last 13 years of insurgency. In many districts, the country needs to completely renovate the health networks.

After the intensification of the insurgency, the government continued to reduce its annual investment in the

health sector. In its annual budget of 2006-2007, Ministry of Finance increased its budget targeting the women's health issues.

Although the safe motherhood and other women related health issues has been high on the national and international agenda, progress in overall situation is too slow as the conflict prevented the launching of effective programs.

At a time when large numbers of women are being denied the basic health service thanks to the conflict, which devastated basic health infrastructures in rural parts of Nepal, the United Nations Population Fund has come out with a mobile reproductive health outreach service to conflict-affected population. As

overwhelming number of women have to sacrifice their lives without acquiring basic health facilities, this program has been announced as the first one after ceasefire opened an opportunity to go to village to take care of the women there.

"As the peace is relatively restored, the government is now working to carry out certain programs aiming to improve the health of women. The government will spend money to do surgical intervention to those women suffering from fallen womb," said deputy prime minister and Health Minister Amik Sherchan.

Nepalese women are dying not because of major health complications but overwhelming because of simple complications, particularly related to reproductive health. As conflict eases and phase of reconstruction begins, the time has now come to provide some relief to women who have suffered a lot during the last one decade. ■

CITIZENSHIP

Controversial Move

The announcement of the government to bring the new citizenship act sparks a new round of controversy over the modalities and conditions

By A CORRESPONDENT

Although it is highly controversial and issue of national debate, the government of Seven Party Alliance with support from the Maoists, has decided to table a new bill on Citizenship Act. According to the bill, the cut-off year of citizenship certificate is now 1990 or before the date of promulgation of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal 1990.

For the past four decades, different political forces from terai had raised the question of citizenship. According to them, large numbers of southern people are discriminated while distributing the citizenship certificate. Nepal Sadbhavana Party contested all previous three elections on the basis of citizenship but it hardly own 3 percent of total votes.

The problems of citizenship certificate are there in terai as well as in hills. Of course, the number of people in terai may be higher but it has its own way to identify the people and distribution process. How can one guarantee that the amendment of act and changing the cut off year will solve the problem forever?

The bill also includes a clause, which will open distribution of citizenship on the basis of mother's certificate. Likewise, a person, who wants to have Nepalese certificate, now needs the recommendation of any three Nepalese to prove his eligibility for the citizenship certificate.

"It is unfortunate that all those communists and their sympathizers who have never tired of projecting themselves as nationalists are now defending the bill, which will in future make Nepal's situation like that of Fiji," said advocate

Bal Krishna Neupane, who has already fought about half a dozen of cases regarding the citizenship at the apex court. "If two percent of population from north and south enter into Nepal, Nepalese will become minority citizens in their own country. However, migration of even 20 percent of Nepal's population will not make any difference to Nepal's neighbors."

Nepal had its citizenship act and constitutional provisions which never hindered genuine persons born in Nepal to acquire citizenship. The act and constitution only hindered those who were born in foreign country.

Terai leaders who are pressing for the new act still believe that the proposed bill will not totally resolve the problems of citizenship. "We Madhesiyas are always discriminated by the people from hill. As long as the Articles 8 and 9 of the Constitution of Kingdom of Nepal 1990 are abrogated, the problems of citizenship will prolong forever," said Rajendra Mahato, a member of Nepal Sadbhavana Party (NSP-Anandidevi). "This is incomplete bill. We want our genuine right to claim as citizens of Nepal."

Nobody understands the rationale behind the sudden and mysterious consensus among the political parties to scrap the existing citizenship act and bring a new one against the spirit of present constitution.

As Nepal and India have open border and citizens of two nation move freely to each others' country, the provision will be possibly misused since it is very difficult to distinguish who is from which country. Many believe that the proposed bill will open floodgates to those who want to acquire Nepalese citizenship certificate. Along with the

people from south, Tibetan, Bhutanese and Kashmiris who have living in Nepal for the past 14 years will also be eligible for the citizenship.

If the proposed bill on citizenship is passed by the parliament, which looks definite, Nepal's population will surge suddenly as the proponents of the bill claim that there are more than 5 million people in terai without citizenship.

Knowingly or unknowingly, the problem of citizenship certificate has now become the agenda of consensus among the seven party alliance, RPP, Rastriya Jansakti Party and Maoists as all leaders representing terai in these parties pressed the government for this.

Surrounded by world's two most populous nations, one of the major challenges of Nepal, a small country, is to retain its national identity. Realizing Nepal's geographical location, makers of the Constitution of Kingdom of Nepal 1990 had put some specific provisions and conditions for distribution of Nepalese citizenship certificate.

"All those who are busy to discredit Nepal's traditional institutions like army and monarchy seem to have tacit backing to this anti-national bill. The leaders of all left parties including the Maoists who claim as nationalists have been badly exposed," said Neupane.

Whether the people living in terai, hills or mountains, all of them are Nepali and no one should be discriminated under the rule of law. "If this bill is passed as it is, Nepalese will be minority in their own country and the country may face the fate like that of Sikkim," said Neupane. "This is time to close the open border not to distribute the citizenship under a new act."

Terai people, however, oppose this view as Nepalese hegemony. "We are the sons of the soil. If terai people are denied the rights of citizenship, they could take any decision including the demand for separate state," said Mahato.

No rationale people will support any move to discriminate the people of terai but one needs to be cautious not to allow foreigners to enter into Nepal in the name of genuine people of terai. It is the people of terai who have to face consequences of any demographic change. ■

Difficult Transition

By SURYADHUNGEL

In the context of a possible negotiation with late King Birendra in February 1977, Late B.P. Koirala in his recently published jail diary had noted: "Soft statements have a meaning only if there is a possibility of receiving a positive response from the other party. In absence of such possibilities, a soft statement is even worse than the gutter. Neither would this be political nor ethical from a revolutionary's perspective." (Sundarijal Again, 2006, p. 47)



accelerate the process leading to the creation of a Constituent Assembly? Is there any invisible factor that prevents our political actors from applying their independent minds? Is not the politicians' disastrous failure to make the best use of so many advantages in the interest of the country a real disadvantage for Nepal? Is it the political incompetence or greed of politicians a real cause of Nepal's failure to deal with the 'truth'? What does the

In the present day Nepalese context, political alliances created prior to and during the *jana aandolan -II* against the continuation of unconstitutionally assumed Royal Authoritarian Rule have in fact diluted the fundamental differences amongst the agitating political parties and their leadership. No statement from anyone appears to be politically soft and authoritative in nature, and none of the politicians has a tendency to issue responses positively. It is not quite clear as to who is responding to whom and to what? Hence, a humble attempt has been made herein to raise some issues of concern with an expectation to receive a few constructive responses, at least from the second generation leaderships of the leading political parties, if their sense of public accountability impels them to consider the issues raised better than the 'gutter'.

1. Nepal's disadvantage:

The Nepalese politics, including the nature of armed conflict, has its own unique characteristics, rarely to be found anywhere in the world. Even the top most political party leaders, including the Prime Minister and rebel party leaders, are easily accessible here. They are able to conveniently communicate to each other without any traces of hesitation and threat. Intellectuals and political elites are ready to volunteer their services to the cause of the peace and democracy irrespective of their ideological leanings. These are certainly great advantages of a country which is heading to a path of lawlessness and collusion.

All political parties have publicly expressed in written (ref: concept papers submitted to the interim constitution drafting committee, 12 point and 8 point understandings, etc) their commitments to pluralistic (multi-party) democracy, rule of law, human rights and constitutionalism, irrespective of their ideological anomalies. All stakeholders have willingly supported the idea to invite UN to help ensure the monitoring of arms management and electoral processes.

Despite all these advantages, why has the peace process been stalled? Why is there no effort from any quarters -neither from the Government, nor from SPA and the CPN (M)-to

second generation leadership of political parties have to say about it and what role could they play to change the scenario. Answers have to be sought from them, not any more from the first generation leadership.

2. UN's dilemma:

UN has demonstrated its special favour to Nepal from the highest level by appointing a seasoned diplomat so familiar to Nepal as special emissary of the Secretary General to assist in the peace process in response to the requests from the Government and CPN (M). But the key political actors of the country, especially the SPA-led Government and CPN (M), have miserably failed to provide a minimum basis for the SG's emissary to initiate his work. First, CPN (M) has not yet declared a permanent ceasefire. Without a ceasefire agreement signed by both CPN (M) and the Government, preferably, in presence of UN, other international actors, SPA and other relevant stakeholders as witnesses, clearly outlining the bases (principles and procedures) for initiating the peace and arms management processes, it may not be possible for the UN, to determine its organizational presence and strength before assuming its full responsibilities. Second, a series of dialogue between UN SG's emissary and the requesting parties has to take place preceding the actual work. This is essential simply for preparing the real groundwork for shaping the modality of peace and arms management processes.

Surprisingly, however, no one is asking the SPA and CPN (M) leaders to come together and hold discussions with the UN emissary to concretise the peace process and stop beating about the bush. Can the second generation leaders push for this?

3. Seriousness in Business:

Lack of seriousness in mission, objectives and business amongst all agitating political parties, such as (SPA) and CPN (M), is quite apparent from their failure to produce a suitable 'interim constitution' on time. Many people had apprehensions about the outcome on the very day when the interim

constitution drafting committee was unceremoniously constituted without adequate consultations.

With necessary amendments, it was much easier and logical to modify the existing 1990 constitution, which had obtained the status of an 'interim legal instrument' *suo motu*, once the House of Representative assumed the constituent authority and declared to hold Constituent Assembly elections to frame a new Constitution on the political ground of the sovereign authority granted by the successful *jana andolan-II*. But the political forces of the day conceded to the proposition of drafting an interim Constitution by a controversial drafting committee which left the job incomplete. Neither the political parties extended their cooperation to the drafting committee to accomplish its tasks, nor the committee seriously ever put pressure on the SPA and CPN (M) to solicit their necessary support.

The Government has yet to succeed in creating an environment to bring the 'rebel groups' to the mainstream politics by inducting them in the government for sharing responsibilities due to continued *impasse* on the issues of arms management and interim legal instrument. The CPN (M), on the other hand, has been adopting a wrong tactics of continued 'threat' and 'consolidation of its new political base' during transition rather than helping the new political order amicably resolve the nation's problems through peaceful and legitimate democratic means.

The CPN (M) leaders' recent public discourses have not convinced the people and international community in general about their commitment to the process, as they have not yet offered any meaningful indications in action towards the establishment of peace and new constitutional order through 'permanent ceasefire', arms management, mainstream politics and the Constituent Assembly. They have not been able to control their cadres' persistent rebel behaviour that has been vitiating the political environment.

Despite all these challenges, there is a ray of hope if the new political leaderships in all parties are prepared to pressurize their leaders for actions. Rather than wasting time on issues that are meant for the Constituent Assembly to resolve, the national leaders and all stakeholders have to work together to clear the obstacles preventing them to reach to the Constituent Assembly.

4. Prospects:

As stated at the outset, Nepal has several unique advantages. In addition, the Maoist leaders have come out from the jungle to join the open competitive politics. They have publicly expressed their full commitment to respect and comply with democratic and human rights values, despite their ideological inconsistencies. They have agreed in black and white to accept the UN's lead role in facilitating arms management and fair electoral process, at least in principle. These commitments combined with the agreed commitments of the SPA and the Government should in fact be the starting point for future course of action. The hitherto stalled peace process should move again before the nation gets plunged into lawlessness and chaos.

Following few steps may help restart the process:

a) Younger generation leadership may consistently urge the Prime Minister who as a leading senior political figure could take a lead role again to bring the CPN (M) and SPA leaders to a table to thrash out the pending political issues, including the procedure to enable the UN Secretary General's emissary (Mr. Ian Martin) start his work. The dialogue with SPA and CPN (M) leaders should be made regular, frequent and structured, and the PM may have to hold several individual meetings with political actors and other stakeholders for rolling the ball of dialogue on.

b) At the initiative of the Prime Minister, dialogues with the SPA and CPN (M) leaders and UN must immediately start on the peace and arms management process. It must first begin with conclusive discussions on the declaration of a 'permanent ceasefire,' followed by signing of a 'peace agreement' amongst CPN (M), SPA, Government and other stakeholders outlining the principle and procedure of the peace process leading to the fair elections for the Constituent Assembly. Presence of UN and other stakeholders, including non-controversial civil society leaders, as witnesses to the peace agreement must be recorded.

c) Appropriate environment for enabling CPN (M) for congenially joining the Government must be created through continuous dialogue, if necessary, in presence of UN and other friendly actors. CPN (M) also must not unconvincingly take its undemocratic and illogical position while negotiating on the peace process. They should demonstrate their political sincerity and responsibly reciprocate to the genuine democratic offer of the SPA and the Government on the negotiation table. People want to be assured from them that they immediately stop all their ongoing undemocratic, illegal and violent tactical moves of abduction, threat and extortion.

d) The issue of 'interim constitution' must be immediately resolved. Let a persuasive measure be urgently initiated to either modify the present constitutional document into an 'interim legal framework' or to come out with a short and precise 'interim constitution' in order to pave the path for the Constituent Assembly.

e) Dialogue, dialogue and dialogue amongst SPA, CPN (M) and UN is the answer to the present day political impasse. Dialogue must be complemented by the democratic temperament and tolerance of the political actors. The Prime Minister or any of the political party leaders must commit himself to sustain the dialogue. Let the door of dialogue never be closed until the nation comfortably moves to the path of Constituent Assembly. Desired responses to even soft queries may be received from the parties concerned, as mentioned by late B.P. Koirala in his jail diary. Otherwise, the never ending days of political transition and lawlessness will ruin the nation. The role of second generation leadership in media world is critical to maintain the pressure on the political leaders as well as for conveying right messages to the people and the world community. ■

(Dr. Dhungel is a constitutional lawyer)

WHITHER CONSTITUTION

One Step Forward, Ten Steps Backward

Nobody knows whether the present constitution is alive or not in the present context

By KESHAB POUDEL

Although more than a couple of months have already been passed since a group of lawyers have filed a petition in the Apex Court challenging the constitutional status of the Declaration of House of Representatives, the court is yet to begin full hearing on it.

From its two days of initial hearing, the judges - who have already established the supremacy of constitution through its various interpretations - seem to be facing some kind of uneasiness to deal with the issue.

Nobody knows the fate of petition - which have raised the fundamental issues of Constitution - pending in the Supreme Court since many months. Till now not a full length hearing has been done for it. The apex court seems to be at great difficulty for obvious reasons to take up such issue and give a decisive opinion.

This is not for the first time when the judges of court are facing such difficulty. Following the royal takeover and formation of High Level Anti-Corruption Commission by the King, then judges had similar difficulty. Though the new Loktantra has replaced the older authoritarian regime of the King, the new regime under Loktantra is threatening the judges in similar manner. The debate

of reappointment of judges has already made the tenure and position of judges uncertain.

Even as the government and the parliament considers the constitution alive as long as they are allowed to work, nobody is following the letter and spirit of the constitution. "Till it is abrogated by another one by Constituent Assembly, the present constitution cannot be taken as non-existent or to be in suspended animation," said a prominent

constitutional lawyer. "It was quite logical and plausible also to use this constitution as an interim one till the CA comes out with a complete constitution."

Although an effort has been made to write an interim constitution to replace the present one, it turned not only a futile exercise but ridiculous too. Some members of the drafting committee publicly acknowledged that working for interim constitution resulted in an absurd joke to the country. None of the draftsmen withdrew themselves from the drafting committee but no one is cable of explaining what they did or what they did not do.

"Persons in the legal profession are not so incapable in this country to make themselves as laughing stock permanently in the legal history of Nepal. They were in some extent incapable

assessing the political situation of the country and making the constitution as a document of existing power balance of the country. But, this lost opportunity was not so serious as we already have a constitution reflecting the mandate of the Janaandolan I. Let wisdom prevail in the political forces and the country accept this constitution completely and faithfully in letter and spirit till the CA comes out with an agreed constitution," said the lawyer.

Whither Constitution

Although majority of lawyers said there exists the constitution, following the declaration by the House of Representatives, the Constitution of Kingdom of Nepal 1990 has been rendered as virtually redundant.

"Yes constitution is there. If nobody follows the letter and spirit of the constitution, what is its sense. In the name of



HoR: Assertive Mode

people's power, the persons in power are doing whatever they want," said advocate Bal Krishna Neupane. "The politicians with vested interest of particular country made some articles related to citizenship and sharing water resources defunct."

Politicians are ruling the country citing the mandate of Janandolan II. "What we have been doing is in accordance with the mandate of Jananodlan II," said speaker of House of Representatives Subhas Chandra Nembang.

After April 26, the present phase of politics is usually claimed as being guided by Jananodlan II by people, in general, and particularly the persons in power. The first Janandolan which was held in 1990 - brought into operation the Constitution of Kingdom of Nepal 1990 and none of the political parties of this Jananodlan has denounced the Constitution of Kingdom of Nepal 1990 yet.

"None of the agreed documents of statements between leading seven parties and Maoist have denounced the previous Janandolan as well as the constitution which were the pride outcome of that. If one goes through all the joint deliberations between the two groups of political parties, the thrust was to activate the present constitution in full terms with its letter and spirit. The six point declarations of the seven parties for launching Janandolan II had specifically declared that the constitution would be fully implemented after the restoration of the parliament," said the political analyst.

Present constitution was not given by the King but was promulgated following the successful People's Movement. This constitution cannot be abrogated by the King or any other political forces. This might be the reason political parties had agreed to go for CA for a new constitution and that way they had agreed for a superior and more powerful body than the parliament to decide the fate of the present constitution.

The agitation was concluded by a declaration of the King conceding to the basic demands of the SPA. In the declaration, it was explicitly mentioned that the CA would decide the future form of governance. But, soon after the restoration

of HoR its leaders completely ignored the body of parliament, which consists three major constituents i.e., the House of Representatives, the Upper House and the King. All these constituents in a combined form make a parliament.

The fresh violation of the constitution was made by unilateral functioning of the HoR. The next step of violation was to issue a declaration of a HoR in which it declared itself as the sole authority to function as a supreme legislature.

In all its nine point declarations, basic provisions of the constitution has been violated. In its clause (9) c, it declares that any provision of the constitution of 1990 as well as the law of the land shall be null and void to the extent of contradiction with the declaration of the HoR. Since then series of actions have come each day violating the provisions of the present constitution.

No legal and credible opinion has come to the public notice justifying the actions of the HoR which are in contradiction with the constitution. No straight and clear answer is given to the press or public by persons who are in the positions of decision making.

People are completely bereft of the legal knowledge they had till now with them. The present constitution either exist or it does not exist could have been a straight way opinion.

Not a single precedent of any constitutional order is known in this country in which a declaration of the HoR assumes supremacy over the prevailing constitution and law. The Article 1 of the present constitution explicitly says that this is the fundamental law of the land and any law in contravention to it shall be null and void.



SC: Slow Hearing

According to article 1 (1) of the constitution, Constitution is the Fundamental Law: This constitution is the fundamental law of Nepal and all laws inconsistency with it shall, to the extent of such inconsistency, be void.

But the declaration of the HoR has issued an opposite clause stating that the provisions of the constitution shall be null and void to the extent of its contradiction with HoR.

"The declaration of HoR does not claim to be the law or fundamental law of the country. It is just a political declaration," said the analyst.

Whatever one says, nobody knows whether the constitution of Kingdom of Nepal 1990 really exists or not at this juncture. Although the 1990 Constitution gives the right to interpret the constitution to the Supreme Court, it is yet to show courage to speak about the status of the supreme law of the land. ■

PLUS 2 COLLEGES

Growing Charm

Most of the students want to join Plus 2 colleges attracted by their quality and management

By SAHISHNU POU DYAL

Every morning, one can see young students clad in various types of uniform walking briskly through the streets and chatting with their friends. These are the new age students of higher secondary colleges, which have become ubiquitous.

From main streets to every nook and corner, the higher secondary colleges or Plus 2 colleges as they popularly known, have mushroomed everywhere. And each one of these colleges seem to be filled by aspiring young students.

After passing out the School Leaving Certificate (SLC) examinations, youngsters now wish to join the Plus 2 colleges. Gone are the days when they flocked to government colleges to study the Intermediate level or Proficiency Certificate Level. Everyone now is attracted towards the modern and quality education offered by these private colleges.

"I have joined VS Niketan College for higher education," said Archana Thapa, a SLC passed student. Like Archana, maximum number of students want to join Plus 2 colleges after their SLC. Very few of them want to join government college, which are notorious for bad quality, lack of learning environment and so on.

When asked why she didn't join government college, Thapa said, "I think not only me but all those who can afford want to join Plus 2. Nobody wants to go to government college because they have low education quality, improper management system, low result output, and irregularity in examination."

There are hundreds of students like Thapa who have decided to abandon the government colleges and flock towards the Plus 2. After the government decided to gradually phase out Proficiency Certificate Level from the government colleges, the growth of higher secondary schools have been phenomenal.

According to the data provided by Higher Secondary Education Board (HSEB) in 2060 there were 74,000 students who had joined in Class 11 (higher secondary schools); in 2061 the number of students increased up to 112,100. Likewise, in 2062 the number of students reached 106,000. This record shows that the craze of 10+2 schools is increasing day by day. As a result, the students are showing indifference towards government colleges.

This attraction of Plus Two colleges has affected the charm of government colleges. "Yes the increasing number of students in +2 colleges has affected the government

college. They lack students day by day. There are many drawbacks of the government colleges such as the absence of environment for any interaction between teachers and students, low result percentage, packed class rooms, no concentration in class rooms, political influence etc which ensures that students do not want to join government colleges," said Niraj Poudyal, Faculty Member at Patan Multiple Campus in Lalitpur.

However, Sunil Kumar Poudyal, the Campus Chief of Ratna Rajya Campus said, "The number of students who want to be admitted in our campus has not decreased. However, we have to stop admissions to wait for the results of the exempted students. There are about 600 admission sheets given to our campus, out of them 400 sheets have already been filled and the rest are being saved for the exempted students."

Whatever the teachers may say, the data of HSEB proves that the number of students in +2 colleges are rapidly increasing, which also means that the students of government colleges are decreasing. In a short span of its establishment, the higher secondary colleges run by the private sector has succeeded to overcome the weaknesses witnessed in government colleges. The HSEB has been giving authority to private operators to run Plus 2 colleges since 1991.

Reservation Proposed In Private Schools

The government is proposing to introduce reservation in private schools. The draft bill to amend the Education Act has provisions making it mandatory for private schools to set aside 10 percent of seats to underprivileged groups such as girls, Dalits and indigenous people. Government spokesperson and State Minister for Information Dilendra Prasad Badu said the cabinet has endorsed the bill, which would now be presented before the parliament for final approval. Laba Prasad Tripathy, spokesperson at the Ministry of Education, claimed that the new move would help 80,000 students from underprivileged section of society. It is reported that around 800,000 students study in nearly 10,000 privately run schools across the country. Tripathy said the proposed bill also sets up criteria to select the students under reserved quota.

POWER SUMMIT

Heralding A New Era

In a historic gathering, private investors from India and Nepal come together to discuss the mutual prospects under active encouragement from two governments

By A CORRESPONDENT

After years of harping about the potentials of water resources and prospects of cross-border power trade, finally there was a concrete beginning last week when private investors from India and Nepal came together at the Power Summit organized jointly by the Independent Power Producers of Nepal (IPPAN) and Power Trade Company (PTC) of India.

The two-day summit was fruitful in that it brought the actual investors, business professionals, experts, financiers and insurers together at a single forum where all kinds of issues from policies and laws to technology and trade were discussed.

The Summit was seriously and actively promoted by the two governments as well. While senior ministers of Nepal attended the inaugural session of the summit and vowed to help in facilitating the investment in power sector in Nepal, the fact that PTC was a co-organizer ensured that big and reputed Indian companies participated in it.

Addressing the summit, president of IPPAN, Dr. Sandip Shah said that investment of \$100 billion is required to harness 40,000 MW from Nepalese rivers. "This money cannot be raised by the government or the donors as they have other pressing socio-economic priorities. It is the private sector that has to be allowed to invest in this field on commercial basis," he said.

Dr. Shah called on authorities of both the countries to come to terms with the fact that power should be treated as commodity, which can be traded on commercial terms. Till now, the issue of power has always been related with that of water resource and nationality, which

has hindered smooth progress on investment and trade of power.

"There are excellent opportunities for power trade between Nepal and India. At present, Nepal can export power to India during monsoon season and import during winter season," said Gyanendra Lal Pradhan of IPPAN. He added that once big hydro projects in Nepal are developed, the neighboring Indian markets provide it with waiting market. "We are lucky that we are so close with Delhi grid and northern grid in India, which are heavily energy deficient," he added.

The first-of-its-kind energy conference of private sector investors of Nepal and India was participated by 150 representatives of 50 influential companies – mostly from India. The participants include some leading names

from India and Nepal like Jaypee Group, GMR, IL&FS, ICICI Securities, POWERGRIP, LANCO Group, Teesta Urja, Alstom Projects, IFFCO-Tokio General Insurance, SBI Capital Markets from India and Butwal Power Company (BPC), SN Power Invest, Standard Chartered Bank, Everest Bank Limited from Nepal.

Underscoring the tremendous potential that lie between Nepal and India, TN Thakur, chairman and managing director of PTC India said, "Energy is fast growing and crossing boundaries. Power trading has a huge scope and could compliment each other's need."

During the summit, Indian ambassador to Nepal Shiv Shankar Mukherjee pledged to fund a 100 to 150 MW project in Nepal. The Indian envoy said that consultations were on to help fund a project that could help in internal consumption of Nepal. The Indian assurance came at a time when Nepal is reeling under the problem of load shedding due to absence of new hydro projects. Mukherjee also said that India is positive towards commercial sales of power to Nepal during winter season even though "India itself faces power shortage."

Prachanda Responds To Peoples' Queries

In a live interview by BBC Nepali Service on Friday (September 8), Maoist chairman Prachanda responded to various questions put forth to him by various people who raised their questions via live telephone, email or mail.

During the one-hour-long first-of-its kind program, Prachanda compared the bloodshed during the decade-long insurgency with 'labor pains.' When a new Nepal is born, everyone will forget the pain as labor pains and will be happy with the beautiful Nepal, he said responding to a question on how he feels about the bloodshed.

When a street vendor woman from Pokhara asked Prachanda why she was targeted by the Maoist bomb, Prachanda said he was sad that in some cases innocent and untargeted civilians had to bear the brunt of violence. He, however, justified the Maoist violent insurgency saying that in a history of every great nation, there would be such a phase.

In reply to a question about why the Maoists used brutal and merciless methods for killing its 'enemies' Prachanda said that his party did not have any policy of using brutal methods and regretted some such incidents.

When a caller from Madi, Chitwan, asked Prachanda about the Maoist bombing of a civilian bus, the chairman said that incident made him sleepless for three nights. "It was one of the most unfortunate incidents," he said, adding that he planned to visit people of Madi soon.

On political issues, Prachanda hoped the forthcoming peace talks would produce date for constituent assembly elections and agreement on arms management.

Prachanda And The Politics Of Kashmir

By batting for Kashmiris and the north-east, the Maoist leader is trying to score runs for his own floundering side

By YUBARAJ GHIMIRE

The feelings of the Communist Party of Nepal towards India fluctuate, though the tendency of Maoist leaders and literature to bracket India as an ally of the US makes it a natural enemy of the 'revolutionaries'. It's a strange relationship: India has been home to most Maoist leaders for the past 11 years of insurgency, and last November the Indian establishment brought the Maoists and the seven-party alliance together after the rebels pledged to join competitive parliamentary politics.

That saw the Maoists toning down their rabidly anti-Indian stance, so it was a surprise to hear Maoist supreme Prachanda proclaim, in an interview to BBC's Nepali service, that he was in favor of the people of Kashmir being given the right to self-determination to resolve the problem. Prachanda also said the same right should be given to people in India's north-east states.

New Delhi's reactions aren't yet known but the statements will certainly not go unnoticed, and Prachanda's main interest also seems to be to generate some kind of reaction. But why did he choose to comment on something which Nepal has long considered an 'internal matter' of India?

One explanation is that Prachanda, faced with doubts over his party's anti-imperialist and anti-feudal credentials after pursuing 'politics of compromise' with Indian assistance, felt the need to dispel the impression effectively. What could be a better way of doing things than what he did?

Prachanda's statements came, no doubt, as justification of the CPN-M policy that Nepal should have about nine ethnic provinces with all of them enjoying the right to self-determination. Does this stretch to the right to secede? Not always, was what Prachanda hinted.

In fact, West Bengal's very anti-Maoist (Nepali) policy is dictated, of course, by the state's history or behavior of intolerance towards naxalites in the early 70s. Large-scale presence of the Nepali Maoists there, especially after 2001, and their instigating the Nepali speaking hill people to assert

the right to self-determination, gave fresh evidence to the state government to treat the Nepali Maoists almost at par with the Naxalites of the past. Sitaram Yechury's encouraging the Nepali Maoists to join the political mainstream ostensibly in the hope that this could set an example for Indian Maoists to follow may not have full concurrence of the CPM Government in West Bengal. In fact, it would be for the CPM in general and Yechury in particular to react to what Prachanda has said.

Maoists who are engaged in dialogue with the government in search of a negotiated settlement of the insurgency that has already taken a toll of around 13,000 lives have said they would not go back to the jungle even if the talk fails. They know, more than anyone else, that they cannot resume activities in India as they had when the anti-Royal political movement was

They know, more than anyone else, that they cannot resume activities in India as they had when the anti-Royal political movement was gathering steam, with full Indian support. Encouraging Maoists to be part of the competitive parliamentary party system was part of that plan. But India is also insisting that the Maoists should not be included in the interim Government till they have laid down arms.

gathering steam, with full Indian support. Encouraging Maoists to be part of the competitive parliamentary party system was part of that plan. But India is also insisting that the Maoists should not be included in the interim Government till they have laid down arms.

This, Prachanda feels, is a betrayal by India. And on this precondition, Maoists also see India moving closer in alliance with the US, to retain the Monarchy - something the rebels want to uproot once and

for all. Even Prime Minister Koirala was accused by the Maoists of having followed a "diktat" from these two countries when he said he wants the 'ceremonial monarchy' to retain some space.

Clearly, for the Maoists, those who do not concur are either supporters of the US or India at the moment. But it would be interesting to see if Prachanda sticks to his opinion on Kashmir and north-east once the decks are cleared for his party's entry into the interim Government. A retreat from that - either out of pragmatic realization or under pressure - would be at the cost of his image of a 'revolutionary'

(Courtesy: The Indian Express)

“Half A Million Job Opportunities Required”: Khetan

In his presentation at the launching of Business Vision 2006 of the Kathmandu University School of Management, noted industrialist Rajendra Khetan talked about the armed conflict and prospects of transformation of Nepalese business sector.

“An overtly agrarian country, more than 30% people of Nepal are still under poverty line. It is, therefore, evident that agriculture alone cannot sustain the required socio-economic needs of the people anymore,” he stated.

Predicting that the continuation of conflict could ultimately turn Nepal into a failed state, Khetan said “it is high time to implement radical socio economic inclusion and empowerment of the deprived masses with equitable distribution with overall political settlement.”

He stated that the country required job opportunities for at least half a million people within next ten years by increasing the share of private sector through trade in the GDP from existing 15% to 50% by rapid industrialization.

“These initiatives can be successfully fulfilled if and only if there is time bound coherent strategy to ensure socio-economic inclusion. It is now imperative to build inclusive and broad economic outline for this country with minimum common understanding among political forces,” he said.

In his presentation, Khetan listed the following few select areas where Nepal has tremendous potentials for growth. He also elaborated the potentials of each sector:

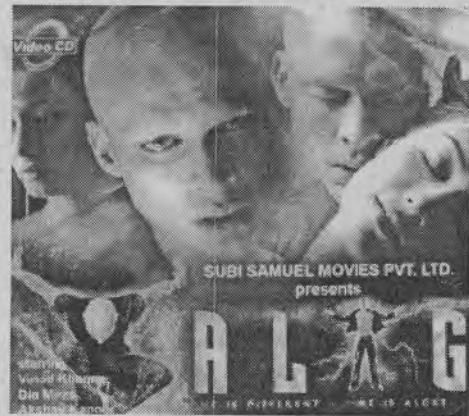
Bio-Diversification: Nepal is prominent for its bio diversity and is called a naturalist’s paradise which can lead to high value agro based industrialized economy. In recent years, indigenous, wild biological and genetic resources and diversities, plants, medicinal herbs such as Yarshagumba, etc. have attained a good market value. The annual income of medicinal herbs is about 10 million US dollars. However, about 90 per cent of the herbs are exported at low prices because of absence of processing facilities within the country.

Water and Power: The prospects for water resources are enormous, yet problems in the process of executing hydel projects and irrigation are challenging. The urgent need of the hour is to develop the country’s abundant water resources for both energy generation and irrigation of agriculture through meaningful sharing in economic terms with needy countries like India. According to a rough estimation the commercially viable hydropower potential of Nepal is 43,000 Megawatt (MW), which will require investment of over \$100 billion for harnessing. Besides, it is believed that more than 8 million hectares of barren lands can be irrigated from the water resources of Nepal.

Service Sector: Nepal is home to perfect amalgamation of two of the world’s most ancient and richest civilizations – Hindu and Buddhists. The country’s culture finds expression in a wide variety of forms - religion, art, music, dance and social and religious festivals. Being located between China and India – two largest and fastest growing economies in the world – provides Nepal with invaluable real estate in the globe. This location can be used as transit point and manufacturing zone including offshore facilities supported by special economic zones. Nepal needs to develop as a hub of South Asia and largely as Air Transit Point of Asia as potential areas for the country including exercising fifth freedom rights.

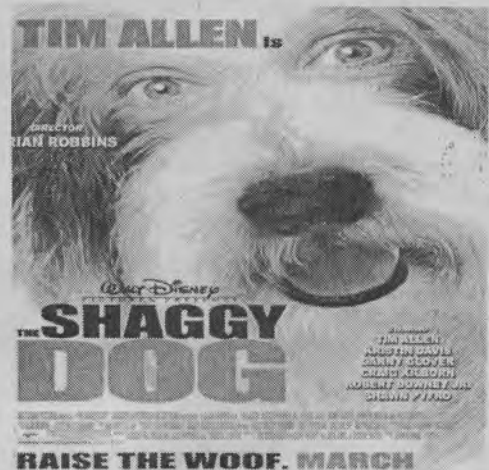
Way Ahead: The burning question before Nepal today is how to provide equitable economic opportunities to all sections of its society. How to ensure two square meals, healthy life, good education, secure environment, peace and opportunities to prosper in a manner that is inclusive and equitable? An economy that is inclusive and fully integrated will only become vibrant and be able to sustain the nation while leading to peace and prosperity. ■

CINEMA



Hindi

Phir Hera Pheri
Chup Chup Ke
Fanna
The Killer
Omakara
36 China Town
Gangstar
Krish
Alag
Goalmaal



English

Shaggy Dog
She's the Man
Down in the Valley
House of Dead 2
Hale Light
Tuespasseus
Kidulthood
Over the Hedge
The Boston
Madea's Family Reunion

Source : Super star Ph : 4242000

KIRAN KC

Country Comedian

Comedian, KC has carved a separate niche for himself

By KABI ADHIKARI

In the past, KC used to act in comic dramas and tele-serials made by the legendary duo Madan Krishna Shrestha and Hari Bansha Acharya. KC himself claimed that he was a product of MaHa stable that produced a number of comic actors such as Rajaram Poudel.

But in recent years, KC has been able to successfully come out of the shadow of MaHa and carve a separate niche for himself. Currently, he is riding on a high reputation following his comical role in hit tele-serial called Jire Khursani.

Hailing from what is known as Kaath region – in the outskirts of the valley – KC has brought a typical taste of comedy to Nepalese audience. And he has been able to play different actors with equal finesse. From a Tharu youth he played in Pandhra Gate to the avuncular jester in Jire Khursani, KC has been able to win accolades for his performances.

Two decades ago, when he started acting, his first tele-film 'Pandhra Gate' in 2042 was a huge hit. Even though his role was a small one in that serial, he managed to draw the attention of a fair number of crowd.

After the success of Pandhra Gate, he regularly acted in a number of comic serials made by MaHa duo. In his partnership with Rajaram Poudel, he gradually began to earn both name and fame. Kiran and Rajaram were even termed as KiRa duo in subsequent years. While Rajaram has left for the US in search of greener pastures, Kiran continued to engage in acting along with producing tele-serials as well as feature films.

The struggle that he went through in the last two decades has begun to bear fruit. He is now an established actor and producer. He has a big fan following. And he has even managed to earn his name by moving away from the shadows of MaHa legend.

Born in 1957 in Imadol, Lalitpur, K.C has played more than 115 tele-films in his

life. Among those best liked of his tele-films include Pandhra Gate, Dashain, Lalpurja, Kantipur, Raat, Bigyapan etc. All of these tele-serials were made by MaHa. In recent years, he has earned big popularity for his roles in telefilms like Jire Khursani and several other feature films in which he has played the role of not only comedian but also villain.

"Tele-films have big hand in establishing me in the Nepalese film

shows during annual Gaijatra festival since 1992. In partnership with various other artistes, he has worked in satirical shows that paint the ludicrous picture of contemporary society and incisively hit at its weaknesses. KC proudly claims that till now he has already performed for about 1000 times in the stage.

Besides acting, he is also known as a producer. "Tan Ta Sarai Ni Bigris Ni Badri" and "Je Bho Ramrai Bho" are two feature films produced by him. Both of these comedy-based films were super hits. KC plans to continue producing feature films in coming days also.

Now, he is busy in two feature films - "Hami Sathi Bhai" produced by Dilip Rayamajhi and "Duniya" produced by Binod Sherchan. At present, he is busy in



KC: Comical Character

industry" said KC. Sampati is one of the first feature films he worked in his life. After the success of that feature film, more and more producers started approaching him. Till date, KC has acted in about 80 feature films. Garib, Pariwar, Karodpati, Balidan, Basanti, Truck driver, Prempinda etc. can be taken as examples of his feature films.

KC has been actively involved in performing in the stage since 1970. Nata, Suiting, Remote Control, Bose Andrabhudi, Mutuko Betha, Manab Khappar, Akash Nilo Hunchha etc are the plays and dramas in which he has performed. Besides, he has been regularly hosting stage comical

two tele-serials ire Khursani and MaHa Chautari.

KC has received training on acting and dancing from the National Theatre of Dance. He started his journey in theatre from Royal Nepal Academy.

Apart from acting and producing, KC is also involved in social works. He lends his contribution on campaigns to raise public awareness on blood donation, HIV/AIDS and Clean Environment, among others.

Apart from acting and producing films, he also sings. He is planning to bring out two albums with different types of songs in each of them.

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