

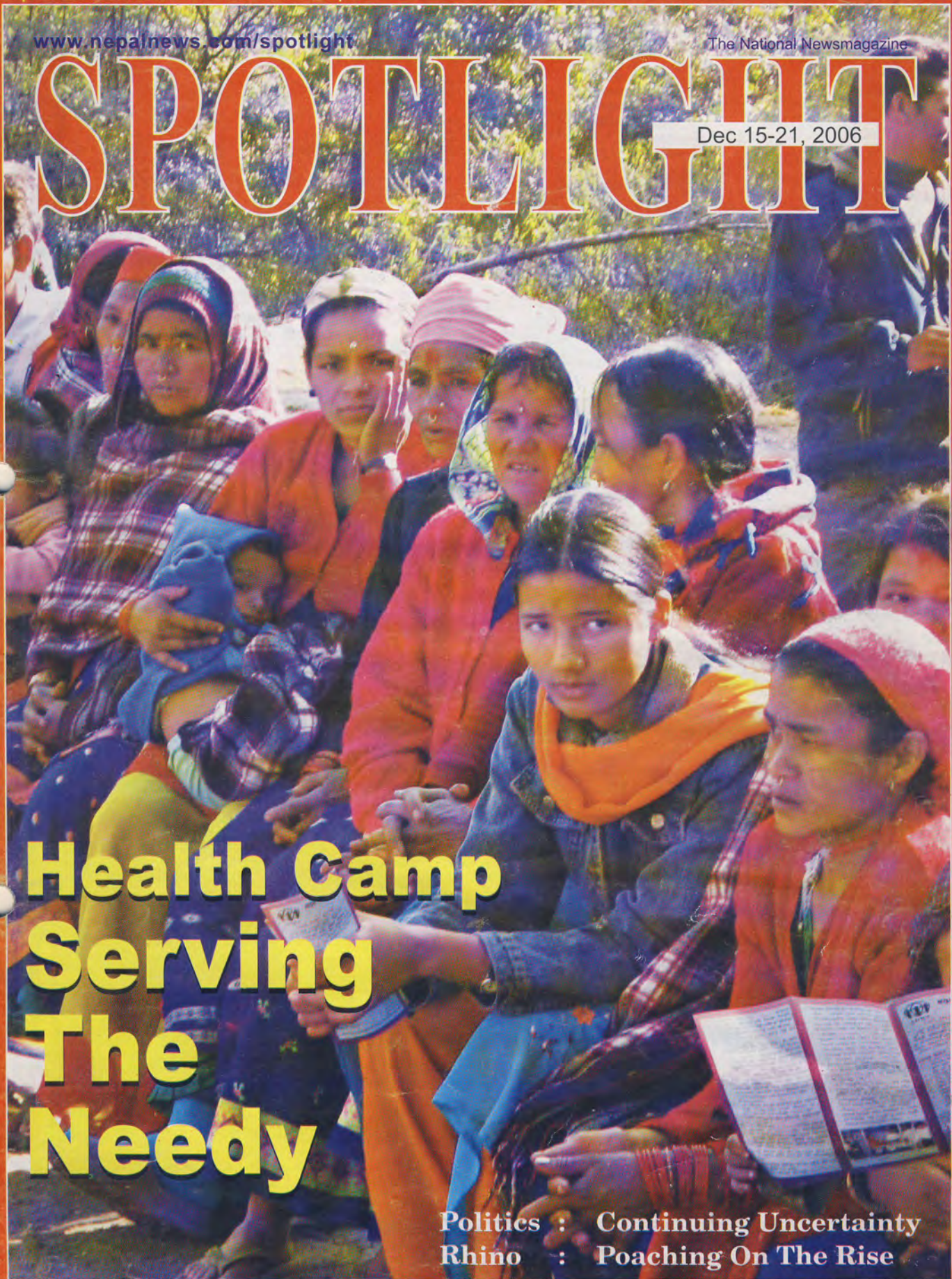
Opinion: Dr. Ananda Bahadur Thapa

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The National Newsmagazine

SPOTLIGHT

Dec 15-21, 2006



Health Camp Serving The Needy

Politics : Continuing Uncertainty
Rhino : Poaching On The Rise

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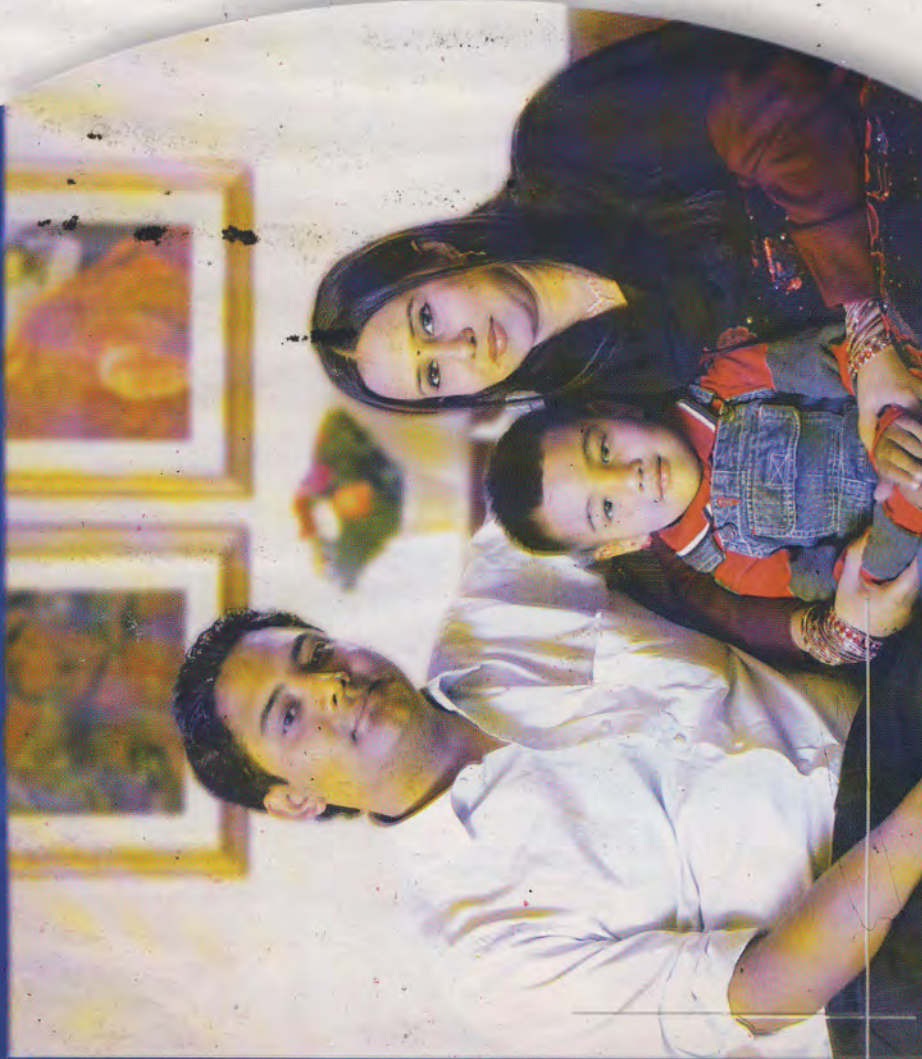
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COVER STORY : Serving The Needy Women

The mobile health camps provide an economical and convenient alternative to needy population of rural Nepal

(Cover photos taken at Gaira, Doti, by Keshab Poudel)

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POLITICS : Democratizing the Democrats

First and foremost, there is a need to democratize the democrats

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IDPs: Untold Miseries

Despite peace agreement, many internally displaced persons are not able to return home

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SPOTLIGHT

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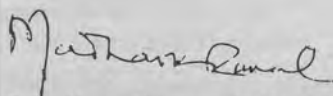
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The failures in reaching the final agreement for an interim constitution clearly manifests the glaring lack of sincerity in both the SPA and the CPN (Maoists). Even the marriage of convenience seems heading towards an early divorce. If both the parties were honest and loyal to their country and the people and not stooges of alien power what should have prevented them from coming to an early understanding? Does not this kind of behavior prove the famous Johnsonian dictum that "politics is the last refuge of a scoundrel." There is no word like "morality" in Girija Koirala's lexicon. The Maoist supremo has lately exposed his opportunistic ideology. And it is no use talking about the lesser politicians who only work as lackeys of foreign power. That's why we have been emphasizing for a change in the political leadership. As long an honest, proud and patriotic leadership does not emerge, poor Nepal will never be able to avoid the possibility of disintegration or even extinction. As such, let the present leadership prove for once, that they too can take independent judgment and reach an understanding for the interim constitution. Since the final and all authoritative constitution will be drafted only by the elected constituent assembly, the present brawl about the interim constitution is totally unnecessary, unwarranted and childish.

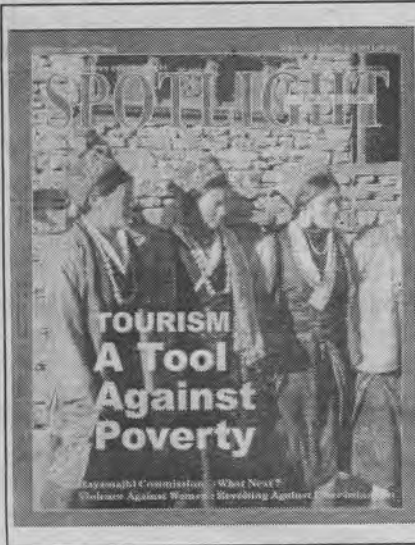
Hoping against hope that the SPA and the CPN (Maoist) will agree to an interim constitution and move forward towards holding all important election to the constituent assembly that is sure to bring new faces in Nepalis politics, we would like to make a few suggestions for arms management and amalgamation of the Maoist insurgent cadres in the social fabric of Nepal. As far the Maoist cadres are converted, let the cadres themselves, for a change, make a decision what they would like to do. Here are four options (1) Foreign employment: Those cadres who would decide for a foreign employment must be given first priority. For this the government must make special arrangements with respective foreign governments. A few thousand cadres can easily be accommodated under this head. (2) Education: Those cadres who prefer to go for higher education must be given all facilities to pursue their objectives. (3) Continue their occupation: Those cadres who would like to continue their present profession must be provided jobs in Nepal's security forces in accordance with their qualifications. Since CPN (Maoists) have joined the main stream Nepali politics, they won't need their armed forces any more. And (4) Rehabilitation: those cadres who would prefer to go back to their civilian life should be provided ample financial help to restart their peaceful life. Now, regarding the arms management: Since the CPN(Maoist) will have to be equated with other political parties and should not be permitted to keep their army, all their arms could be handed over to Nepal Army since that work as their army also. We think this should be the very agreeable solution to both problems. And this could also pose a test of sincerity of the CPN(Maoist), India, other donor countries who think they are friends of Nepal and even the United Nations. These arrangements, if accepted by all concerned, will not only serve our purpose and pave the way for a permanent peace but also save huge sums of money that would be needed in the construction of camps, roads and other infrastructures and the continued maintenance of the insurgents for an unspecified time, as sheer waste of rare resources. We will wait and watch. ■


Madhav Kumar Rimal
Chief Editor & Publisher

Tourism Vs Poverty

The cover story (Tourism: A Tool Against Poverty, SPOTLIGHT December 8) has pointed out a potential area where Nepal can benefit a lot. As it is richly endowed with natural beauty and cultural attractions, bringing tourists to the rural areas could result in direct benefit of the poor community. This could lead to substantial reduction in poverty, which is the biggest challenge for the country. These schemes should be linked with national plans and policies for the optimum results.

Janak KC
Lagankhel



Planned Intervention

The TRPAP project has shown a potential area where the authorities need to focus on in order to defeat poverty (Tourism: A Tool Against Poverty, SPOTLIGHT December 8). Since the project has shown the viability of utilizing tourism to fight against poverty, the authorities must prepare a planned intervention. They need to develop packages and move ahead in close collaboration with the tourism entrepreneurs to deal with the issue. Without seeking the help of tourism entrepreneurs these schemes will not succeed. Ultimately, it is the private sector that can work in the tourism area. With a vast experience and knowledge, Nepalese private sector is fully equipped to cater to all kinds of tourists. Whereas the government does not have similar expertise and experience. Therefore, the first thing the government should do now is share the experiences of TRPAP's success with the travel trade entrepreneurs. The government should seek their suggestions and incorporate it in a separate policy to promote rural tourism. Based on that policy and set guidelines, it can facilitate the private sector's role in actually bringing the tourists and taking them to remote areas. That will lead to a sustainable development of rural tourism.

Keshab Baral
Tinkune

Cultural Tourism

As opposed to the natural tourism, cultural tourism can result in direct and

more resources and income for the rural community (Tourism: A Tool Against Poverty, SPOTLIGHT December 8). Currently, tourists around the world not only look for natural beauties but also cultural attractions. They are always excited to explore new and unique cultures. How fellow human beings are living in remote parts of the world? This is an exciting option for them. For such tourists, Nepal has enormous advantages – from Tamang and Magars in middle hills to sherpas in mountains and tharu in the southern plains – there are many cultural attractions. Each of these communities have rich and unique cultural traits. They can be marketed to attract tourists from all over the world.

Shyam Rai
Kalimati

No Trickle Down

For years economists and planners have emphasized trickle down theory based on which they claim that even the poorest segment of the population can ultimately gain access to resources that flow down in a trickled-down manner (Tourism: A Tool Against Poverty, SPOTLIGHT December 8). They claim that pouring resources at the center, therefore, will ultimately help those living at the bottom of the development ladder. However, this theory is highly unjust. As opposed to trickle down, people are now calling for direct benefit to the actual sufferers. In this connection, the use of tourism in rural community comes as a viable solution. As per this

method, tourists will visit the remote areas and directly contribute to the local economy. For instance, if they go and stay at a Tamang village in Rasuwa, they will pay money for hospitality directly to the community. Likewise, they will also pay money for local food stuffs, vegetables etc. New job opportunities can be generated and income level increased. However, for this to happen, the authorities must first focus on building at least basic infrastructures and maintaining clean hygiene in those regions. Local stakeholders must be trained about basic hospitality business as well.

Laxman Thapa
Sanepa

Women Story

The article "Revolting Against Discrimination" (SPOTLIGHT December 8) demonstrates the socio-cultural discrimination that is meted out to women of this country. In various communities, women are still treated like animals. It is very sad to note that the dawn of modernism has not yet reached those communities. At a time when the world is marching ahead with men and women working shoulder to shoulder, our people are still deeply entrenched in unexplainable traditions and superstitions. No government plan or policy can resolve this matter. What is needed is massive education and awareness campaign.

Hemanta Sharma
Balaju

Economic Uncertainty

With the mixed signals being given by the Maoist leadership, there is uncertainty regarding the course Nepal's economy will take in the coming days (Will It Stay The Course? SPOTLIGHT December 8). If the Maoists decide to stick with their ideology, they will be certain to introduce radical changes in the current economic policies. It is unclear how they will manage it at a time when Nepal is already a member of integrate global economic system. Such radical changes will also have long-term repercussions for the country.

Jagadish Shrestha
Mangal Bazaar

Foreign Employment Agencies On Strike

The foreign employment agencies are preparing to go on strike beginning Monday (December 11) after the government did not show interest to meet their demands. They will start their strike by picketing the Department for Labor and Employment Promotion on Monday morning. LP Sanwa Limbu, president of Nepal Association of Foreign Employment Agencies (NAFEA) said that their strike will go on indefinitely. The association claims that decision of the government to impose 2 percent tax plus 5 percent (of the total expenditure) service tax on each individual leaving for work overseas as being against public interest. The association also opposes the government decision to increase the deposit amount for the agencies from Rs 500,000 to Rs 3 million. Limbu claimed that if these provisions are imposed, 80 percent of agencies will be closed down. *Nepal Samacharpatra daily reports.*

Telecom To Float Rs 2 Billion Worth Shares

The government has decided to sell off its equity stake in the Nepal Telecom by floating shares worth Rs 2.25 billion in the public. Although the NT had been turned into a company from government-owned enterprise, the government still owned majority of its shares. And now the Privatization Cell at the Ministry of Finance, has decided to sell off the shares to public and NT employees. The total capital of NT has been calculated to be Rs 15 billion. As such, 10 percent of the total capital – that is Rs 1.5 billion – will be sold to public while 5 percent – that is Rs 750 million – will be sold to NT employees. NT managing director Sugat Ratna Kansakar informed that shares will be sold to employees by forming a committee. *Nepal Samacharpatra daily reports.*

Students Disrupt RPP-Nepal's Meet

A regional meeting of Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP-Nepal) was

disrupted after irate students barged into the venue at Party Palace in Mahendra Pul in Pokhara and vandalized furniture along with manhandling party leaders. Student activists belonging to sister organization of Nepali Congress, UML and Maoists barged into the venue angered by the remarks made by the party president Rabindra Nath Sharma that 'King is needed' for the country. Sharma, who recently replaced Kamal Thapa – the home minister at the royal cabinet – as the president of the party, along with other leaders and cadres had to leave in a hurry after students resorted to vandalism. *Leading dailies report*

Maoist Victims Warn Of Armed Struggle

At a time when the Maoists have put down their guns and the People's Liberation Army (PLA) limited within cantonments, victims of Maoist atrocities are preparing to launch an armed struggle. "Some of our central committee members have gone underground and some to different districts to make preparations," said Dharma Raj Neupane, president of the Maoist Victims Association. He said they suffered much during the peaceful protests. Many agitators have died on the road but the government turned deaf ear to their demands. According to him, they have a record of over 200,000 victims from 27,000 households in all districts excluding Manang and Mustang. "We are given assurances but in vain," said Bhojraj Timilsina, spokesperson of the association. According to him, the victims of Maoist atrocities in villages would rather burn themselves along with their family members instead of being ruled by the Maoists. "This is not a fiction. One has to go through the situation we have been through the bloodshed to feel it," he said. Neupane said they were forced to flee their homes leaving everything behind, while the ministers obtained compensation and built buildings in the capital by burning down their huts in villages. The real victims are left high and dry. "We are to be considered not consoled," he said.

The victims have forwarded the demand for representation in the interim legislature and interim government along with providing compensation to them, employment for youths, education for their children and return of all property that they have lost. "We are left with no option but to launch an organized armed struggle for justice," Neupane said. *The Himalayan Times daily reports.*

Democracy Is Basis For Rights Protection: PM

In his message on the occasion of the 58th International Human Rights Day, Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala has said that democratic system is the basis of human rights protection. He stated that with the country having entered in a new phase, Nepal will not have to live under the dark clouds of fear and terror anymore. "We are now on the way towards consolidating democratic system to ensure human rights," he stated. *Compiled from reports.*

Effective And Independent NHRC Demanded

Key donor representatives including the chief of the OHCHR-Nepal Lena Sundh has called on the government appealing for setting up an independent, effective and inclusive National Human Rights Commission (NHRC). "The peace process which has just begun to take root needs an independent, inclusive and effective NHRC to monitor, investigate and report human rights abuses," said Sundh. She added that a strong national human rights institution is needed to provide moral leadership and expertise on human rights issues and to provide a voice for the impoverished, marginalized and exploited in society. She said that the establishment of OHCHR could never substitute a strong, independent and effective NHRC. Sundh along with the UN Resident Coordinator Matthew Kahame and key international donors, in their meeting with the Prime Minister, had emphasized the need to appoint independent and representative

Commissioners without further delay in a transparent and consultative process in line with the Paris Principles that takes into account the views of civil society. *Compiled from reports.*

Women's Contribution In Overseas Works Is High: A Report

There are over 78,000 Nepalese women working overseas countries, except in India, according to a report. The report prepared by Nepal Institute for Development Studies with the help of UNIFEM has shown that 9.13 percent of overseas workers are women. The women send home Rs 11 billion every year in forms of remittances. Although women generally earn less compared to men, they save more. The report concludes that better environment should be created to facilitate their foreign employment. Of the total women working overseas, 66 percent work as house maids while the rest work in factories, offices and restaurants. An average stay of a woman in overseas is around three and a half years. The study on migration and remittance was conducted by Ganesh Gurung, Dr. Jagannath Adhikari, David Seddon and Dr. Chandra Bhadra. The study points out that apart from India, there are 858,451 Nepalese working in overseas countries. There are 1550 women working in UAE, 1870 in Kuwait, 1600 in Qatar, 30,000 in Saudi Arabia, 1340 in Bahrain, 400 in Lebanon, and 350 in Israel – a total of 40,000 in Gulf countries. Likewise, a substantial number of Nepalese women are working in Hong Kong, followed by the United States, United Kingdom, Japan and Australia. *Nepalnews.com reports.*

Mohan Bikram To Stay Underground

Claiming that the real democracy has not been restored in Nepal, a senior communist leader – said to be political guru of current Maoist leadership in the

past – Mohan Bikram Singh has decided to continue to stay underground. His party, Communist Party of Nepal (Unity Center-Mashal) will continue to remain underground because the real democracy cannot be established till the country is in the grip semi-colonialists, Singh said without elaborating at a rare press conference held in the capital on Thursday (December 7). He informed that the political front of the party – People's Front – and its two leaders MP Chitra Bahadur KC and Sonam will remain over ground and involve in open activities. Singh welcomed Maoist decision to return to peaceful competitive politics. But he accused the Maoists of demonstrating aberrations in their policy and practice. He said that no form of monarchy should remain in the country. *Leading dailies report.*

Palace Pays Custom Duty

The palace has paid custom duty and demurrage (delay charge) on the 'hunting trophy' that had arrived at Tribhuvan International Airport from Austria addressed to Crown Prince Paras. The parcel had lied uncollected for the last three months at TIA. According to the customs officials, palace officials paid Rs 130,900 to release their parcel. This is the first time the palace had paid custom duty after the May 18 House of Representatives Declaration stated that even royal family will have to pay taxes. *Kantipur daily reports.*

Upper Seti Project To Inundate 811 Hectares Of Land

The proposed Upper Seti Storage Hydroelectricity Project, which aims to produce 132 MW of electricity for Tanahu district, will sweep away 811 hectares of land, which includes forests, wetlands and also a habitat for hundreds of conserved wild species. Jack Prosser, a member of an environment team that conducted a study in the area, said that out of the total area to be covered by the project, 121 hectares is either under cultivation or has houses, 127 hectares form a grazing area, forests occupy 428

hectares and 227 hectares form other barren land. Prosser is a senior partner of the Environment Planning Associated and his study was a part of the studies for the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The project area is a habitat for 27 species of mammals, 17 reptiles and amphibians, 62 birds and 46 butterflies and moths. Prosser said his team recorded 209 wild species of plants, some of which – including the Screw Pine and four types of orchids – are under the conservation category. He said that a supplementary Environment Impact Assessment is necessary to make a final decision on the project. According to Toshiko Shimada, a member of the JICA study group, 1057 households will lose their private land, 155 households would lose their structures and 122 households will be affected. "We need to develop a strong resettlement and social action plan for the families that will be affected," she said. *The Himalayan Times daily reports.*

JTMM Steps Up Its Activities, Starts Raiding Houses For Weapons

In what appears to be its hunt for weapons to intensify its violent campaign, the cadres of Janatantrik Terai Mukti Morcha (JTMM) have raided houses of villagers of Hardiya Paltuwa VDC of Rautahat district to confiscate their weapons, according to local villagers. After they looted a gun from the residence of Shyam Mohan Bhandari of nearby Bishrampur VDC, the JTMM cadres then raided houses belonging to Khovari Raya Yadav, Ganesh Raya Yadav, Bhuplal Raya Yadav, and Chandeshwore Raya Yadav looking for weapons. Meanwhile, although the local administration had started returning privately owned guns – which it had taken control of owing to Maoist insurgency in the past - to the individuals, given the violent activities of JTMM, it has stopped doing so from Monday. Superintendent of Police of Rautahat District Police Office Ram Kumar Khanal said that the process of returning the guns has now been stopped. *Nepal Samacharpatra daily reports.*



PM Koirala hosting a reception on the occasion of 58th Human Rights Day

Gorkhapatra

CHIEF OF ARMY STAFF (COAS) OF NEPALI ARMY GENERAL Rukmangad Katawal has expressed that NA is fully committed to "democracy and human rights." Addressing army officers on the human rights day, General Katawal said that NA is committed to work for the Rule of Law and protection of individual rights. Meanwhile, International Red Cross Committee provided training to army officials on human rights issues.

IN A TRAGIC INCIDENT, FOUR PERSONS INCLUDING A woman and her three kids died of carbon monoxide poisoning on Wednesday night (December 6) in Dhapasi of Kathmandu. The family of Shanti Bhujel met the tragic end because in an attempt to protect from winter cold they had shut down all doors and windows while burning a stove inside their room. Along with Bhujel – a single mother who lived in a rented apartment – three kids including daughters Anu Bhujel, 9 and Bunu Bhujel, 5 and a son Saru Bhujel, 4, were also killed. Police say her husband had abandoned her in the past. Doctors say that sleeping in a small and closed room by burning stove leads to quick depletion of oxygen and poisoning due to carbon monoxide.

US AMBASSADOR JAMES F. MORIARTY, ON THURSDAY (December 7), announced the opening of USAID/Nepal-supported Mediation Centers at the Supreme Court and at the Patan Appellate Court. "Opening the mediation centers here at the Supreme Court and Patan Appellate Court is a major step in making court-related mediation a reality in Nepal," the Ambassador said at a brief ceremony at the Supreme Court. "The centers have been established as part of USAID/Nepal's three-year, \$5.6 million program to enhance the administration of justice in court, prosecutor and public defense organizations, to increase access to justice for the poor and disenfranchised, and to improve advocacy and legal frameworks for rule of law and justice sector reform," states a press release issued by the US Embassy. "At the new mediation centers, 80 newly trained mediators now have the opportunity to practice their new skills. Additionally, these centers provide a visible presence in the court, managing the process for initiating and concluding mediation." The initiative to open the centers involved a partnership among USAID/Nepal, nongovernmental organization ARD, the courts, the Nepal Bar Association, and FNCCI.

THE GOVERNMENT HAS PREPARED AGRICULTURE promotion policy aimed at market promotion and commercialization of agriculture. Joint secretary at the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives Asheshwore Jha said that the policy includes provisions on diversification of agriculture, ways to involve private sector and assurance of government of support. "The policy has been prepared with the thinking that the living standards of farmers cannot be uplifted without transforming the agriculture from current subsistence-based to commercialized," Jha said. It has also laid emphasis on the building of necessary infrastructure, technological improvement and conducting special programs to help women, Dalits and other disadvantaged people. The agro promotion policy is a part of the umbrella National Agriculture Policy of 2005.

MAOIST CADRES KEPT A TEAM OF POLITICAL LEADERS and human rights activists in captivity for four hours in Sukadeva of Hekuli VDC of Dang district. The 25-member team including leaders of Nepali Congress (NC), People's Front (PF), Unified Marxist Leninist (UML), human rights activists and journalists had gone to the area to probe allegations that Maoist cadres had looted food grains and wood from the houses of district-level Congress leaders Lokmani Giri and Devendra Giri. However, the team was stopped by local Maoist leaders including Jehendar, Bikas and Padam. They were then harassed and kept in captivity. They were later freed at Maoist central member Narayan Sharma ordered their release through phone. Team members later told media that the Maoist cadres raised slogans against them and used vulgar words to belittle them. The Maoist cadres also claimed that the food grains were captured by 'farmers.' The team has concluded that in the past few days, the Maoists have felled wooden logs worth Rs 2 million from the orchard belonging to Dipak Giri, Shambhu Giri and Devendra Giri – all three of whom are currently displaced due to Maoist threat.

ACCORDING TO THE REPORT BY THE AUDITOR GENERAL, the total government arrears has reached Rs 30 billion. In this year alone, the arrears amounted to Rs 9.86 billion. Auditor General Gehendra Nath Adhikari submitted the annual audit report to Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala on Wednesday. Submitting the annual report, AG Adhikari said the government needs to introduce stringent measures to control irregularities in ministries and various other public offices. The 2000-page audit report shows that the unsettled account (beruju) this year stood at Rs.9.86 billion. Of the total Finance Ministry incurred such arrears of Rs 2.9 billion followed by Defense Ministry (Rs 1.35 billion), Works and Physical Planning Ministry (Rs 1.04 billion), Education Ministry (Rs 990 million) and Home Ministry (Rs 950 million).

A DAY AFTER THE EX-ARMY MEN DEMONSTRATED against the delay in the hearing of their case, the Supreme Court, on Tuesday (December 5), ordered the government and the Nepali Army (NA) headquarters to make transparent the use of the Army Welfare Fund (AWF). A division bench comprising judges Min Bahadur Rayamajhi and Damodar Prasad Sharma gave the order, asking the Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the NA headquarters to maintain transparency in the use of the welfare fund set up with the money deducted from the salary of NA troops working in UN's peacekeeping missions abroad. The bench also ordered the army headquarters to maintain standard auditing and disclose the details of the Fund. A group of ex-army servicemen had filed a writ petition at the Supreme Court four years ago. In their writ, they accused the army headquarters of not providing salary to Nepali UN peacekeepers as per the agreement between the Nepal government and the UN.

“All things will be done after arms management.”

Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, stating that promulgation of interim constitution will be done only after the completion of arms management.

* * *

“Any delay in the date for CA elections could derail the entire peace process.”

Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, senior Maoist leader, in Kantipur Television.

* * *

“We have completed our job and now the top leaders will finalize the interim statute.”

Krishna Sitaula, Home Minister and coordinator of government talks team, talking to reporters.

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“After promulgating interim constitution, all issues will be dealt with on a war footing.”

Madhav Kumar Nepal, general secretary of the Unified Marxist Leninist (UML), speaking at a press meet in Nepalgunj, in The Himalayan Times.

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TKP

“The peace process which has just begun to take root needs an independent, inclusive and effective NHRC to monitor, investigate and report human rights abuses.”

Lena Sundh, representative of UN OHCHR to Nepal, calling for the appointment of commissioners at the National Human Rights Commission.

* * *

“We are left with no option but to launch an organized armed struggle for justice.”

Dharma Raj Neupane, president of Maoist Victims Association, claiming

that they would launch armed struggle for justice, in The Himalayan Times.

* * *

“We are not asking them to give us visa. We are only asking them to refund our money and compensate our lost time.”

Rajendra Bastakoti, president of DV Victims Association – an association of people who could not get the visa despite being selected in Diversity Visa scheme – in Kantipur.

* * *

TRANSITION

SIGNED: The accord on the monitoring of the management of arms and armies, by representatives of the government, the Maoists and the UN. Earlier, the accord was signed by the government and the Maoist side but following ‘some minor changes’ the UN official **Ian Martin** also put his signature in the accord.

RETURNED: **Ian Martin**, Personal Representative of UN Secretary General **Kofi Annan**, to Kathmandu,

after two-weeks long visit to New York.

FORMED: Central camp monitoring committee with the participation of UN officials, Nepali Army and Maoist representatives. The committee is headed by UN official **Jan Eric Wilhemson**. NA has sent three member team including Brigadier General **Shiva Ram Pradhan** and Colonels **Ganesh Basnet** and **Subarna Mahat** to the committee. Likewise, Maoist representatives include **Pasang, Baldev and Prabhakar**.

BAGGED: Three bronze medals by **Manita Shahi, Deepak Bista** and

Ayesha Shakya in the 63 kg, 75 kg and 59 kg category, respectively, of Taekwondo at the 15th Asian Games in Doa.

APPOINTED: **Dr. Purna Chandra Karmacharya**, as the vice chancellor of the BP Koirala Institute of Health Sciences, by Prime Minister, in his capacity as chancellor of the Institute and as per the recommendation made by co-chancellor.

DIED: **Raj Bahadur Chipalu**, reputed businessman and founding president of Nepal Chamber of Commerce (NCC), at the age of 94.

WILL NEA OPEN ITS EYES?

Load-shedding Problem

By AB THAPA

We have again started to face serious power shortage crisis. The NEA has already begun load shedding. Now we are having interruption of power supply in rotation in evening hours. The nature of the load shedding indicates that the NEA is now experiencing shortage of capacity (KW) as well as energy (KWh). Fortunately, the impact of present power shortage crisis could be considerably softened in near future if the full potential of the existing Kulekhani storage reservoir is used. Will the NEA open its eyes to utilize such potential?

The power shortage crisis is going to deepen in the years to come because the demand for electricity in our national grid with a total firm capacity of about 500 MW is expected to grow steadily at an annual rate of at least about 5 to 7 percent. Except for the 70 MW Middle Marshyangdi Project, other major new power projects are nowhere near which would have come into operation within the next 5 to 7 years. Thus we are now being dragged into a whirlpool of deep power shortage crisis due to our shortsighted planning. However, there might still be a way to soften the impact of this power shortage crisis if we launched a programme on war footing to utilize the full potential of the existing Kulekhani storage reservoir and hydropower stations (Kulekhani 1 & 2 hydropower) to generate extra power by diverting from Kathmandu valley the surplus flow of the Bagmati river and later on the Melamchi river into the Kulekhani reservoir. The design of the proposed Kulekhani 3 Hydropower should also be reviewed and perhaps its capacity might have to be raised to over 100 MW to meet the steadily growing peak load demand if it is decided to divert the Bagmati water into the Kulekhani reservoir.

Half-empty Kulekhani Reservoir

It is reported almost every year in local newspapers that the electricity generation of the Kulekhani hydropower stations is going to be reduced by a substantial margin because the Kulekhani storage reservoir is half-empty at the end of the monsoon season, with the result that the NEA would be forced to resort to load shedding in the coming dry season. This problem would certainly be solved if the surplus water from the Bagmati river in the Kathmandu valley is pumped into the Kulekhani reservoir to be stored for the supply to the Kulekhani hydropower stations in the dry season.

The Kulekhani reservoir operation rule for the Kulekhani-1 power station with an installed capacity of 60MW is framed by a basic discharge pattern of 6.2 cum./sec. in the dry season from December to March and 2.1 cum./sec. in the wet season from April to November. The former is designed to generate four-hour peak power using the maximum discharge of 13.1 cum./sec. and 20-hour base load using 4.8 cum./sec. The latter

is to utilize 6.55 cum./sec. for the peak power and 1.21 cum./sec. for the base load respectively.

Available water for the Kulekhani-2 power station with an installed capacity of 32 MW is comprised of the outflow from the Kulekhani-1 and the runoff of the Mandu river. The maximum Kulekhani-2 discharge is designed to be 13.3 cum./sec.

Diversion from Kathmandu to Kulekhani

The Bagmati river water in surplus to the need in the Kathmandu valley could be diverted into the Kulekhani reservoir from a place near Chobhar gorge. Mean flow of the Bagmati river at Chobhar is quite abundant during the monsoon seasons. Even in the winter months of the dry season starting from December to the end of March when the demand for electricity in Nepal is very high the average flow of the Bagmati is expected to be over 2 cum./sec. The half empty space of the Kulekhani storage reservoir (with an effective storage capacity of 73.3 million cubic meters) could be utilized to accommodate about 20 million cubic meters monsoon season flow of the Bagmati river. Thus the Kulekhani hydropower could be provided throughout the 4 winter months additional 4 cum./sec. flow. Out of this total flow, the water drawn directly from the Bagmati would be about 2 cum./sec. and the Bagmati water stored in the Kulekhani reservoir would provide the remaining 2 cum./sec.

The diversion of the surplus Bagmati water from Kathmandu valley to the Kulekhani reservoir could be a very simple and at the same time the most cost effective proposition despite the fact that at first glance it might appear to be a somewhat complicated engineering task. Let us consider that we are going to draw about 4 cum./sec. Bagmati water from somewhere near Chobar. It is explained hereinafter that the total power generation of the Kulekhani 1 & 2 hydropower plants would almost be doubled by investing only about US \$20 million in the construction of the proposed diversion structures including a pumping station.

The Proposed Design

We might have to build a 15-MW pump station at Chobar to lift 4 cum./sec water to a height of about 300 meters which might be equivalent in height to the full supply level (FSL) of the Kulekhani storage reservoir. It is equally possible that instead of one big pump station we might need several small pump stations with a total capacity of about 15 MW if the topography does not allow to provide single stage pumping. A 15 km long waterway might be needed to carry the water into the Kulekhani storage reservoir out of it the length of the tunnel could be about 9 kilometers.

The total cost of such diversion could be about US \$ 20 million.

The construction of the proposed Bagmati diversion works could be completed within 2 years with one additional year for the initial preparatory works. The NEA might not require external foreign investment. It could mobilize its own resources to finance this project.

After the completion of the proposed Melamchi river diversion into the Kathmandu valley there would be a substantial increase in flow of the Bagmati river at Chobar. As a result, the electricity generation of the Kulekhani 1&2 hydropower stations would be further increased.

Rationale Behind the Bagmati Diversion

The proposed Bagmati diversion could be implemented within a very short period to meet the ever growing demand for power in our national grid. The proposed diversion is going to be perhaps the most economic project because we do not need to invest on construction of the reservoir, power stations and transmission lines. We are going to utilize the existing power stations, reservoir and other structures. For pumping surplus monsoon period water from the Bagmati river into the Kulekhani reservoir we can use seasonal energy generated by our run-of-the-river hydropower projects. At present the seasonal energy is almost entirely wasted. The proposed diversion plan would open a route to transfer Langtang River water via Melamchi tunnel into the Kulekhani reservoir for generation of exceptionally cheap electricity.

Langtang River Potential

According to the Gandak Basin Master Plan study carried under the UNDP assistance, a fairly large storage reservoir can be provided in the uppermost reach of the Langtang River and thus the hydropower development potential of this river is quite high. The Langtang storage reservoir can help to provide all through the year an uniform flow of about 15 cumecs in the middle and lower reaches if this river is developed in combination with the Melamchi Project. There would be a total head of about 2500 meters between the full supply level of the Langtang storage reservoir and the Melamchi powerhouse tailrace that would be discharging the Melamchi and the Langtang waters into the Kathmandu valley. Such an enormous head could be utilized for power generation by 3 hydropower stations to be built in a cascade and out of them two power stations would be operating at an exceptionally high head of about 1000 meters or more. The surplus Langtang and Melamchi waters after the use in Kathmandu valley could be easily delivered into the existing Kulekhani storage reservoir and, as a result, it would be possible to run

in full capacity the Kulekhani No-1 & No-2 hydropower stations by almost tripling their present annual power generation capacity.

The Langtang Power Projects

The Langtang projects operating at a head of about one thousand meters and more could produce electric energy at a very low cost. Apart from it, water in abundant quantity could be supplied to the Kathmandu valley for free. The concept of the Langtang project solely for power generation was developed under the UNDP supported Gandak Basin Master Plan study. However, this concept required some revision to incorporate the drinking water supply component to provide water to Kathmandu valley. It necessitated that at the end the regulated Langtang water after power generation be discharged into the Melamchi river instead of the Bhotekosi (Trisuli).

According to the Gandak Basin Master Plan a 120 m high dam has been proposed on the Langtang Khola near Jaithang. The volume of the reservoir would be about 180 million cubic meters. Based on revised concept the water in the reservoir at a full supply level of 3995 meters would be first tapped by the Langtang-1 power station operating at a gross head of 950 meters. The installed capacity of

this Langtang-1 power station located near Ghore Tabela about 15 km downstream from the storage reservoir would be about 70 MW.

Water from the Langtang-1 power station would be directly drawn into the Langtang-2 power station. For augmenting this flow the water from the catchment downstream of the storage dam would also be drawn into the headrace tunnel of the Langtang-2 power station.

The installed capacity of the

Langtang-2 power station operating at a head of about 1300 meters would be about 150 MW.

Why Langtang Power Would Be Cheap

Of all the site characteristics, head is the most important. Design guidelines, 1989 approved by the American Society of Civil Engineers has given some simple reasoning that would help to explain why the super high head Langtang power stations operating at many times greater head by comparison with other hydropower stations could be built at a very low cost. "Very simply if one doubles the head the quantity of water needed to produce a certain amount of energy is halved. Thus, for like site energy development the penstock area and reservoir volume are halved and further large cost reductions occur for powerhouse and machinery costs. This fundamental consideration is at the root of the large cost reductions that occur at higher heads." ■

Dr. Thapa writes on water resources

POLITICS

Democratizing the Democrats

At a time when pressure is building to promulgate the new interim constitution, the problem of Nepal is to democratize the democrats

By KESHAB POUDEL

Although leaders of eight political parties believe that current political problem will be solved after promulgation of the new interim constitution, they are yet to agree on its modality which, in principle, has already been agreed.

This is not the first time in Nepal when political parties rejected to respect the dissenting opinions. Whenever there is disagreement on certain issues, political parties, who publicly adhere to the principle of multi-party democracy, reject the idea of right to dissent.

"There is no question to give any role, whether symbolic or ceremonial, for monarchy in the interim constitution as envisaged by Nepali Congress," said CPN-Maoist leader Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, a newly converted democrat. "Because of Nepali Congress and some factions of SPA, some royalist and regressive forces have already started to challenge us. There is no question to give any platform for Monarchists."

Recently converted democrat who has been a follower of hard core communist doctrine for a long time, Dr. Bhattarai is not alone in speaking in absolutist language. Even members of the follower of liberal democratic parties hold similar view. "No body should be allowed to go to poll with monarchical view," said Narahari Acharya, a member of Nepali Congress. "The monarchy is already dead."

A group of students led by leader of student wing affiliated with Nepali Congress has already shown how their brand of Loktantra would be by vandalizing the car of Rastriya Prajatantra Party Nepal leader Rabintra Nath Sharma. Student leaders did not attack Sharma physically but they were

against the views taken by him and his party on monarchy.

Although right to dissent is first and foremost element of democracy, nobody seems to be ready to accept this fundamental notion of democracy. If this culture is not developed, no constitution will work in the country. All constitutions have to face similar fate as a scrap of a paper whenever there is opposition.

"A democrat is not a born democrat. A person has to go through an awareness of democratic society commitment for that and forming attitudes and habits in accordance with that," said an analyst. "Since more than fifty years, Nepal has been passing through different phases of democratic experiments in which all had commitment for broader form of democracy in this country. This country has no adherent of fascism or autocracy though the practices have been at several occasion resembling that."

The greatest challenge to democracy was from communists at different phase

by different set of organizations. Till the uprising of 1990, there were communists who had a declared objective to establish the dictatorship of proletariat through revolution. The change of 1990 converted that brand of communists into a multi-party democratic force with unequivocal declaration.

During the heydays of parliamentary democracy in Nepal, there emerged a new brand of communist which is known as Maoists, which used more ruthless and barbaric method, of introducing their own version of communism in Nepal. After the recent changes of April 2006, they too have been converted into a political force with a commitment to the multiparty democratic system.

"Each of these forces converted into multi-party democracy with many ifs and buts as their rhetoric postures but basically all have now renounced the objective of dictatorship of particular form. While talking about the rightist force to reckon with the role of King Gyanendra, his role for certain period will be remembered as very controversial. All the four Kings in the last five decades had their commitments for democratic ideals. Among them, King Mahendra and Birendra were involved with the party-less form of democracy which was considered as the negation of multiparty democracy," said the analyst.

King Gyanendra played the most controversial role which is still haunting



Past agitation: Culture of intolerance

File photo



Nepal (left) and Koirala: Reconciliation at the top

the mind of the people for whatever he did during his direct rule. But he did not declare his objective goal to switch over to anything other than the prevalent multi-party democracy. Though his actions violated the provisions of the constitutions; his assertion was always in favor of present multi-party democratic constitution.

"Nepali society has its unique character of conflict and cooperation in assimilation and reconciliation throughout its history and one can find the nation united by invisible but strong threats of interdependence and co-existence. Any political forms or constitution can easily be introduced and implemented by a broader consensus of the people that has been seen throughout its history of making of constitution. It is always everywhere mentioned and it is in everybody's knowledge that politics of Nepal is determined by external factors more than the internal ones. From Prithvi Narayan Shaha, the founder of present Nepal, to any serious analyst of Nepalese history, all had similar experience," said the analyst.

Late Leo E. Rose in his book *Nepal Strategy for Survival* observed, "To Kathmandu the current potentialities of external domination and subversion are not very different in kind- though they may be in degree- from those with which Nepali governments had had to contend for at least two centuries."

Although Nepalese political forces, which claim themselves as decisive, have already completed several rounds of discussion on interim constitution, they are yet to agree on modalities. Their

argument is still lingering on the issues like arms management and promulgation of constitution. "There is no question to promulgate the new interim constitution without arms management," said CPN-UML leader Madhav Kumar Nepal. "Promulgation of interim constitution will pave the way for arms management."

Now Nepal is at very serious crossroads. Whatever and whenever the constitution will be promulgated, it is impossible to survive in a complex role of external element and without any strong democratic commitments. "Democracy is a process of modernization of kinds for which Nepal does not have enough of experience. Now the time has come to democratize the democrats," said the analyst. ■

Satellite Camp Sites Proposed

According to Maoist deputy commander Prabhakar, the Maoist side has proposed 21 satellite camp sites, three each around the seven main PLA camps, "which have been selected to suit to the convenience of the monitoring teams".

The proposed sites are Tandi and Yangshila in Morang district, Sunmai in Ilam, Sindhuligadhi in Sindhuli, Belkhet in Udaypur, Khairapakha in Sarlahi, Rasauli, Bhutyaha and Gairibari in Chitwan, Kawasoti, Jarga and Rani Baghiya in Nawalparasi and Tila and Uhga of Rolpa and Bijauri Sangram in Dang district.

Similarly, Kalyan, Lekpur and Gumi in Surkhet district and Sahajpur, Gorange and Masuriya in Kailali have been proposed for PLA satellite camps. The United Nations, the government and the Maoists are expected to arrive at an understanding regarding the proposed sites.

The main camps have already been set up in seven different places around the country and majority of the PLA members have already been settled in these camps. A joint monitoring team comprising three representatives each from the UN; the government and the Maoists is set start inspection of the camps and army barracks in a few days.

Meanwhile, the government has appointed three Nepali Army personnel in the camp monitoring committee. They are Brigadier General Shiva Ram Pradhan, Colonel Ganesh Basnet and Colonel Subarna Mahat. Likewise, the Maoists have named Maoists leaders Baldev, Prabhakar and Pasang in the team of the camp monitoring committee. Three UN officials will also be members of the committee. The committee will be headed by UN official Jan Eric Wilhemson.

Besides, the UN has already dispatched a six-member technical assessment team to study the actual budgetary and human resource needs and recommend the same to the Security Council.

MOBILE HEALTH CAMPS

Serving

The

Needy Women

For thousands of population living in remote parts of Nepal particularly women, who were denied basic health and Reproductive Health services for years following intensification of Maoist insurgency, Mobile Reproductive Health Outreach Services have come as a boon as it provides all health related services from diagnosis to counseling and treatment and referrals – and all these available in their villages. Funded by European Commissions Humanitarian Aid Department (ECHO) and implemented by the United Nations Populations Fund (UNFPA) in partnership with ADRA-Nepal and Phect Nepal, the Mobile Reproductive Health camps have already taken care of many needy population of far western and mid-western region. From a small financial contribution of donors, the mobile health camp is making a big difference in the lives of thousands of disadvantaged and marginalized female population who live under the sword of death

By KESHAB POUDEL in Gaira, Doti

It was cold and foggy but overwhelming number of rural women poured at the premises of Adarsha High School of Gaira village of Doti district, 500 miles far west of capital. The response indicates how much people of this region are really in need of emergency medical services.

From infant to young and middle aged to old, there was assemblage of people from different religion, race, caste, creed and political ideology.

Organized by ADRA-Nepal, District Health Office, District Public Health Office and local health posts with the support from UNFPA, the Mobile Reproductive Health (RH) Outreach Services is first of its kind that came as a

dividend of peace in the region. Although two-day camp estimated to check up 2000 people, the first day registration alone was much higher than expected.

The crowd of people who desperately waited to tell their health problems was so big that three doctors, dozens of local paramedical staffs and Female Community Health Volunteers had tough time to cope with the pressure.



Queue of patients: Help, at last

Although December 9, 2006 was Saturday or government holiday, the school premises was almost packed from 8:30 in the morning.

"We have to check up the patients till the daylight permit us to do so. As an only lady gynecologist, many women want to share their problems with me," said Dr. Rajni K.C of ADRA-Nepal. "Women feel easier to discuss their health problems including reproductive health with women doctors."

The huge crowd, who came from far distance of Dadeldhura and Doti districts even by trekking four to five hours, without any hurry lined up in a long queue without knowing how much time a couple of doctors can spend with them.

For many, just touching a doctor seems to heal their disease. "I have never seen any doctor in my life. As I felt pain in my lower parts of stomach, my son and husband brought me here. I have to see how my ailment will heal just by a touch from a doctor," said Kumari Devi Khadka, 62 of Rajwar Village of Doti

district. "My husband and son told me that doctor can heal all disease." Like Khadka, mother of ten children, there are many women who were going to face medical doctors first time in their life.

The rush of people was so big that a patient might get in an average 2-5 minutes to consult with doctors. "We spend our time depending on the complication of a patient. If a woman has severe problem, she gets even half an hour. If people do not have major complications, it will be shorter," said Dr. K.C.

"What I want is to tell the doctor about my problem. I have been felling pain below my stomach," said Tikeshwor Madai, 45, mother of seven children.

Although it was a health camp, there was also an emergency service for those who needed immediate service.

"I have seen people from far away, districts starting to assemble at the school from early in the morning. This kind of gathering is only possible during polling day or festival but they are not as peaceful or quiet as they are now," said Shiva Dutta Bhatta, Public Health Administrator of Dadeldhura District.



Mimi: Noble battle

For majority of disadvantaged people particularly women of different ages this was the day when they could meet with doctors to complain their health related problems. Health camps fill gaps of inadequate health service.

Funded by ECHO and implemented by UNFPA, a mobile health camp under Mobile Reproductive Health Outreach Services to Conflict-Affected Population brought festive mood in Khara as well as other surrounding villages of Dadeldhura and Doti districts.

"This is for the first time in the last ten years when these kinds of big gathering was possible in the district," said district health official Bhatta.

Initially targeting over 14,000 clients/patients (women, men and adolescent) and local health care providers, the first phase of health camps have already been organized in Dang, Rolpa and Banke of mid-western region and Dadeldhura, Doti and Accham districts of far western region.

Not only for the patients, the camp is also training ground for health workers. "We are learning ways of pre-natal and post natal care as well as other surgery," said Bhagirathi Pandey, 20, assistant nurse at local primary health care center. One of the aims of the camp is to train and orient local health service providers to deliver reproductive health services and surgical procedures to conflict-affected populations. Dadeldhura and Doti were two most affected districts where many sub-health posts buildings were also bombed.

Although people have been living with painful ailments for a long time, their faces are full of smiles. The camp organizer ADRA-Nepal, District Health Office and District Hospital showed documentaries in the camp to generate level of awareness. One of the aims of the program is to increase the awareness of clients/patients of RH preventative care and general RH care through dissemination of IEC materials.

For most of the people, country's main political agenda of republic Vs monarchy or first past post system Vs proportional representation, Maoist Vs government seem to have no meaning. They know they have to cast vote when

the elections is held. Despite the rampant poverty and its effect, there is smile in the faces of all.

Similar Problems

Brought to the camp by their sons, husbands and daughters, daughter in laws, the overwhelming majority of women had similar health related problems - constant pain below the stomach for several years. After reaching the health camp and expecting to see the doctors, these women looked completely satisfied.

Although Safe Motherhood Policy 1998 stresses the need to increase the accessibility, availability and utilization of maternal health care facilities and to strengthen the technical capacity of maternal health care providers at all levels of the health care system, the hospitals and health centers in far western region of Dadeldhura and Doti are yet to see it materialize.

"One of the unfortunate things is that we don't have enough manpower at all in all levels. From doctors to other medical staffs, the Seti Zonal Hospital is running with half the staffs," said Dr. Ganesh Bahadur Singh, acting medical superintendent of Seti Zonal Hospital.

In such a situation, though it is small, health camps are only hope for people of remote parts of Nepal. The health problem of women varies from serious nature of reproductive health to general problem and the camp offers all kinds of services. If there is serious case including the third degree of uterine prolapse, the doctors at the camp will refer them to the next camp for surgery.

"This project is highly relevant to ensure

that preventive and corrective measures for reproductive health concerns can be provided before they severely limit livelihoods," said Junko Sasaki, UNFPA's Representative to Nepal.

According to the World Bank's Country Assistance Strategy 2002-2007, with approximately 85 percent of the total population living in rural areas, the basic health care services remain limited.

Health After Conflict

For a majority of people living in rural areas, access to health care and facilities are hampered by economical and cultural barriers. At a time when 12 years long conflict had badly shaken the health care services with lack of health workers, health facilities and medical



Dr. Singh: Humanitarian task

supplies, overwhelming poor people have no alternatives other than to die without basic medicines. After beginning of peace process, the health camp is only effective way out to reach to the disadvantaged population.

UNFPA estimates that the burden of most common disease

including maternal illness, which are estimated to grow by 100,000 new cases per year remains almost attended. The Mobile health clinics provide diverse health services including diagnosis, counseling, treatment and referrals of cases to the National Health System, thus addressing potentially life threatening concerns such as safe family planning and childbirth, emergency obstetric care, gender-based violence and sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS. The camp also provides vital surgical procedures such as prolapsed uterus corrections.

In terms of Nepal's ecological regions, poverty in the mountains is significantly above the national average. The average level of poverty in remote mid-western and far western districts are much higher than the national average of 31 percent. In far west and mid-west, the people whose income is less than US\$ 1 a day are significantly high.



Health Camp: Mother and child, both in need

Nepal is one of the poorest countries in the world with per capita GDP of around US\$270 in fiscal year 2004. According to Nepal Living Standards Surveys (NLSS II), a study conducted by Central Bureau of Statistics under the support of the World Bank, the poverty has dramatically declined in Nepal between 1995-96 and 2003-04. In 2003-04, 31 percent of population is poor in Nepal. The mid-western and far-western regions have the highest levels of poverty, 60 and 64 percent respectively. Among development regions the proportion of women consulting for prenatal care in the far western and mid western region is still very low compared to other regions.

"I had given birth to 11 children, all the children were delivered at home. When I was last pregnant 13 years ago, I knew there was a hospital in Dadeldhura but it was economically unaffordable to us," said Khoji Devi Oli, who was a third degree patient of Uterine Prolapse and referred for surgery in second round of health camp in March, in Gankhet Village Development committee of Doti district. "I survived all painful conditions of uterine prolapse but my family is economically in no position to spend about Rs.23,000 (US\$300) operation cost," said Oli,



Women in health camp: Long suffering



Zonal hospital: Inadequate manpower

whose only four daughters and 3 sons survived out of 11 births.

Cases of Uterine Prolapse

According to medical research, the cases of uterine prolapse are common in Nepal and there is high concentration of women with uterine prolapse in Doti and Dadeldhura districts. Out of 4,766 patients checked up in the first health camps conducted in Dadeldhura in November, 2408 cases were related to General Reproductive Checkup Health,

Gynecological Services, Ring Pessary Insertion and 60 cases referred for Uterine Prolapse Surgery.

"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 years. All together more than 600,000 women are in urgent need of medical care," said Junko Sasaki, UNFPA's Country Representative.

Although Prolapsed uterus is very serious and painful problem related to reproductive health, many women hid it because of social and economic reasons. For people who cannot afford to buy primary medicine like cetamol, it is virtually impossible for them to pay the cost of treating the prolapse.

"Since society is conservative and reproductive health related problems are taken as sin, no one wants to disclose it whatever the pain they have to suffer," said Dr. Gopal Gnawli, acting district health officer of Dadeldhura District Hospital. "The women disclose the disease at the last stage when it is impossible for them to deal with."

Although Dadeldhura-Dhangadhi Highway connects many villages of far western region with the rest of Nepal including health facilities of the country,

majority of people are still isolated by the poverty and conflict. The cultural barrier is so crucial that women cannot ignore it before deciding to break tradition.

"I have been suffering from uterine prolapse for the last fifteen years but I hid it within me. Had I disclosed it then, my husband would have remarried and I would have to suffer physical as well as economic problems," said Kosidevi Air, 55, of Doti district.

Despite efforts of several NGOs and INGOs, the access to health care and facilities are hampered by geographical, economic and cultural barriers. The twelve years long armed conflict has jeopardized the basic health care services exacerbating the lack of health workers, health facilities and medical supplies.

More than two third of health centers are now without trained health manpower in Dadeldhura and Doti districts. Even in the district hospitals, only one doctor has to perform all the roles.

"We don't have enough health workers in the hospitals as well as in the primary health care centers and sub-health posts. I have to perform 2-3 delivery and run other general surgery and out patient department as well," said Dr. Gnawli. "In a situation when the district health infrastructures are unable to provide the basic health service and *Reproductive Health Service* to disadvantaged and needy population, the UNFPA's mobile camp is only way to cover the areas out of reach."

Along with nearby village, most of the people visit the camp because they

don't need to pay any money for all the check up, diagnosis, treatment and vital surgical services. "The patients do not need to pay anything here. All the cost will be borne by the camp," said Mimi Mireille Guiraud, monitoring and evaluation officer of UNFPA based in Dadeldhura. "Problems with the health systems in far western districts of Nepal are that they don't have proper documentation."

With a total budget of EUR 320,000, the project is a part of the US\$ 6,000,000 aid package to Nepal by ECHO, which is the biggest single source of humanitarian aid in the world.

UNFPA chose ADRA-Nepal and PHECT-Nepal to run the mobile camps. The ADRA-Nepal will run all the mobile camps providing all basic health facilities and medicines and PHECT-Nepal will take up the referral case of surgery for Uterine Prolapse in second round.

"UNFPA is not a usual partner but we considered its proposal to run mobile camps in remote parts of the far-western and mid-western region as timely and appropriate. At a time when many people of far-western and mid-western region are in desperate need of basic health services, health camp is best way to meet the basic needs of people," said Dominique Feron, Technical Assistant for Nepal. "Nepal is now in peace but poverty and access to health remain same."

Published by UNDP and Ministry of Health in October, Millennium Development Goals Needs Assessment for Nepal reveals that there are huge resources gap that is hampering the implementation of program to provide basic health services to women particularly the pregnant ones. Of course, antenatal care coverage has been improving over the last decade, but the progress has been very slow. Nepal requires 26.2 million dollar in fiscal year 2010 for the maternal health intervention package.

At a time when there is a huge resource gap to introduce the package all over the country, the health camps show how a small amount of investment can bring bigger change in reproductive health to the people living in conflict-affected areas of far-west and mid-western region. ■



Doctor checking up women: Too busy

ASIAN GAMES

Consolation Wins

In the ongoing 15th Asian Games, Nepalese athletes have won a handful of medals as consolation

By A CORRESPONDENT

As expected, Nepalese athletes have not been able to attain any spectacular results in the ongoing 15th Asian Games in Doha, Qatar.

Till December 10, Nepal had won three bronze medals and all of them from Taekwondo.

Ayesha Shakya won the third bronze medal for Nepal on December 10. Shakya fighting in the 59-kg category, was defeated by a Vietnamese player Thi Hoai Thu Nguyen in the semi finals. Shakya, a silver medalist at the Tenth South Asian Games held earlier this year, had reached semi finals after defeating a Chinese player.

Deepak Bista had bagged the second bronze medal. Bista bagged the bronze medal in 75-kg category by defeating a Kuwaiti player in the quarter final on Friday. He, however, lost to a Qatari player in semi final, in what the Korean coach Kwon Hyouk claimed as biased refereeing. Bista is one of the most successful taekwondo players of Nepal. He has already won gold medal thrice in the South Asian games. He had also won a bronze medal in the previous Busan Asian games held four years ago.

Likewise, Manita Shahi became the first Nepalese athlete to bag any medal in the ongoing 15th Asian Games. Shahi won the bronze medal in the 63-kg category of Taekwondo on Thursday. She was defeated by an athlete from Chinese Taipei Wen Su Li in semifinal. Earlier she had

trounced Sangya Wangmo of Bhutan in a quarterfinal match after defeating Varsah Bende of India in the first round. Shahi is a gold medalist at the Tenth South Asian Games held recently in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Taekwondo, karate, wushu and judo are few events in which Nepalese athletes are expected to bring home some medals.

In athletics, Nepalese players could not perform well. Kanchhi Maya Koju completed her 10,000 meter running in 37 minutes 59.76 seconds – which could provide her only the last position among seven other runners. A silver medalist at

Tenth South Asian Games, Koju came last in the race in Doha, which was won by a Japanese runner.

Likewise, runner Arjun Bahadur Basnet finished at the 11th place in the marathon tournament by clocking 2 hours 23 minutes and 55 seconds. A Qatari runner won the marathon 11 minutes and 11 seconds ahead of Basnet who had won a silver medal in the marathon at Tenth South Asian Games.

Till December 10, Nepal was placed at 33rd position in the medals table. China led the medal tally by bagging 110 gold medals followed by Japan (38 gold) and South Korea (37 gold).

Among the South Asian countries, India stood at seventh position with six gold and 13 silver and bronze medals respectively. Pakistan has bagged one silver and Bangladesh one bronze till now.

Meanwhile, the Doha Games started on December 1 amid a spectacular Opening Ceremony, arguably one of the

most elaborate ceremonies in the history of any sporting event. The ceremony had both spectacle and modern technology with the world's largest LCD screen that made use of several special effects that would not have been amiss in a Hollywood blockbuster.

The ceremony was inaugurated by Qatari Emir at the Khalifa stadium. The largest game show after summer Olympics, the Asian Games is held every four years.

This year, 50 Nepalese sportspersons are taking part in 14 events. Over 10,000 athletes from 45 countries of Asia will be competing in 39 sports events in the Doha Asiad. As the game is still continuing, Nepal can still hope to bag some more medals in the coming days. However, dismal performance of almost all South Asian countries show how far behind they are even at the Asian level in competitive sports. ■



Ayesha Shakya: Bronze winner

RHINO POACHING

Alarm Bells Ringing

The one-horned rhinos face fresh assault to their survival as poaching increases

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

In July this year, poachers killed three rhinos in the forest of Chitwan National Park within a week. They also injured another rhino. While two female rhinos were killed in Chitwan, a male rhino was killed in Nawalparasi. The poachers managed to take away the horn of one rhino.

Last week in December poachers killed another rhino. Poachers critically

three dozen rhinos in Bardiya National Park.

As the population of one-horned rhino (*Rhinoceros Unicornis*) is fast dwindling, the increase in the incidents of poaching has started to ring alarm bells.

On December 3, the apex court bench comprising judges Tapa Bahadur Magar and Pawan Kumar Ojha had ordered the government to save rhinos. The government had reduced number of check posts within the park from 36 to 8 due to



Rhino: Survival at risk

injured a rhino in Bhimbali community forest in Padampur of eastern Chitwan. The rhino succumbed to its bullet injuries in leg and neck.

Reports say that in the past two years alone, 37 one-horned rhinos have been killed by the poachers while ten died of natural causes during the same period. In the last six months alone, ten rhinos have been killed by poachers

The latest rhino census conducted two years ago showed there were 372 rhinos in Chitwan. These apart there are just around

growing insecurity caused by Maoist insurgency. The apex court has asked the government to increase the number of check posts to the same level if possible.

Perhaps in response to the apex court order, the Department for National Parks and Wildlife Reserve has added four security posts inside Chitwan National Park. Three posts in Amrite, Kujauli and Botesimara have been replaced — they had been abandoned due to conflict in the past. Another post in Narayani Tapu has also been set up. Chief of the department Shyam Bajimaya also visited the

national park and assured that the government has decided to increase the security posts in the coming days.

In fact, since the intensification of violence, the rhino poaching, too, have increased. As security forces abandoned their forest posts to fight against Maoist rebels, it was open season for poachers. In the year 2002, as many as 43 rhinos were killed — up from 18 and 13 in the years 2001 and 2000 respectively. Likewise, the number of rhinos killed in subsequent years have gradually increased.

Poaching has increased in Nepal whenever there is political instability. As the country is currently busy in transition, poachers seem to have a field day.

There are established networks of poachers that take advantage of the locals who are lured by money to kill rhinos and extract their horns and hooves. The rhino horn fetches a high price in the East Asian market. Apart from its reputation as an aphrodisiac accessory, it is high on the list of makers of traditional Chinese medicine and is considered to have various curative properties.

The rise in poaching is a serious blow to Nepal's success in the conservation of its endangered species. Nepal was home to more than 1,000 rhinos before 1950 when the Kingdom was closed to the outside world. But deforestation, poaching and shrinking of the rhino habitat in the southern plains because of migration of people eroded that number. The rhino population fell to 400 in 1957 and to a shockingly low 100 in 1966.

It was at this juncture when the rhinos were on the verge of extinction that the Nepalese government created the national park, and mobilized the army for the park's protection. Gradually, the rhino population began to swell and their number has been on the rise ever since.

But in recent years their numbers have started to fall. While the census taken in 2000 stated there were 612 rhinos in two national parks in Chitwan and Bardiya with the park in Chitwan alone home to 544 rhinos — up 104 since 1994, the latest census conducted two years ago has stated that only 372 rhinos remain in Chitwan. The one-horned rhinoceros are found only in Nepal and India. The two countries are home to around 2,000 rhinos. ■

IDPs

Untold Miseries

The miseries of internally displaced persons are yet to be addressed despite the cessation of violence

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

Last week, the Maoist cadres kept a team of political leaders and human rights activists in captivity for four hours in Sukadeva of Hekuli VDC of Dang district.

The 25-member team including leaders of Nepali Congress (NC), People's Front (PF), Unified Marxist Leninist (UML), human rights activists and journalists had gone to the area to probe allegations that Maoist cadres had looted food grains and wood from the houses of district-level Congress leaders Lokmani Giri and Devendra Giri. However, the team was stopped by local Maoist leaders including Jehendar, Bikas and Padam. The team found that in the past few days, the Maoists have felled wooden logs worth Rs 2 million from the orchard belonging to Dipak Giri, Shambhu Giri and Devendra Giri – all three of whom are currently displaced due to Maoist threat.

These displaced persons have not yet returned to their native because of continued fear of intimidation and physical attack.

There are thousands of other people who are still not able to return to their place of choice despite peace agreements.

Two of the provisions in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) signed on November 21 between the government and the Maoists are directly linked with the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).

The first provision expressed the commitment of both sides "to allow

without any political prejudice the people displaced due to the armed conflict to return back voluntarily to their respective ancestral or former residence, reconstruct the infrastructure destroyed during the conflict and rehabilitate and socialize the displaced people into the society." Likewise, another provision expresses their commitment "to respect and protect the individual's freedom to move freely and right to choose a place to reside within the legal periphery and also



A hut in eastern Nepal village: Where are the owners?

expresses commitment to respect the right of the people who have been displaced to return home or to live in any other place they choose."

Three weeks have already passed since the signing of the CPA and yet the plights of the IDPs remain unaddressed.

In fact, given their continued plight, the United Nation agencies have announced three-week-long media campaign recently with the objective of highlighting that all persons who have been displaced by the conflict should be able to voluntarily return home safely, in a dignified and sustainable way.

The UN agencies feel that the CPA has offered "an opportunity to resolve

this hidden legacy of the conflict." As such, the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), OHCHR (Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees) and OCHA (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) have joined hands in this campaign.

The campaign aims to appeal for ensuring conditions on the ground that ensure the conditions exist for displaced persons to return voluntarily to their homes. "We want to underscore two points in our campaign – that the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) come from all kinds of social and political background and all of the IDPs have the right to return voluntarily to their places," said Kieran Dwyer, an official at the OHCHR-Nepal.

According to various estimates, there are between 200,000 to 250,000 IDPs in Nepal. "We don't know how many of them have returned in the past eight months of ceasefire. In some districts, around 90 percent of them have returned while in others the figure is very low. Many of them continue to face threats of persecution and have lost all their moveable properties, which have stopped them from returning," said Bjorn Pettersson, Internal Displacement Advisor at the OHCHR-Nepal.

Pettersson said that the government should introduce concrete operational plan including packages of material assistance to help the IDPs.

On the other hand, Michele Manca di Nissa, official of the UNHCR, said that while it is the primary responsibility of the state to take care of IDPs, the UN was willing to assist the state in this. Hanne Melfald of OCHA said many of the IDPs have blended very well with the community leading to the difficulty in ascertaining their actual number.

The UN officials stated that at present it is the Maoist cadres rather than security forces who are obstructing the return of displaced persons. Whether the media campaign will help to change the mindset of Maoist cadres in the coming days remains to be seen.

WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Double Dividend

A UNICEF Report reveals that gender equality produces a double dividend benefiting both women and children

By A CORRESPONDENT

Eliminating gender discrimination and empowering women will have a profound and positive impact on the survival and well-being of children, according to a new UNICEF report issued on UNICEF's 60th anniversary.

Gender equality produces the "double dividend" of benefiting both women and children and is pivotal to the health and development of families, communities and nations, according to *The State of the World's Children 2007*.

"Gender equality and the well-being of children are inextricably linked," said UNICEF Executive Director Ann M. Veneman. "When women are empowered to lead full and productive lives, children and families prosper."

According to the report, women's influence in key decisions improves the lives of women and has a positive effect on child well-being and development.

Despite progress in women's status in recent decades, the lives of millions of girls and women are overshadowed by discrimination, disempowerment and poverty. Girls and women are disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS and women in most places earn less than men for equal work. Millions of women throughout the world are subject to physical and sexual violence, with little recourse to justice. As a result of discrimination, girls are less likely to attend school; nearly one out of every five girls who enroll in primary school in developing countries does not complete a primary education. Education levels among women, says the report, correlate with improved outcomes for child survival and development.

"If we care about the health and well-being of children today and into the future, we must work now to ensure that women and

girls have equal opportunities to be educated, to participate in government, to achieve economic self-sufficiency and to be protected from violence and discrimination," Veneman said.

The *State of the World's Children 2007* presents seven key interventions to enhance gender equality. In education, key actions include abolishing school fees and encouraging parents and communities to invest in girls' education. In financing, presently little recognition has been given to the resources needed to meet the goal of gender equality and women's empowerment. Investment to eliminate gender discrimination



Women and Children: Need to focus

must be integrated into government budgets and plans.

In the front of legislation, national legislation in property law and inheritance rights should ensure a level playing field for women, alongside measures to prevent and respond to domestic violence and gender-based violence in conflict. In legislative quotas, it is stated that quotas are a proven method of ensuring women's participation in politics. Of the 20 countries with the most women in parliament, 17 use some form of quota system, the report states.

Likewise, in women empowering women, the report mentions that grassroots

women's movements have been vocal champions for equality and empowerment and should be involved in the early

stages of policy formation so that programs are designed with the needs of women and children in mind.

Furthermore, in engaging men and boys the report says that educating men and boys, as well as women and girls, on the benefits of gender equality and joint decision-making can help nurture more cooperative relationships. Likewise, in improved research and data, it says better data and analysis are critical, especially on maternal mortality, violence against women, education, employment, wages, unpaid work and time use, and participation in politics.

The report finds that women do not always have an equal say in crucial household decisions, which can have negative consequences for children. In only 10 of 30 developing countries surveyed, 50 percent or more of women participate in all household decisions, including those

regarding major household spending, their own health care or their visits to friends or relatives outside the home.

A study by the International Food Policy Research Institute found that if men and women had equal influence in decision-making, the incidence of underweight children under three years old in South Asia would fall by up to 13 percentage points, resulting in 13.4 million fewer undernourished children in the region. In sub-Saharan Africa, an additional 1.7 million children would be adequately nourished.

As income in the hands of women can reap benefits for children, gender gaps in earnings can decrease or limit the resources available to meet children's rights, such as health care, adequate nutrition and education.

Estimates based on wage differentials and participation in the labor force suggest that women's estimated earned income is around 30 per cent of men's in countries surveyed in the Middle East and North Africa, around 40 percent in Latin America and South Asia, 50 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa and around 60 per cent in CEE/CIS, East Asia and industrialized countries, the report states.

RPP-NEPAL FACES ATTACK

Lack Of Tolerance

Can democracy flourish in an environment of intolerance?

By A CORRESPONDENT

On the day when rest of the world was observing the International Human Rights Day commemorating the adoption of Universal Declaration of Human Rights that defined the collective resolve of mankind to respect individual freedom and rights, the students belonging to parties that have espoused the same principle launched unprovoked attack against another political party in Pokhara of Nepal.

The leaders and cadres of Rastriya Prajatantra Party were attacked by student activists just because they had said that their party favors keeping the institution of powerless monarchy alive.

The RPP-Nepal has said the attack has raised question on whether the Constituent Assembly (CA) elections can be held in free, fair and fearless environment.

A day after its western regional meeting Pokhara was disrupted by student activists, RPP-Nepal president Rabindra Nath Sharma, addressing a press meet in the capital on Monday, said, "It is a blatant attack against democracy, human rights and fundamental rights."

Accusing the perpetrators of flaunting the principle of Might is Right, Sharma said that they wanted to impose their ideology and thinking on all others. Saying that his party will not bow down to such pressures, Sharma said he will continue to preach what he believes is right "for the country and the people."

According to Sharma, student activists – 99 percent of whom constituted members of Maoist-affiliated union and one member of Congress-affiliated union – vandalized their meeting venue and injured a few.

"What leads me to claim that the attack was pre-meditated is the fact that

they came along with media crew whom they must have pre-informed," Sharma said. The student activists claimed that they could not let the pro-monarchists organize the meeting.

Sharma defended his party's stance saying, "Our party believes that some form of monarchy – whether it be symbolic or decorative – is essential for this country for two reasons. One, in the absence of the institution, extremists will prevail. Another, Hindu religious zealots could create problem in the absence of Hindu monarchy."

Sharma said that in Nepal, monarchy can survive only when the democratic forces are powerful and vice versa.

Countering allegations that he still harbored desires in favor of active monarchy, Sharma said, "I was one of the first persons who had opposed the October 4, 2002 steps by King Gyanendra and also the February 1, 2005 steps by him. Our party does not believe in active monarchy. And our ideology supporting symbolic monarchy should not be construed as meaning that we condone the actions taken by an individual King."

Sharma also said that he believes a strong democratic front is needed to balance off the growing strength of leftist and republicans. "And such a front must be led by Nepali Congress and no one else," he said.

Sharma added that the trend of Neo-Mandale trying to impose their thinking through the use of force must stop if the CA elections is to take place in a free, fair and fearless manner. ■

OHCHR Concerned About Violent Demos

The UN's human rights organization has expressed concern over the ongoing student protests and police actions against them.

"OHCHR-Nepal is very concerned about violent demonstrations which have taken place these past few days in the Kathmandu Valley, in the context of student protests, and the excessive use of force by police in responding to the violence, as witnessed by its monitoring teams," states a press release issued by the office.

"Demonstrators have the right to protest peacefully. In recent days our monitoring teams have witnessed stone-throwing and other forms of violence by demonstrators in Kathmandu and Bhaktapur which have resulted in injuries to police and damage to property. We urge all demonstrators and demonstration leaders to ensure that protests are peaceful and do not turn violent."

It further states, "At the same time, OHCHR-Nepal calls on police authorities to issue clear directives that police should only use appropriate force. OHCHR-Nepal monitoring teams have witnessed police beating demonstrators repeatedly over the head with lathis in a similar manner to the excessive use of force our teams witnessed during the April Jana Aandalon.

As OHCHR-Nepal stated on a number of occasions during the Jana Aandalon, and highlighted in its report on the April protests, such severe beatings on the head are an unacceptable use of force by police which are likely to cause serious injury. We urge police commanders to ensure restraint by all police, and issue instructions that excessive use of force by police will not be tolerated." ■

BOOK

Original Rebel

Historian Dr. Rajesh Gautam explains the role of Dr. K. I. Singh in the role of democratic movement of Nepal

By A CORRESPONDENT

In the history of Nepal's democratic movement, former prime minister Dr. K.I. Singh (Dr. Kunwar Indrajeet Singh) has a unique place. From a revolutionary worker leading revolt against Rana regime in 1950 to rebellion against the agreement, Dr. Singh has performed various roles.

After declining to give up guns even after signing the Delhi Agreement of 1950, Dr. Singh launched his own brand of revolution in some parts of western Nepal.

After his refusal to surrender, he was arrested under the support from Indian army. Whatever his intention may be, by opposing the tripartite Delhi agreement, he invited Indian troops into Nepal.

In the history of violent insurgency, Dr. Singh established himself as a first leader to lead a violent rebellion. From Nepali Congress leader Subarna Sumsher to Ram Raja and Prachanda in later days, all appear to follow the footsteps of Dr. Singh in different phases and forms.

Although the role of Dr. K. I. Singh was very controversial in the democratic movement, he has made certain contribution to Nepalese history. From rebel leader to prime minister and politician, former prime minister Dr. K.I. Singh's character is full of contradictions.

Exiled for more than a couple of years to People's Republic of China following the rebellion, Dr. K.I. Singh has made many controversial decisions in his shortest period as a prime minister.

As a first rebellion that stood in opposite camp condemning tripartite Delhi Agreement, Dr. Singh, who was termed as a dacoit by India, also received a red carpet welcome in New Delhi just a few months after his return from a long exile in China.

Despite many ups and down in his character, Dr. K.I. Singh had certain

quality to raise the popular sentiment of people. Singh remained a good orator in the minds of the people. Thanks to his simple speeches, Dr. Singh was able to catch the attention of large number of common people and he was popular among them.

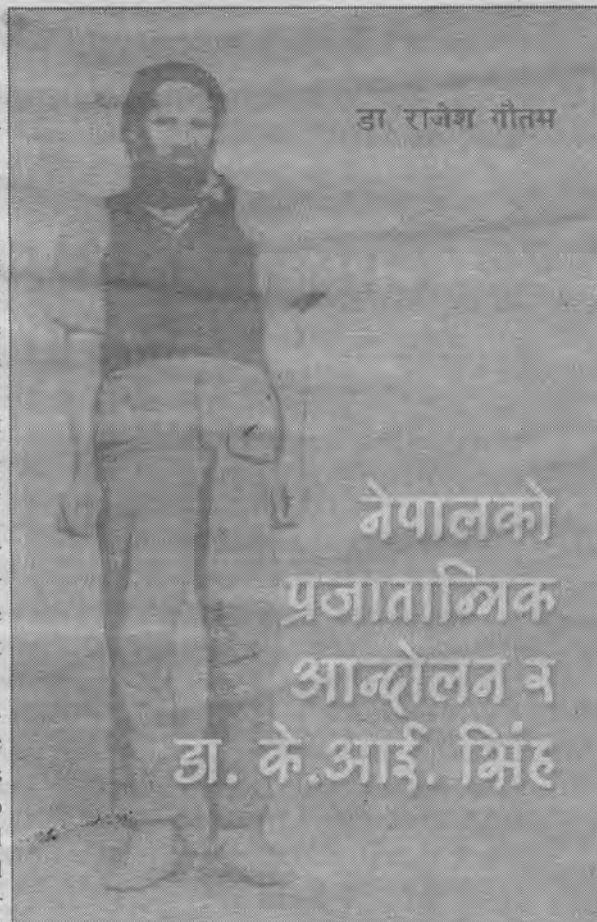
In a series of publishing the book on democratization process of Nepal, Dr. Rajesh Gautam has already published about half a dozen books. Dr. Singh's book is one of them. With full information and documentation, Dr. Gautam, as in his previous books, sketches the exact picture of Dr. Singh and his role.

Historian Dr. Gautam is fairly objective while writing on the role of one of the most controversial figures of Nepalese history. After evaluating Dr. Singh's personal stories, Dr. Gautam draws the conclusion that former prime minister Dr. Singh was a person with extensive knowledge and information.

Dr. Gautam tried to portray former prime minister Dr. Singh just as he looks like." If you see his role in Nepalese politics, Dr. Singh was a person with very unstable character. He was inconsistency in his policies. One of his weaknesses was to take any decision in a hurry. He was a man who was easily trapped," said historian Dr. Gautam. "Because of his inconsistent policies, he was never successful in the politics." Although Dr. Singh fought a long struggle to establish the right of the people, he was more monarchist and follower of King than a democrat.

The role played by him in politics is there in Nepalese history and it is up to the people to conclude what kind of politician he was. By writing a book on Dr. Singh, historian Dr. Gautam has enriched the history of Nepal.

One of the problems of Nepalese history is that there are only a few historians like Dr. Gautam who have made this kind of efforts to introduce the person of historical importance like Dr. Singh.



*Nepalko Prajatantrik Andolan Ra Dr. K. I. Singh
(Democratic Movement
of Nepal and Dr. K.I. Singh)*

Written by: Dr. Rajesh Gautam

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China Reassures Nepal in Transition

By DR. UPENDRA GAUTAM

Vice-minister of International Department of Communist Party of China (CPC) Liu Hongcai led a delegation to pay a friendly visit to Nepal from November 21st to November 26, 2006. He, significantly enough, was invited by the ruling Nepali Seven Party Alliance (SPA) including the Nepali Congress Party. Vice Chairman of the Nepali Congress party Shushil Koirala on behalf of Nepal's ruling Seven Party Alliance had extended the invitation for his visit.

Liu was the first important Chinese party dignitary who visited Nepal after April 2006 revolution in Nepal that forced King Gyanendra to restore dissolved House of Representatives and appoint SPA Leader Girija Prasad Koirala as the Prime Minister of the country. As a Vice-minister of Mao's and Deng's China, Liu knew it very well that how much his country has been maligned by the foreign elements for the organizational name that the guerrillas (the Communist Party of Nepal) have used for themselves. This is exactly why he did not go beyond the SPA government framework, and kept his engagements in Nepal absolutely consistent with China's celebrated policy of non-interference. But after the formation of a more inclusive interim government, the scenario may change for wider Chinese engagement in Nepal. China as a principled pragmatic neighbor has been and will indeed keep pace with changes and reforms in Nepal.

Knowing Liu

Liu has been a Vice-Minister, International Department, CPC Central Committee since 2003. He was chief, CPC, Central Committee, International Department, Administrative Office from 2001 to 2003. He was Deputy Secretary-General, CPC, Central Committee, International Department 2000—2003. He was Director-General, CPC, Central Committee, International Department, Bureau No. 2 from 2000 to 2001. He worked as First Secretary, Chinese Embassy in Japan between 1989—1992. He was Director-General, CPC, Central

Committee, International Liaison Department from 1975—1989. Liu born in north-east Chinese province of Liaoning in 1955 has been among those rare birds in CPC who could confidently navigate CPC with 400 political parties around the globe.

Kathmandu events

On November 22 Nepali Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala had a meeting with Liu. In the meeting he reaffirmed Nepal's stance that Taiwan and Tibet are inalienable parts of China, and Nepal will never allow external forces to engage in anti-China activities on Nepal's territory. Koirala said China has long been providing aid to Nepal's development and positively contributed to Nepal's peace progress, expressing hope that the Nepal-China friendship will be passed on to the younger generations by stepping up their exchanges. The prime minister further noted that the Nepali Congress party attaches importance to the relationship with CPC, and the party was in favor of learning CPC's experience in governing a country, especially in developing economy. In reply, Liu said the CPC and the Chinese government highly appreciate Nepal's political parties' signing the peace accord and putting the interests of their country and people first, and wished Nepal lasting peace and steady economic growth. He also expressed hopes that the two countries will continue to deepen their reciprocal cooperation. Liu made futuristic remarks while meeting with the second generation leaders of the SPA. On 26 November he held an informal farewell dialogue with the senior representatives of China Study Center, Nepal. His departing points will be remembered for its reassuring tone and content pregnant with a profound sense of understanding and strong willingness to help politically transitional Nepal. Multi-dimensional and multi-channel contacts between China and Nepal have received further boost on the heels of Liu's visit. ■

Restructuring Education

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is backing a comprehensive program that will help restructure Nepal's primary and secondary education system, according to a press release issued by the bank.

The program supports the Nepal Government's Education for All program (EFA) for 2004-2009, a high priority national program that serves as the sole framework for basic and primary education in the country. Even with several development partners, the EFA still has a financing gap of about \$55 million.

The Government wants to develop public education into an integrated 12-year system - eight years of basic education and four years of secondary education. Beginning with technical assistance in 2004, ADB, in coordination with other concerned donors, has helped the Government to begin planning for a holistic approach to this development.

"Through this program, ADB will support both EFA and the preparation and transition to the 1-12 year school system," says Ayako Inagaki, an ADB Senior Education Specialist. "The reforms and restructuring should result in a more equitable, inclusive, effective, and holistic education system."

The program will offer support to the EFA through the joint financing agreement (a harmonized system for development partners to support EFA). The first phase will support EFA through a joint financing agreement, and help prepare an education reform and restructuring program that will integrate the current system into the planned 12-year framework. The Ministry of Education and Sports is the executing agency for the project.

Ending Of Impunity Is Crucial

BY LENA SUNDH

Human rights day gives us an opportunity to reflect on the achievements in defending and promoting human rights in the past year, and take stock of the challenges that are before us. The recent signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement has formally brought an end to the 11-year conflict. I would like to begin by remembering the victims of human rights abuses throughout the conflict, especially those who were killed or disappeared and those whose lives have been wracked by terrible violence. As human rights workers, as human beings, we must not forget them. We must not flag in our efforts to help the families of those killed and to help restore the lives of those who survived. We must continue to work for change to address the causes which led to these human rights violations, so that such violations never occur in Nepal again.

The High Commissioner has committed her Office to support the peace process through the monitoring of all human rights aspects of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. OHCHR-Nepal will give priority to its monitoring activities in the regions and districts, especially those districts where the human rights situation is more volatile. Nepal's in all parts of the country, and from all communities, have the right to live free of human rights abuses.

In addition to our monitoring work, OHCHR-Nepal will focus on three issues in the transitional period that we believe must be addressed in order to ensure that there will be no human rights abuses in Nepal in the future.

Firstly, impunity must be ended, especially for serious human rights abuses. Those who hold positions of power and public responsibility must be accountable to the public, not least State security forces. It is essential to create a new culture within the security forces, including any new or reformed security forces, of being accountable before the law, to ensure that there is no repetition of human rights violations. During the conflict, serious abuses were committed by both sides, and there will be dangerous consequences for future human rights protection if these are merely swept under the carpet – supposedly in the interests of peace. In order to play its proper role in a democratic society, the security sector, charged with maintaining law and order, must be accountable before the law. Accountability starts with dealing with past abuses from the conflict, by both sides: investigating them, conducting prosecutions and holding those responsible to account.

Second, there must be a well functioning law enforcement and criminal justice system. Nepal Police must be redeployed to posts in communities across the country, and carry out their duties in a professional and effective manner in order to re-establish the rule of law. Providing security through civilian policing is among the most important of the State's human rights obligations. The Nepal Police is called upon to fulfill this State responsibility at an historic juncture, and they must be well-resourced and properly trained. The criminal justice system must also function in a strong and independent manner, and be accessible to all Nepal's, including those who traditionally have difficulty gaining access to justice, such as Dalits and the rural poor. Women victims of sexual violence must also have the full protection of the law, and the obstacles they currently face to accessing the justice system must be removed.

Third, it is essential to address longstanding discrimination against and social exclusion of Nepal's such as Dalits, indigenous peoples, communities such as Badis, groups such as ex-Kamaiyas, people with disabilities and sexual minorities. It is not an easy task to address and change such deep seated discrimination. It cannot be completed overnight. However, by acknowledging the problem in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, the parties have opened the way to change. This commitment must be followed up with practical measures during the transition to ensure that those peoples who have been traditionally left out of the political process are able to participate equally in the shaping of the new Nepal.

The international theme chosen by the High Commissioner, Louise Arbour, for this year's Human Rights Day is poverty. As the High Commissioner wrote in an article published in newspapers around the world for Human Rights Day, "Poverty is frequently both a cause and a consequence of human rights violations. Poverty means not just insufficient income and material goods, but also a lack of resources, opportunities, and security which undermines dignity and exacerbates the poor's vulnerability. It is also about power: who wields it, and who does not, in public life and in the family."

In Nepal, one of the poorest countries in Asia, there is a direct link between discrimination and poverty for millions of people – discrimination creates obstacles for people to have access to opportunities and resources. The State has an obligation to take immediate and long term measures to eliminate discrimination and so address one of the root causes of poverty. For example, the situation of women in Nepal clearly varies depending on which community they belong to. But one thing that all women have in common is that they have less power than the men from their communities. As the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 sets out, it is essential that women play an active role in peace building initiatives after conflict. Women must be represented in decision-making bodies at all levels of society, from the village to the national level. By addressing this deep seated discrimination against women, Nepal can also take a major step towards fully utilizing its human resources to tackle the problem of poverty.

OHCHR-Nepal will work with the incoming Government, and civil society organizations representing marginalized communities in Nepal, to advise and assist in the development of measures that can begin to eliminate discrimination in Nepal and so contribute to eradicating the causes of poverty.

To our partners, Nepali human rights defenders in communities across the country, I would like to highlight that you have achieved so much since the last Human Rights Day. I congratulate you. We will continue to strengthen the partnership that has developed since OHCHR-Nepal began its activities. There will be many challenges ahead but it is essential that we all work together to ensure that the protection and promotion of human rights remains central to the peace process. ■

(Excerpts of speech by Lena Sundh - representative of OHCHR to Nepal - delivered on the occasion of 58th International Human Rights Day at a program organized by Human Rights Home)

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