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The National Newsmagazine

SPOTLIGHT

April 27-May 03, 2007

Road To Prosperity



Interview :
Hari Krishna Upadhyaya



Politics : Loktantra's Anniversary
TRPAP : Pikey & Dudhkunda
Cultural Trails
Politics : An Art Of Compromise

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LOTUS

बचत खाता



नेपाल इन्भेस्टमेन्ट बैंकले तपाईंहरूको विश्वास र चाहनालाई ध्यानमा राखि फेरि ल्यायो जीवनभरको लागि मात्र रु. १,०००/- मा लोटस बचत खाता । यो योजना नेपाल इन्भेस्टमेन्ट बैंकका सबै शाखाहरूमा लागू हुनेछ ।

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CONTENTS

LETTERS

Page

3

NEWS NOTES

4

 BRIEFS

6

QUOTE UNQUOTE/TRANSITION

7

OPINION : Dr. A.B. Thapa

8

LOKTANTRA DAY: Stupendous Year

10

POLITICS: An Art Of Compromise

11

EDUCATION: Golden Service

15

INTERVIEW: Dr. Hari Krishna Upadhyay

16

WOMEN

23

GAUR CARNAGE REPORT

24

ENCOUNTER: Prabhu Budhathoki

Country Representative of IUCN-Nepal, Budhathoki talks about environmental challenges facing the country

Page 18



COVER STORY: Road To Prosperity

Now that Surkhet-Jumla road is complete, efforts should be made to integrate the markets of north-south corridor to usher in prosperity in the country's most backward region

Page 12



TOURISM: Cultural Trails

By opening new destinations and enforcing pro-poor tourism, TRPAP continues its contributions

Page 20



SPOTLIGHT

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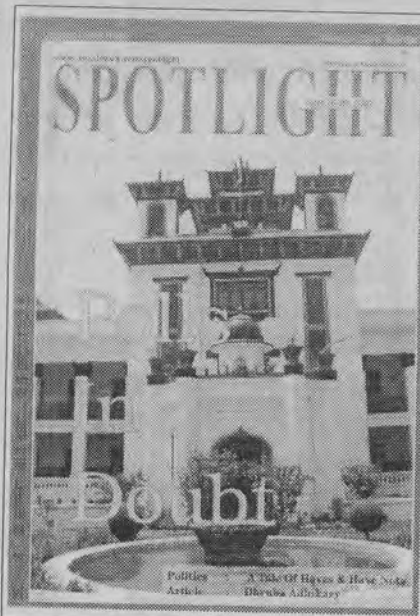
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Constitution can be made fully democratic but its result may not be up to the mark as it requires human factor to accomplish. In the name of *Loktantra*, Nepal has introduced sixth constitution as an interim constitution but it has not changed the basic character of people. In a country like Nepal where institutions are in the process of making, there is always tendencies for autocracy whether it is by one man or eight parties. Though Nepal had independent and unique position in the region, it has been fast modernizing its institutions of governance including judiciary in the last sixty years. Compared to 1951, there are substantial growth of educated and enlightened middle class which has taken its lead from politics, science and technology and management. Despite all troubles and turmoil, this trend has been going on and getting matured. As it is said the constitution is a scrap of paper if it does not hold the command so is the situation in Nepal. According to a political analyst, laws are made and used at the convenience of rulers but rulers have limits. They can't make or unmake the basic trend of the country and its hard realities. Nepal at present is going through a very painful and confusing process of reorganization. It has survived in the past since it had some inherent and inbuilt capability of survival. As usual, we would like to stress again that there is no alternative to middle way. Nepal has gone through various forms of government and political systems. The lesson is that extremism of any form has no place in Nepal and there is no way other than middle way. A year after successful Jana Andolan II, one brands of extremists are still controlling the street. As usual, overwhelming majority of Nepalese people are in favor of middle way. The centrist opinion has wide appeal upon the vast majority of the country. And this centrist opinion is a moderate opinion and therefore a democratic opinion. The centrist opinion is expressed in several ways and terms which are in this country known as the politics of national reconciliation – as championed and propounded by B.P. Koirala. Lately, even de-facto supremo of eight parties Girija Prasad Koirala has started reminding the people that he yet upholds the politics of national reconciliation though his actions are still tilted towards extremism with an uncompromising attitude against moderates as well as traditional forces.

After completion of Jumla-Sukhet road, Nepal's all 14 zones have transport links. Karnali zonal headquarters Jumla has been linked with national highway and it is incorporated into national road network. Thanks to hard work, commitment, dedication and sacrifice of Nepal Army, which has specialized and experienced units in road construction, Surkhet-Jumla road is now operational - a few months before schedule. We have written a cover story on the economic advantage of road corridor and how it will contribute to uplift the livelihood of the people. As a place of ecological advantage, Surkhet Jumla road corridor can be used as a productive zone for off season vegetables contributing to reduce the poverty from the region. As good news, NGOs like Center for Environment and Agricultural Policy Research, Research, Extension and Development (CEAPRED) CEPARED have already implemented some programs to tap the potential of this corridor to benefit poor and marginalized people of the region.

Keshab
Keshab Poudel
Managing Editor



Chasing Polls

Elections have become a mirage for the people of Nepal (Polls In Doubt, SPOTLIGHT April 20). The much promised Constituent Assembly polls also has been derailed. It is clear that there will not be any election in June. The political parties have not yet clarified when the stalled polls will be held again. As such, the common people are left wondering what is going on in their country. Till a few months ago, political leaders spoke about the CA elections as if everything will stop till it is held. Now that the elections have been thrown into uncertainty, nobody is taking up the issue with the seriousness it deserves.

*Sangita Bista
Jhamsikhel*

Agenda of Deflection

Following the announcement by the Election Commission, all the political parties still seem to be in a state of shock (Polls In Doubt, SPOTLIGHT April 20). Slowly they are now coming up with newer agendas that are sure to dilute and deflect the real issues. The Maoists have said that announcement of republic is more important now. They have said the CA elections can wait. The UML has now proposed holding referendum instead of CA. Such voices coming from responsible parties are certain to send the people into confusion. People are now unsure whether the CA elections will ever be held in this country.

*Bikash Ratna Shakya
Patan*

Blaming EC

Although they had known much earlier that the CA elections cannot be held on time, the clever leaders of political parties left it to the poor and hapless Election Commission to make the public announcement that the polls cannot be held (Polls In Doubt, SPOTLIGHT April 20). That was nothing but clever ploy by the leaders to shift the onus of blame and

responsibility to the EC. But the leaders must have forgotten how keenly and how closely the people are watching the whole scenario unfolding. People are not prepared to lay the blame of polls postponement on anyone except the political parties and their government. It is crystal clear how the leaders and the government dilly dallied in formulation of key electoral legislations. They consistently missed the deadlines for forming interim parliament, declaring interim constitution and forming interim government. And now they have missed the sacrosanct deadline of CA polls. Worse, the leaders are unable to determine the fresh date for the polls even.

*Kailash Acharya
Koteshwore*

Slinging of Mud

In the aftermath of the EC's announcement, the political parties engaged in mud-slinging (Polls In Doubt, SPOTLIGHT April 20). Particularly, the UML and the Maoists were seen pointing fingers at the Prime Minister and Nepali Congress for the fiasco. The Maoist chairman Prachanda

declared that the foundation of eight party unity was no more. All these statements have definitely weakened the eight party unity – which is so crucial if the country is to be steered out of this difficult transition smoothly and successfully. The leaders have to understand that very well.

*Diwas Gurung
Samakhushi*

Seven Commandments

The story "Unaddressed Challenges" (SPOTLIGHT April 20) clearly points out what our political parties and the government must do in order to create conducive environment for the polls. These seven points have been prepared by internationally renowned Carter Center after thorough study of the condition in this country. The Center has vindicated the position of the EC that it is incapable of holding the polls in the current situation. It is not only adequate to enact legislations and ensure security, it is equally necessary to create enough democratic space where voices of shades can be heard. Besides, the campaign of voters' education is a must before credible polls can be held.

*Shiva Risal
Battisputali*

Third World Politics

Apropos the article "Politics of Haves and Have Nots" (SPOTLIGHT April 20), it is true for every third world country. In any underdeveloped country, the issue of power is at the center of any political party or individual leader. They are guided by nothing else but the urge to be in power. They throw away all kinds of ideologies or visions out the window, if they can be assured of power. These tendencies can be defeated in a gradual course of time as the country marches towards development.

*Sandhya Singh
Kalimati*

PM Promises To Ensure Return Of Seized Properties

Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala has promised his MPs that he will ensure the return of all seized properties by the Maoists. Following the meeting of the parliamentary party of Nepali Congress, Sunday (April 22), the PM made the promise. The MPs had criticized the government for failing to maintain law and order and for inducting the Maoists into the government before the latter returned all seized properties. After the meeting, Benup Raj Prasai, secretary of the NC PP, informed that the MPs had also criticized the Maoists for stalling the proceedings of the parliament. He said such activities could hurt the basis of eight party unity. *Compiled from reports*

YCL Announces Campaign To Seize Royal Land

The cadres of Young Communist League (YCL) declared seizure of 99 ropanis of royal land in Sallaghari of Bhaktapur on Saturday (April 21). Coordinator of 'New Kathmandu Valley Campaign' Hitman Shakya planted a tree-sapling at the land declaring open their campaign. The land in Sallaghari is said to be in the name of late prince Nirajan. "The parliament has failed to formulate laws on capturing land belonging to the King, as such, the YCL will now capture all such land and use it for the public," he said. Earlier, on Friday, police had arrested seven cadres of YCL from Kappan area in Kathmandu as they barged into the residence of one lady named Tungsang Lama and were attempting to rob her valuables.

Compiled from reports

PM And Education Minister Agree To Appoint VCs

Following the meeting between the

Prime Minister and Education Minister Pradeep Nepal, on Friday (April 20), the two have agreed to expedite the procedure for appointing the vice chancellors of the universities. According to reports, as per the understanding, the PM will soon form a recommendation committee, which will nominate VCs for universities. As per the understanding among the parties, the Unified Marxist Leninist (UML) will get to choose its candidate as VC of Tribhuvan University (TU), NC will have VC in Purbanchal University, Maoists will get to appoint their nominee at Pokhara University and NC (Democratic) will bag the position at Nepal Sanskrit University.

Leading dailies report

Three Die In Mysterious Incident In Sorhakutte

Three brothers were found dead at a rented room in a house in Khusibu Town Planning area in Sorhakutte on Friday. Three brothers between 18 to 22 years of age were found dead at their room on Friday (April 21). Their room had remained locked since one week (April 14). Neighbours today found them dead when the room was opened up as stench emanated through it. Their bodies were found lying underneath two beds. Police have suspected that they could have been killed a week ago. The three brothers – Anil Bajracharya, Sunil Bajracharya and Sujan Bajracharya – had been living at the house owned by one Sunil Rajopadhyaya in Sorhakutte. They hail from Thangsing village of Nuwakot district. Police and medical examiners have not found any sign of external wound or bruise in their bodies. They are suspected to have died of asphyxiation but further examinations will be held before concluding the reason for their deaths.

Compiled from reports

Experts Against Nepal Nod To Lift Ban On Tiger Trade

Nepal should not agree to lift ban on the sale of tiger parts as proposed by a Chinese delegation during an international tiger symposium, experts said. "Nepal should show serious concern and intervene on the issue of legalization of trade and commercial farming of tigers," Steven Broad of the Traffic International (TI) said. The UK-based TI coordinates with the worldwide traffic network, established to monitor trade in wild plants and animals. An international tiger symposium is going on here and a group of Chinese delegation is lobby to have tiger trade legalized as illegal farming of tigers and selling tiger parts to produce medicine and wine is a big business there. Though China has a few wild tigers, it has over 5000 tigers in captive breeding, according to a study done by TI. "Tiger parts from such breeding places are supplied to factories for medicines and wines while some luxury restaurants even serve tiger meat," says the TI report. Broad said that the lifting of ban on tiger trade in China is going to make a direct impact on Nepal's tiger conservation, adding, "If Nepal fails to convince the world that the open trade is a threat to Nepal's tigers will see a very bleak future." He said as market opens there, chances are there that wild tigers from Nepal's jungles will be openly marked in China. Anil Manandhar, country representative of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Nepal, said that the domestic trade of tiger in China has direct relation with poaching and smuggling of tigers in Nepal. "The lifting of ban on tiger trade in China means acceleration of wildlife trade in Nepal. That is going to be out of control

soon, if the government fails to come up with a wise stand," he said. Nepal is yet to make its official stance on tiger trade. *The Himalayan Times daily reports*

Cabinet Suspended After Minister Quarrels With PM

The cabinet meeting on Wednesday (April 18) morning was suspended after the Maoist Minister Matrika Yadav quarreled with the Prime Minister over the issue of transgression of ministerial jurisdictions. When the ministers arrived in Baluwatar for the meeting, PM Koirala expressed his objection over Yadav's recent comments accusing Nepali Army of being involved in killing animals like deer and wild boars in Shivapuri jungle. Yadav defiantly told Koirala that he will speak what he thinks is right. When the PM pointed out that issues concerning army should not be dealt by ministers other than defense minister (PM himself holds defense portfolio), Yadav said he would not 'lie to the people.' Finally, the PM asked Yadav to go out of the meeting. Yadav further enraged the PM by saying that he did not belong to the PM's party to be ordered like that. Subsequently, Yadav left the meeting and was followed by other Maoist ministers. Latter talking to media, Yadav asked PM Koirala to correct himself and stop treating them like his own party's representatives. On Wednesday afternoon, Maoist chairman Prachanda went to Baluwatar to meet with the PM and sort out the quarrel. After his meeting, Prachanda told reporters that the problem occurred due to differences in the 'style of presentation.' *Compiled from reports*

Shrestha Gets Back His Jeep

Six months after the jeep was confiscated by the Maoists, Raju

Shrestha, a businessman from Budhanilkanta, finally got it back on Wednesday (April 18) when he produced legal documents proving his ownership. Police handed him over the Nissan jeep, which it had seized from Bagbazar on Tuesday after Shrestha spotted it at a parking lot. As the Maoists tried to stop Shrestha from taking away the jeep, police seized it and asked both sides to produce legal documents of ownership. Shrestha did so and got his jeep back. His jeep was reportedly being used by top Maoist leaders including Prachanda. Shrestha said that he had knocked the doors of government agencies and even the UN demanding that he get back his vehicles. In last October, Shrestha claims he was abducted by the Maoists and tortured. "They took away my gold chain, and the jeep," he said. *Compiled from reports*

GDP Growth Could Touch 4 Percent In 2007: UNESCAP

A UN report has estimated that the GDP of Nepal will grow by around 4 percent in 2007 thanks to positive development in the country. The Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2007, released by the UNESCAP said that the GDP grew by an estimated 1.9 percent in 2006, adding, "The recent peace agreement has, however, brought new hope and Nepal is expected to return to a new phase of sustained growth and development." The report also said that the inflation rate has increased by 3.5 percent in 2006 and reached to 8 percent in 2006 due to rise in petroleum and food prices.

The report further said that the fiscal situation remained weak with growing recurrent expenditure, low capital spending and a high budget deficit, which increased to 4.3% in

2006 from 3.4% in 2005." It added, "Reform needs to be maintained to sustain high growth and rapid poverty reduction. With fiscal adjustment still a challenge, more progress is needed in tax collection and resource mobilization to reduce large budget deficits." On regional perspective, the report said that the economy of the Asia Pacific region grew by 7.9 % in 2006 up from 7.06 % in 2005. The report also said that the inflation rate will be 3.8 percent in 2008. "The region is losing US\$ 42-47 billion per year because of restrictions on women's access to employment opportunities and another US\$ 16-30 billion a year because of gender gaps in education," the report further said. *Compiled from reports*

Over 2.2 Million Citizenship Distributed

Home Minister Krishna Sitaula informed that the Home Ministry teams have distributed a total of 2,250,869 citizenship certificates by mid-April. According to the minister, 1,055,869 citizenship certificates have been issued in Terai, 1,022,286 in the hilly region and 173,421 in the mountainous region. The ministry had deployed 586 teams for the citizenship distribution. The Minister said that distribution will continue in Saptari, Dhanusha, Kailali, Achham, Rautahat, Parsa and Sarlahi districts until the end of April while the deadline for citizenship distribution in Humla, Dolpa, Mugu and Mustang districts has been extended by a month. "Longstanding problem of citizenship has been solved with this successful distribution campaign," Sitaula said at a press meet on Tuesday, adding, "The distribution process has been objective and realistic." He also said that the government would take stringent actions against those acquiring citizenship illegally. *Compiled from reports*



Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala receiving credentials from HE Mr Zheng Xiangling, newly appointed Ambassador of The People's Republic of China to Nepal, at Singadurbar State Hall on Thursday 19 April 2007 (2064-1-6)

PM Koirala receives credentials from Chinese envoy Dol

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE HISTORY OF NEPAL, Prime Minister received the credentials of the foreign envoy. As per the interim constitution, PM Girija Prasad Koirala received credentials from the newly appointed Chinese ambassador to Nepal Zheng Xiangling on April 20 at the State Hall of Singadurbar. In the past, the King used to receive such credentials. As the interim constitution has also handed over the duties of Head of State to the Prime Minister, the PM will now have to receive credentials of foreign envoys. Following the ceremony at the State Hall, PM Koirala held brief talks with the new envoy who was later given a guard of honor by the army band.

THE BRITISH COUNCIL WILL CELEBRATE the World Book Week on April 23-25- with events marking the importance of reading books. UNESCO has designated World Book Day as an annual worldwide celebration of books and reading, which takes place on 23 April. "The World Book Day is about helping children and adults to discover the pleasures of reading and encouraging reluctant readers to read. For the last nine years the British Council has celebrated this event throughout our global network," states press release by the British Council in Nepal. According to the press release, this year the Council will exhibit 200 new fiction titles for children and adults from 23-25 April 2007. In addition to the exhibition, there will be a bookmark painting competition for children between 10 am - 5 pm and talk programs on the importance of reading for adults on 24 and 25 April. "There will be three winners for each category of the bookmark painting competition and winners will receive a years free library membership and a book gift voucher of Rs. 3000/-, Rs. 2000/- and Rs. 1000/- as first, second or third prize. Nine winners will be announced on our Website on 1 May 2007. All the exhibited

books will be available in our library from 1 May 2007," the release adds.

THE COMMISSION OF INVESTIGATION of Abuse of Authority (CIAA) intervened to curb the growing incidents of red sandalwood smuggling from India to China via Nepal. On Wednesday (April 18), it summoned senior government officials and directed them to curb the smuggling. The CIAA summoned Secretaries of Forest, Home and Finance Ministries as well as officials of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Department, Customs Department, Revenue Investigation Department, Forest Department and Police Headquarters. The Commission asked the officials to take necessary steps to stop the smuggling.

THE US DEPARTMENT OF STATE'S Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons is awarding a total of \$672,610 in assistance to three organizations in Nepal working to combat human trafficking, according to a press release by the American Center in Kathmandu. "The Government is committed to the fight against trafficking in persons, which includes modern-day slavery involving victims who are forced, defrauded, or coerced into labor or sexual exploitation," it stated. The Save the Children and Maiti Nepal will get a one-year \$197,750 grant to strengthen and expand community-based anti-trafficking strategies through awareness and safe migration initiatives and bolster district anti-trafficking committees formed by the Ministry of Women, Children, and Social Welfare. They will also provide training to ward and district level law enforcement officials. Daywalka Foundation will get \$465,360 in two grants; the first project is to improve the investigation, management and prosecution of trafficking cases. The Foundation will build capacity in the collection of data on trafficking investigations, prosecutions, and criminal judgments. The project will provide training to the police, the attorney general's office, judicial offices, and other branches of the government, as well as offer assistance on building trafficking cases. The second project by the Daywalka Foundation is for training Women's Cell officers on the investigation and proper handling of trafficking cases. It will provide technical assistance in the form of digital and video cameras, fax machines, cell phones, and a van. The program also includes the construction of a Women and Children Service Center at the Central Level Police District Headquarters in Kathmandu. Likewise, the Nepal Institute of Development Studies will get a \$9,500 grant for data collection on the nexus between trafficking and foreign employment of Nepali citizens. ■

“All communist parties must unite to ensure establishment of republic.”

Madhav Kumar Nepal, general secretary of the Unified Marxist Leninist (UML), speaking at a program to mark 57th anniversary of the establishment of Communist Party of Nepal.

“The Constituent Assembly did not take place as others feared communists will win majority.”

Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, senior Maoist leader, speaking at the program to mark 57th anniversary of the establishment of Communist Party of Nepal.

“Given the majority seats of communist parties, the parliament must declare republic.”

Lilamani Pokharel, leader of People's Front (PF), speaking at the program to mark 57th anniversary of the establishment of Communist Party of Nepal.

“Since the Maoists have not improved their behavior even though they have joined the government, the government is feeling difficult to work (smoothly).”



Ram Chandra Yadav, Minister of State for General Administration, in Annapurna Post.

“Longstanding problem of citizenship has been solved with this successful distribution campaign.”

Home Minister Krishna Prasad Sitaula, at a press meet to inform that 2.2 million citizenship certificates have been distributed in recent campaign, in The Himalayan Times.

“Those who have committed corruption are in power. I have not committed any corruption.”

Dr. Tulsi Giri, former vice chairman of Council of Ministers who was summoned by CIAA, when asked for his comment about accusations that he has committed corruption, in Annapurna Post.

“There is a fear that if election is held immediately, the divided Nepali Congress could be wiped out. Therefore, Prime Minister and foreign powers want the elections of CA held only after unity of Congress.”

Narayan Man Bijukchhe, president of Nepal Workers and Peasants Party (NWPP), at a press meet in Surkhet.

TRANSITION

HOSPITALIZED: Home Minister Krishna Prasad Sitaula, at Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital (TUTH), after suffering from ear ailments and diabetes.

LEFT: Surya Bahadur Thapa, president of Rastriya Janashakti Party (RJP) and former prime minister, for India, where he will hold discussions with Indian leaders.

KILLED: Four Nepali security guards working for the United

Nations, when their vehicle fell into roadside ambush by Taleban elements in Kandahar city of Afghanistan.

ARRIVED: Lawrence Bartlett, Deputy Director for Asia and the Near East, and Janice Belz, Deputy Director for Admissions, two senior officials of US State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration arrived in Kathmandu on a six-day visit.

RE-ELECTED: Nepal, as the chair

of World Tiger Forum, for next three years, by its fourth general assembly.

FORMED: A probe team led by Deputy Inspector General (DIG) KB Rana, to investigate the deaths of three brothers Sunil Bajracharya, Anil Bajracharya and Sujan Bajracharya. The bodies of Bajracharya brothers were discovered lying at a rented room in Sorhaknutte.

GLOBAL WARMING AND HIMALAYAN GLACIERS

• By Dr. AB Thapa

Swedish chemist Svante August Arrhenius, noted for his Nobel Prize-winning work in the field of electrochemistry had made the discovery that helped to understand about the greenhouse effect. In 1896 he had calculated that doubling the natural concentrations of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere would increase the global temperatures by 4 to 6 Celsius degrees. His finding is not too far from today's estimates using more sophisticated methods. Arrhenius correctly predicted that when Earth's temperature rises, water vapor evaporation from the oceans increases. The higher concentration of water vapor in the atmosphere would then contribute to the greenhouse effect and global warming. Unfortunately, the predictions about carbon dioxide and its role in global warming set forth by Arrhenius were virtually ignored for over half a century.

Global Warming

Towards the middle of the last century scientists began to detect a disturbing change in atmospheric levels of carbon dioxide. In 1957 researchers at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, based in San Diego, California, began monitoring carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere from Hawaii's remote Mauna Loa Observatory located 3,000 m above sea level. When the study began, carbon dioxide concentrations in the Earth's atmosphere were 315 molecules of gas per million molecules of air (abbreviated parts per million or ppm). Each year carbon dioxide concentrations increased—to 323 ppm by 1970 and 335 ppm by 1980. By 1988 atmospheric carbon dioxide had increased to 350 ppm, an 11 percent increase in only 31 years.

Scientists have now established that the earth's temperature is rising. This heating process that raises the earth's temperature is known as the global warming. It is now found that the Earth's surface temperature rose by about 0.6 Celsius degrees over the last 100 years. Without remedial measures, many scientists fear that the global temperatures will rise 1.4 to 5.8 Celsius degrees by 2100.

It is feared that the warmer earth's temperatures could melt parts of polar ice caps and most mountain glaciers, causing a rise in sea level of up to 1 m within a century, which would flood coastal regions. Global warming could also affect weather patterns causing, among other problems, prolonged drought or increased flooding in some of the

world's leading agricultural regions. The Himalayan glaciers would completely melt away within a period of about a century. In the process of melting new glacier lakes would be formed. Such lakes would pose serious threat to life and property of the people living in our region.

Glacier Lakes Danger to Nepal

At present glaciers are retreating in the Himalayan region, as a result, glaciers lakes are being formed. Such ephemeral lakes disrupt communication systems and various infrastructures like hydropower directly, or indirectly subjecting the mainstream to periodic catastrophic floods. Glacier lake outburst floods also produce peaks in sediment transfer.

In 1988 a joint team of Sino-Nepalese conducted the studies of the glaciers and glacier lakes in the Arun and the Sun-Kosi basins primarily in the Tibetan region of China. The Lanzhou Institute of Glaciology and Geocryology took part in the study from the Chinese side, similarly the Water and Energy Commission took part from the Nepalese side.

According to the findings of the above mentioned joint study, there are many glacier lakes in Arun, Tama Kosi, Bhot-Kosi, Trisuli, Buri Gandaki and Karnali basins within Xizang (Tibet) of China which have some past records of the glacier lake outburst floods (GLOF) events. Sino-Nepal joint study carried out in 1988 had extensively covered only the Bhot-Kosi (Sun-Kosi) and the Arun rivers. The joint study report has recommended to conduct similar extensive studies to cover Tama Kosi and other basins also.

In 1990s Dr. Tomomi Yamada of Japan and Dr. B.P. Upadhyay, Professor of TU were involved in the study of glacier lakes within Nepal. The study was conducted under the Water and Energy Commission. Their study covered Lower Barun, Chamlang Tsho, Naulekh, Sabai Tsho, Dudh Kund, Mojang, Tsho Rolpa, Duwo, Thulagi, Khyimjung and Kang Guru glacier lakes.

The glacier lakes study conducted jointly by experts from the JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) and WECS in 1991 provides detailed description of the Tsho Rolpa glacier lake on the end of the Trambau Glacier within Nepal in Tama-Kosi basin. The lake makes contact with the cliff-shaped glacier end, and it is covered with thick debris. This lake is

extremely dangerous. The lake can be seen in a photograph presented in the report.

Glacier Lakes Outburst History

On August 4th 1985 the nearly completed Namche hydropower plant was completely destroyed by the Dig Tsho glacier lake outburst flood (GLOF). The Dig Tsho glacier was on the terminus of the Langmoche Glacier. The GLOF damaged not only the entire Namche Hydropower station but also all the bridges, trails, cultivation fields, houses, livestock along its path to the confluence of the Dudh-Kosi and the Sun-Kosi rivers at a distance of 90 km from the Dig Tsho glacier.

Since the nineteen forties, according to Sino-Nepal study, there have been at least 10 cases of glacier lake outbursts within the basins investigated. Among them there have been five bursts in three glacier lakes of the Arun River Basin, and four in three glacier lakes of the Sunkosi River (Bhote-Kosi) basin.

In Arun basin the most common are the end moraine-dammed lakes. Because the end moraine-dammed lakes mostly consist of end moraines formed in the Little Ice Age and are closer to their source glaciers, or connect directly with the glaciers, changes in the glaciers directly influence the water level of the glacier lake and the stability of the dam. At the same time, owing to the fact that the end moraine dams are composed of new and loose till, they are uncompacted and therefore unstable. This type of glacier lakes are easy to burst and cause floods and debris flows. The end moraine-dammed lakes are distributed most at the source of several short and small tributaries in the left side of the Arun River. They are distributed over a transitional zone from maritime to continental glaciers.

Gelhaipuco is an end moraine dammed lake located in the headwaters of Gelhaipu Gully (Nantangqu River Basin, east of Riwo, Dinggye County). At 14.00 on Sept. 21, 1964, the lake burst abruptly. According to the study of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, there was a heavy precipitation in the Nantangqu River Basin, which caused the glacier of the Nantangqu River to slide. Huge amount of ice slid into the lake. The generated shock waves triggered the lake water to overflow the moraine dam causing the burst. There was a breach across the dam which was 30 m deep. The debris flow rushed down to the lower reaches of the Arun River in Nepal, and caused heavy economic losses.

At mid-night, July 11, 1981, an end moraine dammed lake located at the headwater of the Sunkosi River suddenly

burst. A breach of 50m deep and 40-60m of bottom width was formed at the moraine dam. The highest burst discharge was about 1600 cu. m./s, which was observed 23 minutes after the burst. The high flood lasted about 60 minutes and the burst water amount was estimated at 19 million cu. m. The debris flow damaged the Kodari Highway and the Sun-Kosi Power Station in Nepal. The flood destroyed the Friendship Bridge at Kodari. According to the investigation of 1984, there had been a similar burst in 1964 from that same lake, but the burst discharge and damage caused was smaller.

Comprehensive Solution

Global warming is the main reason why the Himalayan glaciers are now retreating, and, as a result, new glacier lakes are being formed. At present the world attention is drawn to find a way to resolve the global warming problems.

Due to overwhelming scientific evidence and growing political interest, global warming is currently recognized as an important national and international issue. Since 1992 representatives from over 160 countries have met regularly to discuss how to reduce worldwide greenhouse gas emissions. In 1997 representatives met in Kyôto, Japan, and produced an agreement, known as the Kyôto Protocol, which requires industrialized countries to reduce their emissions by 2012 to an average of 5 percent below 1990 levels. To help countries meet this agreement cost-effectively, negotiators are trying to develop a system in which nations that have no obligations or that have successfully met their reduced emissions obligations could profit by selling or trading their extra emissions quotas to other countries that are struggling to reduce their emissions. Negotiating such detailed emissions trading rules has been a contentious task for the world community since the signing of the Kyôto Protocol. A ratified agreement is still not yet in force, and ratification received a setback in 2001 when newly elected U.S. president George W. Bush renounced the treaty on the grounds that the required carbon-dioxide reductions in the United States would be too costly. He also objected that developing nations would not be bound by similar carbon-dioxide reducing obligations. However, many experts expect that as the scientific evidence about the dangers of global warming continues to mount, nations will be motivated to cooperate more effectively to reduce the risks of climate change.

(Dr. Thapa writes on water resources)

LOKTANTRA DAY

Stupendous Year

Breath-taking pacts and numbing delays mark the one year since the restoration of Loktantra

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

The year 2006 will go down in the history of Nepal as one of the water-shed years in many respects.

As the country celebrates the first anniversary of successful People's Movement II as Loktantra Day, people rejoice a number of fundamental changes they helped bring about – from taming of autocratic monarchy to ending Maoist conflict.

However, one sore point that would continue to haunt the people is the uncertainty surrounding the Constituent Assembly (CA) elections. It was the CA that had brought together seven parties and the Maoists on a common plank and ensured full public backing.

Unfortunately, the CA election is as close today as it was on April 24 last year when King Gyanendra handed back executive powers to the people's representatives.

Although in his message on the occasion of Loktantra Day, Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, said that he remembers and respects brave martyrs who have left behind responsibility, dreams and objectives to be fulfilled, he is yet to clarify the public when the CA elections will now take place.

UML general secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal has said in his message that the country now shoulders the historic duty of conducting Constituent Assembly elections, building democratic republic, federal restructuring and inclusive democracy to bring about socio-economic transformation – but these issues are as formidable a challenge as they were a year ago.

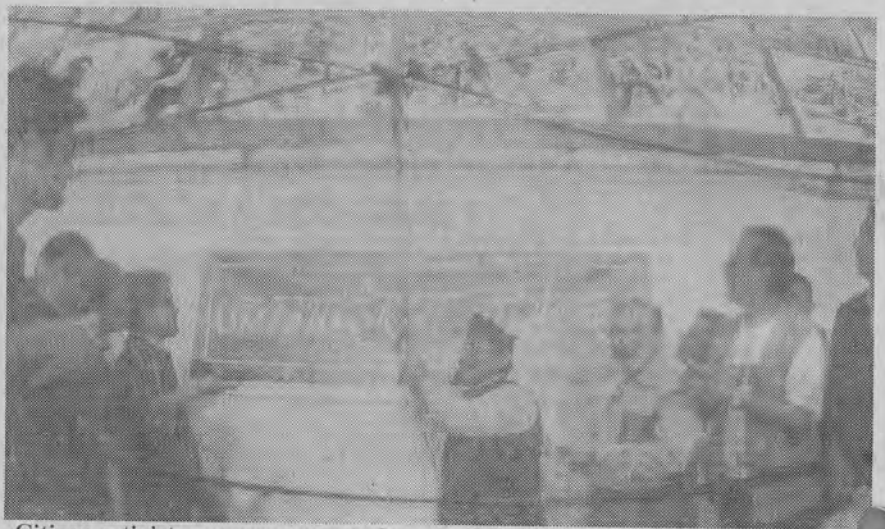
Worrying Signs

A year after the Loktantra was

ushered in, there are ominous signs of cracks developing among the eight party alliance.

With the CA thrown into uncertainty, communist parties are now coming closer to form a common front against Nepali Congress and other rightist parties.

The rise of rhetorics and use of threatening words by the parties has hurt



Citizen activists commemorate Jana Andolan II: Spirit of struggle Kantipur

the unity of the eight parties. The Maoists have stalled the parliamentary proceedings demanding the declaration of CA election date and announcement of republic. The UML has openly questioned the capability of the Prime Minister. The Nepali Congress, on its part, has hit back at the Maoists for stalling the House.

The Maoist leaders have also warned that they will launch street protests if the CA elections are not held by June.

As the parties trade blames and step up rhetorics, the eight party unity has come under strain.

“This is the time to remember, analyze and remain vigilant. The eight party unity is more important now than ever before as transitional period has extended.” Kanak Mani Dixit, senior journalist and citizen activist told Kantipur TV on the eve of Loktantra Day.

Citizen activists who had actively participated in Jana Andolan organized a number of events to celebrate the Loktantra day. “A year has gone by since the People's Movement of Nepal, which stunned the world with its citizens' participation. Much has been achieved in the interim-peace is at hand, the kingship has been sidelined, and the Maoists have joined the interim parliament and government. BUT – the date for the Constituent Assembly elections is yet to be announced, action has not been taken against either the king or those who sought to suppress

the People's Movement. The demands for representation and recognition of identity from the indigenous people, the Madhesh population and other oppressed groups are yet to be addressed. Political confusion and instability remain the order of the day,” states a press release by the civil society activists issued on the eve of Loktantra Day.

As international community joins people of Nepal in the celebrations, both hope that CA elections would be held soon to institutionalize the gains made in the past year. ■

No Alternatives To Middle Way

Whether one likes it or not, Nepalese political forces have no alternative other than to follow middle path

By KESHAB POUDEL

In the last few years, Prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala, who is also the supremo of eight party alliance, encouraged extremism to the extent ignoring his party's own ideological ground as a centrist and liberal democratic organization.

However, prime minister Koirala has recently started to speak on national reconciliation and national unity. Whether prime minister Koirala liked it or not, it showed that compromise is a compulsion in politics.

One of the unfortunate parts is that there are no definite skills and arts to accomplish that. What Koirala is saying in recent days about the reconciliation may not be his own mind speaking but the compulsion of Nepalese politics.

"The national reconciliation is still valid as it was in the past. There is a need for a broader reconciliation to

strengthen the Loktantrik system," said prime minister Koirala, whose actions are completely sidelining monarchy which his brother B.P., Koirala saw as a main factor for national reconciliation.

Extremism has no place in Nepal as survival of country's political forces is very much dependent upon the politics of compromise and reconciliation. Whether it is liberal democratic party, traditional institution like Monarchy or Maoist extremists, their survival depend upon not in extreme political system but in a compromise.

"There is no way other than the middle way in the politics of Nepal. The country has again endured an acid test of trouble and turmoil by extremists with extremist alternatives which damaged the institutions and infrastructures of

the country tremendously putting the very survival of the country also in a danger of extinction," said a political analyst. "However, political leaders ultimately have realized the futility of their actions and they are in search of an opportunity for peaceful accommodation compromising all their beliefs and declarations. Though Nepal would not be the same peaceful, tolerant and resilient nation but it will not be converted into a despotic state with a totalitarian ideology also. Of course, it



PM Koirala: Left, Left

will take quite some time to heal damages done in the past but ultimately there are hopeful indications that the country will again be back firmly on politics of compromise and reconciliation between all components of the society."

The King has shown resilience in his dealing with the extremist trends in politics which is reflected in the parliament as well as in the eccentric utterances of its leader - the prime minister. Similarly, the forces which have not yet completely disassociated with the arms and violence and terrorist activities have no other way except to join the mainstream of politics of compromise and co-existence.

Ethnicity as well as regionalism has also not been able to get proper response from the people at grass root level as

well as from the international community having contact with Nepal. Although extremist communist parties have made some efforts to champion regionalism and ethnic issues for political gains, people at grass root level ignored this.

"The centrist opinion has wide appeal upon the vast majority of the country. And this centrist opinion is a moderate opinion and therefore a democratic opinion. The centrist opinion is expressed in several ways and terms which are in this country known as the politics of national reconciliation," said the analyst. Lately, even de-facto supremo Koirala has started reminding the people that he yet upholds the politics of national reconciliation though his actions are still tilted towards extremism with an uncompromising attitude against moderates as well as traditional forces.

Political parties are made and unmade according to the emerging political trends of the country. Political parties survive only on their own ideological basis. The oldest party NC may not be the same in due course of time as it may fade away from the mainstream like Liberal Party of United Kingdom - which was a leading party. If political parties gave up their certain ethos, they will fade away.

"Newest example is from India where oldest political organization Indian National Congress had the dominant role in the center as well as the states of India during the premiership of Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi for more than three decades. Now it does not command that dominating position in the center as well as in state also. One of the major achievements of India is that democratic institutions and democratic functions have continued despite gross errors and misdeeds. A constitution can be made fully democratic but its result may not be up to the mark as it requires human factor to accomplish. India lacks that as much as any country of the region lacks but India's advantage is continuity of the political process whereas other countries including Nepal have lots of disruptions caused by political instability of various natures," said the analyst.

At a time when Nepal celebrated the first anniversary of Loktantra, there is gradual realization in the minds of people that extremism of any form and variation has no place in Nepal. It is not a question of merely liking or disliking middle path - there is no alternative to it.

NORTH SOUTH CORRIDOR

Road To Prosperity

After the completion of Surkhet-Jumla road, one of Nepal's economically backward places is now integrated with country's transport network. At a time when all other organizations are celebrating the completion of 232-kilometer long road, Center for Environmental and Agriculture Policy Research, Extension and Development (CEAPRED), which has successfully implemented off-season vegetable program in Dharan-Hille north south road corridor in eastern Nepal, has come up with Local Livelihood Program (LLP) along the Sukhet-Jumla and Chhinchu-Jajarkot road corridor to explore the possibility of integrating Karnali with southern markets in Surkhet, Nepalgunj and across the border. As first vehicle has already reached Jumla and regular transport will operate soon, LLP is only hope to bring prosperity in the north south road corridor benefiting poor and marginalized farmers of the region

By KESHAB POUDEL

For Dilli Mahat, 32, a resident of Khalanga district headquarters of Jumla district, one of the main achievements of Jumla-Surkhet road link was to see the apple imported from Kashmir ferried by mini truck in the inaugural trip.

Because of lack of transportation facilities, Jumla's residents are compelled to dump tons of fresh apples produced during July-August season. After looking at the truck carrying apple,

Mahat now visualizes that soon the apple grown in the district will reach the market of south and across the border.

"We can supply fresh apple to Nepalgunj next year as the road links our village with the rest of country and across the border," said Mahat. "Till a year ago, we had a problem on how to export our surplus apple to Nepalgunj and Surkhet but now it seems that we have to worry on how to compete with the apple exported from India."

Mahat's worry is genuine. Merely linking the road cannot bring prosperity and transform economy of Jumla. What is required now is to exploit the competitive advantages of Jumla and places along the road corridor so that poor people of the region can benefit.

The World Bank's Nepal: Interim Strategy Note argues that high transport cost and lack of connectivity are major impediments to Nepal's development. Despite ecological advantages over

southern market, places like Jumla's products have high cost discouraging farmers to grow cash crops.

Situated in northern hills of Nepal, Jumla has many ecological advantages to produce agriculture products that southern plain districts cannot produce.

When the temperature in south rises for rice production, the temperature of Jumla and Kalikot of northern region is suitable to grow the cauliflower and other fresh vegetables.

Road networks have many advantages including exchanging goods along the corridor and outside the corridor. Following the completion of east-west highway, Nepal was integrated but it did not bring any transformation in the lives of people of north where poverty and illiteracy is rampant. Despite the huge ecological advantage to produce competitive agriculture products, only a few northern hilly towns were linked to south.

"The completion of road is major breakthrough in the history of Nepal's road transportation. Following opening of the road, it also opens market access of other parts of the country to the products of Jumla, Kalikot and other nearby districts," said Dr. Jagdish Chandra Pokharel, vice chairman of National Planning Commission (NPC).

With full ecological advantages, 232 kilometers long Surkhet-Jumla road corridor can be a boon for the local population as the climate provides it with the best advantage to compete with outside districts.

According to Human Development Index, Karnali Zone is one of the most backward regions of Nepal. From average income to average life expectancy, it is at the lowest rung. With an aim to benefit poor farmers living in north-south corridor of Surkhet Jumla and Chhinchu-Jajarkot road corridor, CEAPRED has been launching LLP since last year.

Encouraging local marginalized farmers to produce the off-season vegetables along the Dharan-Hille road corridor in eastern Nepal, CEAPRED has already gained experiences on how the road corridor can be used to bring the tremendous change in the livelihoods



People of Jumla: Hard work pays *Gorkhapatra*

of poor and marginalized farmers.

Although LLP is in the initial phase of implementation, the people living along the road corridor have shown that this is what they require to transform their livelihood.

"The overall goal of the program is to contribute to sustainable rural poverty reduction in Nepal by operationalizing and piloting the north-south corridor development approach introduced by government's tenth plan," said Dr. Pius Mishra, executive director of CEPARED. "Along with off season vegetables, Surkhet-Jumla corridor also has comparative advantages potential

for non timber products. Our efforts are to integrate the corridor with market in south so that farmers in north can enjoy their advantages."

The target beneficiaries of LLP are 5000 rural poor and disadvantaged families including marginal farmers, landless families and women headed households and internally displaced persons located within a reasonable hinter road areas along the road corridor. "The project covers 17 VDCs of three districts comprising of 65 wards. In these areas, the project has revitalized 42 existing groups and 104 new groups have been formed covering 3198 households," said Dr. Mishra.

Under the economic empowerment program, LLP has identified various sectors. In vegetable production, 1202 households have been involved. According to the project, they have been provided with required inputs to grow fresh vegetables in their kitchen garden.

"A total of 78 goats with 2 male goats have been distributed to seven groups covering 172 households under goat exchange program. Out of seven groups, three groups have been rearing goats in collective manner. One collective pig rearing group, belonging to Janjati women has been formed and three piglets have been distributed on an exchange program. Similarly, 460 poultry birds have been provided to two groups. A total of 46 households have been involved in this program," said Dr. Mishra.

From providing technical knowledge and capacity of farmers to develop a market to sell their products, the LLP will launch its first program in Kalikot in the coming year by mobilizing the local communities.

"We have started some activities in Surkhet-Jumla road corridor with a north south corridor development approach. In a particular part of the year, Surkhet produces certain commodities what Jumla cannot produce because the temperature of Jumla is much lower and

vice versa. If you can develop the production system in such a way that links the opportunities that exist in Jumla to markets of Surkhet and further down to the market of Nepalgunj up to the market of India, then the opportunities that you can tap because of natural capital that exist in Jumla can lead to better growth not only in Jumla but

also across the corridor because the products that Jumla can produce can have market along the corridor as well as down the corridor," said Dr. Hari Krishna Upadhyaya, chairman of CEAPRED.

The newly opened road corridor of Surkhet-Jumla covers Surkhet, Dailekh, Kalikot and Jumla districts. They are among the 10 low income districts of Nepal.

"We are covering districts like Surkhet, Dailekh, Salyan, Jajarkot and Kalikot of mid western development region of newly opened road corridor of Surkhet Jumla and Chinchu-Jajarkot," said Dr. Mishra.

Fourteen Years of Effort

Following fourteen years long efforts, Jumla and Kalikot, two districts of mid-western region are now linked with the rest of the country. The challenge now is how to make them competitive in the market.

Thanks to the Nepal Army, the road was completed on schedule despite years of conflict in that region. This is not the first north south corridor road which Nepal Army has constructed. Trishuli-Somdang road, Okhaldhunga -Katari road are previous examples. Nepal army is now constructing Beni-Jomsom road.

Traditionally our road networks have been dominated by east west high way. The road which opened up access to wider market - is there but the producers have to compete with each other in the market as all of them were producing similar commodities. In the context of north south economic corridor, what we see as the basic advantage is how the producers within the north south corridor don't have to compete with themselves in particular market because they produce different commodities.

Published by the Asian Development Bank and prepared by late Dr. Harka Gurung, Nepal Regional Strategy for Development draws the conclusion that transport infrastructure determines the future pattern of development. "The north south road linkages have now become more extended than when the concept of growth axes was first mooted and these

tropical and warm in the south to cold temperature in north. This diversity is main advantage of Nepal where one can produce a range of commodities ranging from sub-tropical to warm temperature climate," said Dr. Upadhyaya. (see Interview)

"By promoting the off season vegetables in Dhankuta, we have already shown that by developing the north



Difficult terrain of the past: Uphill task of easing connectivity *Gorkhapatra*

have been superseded by the East-West high way with considerable change in the arterial route system."

Some half a dozen cars reached Khalanga on April 13 with the vice chairman of NPC Jagdish Chandra Pokharel. The 232

kilometer long road will also benefit nearby districts of Mugu and Bajura of far western region.

Although 112 kilometer long road was completed in 1997, construction of the rest of the road was delayed because of Maoist conflict and lack of budget. Had the Maoists not attacked Nepal Army's road construction camp in Kalikot, the road would have been completely operational long before.

"In a distance of few kilometers, you can find temperature ranging from

south corridor for particular product, we can bring prosperity in Nepal," said Dr. Upadhyaya.

By replicating CEAPRED success story of off season vegetables production of Dhankuta road corridor, millions of poor people living in the northern hills can make a lot of difference in their livelihood.

As CEAPRED has already initiated programs for the residents of Surkhet-Jumla road corridor, farmers can hope that their ecological and biological diversities will offer them with unique comparative advantages and opportunities to grow a wide range of high-value agricultural and forest products in raising their income and enhancing food security.

EDUCATION

Golden Service

VS Niketan continues to stand for quality education in its golden anniversary

By A CORRESPONDENT

The contributions made by the private sector are immense in the education field in the country. While the government schools have ensured accessibility to students of remotest of regions, the private schools have chipped in with providing best quality education.

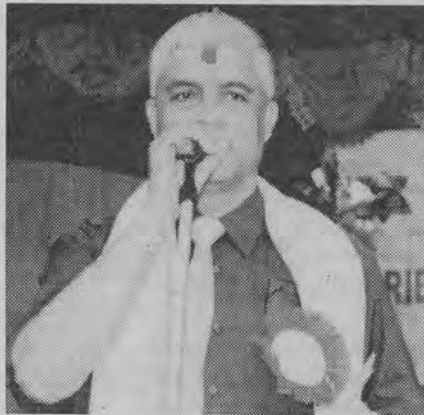
The private schools such as VS Niketan have played a big role in ensuring that students do not have to travel to foreign countries just for the sake of education.

As it celebrates the 25th anniversary of its establishment, VS Niketan takes pride in its achievements. Particularly its principal Dr. Baburam Pokharel deserves kudos for his tireless efforts to excel in the field of education.

Dr. Pokharel believes that the beautiful future of future generations; prosperity of the nation and society all depends on quality education. And that is what his school has been focusing on for the past 25 years with the able assistance by skillful teachers and capable administrators.

Established in 2038 BS with only 147 students and 7 teachers (with classes up to 2nd Grade) the school VS Niketan, which is now a VS Niketan Higher Secondary School, has gone through various phases of ups and downs to reach the present golden stage.

Since its students started appearing in School Leaving Certificate (SLC) examination in 2045 BS, the school has been continuously able to provide the proof of its quality students. In 2055 BS, a student of this school stood Board First in the examination. Since 2051 BS, the school started higher secondary classes (Grade 11 and 12).



Dr. Pokharel: A Tradition of Quality

Besides, since 2057 BS, the school also started teaching management at Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) level. "Because of support, cooperation and encouragement by teachers, students and well-wishers, we are able to become a nationally-recognized educational institution," said Dr. Pokharel.

Students from all 75 districts of the country study in this school. Meritorious students are also provided scholarship.

The school has also erected impressive infrastructure with modern class rooms, three big science labs and four computer labs along with reference



libraries and transport system in place.

"VS Niketan promises to continue to serve the nation and the people by providing quality education, which will contribute to the overall development of the country," said Dr. Pokharel.

Everest Travel's Service

Everest Travel Service Pvt. Ltd., one of the pioneer organizations in the tourism industry of Nepal has successfully stepped into the 43rd year of service. It hosted "Newari Bhoj" on 15th and 18th April to express its gratitude to its partners and well wishers in the corporate world who have been supporting the company since its inception.

Exporters, prominent businessmen as well as airlines participated in this auspicious occasion. The company also organized a blood donation program in association with Nepal Red Cross Society at its corporate office in Kamaladi, where 44 person donated blood.

Established in the year 1965 by then chairman Late Prayag Man Singh Pradhan, the company started as a travel and tour agency to cater to the Nepali customers. Prior to that, from 1954 to 1964 the company functioned as Nepal Air Commercial Agency to help in the country's domestic transportation of passengers and freight at needy items as there were no road connections between many places.

Later with the establishment of Everest Travel Service Pvt. Ltd. amidst the scenic sculpture and culturally rich Basantapur area (popularly known as Hanuman Dhoka) in Kathmandu, the company started its hospitality service for both domestic and international market. In the year 1984, Everest De Cargo was established by its present Chairman and Managing Director Rabindra Man Singh Pradhan [(Former President of Nepal Association of Travel Agents (NATA) and immediate past President of Nepal Freight Forwarding Association (NEFFA)] to cope with the growing need of export business in the country.

Today the company has established itself as Nepal's successful service provider in the area of travel and logistics solution.

“We Have To Focus On Natural Capital Advantage”

-Dr. Hari Krishna Upadhyay

The diversity - which Nepal has in north and south in a distance of few kilometers - is unique. One can find temperatures ranging from tropical and warm in the south to cold temperature in north. This is the advantage where one can produce various commodities.

Dr. HARI KRISHNA UPADHYAY, Chairman of Center for Environment and Agricultural Policy Research, Extension and Development (CEAPRED), has made a significant contribution in Nepalese agriculture sector by introducing programs to transform it from subsistence-based to market-orientated. Former member of National Planning Commission, Dr. Upadhyaya spoke to KESHAB POUDEL on various issues including the role of CEAPRED in the poverty alleviation program. Excerpts:

How would you see future scenario in agriculture sector following the restoration of peace in the country?

If past trend continues and business goes as usual, it is very difficult for us to achieve high and pro-poor economic growth which we need to achieve in the context of new Nepal. The early indications show that the situation in the country will not remain as usual given the tremendous development potential in Nepal. In a relatively comfortable socio-political scenario, we will achieve pro-poor high growth.

How will you achieve it?

If we shift our agricultural system towards more natural ecological advantages, making it more responsive to our competitive advantage, we can bring the changes. The issue of linking north-south corridor is important for this.

Where do we need to focus?

We must focus on agriculture in which most of Nepalese people are dependent upon. We need to reinvent rural sector. For this we need to change the present subsistence-based traditional agriculture system.

How competitive the agriculture market is going to be in future?

Nepal is now a full-fledged member of World Trade Organization which means Nepal is subjected to rules and regulations defined by WTO regime. Nepal is also a member of BIMSTEC and also a member of SAFTA. Being a member in all these trading blocs, Nepal is in a very difficult situation but at the same time it also poses a very favorable situation. It will face difficulty in view of requirement to become competitive.

How do you see the future of traditional crops?

Many commodities - which Nepalese farmers traditionally produced like cereal crops and maize - are not in a position to survive in markets where they have to compete with the production of highly subsidized farmers from across the border. Even if we produce more rice, more maize, we will not be

able to compete with the farmers across the border because they are receiving subsidies. Moreover, they have much larger economy of scale compared to ours. Our production pockets are very scattered and small in which each individual farmer can produce only a couple of kilograms whose cost of production is very high.

How can we make market favorable?

We have natural and ecological capital. If we continue to produce what we have been producing in the past, if we continue our agriculture system in the same mode and same pattern which we have been doing since ages, then we will not be able to compete in the regional market as well as in the domestic market because we cannot block the commodities from outside. If we get cheaper apple from Kashmir nobody will pay high price for apples brought from Jumla or Mustang.

What do Nepalese farmers need to do?

Again, there is a need to reorient agriculture system to tap natural ecological capital or climatic diversity. Then, Nepalese farmers can compete with anybody. During the time Nepalese produce certain commodities, farmers across the border or in other regional market cannot produce them because of the climate. The diversity - which Nepal has in north and south in a distance of few kilometers - is unique. One can find temperatures ranging from tropical and warm in the south to cold temperature in north. This is the advantage where one can produce various commodities ranging from sub-tropical to warm temperate climate. If we specialized in the commodities that have absolute natural comparative advantages because of the natural capital, then we don't have to compete with others. This is where I see advantages of north south economic road corridor.

Can you elaborate the advantage of north-south road corridor?

Traditionally, our road networks have been dominated by east west high way. The roads - which opened up access to wider market - are there but the producers have to compete with each other in the market as all of them have been producing similar commodities. The basic advantage we can enjoy by linking the north-south corridor is that the producers don't have to compete among themselves in particular market because they produce different commodities.

How do you see Surkhet-Jumla road corridor?

Surkhet-Jumla road corridor - where we have started some activities based on north south corridor development approach - is one of the most potential

areas. For example, in a particular part of the year, Surkhet produces certain commodities what Jumla cannot produce because the temperature of Jumla is much lower and vice versa. If you can develop the production system in a way that links the opportunities existing in Jumla to market of Surkhet and further down to the market of Nepalgunj up to the market of India, then the opportunities that you can tap because of natural capital can be led to trigger better growth not only in Jumla but also across the corridor. So, there are built-in market linkages as well as production synergies among the districts falling in the same corridor. We have already launched Local Livelihood Program (LLP) as a pilot program designed to benefit poor farmers living in North South corridors of Surkhet-Jumla and Chhinchu-Jajarkot road corridor with support from International Fund for Agriculture Development.

What does competitiveness involve?

There are only two ways for us to remain competitive. One is to produce what others cannot produce; like producing cauliflower during July which farmers in plain or across the border cannot produce and focus on commodities that depend on our specific climatic conditions. Another way to remain competitive is to produce any commodity that does not use inputs which increases the cost of production. If Nepalese farmers have been producing rice without subsidies in irrigation, electricity, fertilizers and chemicals, they cannot compete with Indian rice which produce by using heavily subsidized fertilizers, irrigation, electricity and chemicals.

What will be the alternative then?

Organic farming is the best alternative. If we produce rice without using any chemical fertilizers, this will be organic and it has its own market. Nepalese farmers have already started to export organic coffee and tea but the production is still limited comparative to the potential available in Nepal. We are promoting this concept in CEPARED. Our concept is to build an organic village which can produce all products organically.

As politicians of all sorts have been talking about new Nepal, how do you visualize new Nepal?

All of us want our country to be a sovereign, prosperous, peaceful and equitable. The word may vary to define what basically new Nepal means but every one must have those elements in their mind. In the center of this concept should be prosperity. If you are not prosperous or if you are operating in very low equilibrium or low growth scenario, poverty is bound to exist. Peace without prosperity is like life without vitality.



As a founding founder-chairperson of CEAPRED how do you feel about your achievement?

Of course, there is an element of satisfaction. But, I don't see this as being sufficient ground for us to be complacent. We could have definitely done better and achieved more than what we have achieved. Given the social, economic and political context, we have been operating in the past ten years particularly in reference to conflict. It was not so convenient for mobility. Whatever limited achievement we have achieved does provide a certain degree of satisfaction.

As you have recently celebrated a ceremony to mark 17 years of CEAPRED, how do you see the growth of your organization?

CEAPRED has grown in size, institutional capacity and strength, and it has grown in its outreach and coverage of the people. It is now working with close to half a million people. As an institution that is widely referred as a successful story, it is a matter of satisfaction. We are proud to say that the previous South Asian Poverty Alleviation Report included CEAPRED as one of the best institutions in the region. There is enormous amount of interest emerging among people from outside both government, non-government, private as well as other sectors in what we are doing and how we are doing. These are some elements of satisfaction.

What lessons have you learnt from your experience?

We started with off season vegetables back in 1990/91 in Dharan-Basantapur highway that led to wide replication. It is now standardized. After that, we decided to go on vegetable seeds, which have also been standardized. In this line, we thought of north south corridor. This has been spelled out in government plans and policies also. Tenth Plan and agriculture policy also talk about this. If this new innovation succeeds, it will not only lead to economic benefits, poverty reduction and livelihood but also more social harmony will be there.

Organic farming is the best alternative.

If we produce rice without using any chemical fertilizers, this will be organic and it has its own market

“Conservation Is Needed For Now, Today And Tomorrow”

-Prabhu Budhathoki

Prabhu Budhathoki is the Country Representative of The World Conservation Union (IUCN) Nepal. Budhathoki has contributed significantly to the cause of natural resource management and sustainable livelihoods in his various capacities, and his other numerous posts at national and international fora. Before joining IUCN Nepal in July 2006, he was associated with a UNDP/GEF funded project as the Chief Technical Advisor of the Carbon Sequestration Project in Iran. Budhathoki's professional track record in the fields of natural resources and protected area management, his first-hand knowledge of the local communities living in the buffer zones of Nepal, as well as his experiences in the forestry sector, has marked him an excellent choice to lead the IUCN Nepal program as its country representative.

Excerpts of the interview:

What is your perception about IUCN's works both globally and nationally?

The World Conservation Union (IUCN) is the oldest and largest conservation network in the world, which brings together 83 States, 110 government agencies, more than 800 non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and some 10,000 scientists and experts from 181 countries in a unique worldwide partnership. As the world's leading authority on conservation with an observer status in the United Nations, IUCN has the reputation of being apolitical and a neutral organization to convene dialogues and debates on conservation and sustainable development issues between governments, civil society and the private sector. It provides policy advice and technical support to governments, UN organizations, international conventions and other groupings such as the G8 and G7. IUCN is also a global body that monitors the state of the world's species through the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. While managing protected areas, governments all over the world have been adopting the criteria and categories developed by IUCN. The IUCN mobilizes people and organizations through its networks worldwide to produce and use conservation knowledge for the benefit of people and nature. Many countries seek support of IUCN to prepare and implement national conservation and biodiversity policies and strategies. It is an organization, which promotes idea that human lives and livelihoods, especially of the poor, who depend on the sustainable management of natural resources. In Nepal, IUCN has been recognized as an organization, which has helped the government

to develop most of the environmental related policies, including National Conservation Strategy and National Environmental Policies and Action Plans. It has been active in enhancing national capacity of the government to implement multilateral environmental agreements, improve environmental governance and conservation awareness raising. Besides, IUCN has been recognized as a leading organization in supporting sustainable management of wetland resources in the country. Since late 1960s, the organization has been helping the Nepalese society in improving scientific understanding of what natural ecosystems provide to humans and need for sustainable management of natural resources to achieve Nepal's developmental objectives.

What made you join IUCN in the capacity of its new Country representative?

Since the country is in the process of transformation, I found that IUCN could be the best organization through which I could contribute, albeit little from my side, to the country's vision of making a new Nepal in near future. This is the reason I joined IUCN Nepal office last July despite possessing a satisfactory job abroad.

What, according to you, are the issues and challenges confronting the country at this period of transition in Nepal?

The country is struggling to formulate a people-centered governance system which helps in improving the livelihoods of the people. We are in the process of state restructuring and trying to develop an inclusive society by which everybody could take part in nation building and equitably benefit from the development. How to maintain unity among diversity and mobilize people for nation building is the main issue and challenge the country is facing currently. Similarly, issues such as how to collectively address political, economic and environmental agenda is another dilemma the politicians are facing now. Besides, in this transition period, pressure on natural resources and biodiversity, including poaching of rhino etc are also increasing.

What do you see the role of IUCN in managing natural resources and environmental conservation in Nepal?

IUCN's main role is to influence, encourage and assist the Government of Nepal and Nepalese society to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable. We can assist the

In this transition period, pressure on natural resources and biodiversity, including poaching of rhino etc are also increasing.

government to develop appropriate policies, in bringing new conservation knowledge to country and disseminating national experiences at the regional and global levels. As impacts of global warming have also been reported in Nepal, IUCN could help in building capacity of the country in climate change adoption. As economy of our neighbors has been rapidly growing, the country should prepare to cope with both challenges and opportunities coming from these mega economies, particularly the pressure on natural resources. Mainstreaming environmental issues in formal and informal education curricula and integrated watershed and wetland management are other areas where IUCN can support the government in realizing its objectives as stated in the Nepal Biodiversity Strategy and its Implementation Plan. We believe that well-functioning ecosystem is necessary to reduce poverty and to improve livelihoods, societies and economies. In summary, IUCN's worldwide experiences in the area of integrated resource management by which we could address poverty and environment issues in a win-win way can be also be replicated to Nepal.

What and how can IUCN contribute to the making of a new Nepal?

As a unique democratic Union and a neutral environmental forum for governments, NGOs, scientists, business and local communities, IUCN can help government and Nepalese society to bring in cutting edge knowledge and experiences suitable to changing context of the country by which environmental goods and services could be managed properly for the benefit of majority of people. For example, IUCN has been taking initiative to mainstreaming environmental and sustainable development agenda in the new constitution of the country. Based on new power restructuring of the government, Nepal may need an array of new policies, plans and strategies in the coming days. IUCN is well positioned to help the government in developing required policies and strategies to ensure sustainable management of natural resources in the country. New policies and strategies are necessary to empower local communities and institutions and to ensure equity in benefit sharing. Equitable access to natural resources is essential to improve livelihood of the majority of people, to ensure peace and stability in the society and is believed to be a precondition to active participation of people in sustainable resource management. Our 'new' resource management policies and practices should address both sustainable development and equitable issues of resource management. Nature conservation is more than an environmental issue—it is both a social and an economic issue.



Any messages to our readers?

Nepal's progress and prosperity depends on sustainable management of our unique landscapes and diverse ecosystems and resources associated to them. Democracy can flourish on economic progress and economic growth relies on the sustainable supply of environmental goods and services. Thus, all these fundamental pillars are very much intertwined. In order to achieve sustainable resource management, we need to empower people, educate them about the current and future values and importance of resources, devise incentive mechanisms and strictly enforce environmental laws so that people reap the benefits of inclusive conservation in its entirety.

How can young people of today be educated on importance of conservation?

Nepal is striving to make a new Nepal. We have to instill a sense of attitudinal and perception change by giving positive messages to the youths. We have to recognize the potentials of talented young professionals and help them develop their careers as they are the ones who contribute fresh and innovative ideas and insights that will in turn help in charting their future course of action and making a new Nepal.

How important is it to ensure nature conservation?

Being just to nature is being just to society. If we want to sustain our society and civilization, we must inherit livable environment to our future generation. We have not only responsibility to sustain survival of our species; the fate of all other living beings is also in our hands. We must chart our action more responsibly. The key message, therefore, is that most of the people say that conservation is for long-term benefits, which I think, is not true. Conservation is needed for now, today and tomorrow too. The air we breath in, the water we drink, and the food we eat are all environmental resources that we need to conserve and manage as ultimately the future of biodiversity is determined by our society.

IUCN can help government and Nepalese society to bring in cutting edge knowledge and experiences suitable to changing context of the country by which environmental goods and services could be managed properly for the benefit of majority of people

TRPAP

Tourism for Poverty Reduction

After the implementation of Tourism for Rural Poverty Alleviation Program (TRPAP), Solukhumbu's southern parts, which receive very low number of tourists, have emerged as new tourist destination contributing to poverty reduction

By KESHAB POUDEL, In Junbesi

Linda Johnson, an American trekker, was on the way to Everest base camp as she started her trekking from the old trekking route Jiri, 100 miles north east of Capital city. As soon as she reached the Junbesi, a small Sherpa settlement with green pine trees, warm hospitality of Sherpa and renowned Thuptenchholing Monastery, Linda changed her mind.

One night stay in this peaceful village compelled her to amend earlier plans to continue journey towards Namche. "I want to spend at least a week in this village now cutting my staying in Namche," said Linda. "My plan is now to go further south up to the settlement of Khaling Rai to see their culture."

For a district with high mountains, attracting tourists like Linda is only way to reduce the level of poverty. As subsistence-based agriculture cannot bring tangible change in the rural life, promoting tourism is best way to maximize the income. This is what TRPAP has targeted for.

Almost all places in Nepal have products sellable to tourists. Solukhumbu's southern areas are no exception. From diverse culture to nature, Solukhumbu's south have all ingredients to attract tourists. What is required is effective marketing.

As TRPAP developed Pikey and Dudhakunda Cultural Trail as a product and Nepal Tourism Board is marketing it to the international community, it

trekking trail.

"The southern parts of Solukhumbu have a great market potential for tourists. What one needs to do is to bring the tourists from northern parts of the district," said Laxman Bahadur Hamal, chief district officer inaugurating Tourists Information Center in Junbesi.

For the residents living in northern Solukhumbu, the tourism has brought prosperity increasing per capita income



Sherpa in Junbesi: Unique Culture

generates hope among the people living in the region that tourism will come to improve their livelihood as in the northern part of the district.

Although southern parts of Solukhumbu district has also many things to boast, they are completely sidelined by the tourism attraction of northern part where the population density is low and overall income of the people is comparatively much higher than the residents of south.

After the signing of peace agreement and return of normalcy, the southern parts of Solukhumbu is again in the tourist map. Nepal Tourism Board and trekking agents have already started to market this

by many folds. However, Solukhumbu's southern part remained closed to outside tourists.

Till early 1970s before the commencement of regular air service to Lukla, many villages of Southern and western parts of Solukhumbu used to get enormous number of trekkers as it was the gateway to Everest.

With the level of poverty high in southern parts of Solukhumbu selling its natural and cultural diversity to the tourist is best way to transform the rural life.

Although it lies on a main trekking route to Everest base camp, only a few tourists know the area. According to an

estimate, about 2000 tourists visited Junbesi this year - a less than 10 percent of total visitors to northern Solu. Known as a Hillary Trail, Jiri-Namche trekking route was badly devastated by the ten years long insurgency. After the Maoists attacked local police station in Junbesi in 2001 killing three policemen, tourist arrival had drastically dropped.

As the conflict intensified and regular air service between Lukla and Kathmandu increased, Junbesi virtually vanished from the minds of tourists. Based on pro-poor tourism program, TRPAP is recently running its program in six districts of Nepal- Taplejung, Solukhumbu, Rasuwa, Chitwan, Rupandehi and Dolpa. Launched in September 2001 with assistance from United Nations Development Program, United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) and SNV-Nepal, TRPAP has shown a way to eradicate poverty through tourism.

"The conflict had badly affected our business. Thanks to the implementation of TRPAP, we have got opportunity to expand the tourism base building new institutions and identifying the new trekking trail," said Mingma Doma Lama, owner of J.B. Lodge of Junbesi.

Relied on the subsistence-based agriculture, tourism generates cash for



A trekker: Enjoying Nature

the family like that of Doma whose per capita income is determined by number of visiting tourists.

"Our agriculture production meets our annual demand of food stuffs and we generate cash from tourism," said Doma, mother of four children, whose elder daughter is now working in Israel as a nurse. "If number of tourist arrival increases, our income will double."

At a time when Nepal's tourism sector is said to be looking for new tourism destinations, Solukhumbu Pikey and Dudhkunda Cultural Trails have emerged as new destinations.

"A study of 2003 showed that 60 percent of tourists were repeated visitors. The identification of new products like Pikey - Dhudhkunda trail has important significance for

them. We will highlight this product in forthcoming second NATA Himalayan Travel Mark," said Lila Bahadur Baniya, manager Sustainable Tourism Development Unit of Nepal Tourism Board. "We have already decided to market this new sector to the international tourism market."

Developed under the TRPAP, Pikey-Dudhakunda cultural trail is unique in its nature. From rivers, mountains, and green pine forest, to ethnic and cultural diversity and monasteries, there are everything in southern Solukhumbu to attract tourists.

Covering 12 VDC's of southern Solukhumbu, this new destination is inhabited by Khaling Rai and Sherpas. From Junbesi's Sherpa settlement and some renowned monasteries like Thuptenchholing Monastery to settlement of Khaling Rai and their culture, there is the unique combination of culture of highlander Sherpa and Rai.

"As basic infrastructures and primary facilities are developed under the TRPAP, now the time has come to link Southern parts of Solukhumbu with prosperous northern part where the



NA aircraft: Flight to Phaplu

tourism is making a lot of differences," said Bharat Raj Dhungana, local development officer of Solukhumbu District.

DDC has implemented the program in 12 village development committees of the districts. Under the agreement signed in March 2004 between Ministry of Culture Tourism and Civil Aviation,

DDC was made accountable to implement the program in 12 village development committees.

Under the TRPAP, District Development Committee has mobilized communities from grass root level to district. From constructing trails to improvements of trails and providing training on various sectors like in cooking

to grocery marketing, all kinds of program was launched.

TRPAP has supported to build all basic infrastructures to make it a new brand - how the brand will be marketed to benefit the large number of poor and marginalized population of southern district remains to be seen. TRPAP programs have shown that tourism can be used as a tool to alleviate poverty.

“Tourists Will Bring Tangible Change

Rabi Jung Pandey

RABI JUNG PANDEY, national program manager for Rural Poverty Alleviation Program (TRPAP), has a long experience of implementing tourism programs in rural areas at the time of conflict. Pandey successfully handled the TRPAP when the country had seen most unstable phase of political instability and intensification of Maoist insurgency. After the inauguration of Tourist Information Center in Junbesi, Pandey spoke to KESHAB POUDEL on various issues. Excerpts:

How do you see the Pikey and Dhudhkunda cultural trails?

This is the most beautiful trekking trail with combination of diverse ethnic culture and nature. When a tourist shares the experiences of this trekking trail, many other tourists will come to visit. I am confident that tourists will bring tangible change in the life of local population.

What kinds of infrastructures are there?

Under TRPAP, infrastructures and institutions at the community level have already been built. The inauguration of Tourist Information Center in Junbesi is another milestone in the tourism promotion. This center will provide all necessary information to the trekkers who come to visit. Now arrival of tourists will bring economic benefits to the communities in 12 southern districts of Solukhumbu. We are very hopeful that this trail will be popularized soon.

How do you see the response of communities?

It is the local communities who have supported us to implement our programs. Even after the completion of the program, it is the local community who has to sustain it. Under our social mobilization program, we have already built institutions to sustain it. We also mobilized community to perform different roles. We also promoted the service indirectly related to the tourism involving the local communities.

What products TRPAP has developed?

TRPAP has already developed a product by adding facilities and now the stakeholders will do the marketing. As the day for the handing over the facilities to local communities is coming closer, we must give message to local people that they need to retain quality of services in the areas. If the number of tourist arrival does not improve, local population may be frustrated and there will be possibility of depression. One has to work hard to prevent such situation.

How do you see the accommodation part?

Especially accommodation needs big investment and this is fixed investment. Only rich people can invest in the accommodation but people with low income can involve in small sector such as tea shops and groceries, trekking guide, tour guide and local guides, small handicrafts house, performing cultural programs. Here are enormous opportunities for them. If we don't address these areas, the tourism sector can not address rural poverty. So far as accommodation is concerned, it involves



many things including foods like vegetables, eggs and others. We are promoting the local products discouraging the use of readymade food. This is another way through which the poor people in local areas can benefit. We have been generating awareness in these area. There is a need to increase the volume of tourists to sustain the program.

How hopeful are you on the success of tourism in Junbesi?

If volume of tourist arrival increases, people will get more benefits and people will devote all their time in this sector. From the designing phase, the program expected that local population can use their leisure time in the tourism related activities. As it will take time to develop the tourism sector, local people are encouraged to continue their traditional work. Once the tourism sector dynamically moves and demands more time of local population, then people will gradually minimize the low income generating traditional work and involve in new income generating activities.

WOMEN AND JUST PEACE

Women's Campaign for Equality and Just Peace has finalized the Nepalese Women's Charter for Equality after three-day meeting with 360 women from 75 districts.

The 23-point charter demands ensuring at least 33 percent of candidates in the proportional election system and the first-past-the-post system proposed for the elections to the constituent assembly.

The charter also includes demands to ensure women's equality in every sector, prohibition of violence and discrimination against women on grounds of gender, caste, religion, community and language by introducing effective legal system and making representation of one-third women in all government sectors, especially the cabinet.

On the inaugural day of the program, OHCHR-Nepal chief Lena Sundh had informed that the rights agency had sent recommendations to the Speaker of the Parliament-Legislature and is working within the UN Country Team in Nepal to influence the ongoing work of the political parties on the Constituent Assembly Members' Election Bill, in order to ensure that the Assembly will fairly represent women and other historically under-represented groups.

"In particular, we recommended that 33 percent of candidates in the election for the first-past-the-post system be women. We have also suggested that in the election using the proportional system, at least 33 percent of candidates be women, and their names should be high on the parties' lists. A further challenge will be to make sure that women in representative positions come from a broad range of backgrounds, not only from privileged sections of society," she said.

OHCHR has outlined the need to launch an informed public debate on the Bill, particularly its provisions regarding the inclusiveness of women and under-represented groups.

"Building an inclusive state, where the human rights of all are fully recognized and respected, is not about drawing castles in the sky, as one proverb puts it. Rather, it is an exercise with the most concrete of aims. For example, you all are aware of the obstacles that women face in accessing justice in cases of sexual violence. Will the police treat them with respect? Will the police bother to file a First Incident Report? Will they investigate the allegations and, if things progress this far, will the justice system be willing to begin prosecutions of those to whom the evidence points? My Office has been advocating for changes in the time-limit within which rape victims can file complaints and I am concerned that a petition to the Supreme Court challenging the very restrictive 35 days has been postponed time and again, the last time until July 2007," she added.

"OHCHR-Nepal is deeply concerned about these all too pertinent questions that Nepali women are forced to weigh before deciding to access their right to justice in cases of sexual violence. It is vital that legislation is reviewed and that the authorities create a safe and protective environment in which women can seek help and redress."

Book List

- Fateful Interview, Madhav Kumar Rimal,Rs. 400.00
- Beyond The frontiers Women's stories from Nepal Padmayati Singh/2006.....Rs 200.00
- Bonded Labour Kamaiya in Nepal. Padma Raj Lamichhane/2005.....Rs. 350.00
- Dhoopee "The Juniper" A Long Poem.Toya Gurung/2006.....Rs. 185.00
- Distribution of goods and Services in Nepal's Conflict Ananda P. Shrestha \Hari Uprety\2006.....Rs. 200.00
- Ecotourism in Nepal with theoretical concepts and principles Damodar Prasad Bhatt\2006.....Rs.675.00
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- Human Rights yearbook 2007 Kundan Aryal\2007.....Rs.500.00
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- My Life Story Ramhari Sharma Nepal \ 2006 Rs.....250.00
- Nepal -Japan Relation, Ram Kumar Panday\2006 Rs. 2000.00
- Nepal Struggle for Existence -Jagadish Sharma\2006 Rs.999.00
- Nepal Postage Stamps Catalogue 2005, Chandra Kumar Stapit \Deepak Manandhar \2005 Rs. 150.00
- Nepal 's conflict and its impact on Public Ananda P. Shrestha \Hari Uprety \2006.....Rs 150.00
- 15. Peaks and Pinnacles Mountainering in Nepal Harka Gudung\2004.....Rs. 500.00
- The Sakyas, Ajaya Kranti Shakya \2006Rs. 350.00
- Simple Convictions My Struggle for Peace and Democracy Girija Prasad Koirala\2006.....Rs. 250.00
- 18 Uncertainty on a Himalayan Scale, Thompson \Warburaton \ Hatley \2007..... Rs. 250.00

GAUR CARNAGE

Security Break Down

The UN rights agency points at breakdown of security system during the Gaur carnage last month.

By A CORRESPONDENT

In its findings based on field investigations, the OHCHR-Nepal has stated that most, if not all, of the killings in Gaur could have been prevented.

The UN human rights agency has stated that the incidents highlighted the weaknesses of law enforcement agencies who, aware of the potential for clashes and other violence, were grossly ill-prepared to ensure effective crowd control.

"The Nepal Police (NP) and the APF failed to prevent the violence from happening by persuading the organizers to move or postpone the rallies. They failed to stop the violence when it broke out. They failed to protect those who came under attack, and they failed to carry out any arrests. The mechanism to coordinate security and law and order, the district security committee chaired by the Chief District Officer, broke down and failed to function on the day of the rallies," it states.

A prime obligation of the State is to carry out immediate and thorough investigations into killings. "To date, no First Information Report has been filed for these killings and to OHCHR's knowledge criminal investigations into the killings have yet to be launched. The high-level commission of inquiry set up by the Government had not, as of 19 April traveled to Gaur to begin its investigations. While this

commission is important, its work cannot in any way substitute for criminal investigations and prosecutions to bring those responsible to justice. Any investigations must look not only into individual perpetrators, but whether the violence and killings were pre-planned and by whom, as well as any omission by the State authorities."

The incidents in Gaur emphasized once more the need to fundamentally strengthen and reform law enforcement, it states. OHCHR has noted that on 2 April, the Home Minister announced that local authorities and security forces had received instructions to use all means available within the law to deal with armed groups and acts of violence which disturb peace and security,

The 27 individuals, most of them linked to the CPN-M, who died on 21 March were killed in a brutal manner. The report, however, states that it did not find women were raped before they were killed – as reported by some rights activists.

particularly in the context of the elections. However, OHCHR believes that additional immediate measures need to be taken in the short term to enable the State to guarantee security, protect life, freedom of assembly and

expression in the context of the peace and electoral process.

The report is the culmination of more than 170 interviews by OHCHR teams in and around Gaur and in Kathmandu with eye witnesses, human rights defenders, journalists, medical personnel, government officials, security forces personnel, CPN-M cadres, political party members, representatives of the MPRF (*Madhesi Janadhikar Forum*), the *Janatantrik Terai Mukti Morcha* (JTMM) (Jwala Singh faction), detainees in police custody, and others.

The 27 individuals, most of them linked to the CPN-M, who died on 21 March were killed in a brutal manner. The report, however, states that it did not find women were raped before they were killed – as reported by some rights activists.

"Many reports have claimed that some or all of the five female victims were raped and/or sexually mutilated before being killed. In the course of its many interviews with witnesses and others, OHCHR found no evidence of rape or sexual mutilation. According to medical experts, there were no external signs of rape on any of the

female victims. OHCHR is concerned that the public diffusion of such allegations without proper verification only served to augment the anguish of the victims' relatives," the report states. n

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