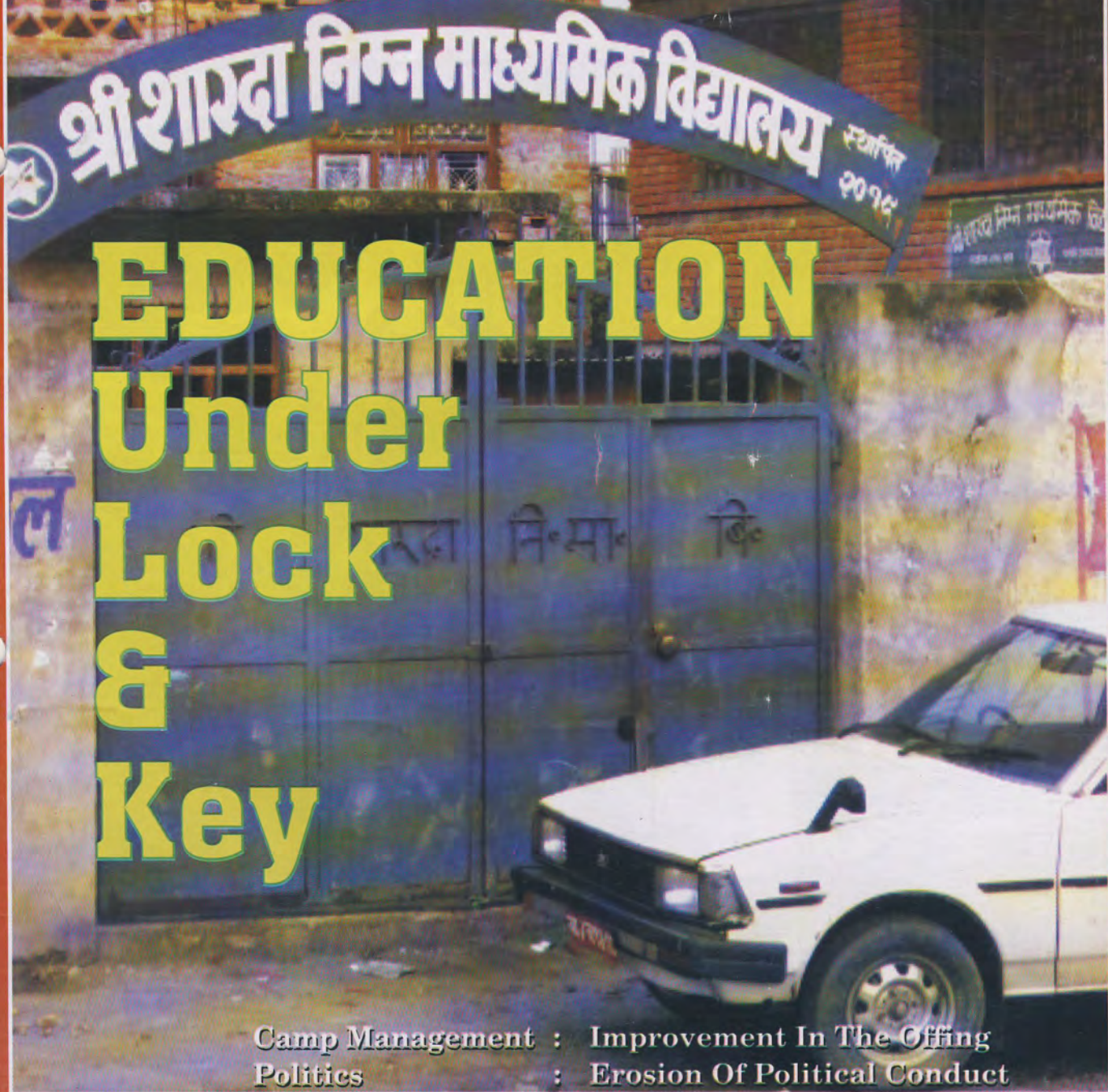


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The National Newsmagazine

SPOTLIGHT

May 25-31, 2007



EDUCATION Under Lock & Key

Camp Management : Improvement In The Offing
 Politics : Erosion Of Political Conduct

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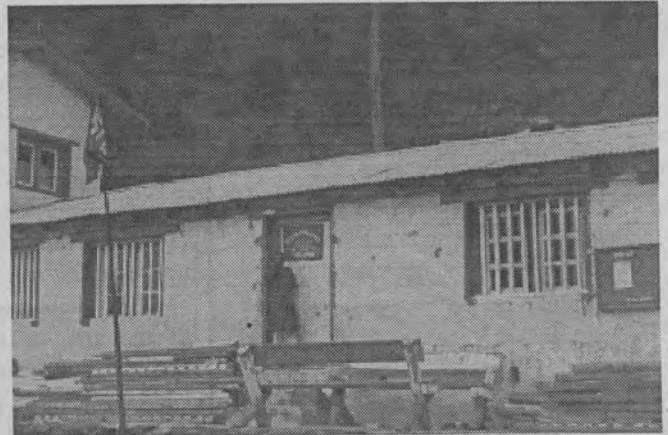
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In a criminal targeting of education, Maoist-affiliated unions force schools across the country to shut down Page 12



CAMP MANAGEMENT: A Step Forward

As the govt fulfills Maoists demands for remuneration and housing, the second phase of verification of PLA looks likely

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Taranath Ranabhat

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SPOTLIGHT

THE WEEKLY NATIONAL NEWSMAGAZINE

Vol. 26, No 37, May 25, 2007
Jestha 11, 2064

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Cover Design : Digi-Tech Scanning & Pre-Press Pvt. Ltd.
P.O. Box : 1655, Jwagal, Kupondole,
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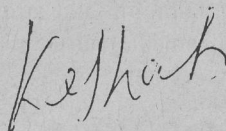
Distribution : R.B. News Paper Traders
New Road, Kathmandu, Nepal
Ph : 4232784, 2020247, 4244679
E-mail : rbnewspaper@hotmail.com

Printers : Printers World
Maitidevi, Kathmandu
Ph : 4423904, 4426520
E-mail : printerworld@wlink.com.np

C.D.O.Regd. No
151/039-40
Postal Regd. No
42/61/62
U.S. Library of Congress
Catalogue No. 91-905060

Without any valid demands or reasons, the schools were shut down for indefinite period of time denying the right of children to go to school. With the beginning of Maoist insurgency in 1996, education sector has become one of the sectors hard hit with frequent strikes and disturbance. Even after the restoration of peace, the process of operation destruction against the education institutions continues. Whenever something goes wrong in politics, political leaders and civil society members come to the street to press the concerned parties. However, when the future of 7.8 million children are being damaged by some whimsical teachers' organization or student union, the leader of the government who is enjoying some of the status of head of the state has not shown any serious concern. United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) and some local NGOs have raised the issue; but no one is paying any attention. In a country with high illiteracy, and high school drop out rate, this kind of act of calling indefinite general strike of education institution must be condemned as crime against children. We decided to look at the overall education situation as a cover story for this week.

The situation of the country has not changed much whether it was under the direct rule of the King or absolute rule of eight parties. In the course of political instability and upheavals, the country has sacrificed major development projects. Nepal had lost hydropower project Arun III back in 1995 under the minority government of CPN-UML when general secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal's single letter evicted the World Bank. Similarly, Danish government pulled out from a community forestry project after February 1, 2005 thanks to political arrogance of then vice chairman Dr. Tulsi Giri. Now, CPN-Maoist leader and minister Hisila Yami has already damaged Melamchi Water Supply Project forcing Asian Development Bank to pull out from it. We know minister Yami will also express her regrets for cancellation of the project like all others did in the past. It is going to be too costly and too late for Nepal. Only question now is whether we are ourselves making all these decisions or implementing the decisions taken somewhere else as recently revealed by Minister for Information and Communication and spokesperson of the government Krishna Bahadur Mahara who said that there is no decisive power in Nepal. Like in opening education institution and bringing the stability, leaders from prime minister to Maoist chairman Prachanda – who have freedom to condemn and criticize each other – are helpless with regard to Melamchi. What we can say now is: The Melamchi Project is Dead, But Long Live Melamchi.



Keshab Poudel
Managing Editor



Melamchi Musings

It is quite clear that Melamchi is headed the Arun way (Melamchi: Still Nowhere, SPOTLIGHT May 18). The hopes of people of Kathmandu valley to be able to drink cool water from Melamchi have been dashed. They should now stop harboring such hopes and instead look forward to what NGOs have been saying – harvest the rainwater. It is now for the NGOs to materialize their tall claims of rainwater harvesting and prove that it is actually feasible for ensuring round-the-year supplies.

*Hitesh Bhattarai
Kuleshwore*

Why Maoists?

It is the duty of Prime Minister to come clean about how this government perceives Melamchi project (Melamchi: Still Nowhere, SPOTLIGHT May 18). If it thinks that this project is not needed, it should say so clearly. There is no need to kick-start another controversy. It is also not proper to blame the Maoists for this debacle. The Prime Minister should come forth and dismiss the minister if the latter is going against the government policy. The Prime Minister is said to be all powerful equipped with even the power of head of state. In reality, he is being pushed around by junior ministers like anything.

*Jiten Rai
Ghattekula*

Parallel Government

Till one year ago, there used to be parallel government and parallel administration but now one can see parallel government in the central cabinet also (Melamchi: Still Nowhere, SPOTLIGHT May 18). The Maoist ministers are building their respective ministries as their personal turfs where anything else – including Prime Minister's position – is out of bound. News have come that Maoist ministers have started replacing the portraits of King and Queen with those of their chairman Prachanda in the Ministries. The parallel form of government can

now be seen in the way the Finance Minister speaks in completely different tone than Works and Planning Minister.

*Kailash Thapa
Balkumari*

Foreign Aid and Lankan Anger

One does not know, why countries in the Third world depend so much on the aid from the advanced nations in the West for their sustenance, especially from the USA, UK and Germany. It is funny that the developing countries, in the name of advancing their so-called national interest, silently digest insult ascribed to them by the rich nations and their loyal media keep mum about that altogether. But, at least for a change, Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa on Wednesday defied moves by Britain and the United States to halt some aid to the island over human rights concerns, saying the state would go it alone if necessary. Britain suspended around \$3 million of debt relief aid to the government earlier this month, citing human rights and defense spending concerns amid renewed civil war between the state and Tamil Tiger rebels. The United States followed suit last week, announcing it had suspended an aid project given "the security situation and the human rights situation. A British High Commission spokesman said Britain is right now withholding three million dollars in aid due to be paid.

Many people have "disappeared" in the past year and security forces and paramilitary units have been accused of extra-judicial killings, abductions and extortion. Thousands of people have been killed in fighting since December 2005, according to Sri Lanka's defence ministry. Germany earlier halted aid to Colombo on similar grounds. Sri Lanka's president rightly vowed not to depend on foreign aid after Britain said it would suspend debt relief to its former colony until Colombo improves its human rights record. "If we are offered genuine aid we will take it, the president said, if not we will forget about aid and do our job. We will not be dependent on aid". Rajapaksa made it clear that Lanka uses its own money for resettlement work and did not wait till the international non-governmental organizations came with their money. The work is going on successfully. "We are providing electricity to people being resettled. New roads are being built in these areas," he said. It is a known fact that the regimes in the developing world are corrupt with a few swindling the mot of the resources and services available in the country. It is very difficult to ascertain which continent is better in allocating resources judiciously to all its citizens. One fails to understand as to why not the developing countries make judicious use of their own resources in a better fashion, in stead of begging the West for a few bones. It needs no illustrations that the bulk of the foreign aid and loans are also swallowed by the same select sections in the these countries. Unlike those who beg in the street, the countries that go around with a begging bowl are not called beggars, for that undermines the prestige of the countries concerned. Now that the President of Sri Lanka, who has also proposed to create a common currency for the SAARC countries, has raised the issue of insult attached foreign aid, the developing countries must rise to the occasion and find a solution to the malaise existing in international relations.

*Dr. Abdul Ruff Colachal
JNU, New Delhi*

Army Condemns Attempts To Terrorize Families Of Soldiers

Nepali Army (NA) has issued a statement condemning attempts made by "anarchic groups" to terrorize families of its soldiers and officers. The NA statement says that on Saturday a group of 20-25 persons forced out one Narayan Bikram Rana from his residence in Dhodari VDC of Bardiya district, physically thrashed him and locked up his home. "The attention of NA has been drawn to this atrocity, which has been carried out as revenge since Rana's son is an officer with the NA," the statement says. The statement has also added that a family of NA soldier in Daulatpur VDC of same district, too, has been similarly harassed and their lands and homes remain seized for the past two years. NA strongly condemns attempts to discourage soldiers and officers and break their patience at a time when the NA is working as per government policies and directives for the purpose of building lasting peace in the country, the statement says. In the statement, NA has said that it is firm to protect lives and properties of its officers and soldiers and their families. "NA wants to make it clear to all concerned not to mistake our patience as weakness," the statement adds. The statement has come in the wake of reports that cadres of Maoist-affiliated Young Communist League (YCL) harassed and forced out Rana from his residence. *Nepalnews.com reports*

UAE Warns To Black-List NAC

After it boarded passengers without return tickets and legitimate visas, the united Arab Emirates (UAE) has warned the Nepal Airlines Corporation (NAC) it could blacklist the airline and prevent it from operating the sector. Despite repeated warnings, the NAC is said to have continued to board such passengers leading the Dubai Naturalization and Residential Department to issue stern

warning to NAC's Station Manager. It has warned to blacklist the airline and impose Rs 11,000 fine per passenger. Sources said Dubai authorities have complained that NAC's operation was not as per international standard and were tarnishing the airport's image. If it is blacklisted, NAC will not be able to operate Dubai – which is one of its most lucrative sector. As per NAC's rules, it cannot board passengers without visas in sectors where On-Arrival Visas are not issued. However, due to collusion among immigration officials, police and NAC officials, such passengers were being boarded. Meanwhile, NAC's Marketing Director BP Basyal has said that directive has been issued to ticketing officials and travel agents not to repeat such things. He said that since visas are generally faxed, they cannot distinguish between genuine or fake visas. On the other hand, PN Sharma, chief of Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA) immigration, said they so not give clearance to any passenger without genuine visa. *Kantipur daily reports*

Sitaula Comes Down Hard On YCL

Home Minister Krishna Prasad Sitaula has asked the Maoists to immediately check the violent activities of their youth wing, the Young Communist League (YCL). At a press meet on Saturday (May 19), Sitaula said the government had taken seriously the YCL attacks on government offices and civil servants in Bardiya, Dang, Banke, Kailali, Kanchanpur and several other places in recent days. Describing the YCL actions as condemnable, the Home Minister stressed that the Maoist leadership must stop the League from engaging in use of force. He also asked the Maoist party to return the properties seized during insurgency. On a query about Maoist chairman Prachanda's warning of nationwide agitations if the government failed to express commitment to manage the PLA cantonments by today evening, Sitaula dubbed the ultimatum as 'unnecessary'.

Law enforcement agencies and the local administrations have been ordered to effectively curb YCL's violence, he said and added that the home administration would act tough on Terai insurgents groups that are involved in abduction and killings of civil servants and civilians.

Leading dailies report

US Advises Fixing Polls Date Soon

The United States has advised the government to quickly fix new date for the elections of Constituent Assembly (CA). In his first meeting with the Prime Minister (on May 19) since he returned from Washington recently, US ambassador James Moriarty gave this suggestion. Sources close to PM said that Moriarty urged him to consult with eight parties and announce new date. PM told him he will soon announce the new polls date. Likewise, US ambassador also criticized the Maoists saying that they have not improved their behavior despite joining the government. During the meeting, he criticized the Maoists for their atrocities in Kailali and Kanchanpur and for obstructing the second phase verification of PLA combatants. *Nepal Samacharpatra daily reports*

Nepal To Hold Decisive Talks With Bhutan

A special "Advance Team" of the government is soon going to be dispatched to Bhutan to hold decisive talks with the Bhutanese government on the issue of refugee impasse. Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala gave this information to a delegation of refugee leaders who had gone to his residence on Thursday (May 18). The Advance Team is being dispatched as per the Prime Minister's order and the PM has also held one round of meeting with Foreign Minister Sahana Pradhan over this issue. The refugee leaders informed that although initially Foreign Minister herself planned to visit Bhutan, later it was decided that the team should be sent first. The refugee leaders quoted PM as saying that in recent times India, too, has

become concerned with the issue. When refugee leaders raised the issue that Bhutan government was planning to evict more Nepali-speaking nationals, PM said he can comment on that only after talking with Bhutanese officials. Refugee leaders Teknath Rizal, Balram Poudel and Thinley Penjore met with the PM. "PM seemed more serious about refugee issue this time than in the past," Poudel said after the meeting. The refugee leaders also handed over their memo regarding the planned people's movement in Bhutan. They have also sent such letter to UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon requesting for UN support in their movement. *Nepal Samacharpatra daily reports*

House Stalled Again

Even though a delegation of Madhesi MPs held a meeting with the Prime Minister on Wednesday (May 16) morning to resolve the impasse, the parliament session could not proceed. Speaker Subas Nemwang issued a notice stating that the House has been adjourned without even commencing and will meet again on May 24. In their interaction with the PM, the latter is said to have assured the Madhesi MPs that the government would consider their demands for revoking the recommendations by Electoral Constituency Delineation Commission, form high level commission to probe atrocities during Madhes agitation and so on. Meanwhile, Speaker Nemwang left for New York on Wednesday to attend a conference on inclusion. He will return home on May 23. *Leading dailies report*

Yadav Rules Out Talks On May 18

Chairman of Madhesi Janadhikar Forum (MJF) Upendra Yadav has ruled out talks with the government on May 18. A day after government talks team member State Minister Ram Chandra Yadav said that they were preparing to hold formal talks with, the MJF chairman Upendra Yadav has ruled out the

possibility. "There is no possibility of talks on May 18," Yadav said. He added that the talks cannot be held before the government fulfills its preconditions such as formation of judicial commission to investigate atrocities during Madhes agitation, declaration of those killed in Madhes agitation as martyrs, withdrawal of charges against MJF activists, and restoration of law and order. "Talks cannot be held without creating conducive environment. Therefore, there is no possibility of talks on May 18," he said. *Compiled from reports*

Maoists Manhandle CDO, Vandalize King's Statues

The cadres of Maoists have vandalized the office of District Administration Office (DAO) of Kanchanpur and manhandled Chief District Officer (CDO) Netra Prasad Sharma. The cadres of Maoists barged into the office and vandalized it after the police reportedly intervened a rally by Maoist-affiliated women who had gone to DAO to hand over their 30-point demands. Police had stopped the women from entering the DAO following which 30-40 Maoist cadres carrying batons charged into the office, vandalized the building and physically thrashed Sharma in his office. Police later said it has arrested 17 person in connection with the attack. Meanwhile, Young Communist League and student activists affiliated with the Maoists vandalized statues of late King Birendra and Mahendra in Pokhara, Birendranagar, and Kathmandu. They used hammers to vandalize the statues. *Leading dailies report*

Minister Mahato Regrets PM's Comment

A senior minister has regretted comments made by Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala about his recent statement. Rajendra Mahato, Minister for Industry, Commerce and Supplies, who is in the eye of controversy after he allegedly remarked against the people of

hill, told reporters in Biratnagar on Tuesday (May 15) that he wished the PM had not said what he had said. Responding to journalists' queries, PM Koirala had said on Monday that Mahato was 'irresponsible' in making the comments. "A minister should not be making irresponsible remarks," PM Koirala had said in reference to Mahato's alleged remarks against the people of hill. Minister Mahato was reported by media as having said - a few days ago in Birgunj - that 'people of hill may live in Madhes only if they agree to be ruled by Madhesis.' "What I said is that Madhesis should be allowed to rule Madhes. This I will say one lakh times," Mahato said on Tuesday. He also took a subtle swipe at the PM by saying, "Instead of commenting to media, he should have summoned his minister and allowed me to clarify the matter." Mahato's remarks had caused a furor with organizations like Chure Bhawar Ekata Samaj demanding his resignation. *Nepalnews.com reports*

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Appa Sherpa (left) sets new record by climbing Everest for 17th time *Annapurna Post*

MINISTER FOR INDUSTRY, COMMERCE AND SUPPLIES Rajendra Mahato has said that price of fuel will not be increased before the elections to the Constituent Assembly (CA). "Given the nation's absorptive capacity, we cannot go on without hiking the price for a long time. But the parties have said we must not hike the price before CA elections," Mahato said. Mahato said that any hike in fuel price could be exploited by nefarious elements to trigger unrest to derail the elections. At a program organized by Gas Dealers' Association on Saturday (May 19), Mahato said the private sector will be involved in order to ease supply of fuel.

THE WORLD BANK HAS ISSUED A STATEMENT strongly condemning the recent abduction and murder of Navaraj Bista, an engineer working for the Udaypur District Development Committee. Bista was a staff with the Rural Access Improvement and Decentralization Project funded by the World Bank and implemented by the Department of Local Infrastructure Development and Agriculture Roads (DOLIDAR) of the Government of Nepal. He and three other project staff were abducted as they were returning from a field training in Siraha district on May 11. The Janatarik Terai Mukti Morcha (Goit Faction) claimed responsibility for the kidnappings and the subsequent murder of Bista. "We are deeply shocked by this incident," said Mr. Ken Ohashi, World Bank Country Director for Nepal. "Development workers, be they engineers, teachers, or health care providers, should not be subjected to political violence. If their safety is not assured, we will be forced to assess whether our development assistance should continue in such areas." The World Bank has also expressed condolences to the family of late Bista and sympathies to project staff traumatized by the incident. The World Bank

also expresses gratitude to human rights professionals who helped secure the release of the other hostages.

A SERIES OF TREMORS HAVE HIT eastern parts of Taplejung district on Wednesday (May 16). According to reports, moderate to strong jolts were felt by villagers on Wednesday, which is said to have damaged dozens of houses and killed unknown number of cattle in around seven VDCs including Mehele, Khewang and Mamankhe. As per the report by Nepal Television, Nilgiri secondary school in Mehele, too, has been damaged by the jolt. Human casualties, however, have not been reported yet. The report said that on Wednesday, strong quakes – whose intensity in richter scale are yet to be known – hit the region at 10 am, 1 pm and 3 pm. Terrified by the series of shocks and aftershocks, villagers are staying in open spaces, said the report. Security team is said to have been dispatched to the region to assess the situation and help the villagers. The affected villages lie some one and a half day of walking distance away from district headquarters.

APPA SHERPA HAS BROKEN HIS OWN RECORD by successfully scaling Mount Everest 17th time on Wednesday (May 16). He was leading Super Sherpa expedition team whose all members have scaled the 8850 m high mountain. Likewise, Lhakpa Gelu Sherpa, who holds the record for climbing Everest in quickest time, has also scaled the Everest for 13th time, according to the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation.

NEPAL TELECOM (NT) is launching Third Generation (3G) mobile services from Thursday (May 17). The service is being launched on the occasion of International Telecom Day. NT officials claim that Nepal is going to be the first country in South Asia where 3G mobile services have been launched. According to NT director Buddhi Acharya, the SIM card for 3G service will cost Rs 4195 and its charges will be similar to that of prepaid mobiles. The NT has fixed Rs 10/min for video conferencing facilities. It has fixed 2 paisa per byte rate for video streaming. Currently, four television channels including Kantipur TV will be available.

NEPALI ARMY (NA) HAS TAKEN ACTION against 14 of its personnel who have been found guilty of irregularities while finalising ration tender. Heads of the Rukum-based Bhairabi Dal Battalion, Dailekh-based Shri Bhawanibax Battalion and Sridal Barrack based in Tehrathum and some other officials have been found guilty of wrongdoing while awarding ration contracts to private sector bidders. According to the Directorate of Public Relations (DPR) of the NA, a court of inquiry set up to investigate into the scandal found them guilty of irregularities. The quantum of punishment to the guilty officials ranges from warning to 60 days detention to suspension of promotion for two years. ■

“Dictatorship can emerge if parliament is not allowed to run.”

Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, speaking to journalists in Biratnagar.

“In order to tackle Terai problem, we have to deal with Delhi properly.”

Maoist chairman Prachanda, claiming that his party can resolve Terai crisis within two weeks if given responsibility to do so, at a press meet in Pokhara.

“Dictatorship of neither King nor eight parties can be tolerated.”

Madhav Kumar Nepal, general secretary of Unified Marxist Leninist (UML), in Annapurna Post.

“Talks cannot be held without creating conducive environment.”

Upendra Yadav, president of Madhesi Janadhikar Forum (MJF), ruling out talks with the government until it fulfills preconditions such as formation of judicial commission to investigate atrocities during Madhes agitation.

“What I said is that Madhesis should be allowed to rule Madhes. This I will



say one lakh times.”

Rajendra Mahato, Minister for Industry, Commerce and Supplies, refuting reports that he had made comments aimed at disrupting communal harmony.

“It is shameful for us that our Prime Minister has to beg to Indian ambassador for supply of fuel.”

Biswanath Goel, acting executive director of Nepal Oil Corporation

(NOC), addressing a convention of petroleum dealers saying that NOC is unable to continue supply fuel in subsidized rate despite suffering from heavy losses, in Kantipur.

“Eight Pradhan (chieftains) of eight-party syndicate have been exposed.”

Dr. Prakash Chandra Lohani, vice president of Rastriya Janashakti Party (RJP), in Kantipur.

TRANSITION

COMING: Jimmy Carter, former US president and Mrs Rosalynn Carter, co-founders of Carter Center, to Nepal, on June 13 for four-day visit, representing the Center’s International Election Observation Mission here.

LEFT: Speaker Subas Nemwang, for New York, United States, to attend a conference on inclusion.

RETURNED: Pradeep Nepal,

Minister for Education and Sports, from the Maldives.

Giriraj Mani Pokharel, Minister for Health and Population, after attending World Health Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland.

HONORED: Sushila Koirala, wife of late BP Koirala, with Lunkaran Das Ganga Devi Chaudhary, for her contribution in social development.

A book called “Samanantar Akash”

by Padmavati Singh, with this year’s Sajha Puraskar.

BROKEN: Appa Sherpa, his own record, by successfully scaling Mount Everest 17th time on May 16.

BEREAVED: Shambhu Shrestha, editor of Drishti Weekly, of his father Dhruva Lal Shrestha, who passed away at the age of 64.

ELECTED: Puskar Man Shakya, as president of Handicraft Association of Nepal.

NEPAL MUST BE CAREFUL: Water Resources Development

-AB Thapa

At present all kinds of private developers are in a rush to grab Nepal's big medium and small hydropower projects despite the fact that the overall situation of our country is not yet conducive to implement them. Certainly many of the private developers might have been interested to establish a kind of their right of ownership of the hydropower projects by trying to gain advantages from the present disturbed state of affairs in our country. Unfortunately, our Government is not seen to be concerned whether or not it is in the interest of our country to implement those projects in near future.

"The present institutions (in Nepal) should be wary of giving away Nepali children's rightful inheritance".

This is the remark of Mr. Paul D. Terrell from Bechtel International who was advisor consultant to Multipurpose Karnali Project. He had expressed his concern in an article published in the journal "HIMAL" on Karnali High Dam Project. On top of it he had also said (a) Nepal can decide NOT to build the Karnali Project, but Nepal alone cannot decide TO BUILD the project, (b) Nepal should beware of unintentional "give away" in hydro development, and not rush to compromise the optimum development for the sake of a quick deal.

Nepal Can Decide Not to Build

Mr. Terrell has said that Nepal can decide NOT to build the Project, but Nepal alone cannot decide TO BUILD the project. It implies that our strongest bargaining chip is our right NOT to build the project. It indeed is the most powerful weapon to compel the adversary in bilateral talk to accept our terms and conditions. Canada had used this bargaining chip to compel the USA to concede and accept their demand in course of finalization of the Columbia River Treaty. Thus it would be our grave mistake if we believe that we can depend on a private company to negotiate on our behalf a fair deal with our neighbouring country on water resources projects.

Lately we were brainwashed by foreign multinational companies into sacrificing the downstream benefits. We were on the verge of handing over the mammoth Karnali High Dam Project to one of the multinational companies completely abandoning our right to recover a certain percentage of the downstream benefits to accrue to India from that project. The Karnali Project will have a storage reservoir about 39 billion cubic meters in volume which is greater than the volume of reservoirs of the Columbia River Projects estimated to be about 18 billion cubic meters. Two US presidents and two Canadian prime ministers were directly involved in the talks to finalize the downstream benefit issues. Negotiations had continued for many years.

Canada Refused to Compromise on Water Issues

The Progressive Conservatives' party Prime Minister of Canada John Diefenbaker was a nationalist. He took a firm stand on the Columbia River Treaty between the USA and Canada in defense of Canada's national interest. The Columbia River Treaty was signed at the White House in January of 1961. Over the course of the following summer, the United States Congress held hearings in connection with the Treaty which ultimately led to its ratification. In Canada, the approval process was virtually halted. Canada realized after signing the Treaty at the White House that it did not meet the aspiration of the Canadian people. The Treaty effectively remained in limbo. Diefenbaker's government fell in 1963 election contest with the liberals. Soon after, a new government was formed under the leadership of the Prime Minister Pearson who was regarded politically close to the USA. But he too never compromised on water resources matters in dealings with the USA.. Prime Minister Pearson agreed to step in to ratify the Treaty only after his meeting with the US President at Hyannis Port. In that meeting it was agreed that the Treaty would be

implemented in a way which met the Canada's concerns.

Nepal Should Not Rush to Compromise Optimum Development

Mr. Terrell has cautioned us that Nepal should beware of unintentional give away in hydro development, and not rush to compromise the optimum development for the sake of a quick deal. Astonishingly about 15 years after the publication of his article in the HIMAL that carried his advice to Nepalese people, our government is now in the process of embarking on a stupid plan in defiance of the opinion expressed in the World Bank financed feasibility study report to implement the 300 MW Upper Karnali Mini Project completely ruining the prospect to develop the 4,180 MW Upper Karnali Storage Project which undoubtedly is the best among all large hydropower projects identified so far in Nepal.

Nepal might be able to get easily up to 50% of the total power in royalty from the private developers if they are properly briefed about the impressive advantages of the Upper Karnali Storage Project. By comparison with the mammoth 10,800 MW Karnali Chisapani Project the firm head of the Upper Karnali Project would be almost two times greater, though the length of waterway of both these projects would be almost the same. It can be derived based on Stage A Optimization Study Data of the World Bank financed Karnali Project study report that per KW installed capacity construction cost of the Upper Karnali Storage Project could be only about 70% of such cost of the project at Chisapani. It need not be explained that the firm power generation of the Upper Karnali Storage Project operating at two times bigger head would also be two times greater from the use of same volume of regulated flow of the Karnali by comparison with the Karnali Chisapani Project.

Nepal might be justified to require that the private developer pay about 50% power in royalty. The total generation of the Upper Karnali Project could be about 10,000 GWh. Our country could get about 5,000GWh in royalty.

At present there is a big surge in demand for peaking power in India. The generation cost of such power could be about US Cents 12 per KWh. The

amount in royalty from the developers could be as high as US\$ 500 million per annum if it is assumed that the electricity would be sold at a price of about US Cents 10 per KWh.

Big Surge in Demand for Peaking Power

At present India is experiencing an acute shortage of peaking energy. At the beginning of the Eight Plan, the total peaking shortage was 20% whereas the energy shortage was only 9% of the total power generation. The thermal and nuclear power stations are suitable to supply electricity to meet the base load demand of the system. It is not economic to use them to supply peaking energy. Gas turbines can be used to meet the peak load demand because of low specific investment costs and quick start up. However, the efficiency is limited due to the high exhaust gas temperature of the turbine.

India is making every effort to improve the hydrothermal mix for ensuring better system operating condition. However, the share of hydropower in the overall power generating capacity has steadily declined since the last few decades. The share of the hydropower in the overall power generating capacity was 50.6% in 1963. But few years before it has come down to only 25.66%.

Few More Cautions

Mr. Paul Terrell has cautioned us against excessive optimism over the building of high dams. He has highlighted some of the problems also. He has said "The major concern in building hydro dams is tectonics. The Himalas are seismically active and although this does not preclude building large dams, it certainly requires stringent design criteria, and the resulting structures may become relatively expensive". It is now a bitter reality that our government is on the verge of granting permission to a private developer to build 190m high concrete faced rock filled dam (CFRD) across the West Seti River for the generation of power because this type of dam is cheap to build. It should be noted that it is going to be the highest dam of this type so far built in the whole world. It is very strange that the Government has not cared to check by employing competent internationally known experts whether or not the proposed dam has been properly designed.

(Dr. Thapa writes on water resources)

MELAMCHI ROW

Perils Of Populism

Maoist minister's refusal to budge from impractical stand compels ADB to announce its intention to pull out from the Melamchi project

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

The missteps by then ruling party UML in 1995 had cost the Arun III hydropower project. Over one decade later, people of Nepal are languishing in constant load shedding due to shortage of power and the government is once again preparing to invite foreign investment to build the 300 MW project.

Whether the current stubbornness demonstrated by Maoist minister could cost the country another mega project – Melamchi Drinking Water Project – is the issue of burning concern right now.

Just as nobody today hails the cancellation of Arun a decade ago, no Kathmandu resident a decade from now will judge favorably if Melamchi suffers the same fate.

Guided by populism and impractical stand, Minister for Works and Physical Planning Hisila Yami has said she does not want to hand over the management of valley's drinking water to a foreign company called Severn Trent Water International – an issue that was already settled when the previous cabinet approved the decision.

"This is like canceling an already agreed deal to buy a much needed house because suddenly one finds that the color of its window is not good," an economist said in reference with Yami's stand.

As soon as the ST withdrew its bid expressing disappointment "by the failure to conclude the tender process," the ADB, on Tuesday, issued a strong statement saying that it would not be possible to carry on with project activities, after its current funding commitment on the multi-million dollar Melamchi Water Supply Project (MWSP) expires on June 30.

The ADB has said "the inability of the Government to authorize the signing of the duly negotiated management contract at this very late stage creates

considerable uncertainty on the way forward."

"A key provision of the loan agreement signed between the Government of Nepal (Government) and ADB on 24 January 2001 was that the restructuring of the Nepal Water Supply Corporation and award of a private sector management contract for delivery of water services under competitive procedures must be completed prior to initiation of civil works contracting for the construction of the diversion tunnel from Melamchi Valley to Kathmandu. This provision of the loan agreement recognized that the chronic water shortages affecting Kathmandu are caused not only by a lack of supply infrastructure and bulk water resources, but also by the poor management of water services" the ADB says in its statement.

The ADB says that signing of the private management contract was the very last stage of a long process to achieve the agreed institutional reform for efficient utilization of Melamchi's water. "This long process, which has required six years of effort, cannot be completed now that the water utility operator is unable to obtain approval from the Government to sign the duly negotiated contract and the final bid validity has been withdrawn on 15 May 2007 (after nine extensions made since March 2006)," it says.

"ADB has also made strenuous efforts and shown maximum flexibility to sustain the Project at several critical times when it has been at risk over the past six years. However, the inability of the Government to authorize the signing of the duly negotiated management contract at this very late stage creates considerable uncertainty on the way forward. As it stands now, it would not be possible to carry on with project



Yami: Playing with populism

activities, with the Project due to close on 30 June 2007," the statement adds.

The agreement to award the foreign company the contract to manage valley's water distribution was a precondition for the ADB to invest in the US\$ 340 million project. The ADB is the leading donor of the project and has agreed to provide loan of US\$ 140 million for the purpose. However, senior Maoist leader and Minister for Works and Physical Planning Hisila Yami refused to honor the agreement (approved by previous cabinet led by the incumbent Prime Minister GP Koirala) to award contract to Severn Trent claiming it had bad track record elsewhere.

The Melamchi project aims to bring in 170 million liters a day (MLD) water to the Kathmandu valley. The valley has been suffering from acute shortage of drinking water – while its demands have shot up to 240 MLD, the supplies have stagnated at 90 MLD.

As Melamchi project is now sliding down the drain – even Finance Minister Dr. Ram Sharan Mahat has said the chances are now slim of its revival – the Maoists will now need to answer to the people of Kathmandu on how it plans to resolve the acute shortage of drinking water. It certainly cannot say that using NGO-driven ideas like rainwater harvesting, using stone spouts and underground sources can be viable alternative for a sprawling metropolis like Kathmandu which has over 3 million population.

Besides, the decision by the ADB to pull out from the project will send very negative message out to the international community and foreign investors, who are already watching the moves by Maoist ministers with a degree of trepidation. ■

CAMP MANAGEMENT

A Step Forward

As government agrees to build houses and pay salaries to PLA, the second stage verification is likely to start soon

By SANJAYA DHAKAL

Despite its clear financial burden, the government has agreed to the Maoist demand for paying monthly remuneration of Rs 3000 to each members of People's Liberation Army (PLA) living in cantonments.

Following a stern warning by the Maoist chairman, the emergency meeting of the ministerial-level Cantonment Management Committee, on Sunday (May 20), had agreed to provide Rs 3000 as monthly remuneration to PLA members. The decision was approved by the meeting of cabinet on Monday.

As per this decision, Rs 93 million will be required every month for providing salaries to PLA. There are around 30,000 PLA members living in seven main and 21 satellite cantonments.

On Saturday itself, the ministerial level meeting had decided to assign the Ministry of Works and Physical Planning to build 1000 camps for the PLA. The physical conditions in the camps have been very poor and even the United Nations has been asking the authorities to improve the conditions.

"All the responsibility (of building proper camps) has been given to the Ministry of Works and Physical Planning. Required funds would be released soon," said Home Minister Krishna Sitaula.

As per the decision, around 1000 buildings will be built. Minister for Works and Physical Planning Yami vowed to complete the building of camps before monsoon. "Works will start right away," she said.

Earlier, on Saturday, addressing a press meet in Pokhara, Maoist chairman Prachanda had warned of a nationwide agitation if the government did not come

up with decisions to improve camp conditions.

The latest agreement is expected to facilitate the start of second stage



First stage verification: Delayed second stage stalling peace process UNMIN

verification of PLA combatants in the camps. The meeting of Joint Coordination and Monitoring Committee (JMCC) – which includes representatives from the UN, Nepali Army and Maoist Army – on Monday, has decided to fix the date for the start of second stage verification in its next meeting scheduled for Thursday (May 24).

United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) has been saying that it is already ready for the second stage verification.

According to Ian Martin, chief of UNMIN, the second stage of registration and verification of personnel in the Maoist cantonment sites is essential for two purposes: to identify minors who under the agreement must be discharged, and to determine whether personnel were recruited after 25 May 2006, in breach of the ceasefire code of conduct.

Martin had earlier expressed displeasure at the Maoists for linking of the start of second stage to fulfilling of other preconditions: in particular, the improvement of conditions in the cantonments, government remuneration for those registered there, and the formation of the committee envisaged by Article 146 of the Interim Constitution to take responsibility for the future of the Maoist army.

Even as the obstacle seen in the second stage of verification is being removed, the larger distrust among the eight parties is yet to dissipate.

The much-awaited meeting of the top leaders of eight parties has not taken

place yet despite the expanding agenda they will have to discuss – from fixing date of Constituent Assembly elections to ensuring law and order; from Terai unrest to issues of negotiation with various communities; from amendment in constitution to continued parliament blockade; from the issue of declaring republic from parliament to growing atrocities by Young Communist League and so on.

On Sunday, Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala during his meeting with Narayan Man Bijukchhe, president of Nepal Workers and Peasants Party (NWPP), said that the Maoists should improve their behavior before date for CA can be announced. He said controlling YCL activities and returning seized properties were necessary before things can move forward. ■

SCHOOL SHUTDOWN

Operation Destruction

With an average literacy rate below 60 percent and high drop out rate; wide gap in teacher-student ratio and lack of basic infrastructures, Nepal's school education system is struggling to cope with a number of problems. With the inception of Maoist insurgency, the education sector became a constant target. Although peace agreement has already been signed between the government and Maoists, Maoist-affiliated teachers and student unions continue their campaign against the education system. As usual, their main target is private boarding schools -which have been serving more than one third of total 7.8 million students. As they have imposed lockout by pushing politically motivated demands, nobody knows when schools will open. Even if agitators agree to open the school now, no one can remain assured that they will not announce general strike again

By KESHAB POUDEL

Sabina Pariyar, 14, a resident of Godavari Village Development committee, is worried whether her parents will allow her to go to school or not. Unlike other urban children, Pariyar, a dalit, has to go to work in the field along with her mother.

"Since my school is indefinitely closed, my parents want me to be in rice field for paddy sowing," said

Pariyar. "My parents feel relief as they have got a helping hand," said Pariyar, a student of class eight of Kitini Higher Secondary School. "If my school is closed down for another two weeks, I am not sure whether I will continue my education."

Sabina's father Kale Pariyar, a father of four children, is considering the utility of giving education to his

daughter. "When my daughter went to school, my wife had to take responsibility of all household chores. Now, we are getting support from her," he said.

Sarwan Dhakal, a resident of Gairidhara, is now considering sending his child to India as frequent general strike has already reduced the performance of his ten-year-old child.

"As our student unions and teachers union are calling the general strike one after another, I don't have any other option than to send my children to Indian schools," said Dhakal.

Frustrated by frequent general strikes and disturbance in education sector, many students - of middle class family waiting the School Leaving Certificate results - are already in search of schools in India. Take the case of Purnika Khadka, 15, who appeared in the School Leaving Certificate this year. She is now searching for school in India for higher secondary education." I don't want to study here because there is uncertainty all the time," she rued.

Nhuchhe Maharjan, 12, a student of Sramik Shanti high school of Chyasal Lalitpur, however, does not have economic capability to go out of capital for studies. "I will continue my education back here in the country. I will do best if luck smiles on me," he said. As a child of farmer, Maharjan has to live at the mercy of student unions like Maoists who are calling general strikes giving pressure to the poor people like Maharjan.

The indefinite general strike harms the interest of children like Pariyar and Maharjan who may join the list of drop-outs if the agitation continues for months. Although right to education is universal fundamental human right and Nepal's interim constitution also guarantees education as fundamental right, no body is in position to condemn these activities aimed at targeting schools.

Eight political party leaders who are promising to build new Nepal are compelled to see grand rehearsal to destroy the education system and make the country illiterate and backward.

Just after coming from his foreign

visit, Minister for Sports and Education Pradeep Nepal called the agitating parties to withdraw the indefinite strike and come in negotiation table. "I call all agitating teachers and student unions to come

will continue our indefinite general strike," said Mukunda Gautam, president of Institutional School Teachers' Union (ISTU) and member of the Educational Republican Forum (ERF). "We will only agree on



A school in Solukhumbu: No resource, no environment

to negotiation table by calling off the indefinite strike," said Nepal.

Even United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) urged concerned parties to pave the way for opening up the education institution. UNICEF also reminded that the right to education is fundamental human rights.

National Coalition for Children as Zones of Peace (CZOP), a local NGO, has already requested the agitating parties to end the indefinite strikes. They urged them to make the education institution as peace zones.

With just a motive to destabilize the education system, the call of national and international organization has not made any change in the stand of agitating Maoist teacher union and student group.

"We want the government to fist implement all previous agreements. Unless the government does not implement previous agreement, we

ministerial-level talks and not secretarial level ones," he said. The ERF is leading a number of organization to impose the school shutdown.

Turning deaf ear to the calls by UNICEF, local NGOs and government, the agitating parties have adamant to give any concession on negotiation. "The strikes will be in force even if the talks take place. We want to settle all the issue now," said Gautam.

Along with other organizations, representatives of Private and Boarding Schools' Organization Nepal (PABSON) and National PABSON have been making efforts to break the ice but in vain.

They have already met prime minister, minister of education and leaders of eight parties but no body seem to be in a position to press agitators. "We met Maoist leader Dr. Baburam Bhattarai and Dinanath

Sharma who are also positive to open the school. In reality, they too are helpless," said a member of delegation on condition of anonymity. "Despite branding themselves as Maoist-affiliated organizations, students and teachers are not under the control of the party. Who controls them? Compared to their union leaders who even threatened to permanently close down our private schools, Maoist leaders are sympathetic to us," he said.

This is not the first case of instability in education. For a year, all the universities were put into disorder by holding back the appointment of vice chancellors by the prime minister himself. A determined new minister in Education Ministry who threatened to resign compelled the prime minister to get vice chancellors appointed.

But soon after this settlement, another bigger crisis has erupted by the closure of all schools including the



Village children: No school, no classes

private ones all over the country for indefinite period. Without any sign of serious concern from the leader of the government who is enjoying even the status of head of the state, about 7.8 million students are suffering in this country.

Like all other sectors, the education sector also has many problems and contradictions. Some private boarding schools do not pay minimum salary to the teachers and other staffs. There are ways to press for such demands. One cannot justify this kind of criminal act committed against millions of children of the country.

With demands for free education and nationalization of education, student organizations, particularly Maoist-affiliated organizations have broken records in the last one

decade by calling frequent general strikes in the country.

"Frequent indefinite general strikes not only hamper the education system but also affects the children psychology," said educationist Dr. Mana Prasad Wagle. "You cannot guess the social and economic damage of this situation."

Education Against Poverty

As it is said by world renowned American economist J.K. Galbraith "where there is literacy there is no poverty and where there is no literacy there is poverty," the experiences have shown that a literate farmer can earn more than double income compared with his illiterate counterpart.

A literate person cares for hygiene and sanitation much more than illiterate one. From income generation to social and health sector, a literate person can make a lot of difference.

After the restoration of democracy in 1990, education was a sector which saw massive upsurge with the number of new schools coming up. The literacy rate has doubled in the span of 12 years.



A school in Kathmandu: Shut down

This also contributed to reduce the level of poverty from 40 percent in 1996 to 30 percent in 2007.

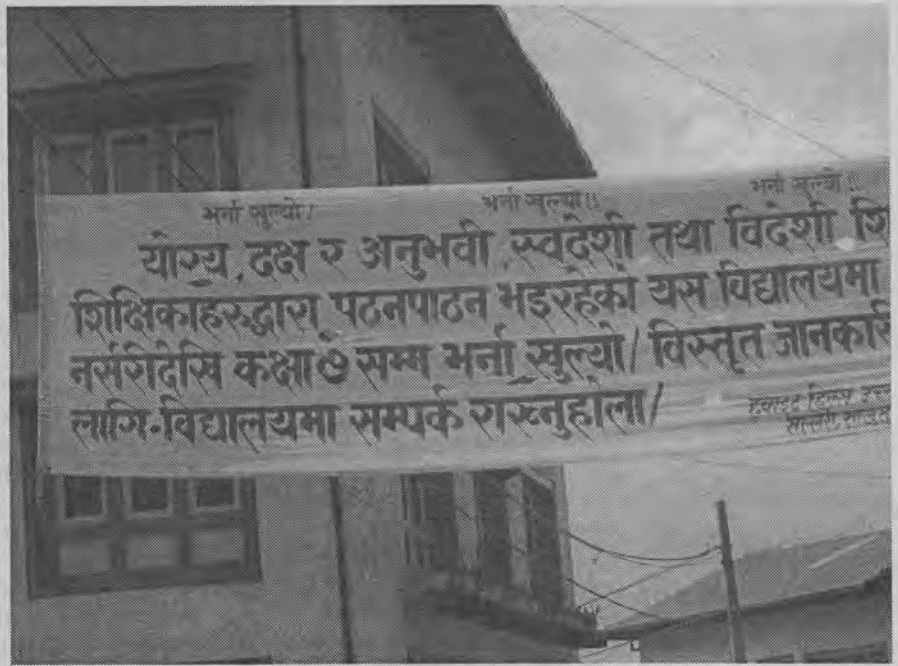
Along with the efforts and investment of government, the private sector has also played immense role in the last decade to expand countrywide network of primary and high schools and colleges. Published by Ministry of Finance, Economic Survey 2006-07 revealed that there are 2159 primary schools run by private sector with 268824 students against 20020 schools with 4502697 students in government schools. There are 967 private boarding high schools with 56075 students whereas 4102 government high schools have enrolled 586177 students.

Defecting Students

Frequent general strikes called by student unions and teachers unions have made the education institution uncertain and anarchic. Thanks to general strike, Nepal education system is uncertain and anarchic. This is the reason most of upper class and upper middle class families are sending their children to Indian schools.

"Thanks to the instability and frequent disturbance in the private schools, many parents have already sent their children to India," said Umesh Shrestha, president of PABSON. "After the restoration of democracy in 1990, private schools were able to reduce the number of students going to India. The situation is reverse now."

Others, too, agree that frequent disruption like the present one in the education compelled Nepalese parents to send their children to India. "The number of Nepalese students going to study in Indian cities like Darjeeling,



Private schools: Creating jobs and providing quality education

Deharadun, New Delhi and Lucknow has dramatically increased. This is the result of frequent general strikes," said Karna Bahadur Shahi, general secretary of National PABSON. "Large numbers of students are fleeing to India."

Every year a large number of students go to Indian schools because of instability and trouble in the country. On an average a student pays, about Rs.8000.00 a month in Indian schools. If ten thousand students leave the country, the country will lose a billion rupees.

Many students now in the private schools are shifting to India and other parts of the world. Most of the middle class populations see Indian schools as of higher quality and safe for the future of the students.

Although Maoists student unions and trade unions are calling indefinite general strike claiming benefits to the poor but it is the poor who have to suffer a lot without possibility of

sending their children outside the country.

"It is a great loss to the country in terms of economy as well as in terms of other things," said Mana Prasad Wagle, an education expert. The country has to suffer a loss of Rs. 100 million in a day of closure.

Whatever the consequences and damages the country has to face, there is no immediate sign of returning normalcy in the education sector. The destruction of education institution that began after the upsurge of Maoist insurgency in 1996 still continues.

Till Tuesday, six days had already passed since the indefinite strike. More the schools are closed, more the students and country will have to suffer.

Whatever reasons are behind it, closing down education institution for indefinite period will harm children like Pariyar and Maharjan who have neither ability go abroad nor can continue the education amid uncertain crisis. ■

“Political Parties Have Lost Their Faith In CA Polls”

-Taranath Ranabhat

TARANATH RANABHAT, former Speaker of House of Representatives and former general secretary of Nepali Congress, is one of few people left in the Congress who are pleading moderate voices. Ranabhat, who has a base in Kaski district, spoke to KESHAB POUDEL on various issues regarding the contemporary politics in Nepal.

How do you see the state of Nepali politics now?

The political situation is very fluid and confusing. I have never seen this kind of uncertain situation in Nepalese politics.

Don't you think your statement is strange when eight party government led by prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala is saying that this is the best period in political history?

They might have their own reasons to say so. What I am saying is the reality of the situation. Look at the situation, parliament is locked up, cabinet meeting was held after two weeks, civil servants were manhandled in their offices and public properties including statues are destroyed in day light. Law and order situation has completely derailed. This is not my personal view but any one can see this. If we are unable to control the present situation, the country will head towards failure. These moves seem to be directed to send the country towards liquidation.

What do you suggest to control it?

We need support from all the forces inside the parliament, and civil society members. Even we require the support of the King to bring normalcy in the country. I don't think only one force can do it. We cannot find solution isolating one force against other.

But, leaders of eight political parties have already declared that they will remove the King?

This is the fact that monarchy is also a strong political force of this country. Had the monarchy not had any base, our political leaders including Maoists would not have spent valuable time in condemning it. In politics merely wishes cannot work. I can wish I want to be a prime minister or Girijababu or Prachanda can wish to be first president of Nepal. Even our leader Girija Baba has hinted the need to have a ceremonial monarchy. His recent argument of reduction of monarchy into twenty percent indicates that. One has to accept the ground reality.

How optimistic are you about holding the elections for Constituent Assembly?

Political parties have already lost their faith in CA polls. By demanding to declare republic from the nominated parliament, political parties have also distrusted the will of the people. You cannot declare republic from a controlled parliament with nominated members by denying the right of sovereign people to decide their own fate. Who are we to deny the rights of the sovereign people? Declaring republic on the basis of votes of MPs who are controlled by party whip is itself an act of distrust on the will of people.

But, political leaders and some intellectuals are saying that this parliament has mandate of people to declare republic?

Street demonstrations or agitations cannot be taken as mandate of people. When people participated in Jana Andolan II, their demand was to hold elections for CA. Its mandate is also to test the mandate of people through the elections of CA. Early political commitments also supported this view legally by agreeing to hold the elections of CA to decide the fate of monarchy. This is legalized by interim constitution. It is politically, legally, ethically or otherwise unjustifiable to declare republic from the present nominated parliament.

How do you see the possibility of making Nepal as a federal state with right to self determination to all the ethnic, linguistic groups?

Making Nepal as a federal state on the basis of region, ethnic and linguistic groups with the right to self determination is no more than a move to disintegrate Nepal. Our sensitive geo-political situation cannot permit us to live as a unified Nepal under the federal forms of government. It will open the way for disintegration of the country.

Is it not too much hypothetical?

At a time when we are unable to reach consensus on the issue of constituent delineation, how can you satisfy the people of different regions, race, culture and ethnicity when you try to draw the border on the various units or federals. This is going to be major issue of discontent from the beginning. Even after about 200 years of demarcation of border between Nepal and India, there remain disputes. How long will it take us to settle the border of the units of Nepal's states. This is going to trigger never-ending debates and disputes.

You cannot declare republic from a controlled parliament with nominated members by denying the right of sovereign people to decide their own fate.

Do you mean federalism is unsustainable in Nepal?

This is a small country, much smaller than any federal state of India. When Indian states like Bihar and UP – which are larger than Nepal – remain as a single unit, I don't think Nepal cannot remain in unitary form of government. Of course, there is a need for strong commitments and implementation of decentralization of authority from center to village.

Since all ethnic and regional groups have already come up with the demand of federal structure, how can you address them?

We have a way out. First of all we should make honest efforts to decentralize authority from center to local. Although I am a student of law, even I don't know much about the federal forms of government. It seems a fashion now to talk about federalism. Like all our political leaders, we are dreaming about the federal government. For a small and underdeveloped country like Nepal, dividing the country on the basis of federal form is unviable in terms of politics, economics and natural resources.

Why is it not viable?

First of all the economic cost will be high. Nobody has imagined the resources we need to spend to sustain the federal units. Lets say, if you divide your country into ten units, you will have ten chief ministers, ten chief justice, ten speakers and hundreds of parliamentarians and tens of thousands of bureaucrats. When you are claiming that even the current size is too big, who will pay for all of them. When we are unable to manage one King, one prime minister and one speaker, politically it will be disastrous for Nepal. Political disputes will be in much bigger scale, there will always be debate who will represent center and who will represent the units. The units are going to be center of political disputes. Along with this, there are going to be disputes on resource mobilization. If Makwanpur or Trishuli or Syangja denies supplying electricity to Kathmandu and other units, what will happen? Similarly, how Rasuwa or Lamjung or Taplejung, Humla or Jumla share resources? This will plant never-ending disputes in this small country. As Prithivi Narayan Shaha said, this country is a yam between two boulders; it has many limitations if its people want to survive as citizens of an independent nation.

What should the role of Nepali Congress be?

The foremost important thing is the unity in the Congress. Our future will be dim in case we go with the divided house. Girijababu and Sher Bahadurji might have their own limitations; but they have no alternative than to unify the Congress. Sooner the unification process begins, better for the future of the party.

What is the identity of Nepali Congress?

Nepali Congress is a moderate liberal



Lets say, if you divide your country into ten units, you will have ten chief ministers, ten chief justices, ten speakers and hundreds of parliamentarians and tens of thousands of bureaucrats.

democratic party. It is a centrist party. At a time when the country's political process is polarizing in two extremes, Nepali Congress has to follow the middle path. There is no alternative to middle way. This is what our leader B.P. Koirala had taught us. B.P.'s said that all national political forces need to go together. Whether you say it as national unity or national reconciliation, it is compromise not a conflict between the political forces. Several general elections, changes and revolutions have already endorsed B.P. Koirala's views of national reconciliation. B.P.'s view is accepted as philosophical as well as legitimate view in our party. National reconciliation is at our heart. If we give up B.P.'s views, our party will lose its identity. We need to reconcile with the monarchy.

How do you see the role of monarchy?

Monarchy still has its role. Even our prime minister Girijababu has talked about the role for ceremonial monarchy. Nepal needs the institution of monarchy to protect its own identity. This may be the reason why B.P. Koirala - who was humiliated by the King and suffered under their rules - defended the institution of monarchy. Some persons may be good and some persons may be bad but the institution of monarchy still has utility in Nepal.

Why have all of you suddenly started remembering B.P. Koirala now?

At a time when the country is in crisis and democracy is in crisis, B.P. Koirala is the only leader whose views and opinions can save us. He is the only leader who could speak anti-current and he is the leader who understood strength and ethos of Nepal. B.P. is our strength and B.P. is our party's soul. In this time of crisis, I can remember him as the only leader who taught us so many things about country and democracy.

POLITICS

Erosion Of Political Culture

In the big bad world of Nepali politics, everybody is a fair game where prime minister humiliates the King and his minister humiliate him

By Keshab Poudel

Don't say King Gyanendra, just say Gyanendra," thundered prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala to Nepalese and foreign journalists while he was in New Delhi last month to attend Summit of South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

"There is a problem in declaring republic because 20 percent of the King's rights and privileges are intact. However, 80 percent of his rights have been clipped. When even those remaining rights are ended, the nation will be declared a republic," prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala said in Biratnagar last week.

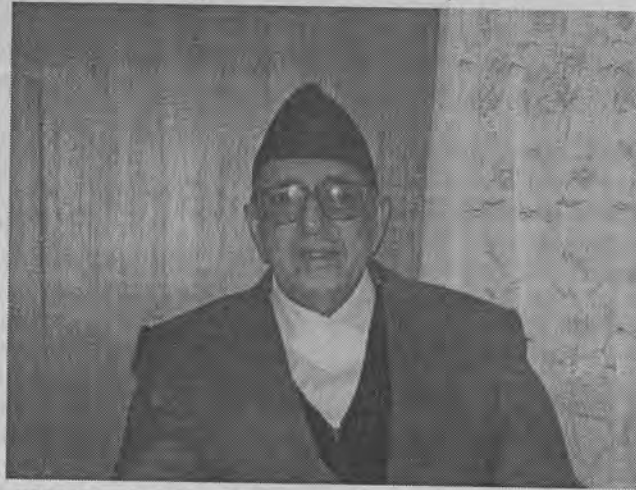
Few months ago, he also advised the King as well as the crown prince to abdicate for an infant as a successor from his home town Biratnagar.

When Koirala is expressing his wrath against monarchy and King Gyanendra, his ministers and other leaders of eight parties are using similar derogatory words against him. The following are but few examples:

"Prime minister Koirala snatched eighty percent of power from King but he is keeping it with him as a dictator," said minister of Forest and Soil Conservation Matrika Yadav (Rajdhani May 14). Minister Yadav goes on to say: "Girija Prasad is protecting the smugglers."

"Girija Prasad Koirala is all powerful but he is inefficient and weak in terms of his health," said CPN-UML general secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal (Kantipur May 22).

"Girija Prasad must understand that



PM Koirala: Game of humiliation

he would be thrown away by King Gyanendra if he does not declare republic," said Maoist leader Mohan Kiran Vaidya.

"While speaking, a person like prime minister must not forget how much he might have lost the essence and dignity of the Office of Prime Minister. The monarchy is yet getting all purse from the tax payers pocket as usual. There might be some personal vendetta against the person Gyanendra but as long as he has privilege of the institution, it is unbecoming for an official like prime minister to express such arrogance," said a political analyst. "Unfortunately, prime minister is also getting worst treatments from his ministers in the cabinet in public."

Though Koirala is projected as a dictator, he is too weak in real terms. Even senior leaders of eight party alliances like CPN-UML general secretary Nepal and Maoist leader Prachanda are using disrespectful

language against Koirala.

The level has deteriorated so much that prime minister is accused by minister just as prime minister uses derogatory remarks against the King. While the artistic statues of previous Kings of Nepal including King Prithvi Narayan Shaha the great, whom the credit goes not only for a unified and independent nation but who was the only person to resist expansion of British

imperialists in South Asia, were being destroyed, prime minister Koirala, who is commanding the support of nominated persons of the parliament was at his full throat to declare that the monarchy had reduced to its 20 percent credential.

"One is not sure how much percentage prime minister has on his size when his own chosen apprentice in

the cabinet like Krishna Bahadur Mahara, Matrika Yadav and so many others are faltering his authorities without any precedents in the past and violating all norms of cabinet system's team spirit," said the analyst. "Things are going on parallel in this country. Prime minister is free to speak whatever comes in his tongue and ministers and his party men are free to flout the prime ministerial system as well as any norm, decency and decorum of political team."

Being a team leader of eight party government, prime minister Koirala is responsible for all those acts of the.

"He is too old and, therefore, unable to diagnose the situation and to take prompt and appropriate decision to deal with that. The country is suffering by his health and age. Sooner he retires, better it would be to find out appropriate person to lead," said the analyst.

Nepal is in a crisis not only by sabotage and destruction by terrorists and anarchical elements but by deterioration in the political norms and

behavior, too.

The way discontents and differences are being expressed by the mob in the streets, in educational institutions, factories and industries have made negative contributions in the crisis of this country but our politicians in power are no less in their negative role for the deterioration of political norms and behaviors adding fuel to the fire.

The way politicians are coming out to the public through unruly behaviors and utterances have saddened people. Leaders who are supposed to set examples of behavior - are destroying those values. "The more one is at responsible position, the more gravity and wisdom is expected from him or her. The prime minister has at present more power and authority which was confound upon him by the constitution statutory than the previous constitution," said the analyst.

According to previous constitution, prime minister could be removed from the power by just a simple majority but there is no provision in interim constitution to remove prime minister. But in practice, the reality is demonstrated in a very unruly and unbecoming manner.

The relation of eight political parties is not based on any ideology or principle. Only the greed for power and opportunities are holding them together.

"The country is going through systematic and consistent destruction of institutions and disregard for laws and disciplines maintaining the continuity of destabilization since the beginning of Maoist movement in 1996. Actors have changed their paraphernalia but there is no change in the trend of systematic destruction and destabilization. Previously there was parliamentary government to defend the establishment and to defend the infrastructures and institutions," said the analyst. "The latest casualty is mega project Melamchi in which donors were considering to fulfill water demands of 3.5 million people of Kathmandu valley. Now the sabotage has been done by the minister while the prime minister is silent or helpless spectator."

Democracy is not only a form of



Yadav: Tail wagging the dog

government but also a way of life, which develops step by step and with precedents after precedents. Whatever is practiced at present may be established as a precedent to be followed by the successive generation. It is a kind of habit formation under certain rules and norms.

Nepal had two parallel forms of political precedents: one was the traditional autocratic political culture where everything was done under the command of superior.

After the beginning of democratic system in 1951, a new political trend was established, which requires adequate patience and tolerance, compromise and concessions based on popular consent and the laws evolved according to that. Nepal is under going through these two different trends under the influence of established precedents.

"Apart from all other problems at present, politicians themselves have become another set of problem as an unruly class. Commitment for democracy does not go even skin deep when it comes to deal with the adverse views. Every day other problems of the country are made more and more complicated either by wrong diagnosis or wrong treatment. Politicians who are in power have been put into such a difficult quagmire that every body needs a scapegoat and every body has their own wishful solution," said the analyst.

ICG Analysis:

While the Maoists have accepted multiparty democracy and have lost their appetite for all-out war, they could still resort to physical confrontation if the peace process stagnates, an international analysis group said.

'Nepal's Maoists: Purists or Pragmatists,' the latest report by the International Crisis Group (ICG), states their entry into democratic politics - working alongside mainstream parties to force the king to relinquish power in April 2006 and joining a coalition government one year later - has brought them new influence and opportunities.

However, some Maoists fear they have traded in their principles and military power for little tangible advantage, the report said. "Making the political process work is up to other actors as much as the Maoists", the report quoted Roderick Chalmers, Deputy Director of Crisis Group's South Asia Project as saying.

"If the mainstream parties are committed to the peace agreement and keep their side of the bargain, Maoist leaders will find it much easier to persuade their followers that compromise is the best way forward," he further says.

The report further states that the Maoists always said their campaign would adapt classical Marxism and Maoism to suit the context of Nepal but now they argue that they can carry out a 'peaceful revolution' that is true to their aims but also reflects political realities. In this light, joining the parliamentary parties and pushing for a bourgeois 'democratic republic' is just a stepping stone towards a true 'people's republic'. They hope to use the constituent assembly process to restructure the state, secure a dominant position within the multiparty system and move toward their ultimate goal, the report says.

The decision to join mainstream politics stemmed from an analysis of the Maoists' own strategic weaknesses who concluded that their belief in military victory had been misplaced, acknowledged that they had misread the likelihood of determined international opposition, and drew lessons from the failures that caused the collapse of many twentieth-century communist regimes, the report added.

BHUTANESE REFUGEE

Fresh Movement

Refugees prepare to launch people's movement to force Druk regime to accept them even as the latter is said to be planning to evict more Nepali-speaking people

By By SANJAYA DHAKAL

Having languished in camps for the past seventeen years, the refugees are now preparing to launch people's movement to force Bhutanese regime to allow their repatriation.

This was revealed by a delegation of refugee leaders during their last week's (May 18) meeting with the Prime Minister. Their intention to launch fresh agitation comes at a time when they have been accusing that Bhutanese government is planning to evict 80,000 more Nepali-speaking people – as they were not allowed to participate in recent mock elections and constitution-making process in Bhutan.

According to news reports, a delegation of refugee leaders including Teknath Rizal, Balram Poudel and Thinley Penjore met with the PM and handed over their memo regarding the planned people's movement in Bhutan. They have also sent such letter to UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon requesting for UN support in their movement.

During the meeting, PM Koirala said that the government is planning to dispatch a special "Advance Team" to Bhutan to hold decisive talks with the Bhutanese government on the issue of refugee impasse. Reports say that the Advance Team is being dispatched ahead of planned visit by Foreign Minister.

The refugee leaders quoted PM as saying that in recent times India, too, has become concerned with the issue.

Meanwhile, in its recent (May 17) report, the US-based Human Rights Watch has stated that the US offer to

resettle Bhutanese refugees has sparked tensions "A US offer to resettle 60,000 Bhutanese refugees has given hope to many of the 106,000 refugees living in Nepal for more than 16 years, but has also heightened tensions in the camps," HRW said in the report.

"Refugees who insist on repatriation as the only acceptable solution have been threatening and intimidating those who voice support for resettlement in the US," it said.

Foreign Minister Sahana Pradhan had recently informed that gives top priority to repatriation but would not obstruct in resettlement of willing refugees.

The Bhutanese refugee crisis began in 1991 when Bhutan began to expel ethnic Nepalis, a policy that resulted in the expulsion of one-sixth of the country's population. But since the announcement of the US offer in October 2006, groups of refugees who insist that the only acceptable solution is return to Bhutan have threatened refugees favorable to resettlement.

"Refugees fundamentally have the right to return to a country that expelled them," said Bill Frelick, refugee policy director at HRW. "But all refugees also have the right to make essential choices about their lives without threats and intimidation."

The 86-page report, "Last Hope: The Need for Durable Solutions for Bhutanese Refugees in Nepal and India," discusses the possible solutions to this protracted refugee situation and the choices the refugees now face. It describes conditions of the ethnic Nepali

refugees who have languished in exile in Nepal and India, and also documents continuing discrimination against the ethnic Nepalis still living in Bhutan, who live in fear that they too could be stripped of their citizenship and expelled from the country.

"While repatriation would be the best option for most refugees, it can only be viable if Bhutan upholds its duty to guarantee the returnees' human rights," said Frelick. "Until then, repatriation to Bhutan cannot be promoted as a durable solution for the Bhutanese refugees in Nepal." So far, Bhutan has not allowed a single refugee to return.

"We don't want to be dependent on others," a Bhutanese refugee told HRW. "Half our lives have been spent as refugees. We don't want that tag on our children's forehead. We want them to be proud citizens."

Since the announcement of the US resettlement offer, tensions in the camps have

been building. Partly, this is because of rumors and misinformation about the nature of the offer itself. It is also due to intimidation by groups militantly opposed to resettlement who insist that the only acceptable solution is return to Bhutan.

The HRW has called on the Nepalese government to prosecute intimidators who threaten or harm those who exercise their rights to freedom of opinion, expression, and association.

"To be effective, the US resettlement offer cannot operate in isolation," said

Frelick. "The Bhutanese refugees need genuine choices." This, HRW says, requires a three-pronged strategy. First, resettlement should be a real option for as many refugees as want it. Second, Nepal should grant citizenship to those refugees who express a preference for local integration over resettlement or repatriation. Finally, the United States, India and other countries should redouble their efforts to persuade Bhutan to allow refugees who want to repatriate to do so under conditions that are compatible with human rights law. ■

CHILD HEALTH

Pat On The Back

Nepal has been hailed for progress in child survival rate despite going through violent conflict

By A CORRESPONDENT

Despite being ravaged politically, economically and socially by the over decade-long violent conflict and despite suffering from unending poverty, Nepal has achieved impressive progress in the child survival rate. A latest report by Save the Children has hailed Nepal for its progress in child survival rate despite financial constraints and conflict.

Save the Children's new *Child Survival Progress Report Card* ranks Bangladesh 3, Nepal 4 and India 10 among 60 developing countries in reducing child mortality since 1990. Pakistan ranks 17, while Afghanistan ranks 39.

The ranking includes 60 developing countries, which together account for 94 percent of all child deaths worldwide. The rankings indicate which countries are succeeding and which are failing to save the lives of children under the age of 5 years. The rankings are part of the 8th annual *State of the World's Mothers* report, released by Save the Children US.

"Among the developing countries, Bangladesh and Nepal are making great strides in child survival despite limited financial resources. These countries have invested in better health care for mothers, better nutrition for children, and lifesaving health care services to prevent and treat deadly diseases," states a press release issued by Save the Children Sweden Regional Office for South and Central Asia.

The report credits Nepal—despite having a GNI of only \$1,530 and being mired in conflict—for having reduced its under-5 death rate by almost half in the past 15 years. Increasing immunization coverage and vitamin A supplementation among young children are key to this success.

The report, however adds that there are still a lot of problems that need to be resolved in countries of this region including Nepal. "Nearly half of all children under age 5 are suffering from moderate or severe malnutrition in Bangladesh, India and Nepal," it states. "Nearly 90 percent of births in Nepal are not attended by skilled personnel, placing both mother and newborn at greater risk of death," it adds.

In a separate set of rankings measuring the well-being of mothers and children in 140 countries worldwide, Save the Children has Sweden as No. 1 (the best place in the world to be a mother), while Niger/Afghanistan come last. In South Asia, India stands at 61st in the developing world, while Afghanistan ties with Niger for last out of 164 countries.

"The report also notes the three biggest killers of children under 5 years worldwide - newborn disorders, pneumonia and diarrhoea. By using existing interventions, we can save more than 6 million of the 10.1 million children who die every year from easily preventable or treatable causes. There are many inexpensive solutions



Children: Good news!

that have the greatest potential to save lives such as vaccines, oral rehydration therapy (ORT) and insecticide-treated mosquito nets," the release adds.

Save the Children notes that it is ultimately a question of political will and social commitment than a matter of national wealth as the countries in South Asia show.

Save the Children is one of the world's oldest and largest independent organization for children, making a difference to children's lives in over 110 countries. Established in 1919 by Eglantyne Jebb, she was the first to press for worldwide safeguards for children.

From emergency relief to long-term development, Save the Children helps children to achieve a happy, healthy and secure childhood. Save the Children secures and protects children's rights - to food, shelter, health care, education and freedom from violence, abuse and exploitation. ■

BOOK

Tackling Irrigation

The book highlights the new coming challenges in the farmer-managed irrigation system

By A CORRESPONDENT

Nepal has a long experience and expertise on traditional methods of managing the irrigation system. Nepalese farmers inherited this traditional approach practiced by their forefathers. The traditional system of irrigation was characterized by institutional, physical and technical concerns. However, the situation has changed now and it is now more subtle and comprehensive - farmer managed irrigation system has seen sea changes.

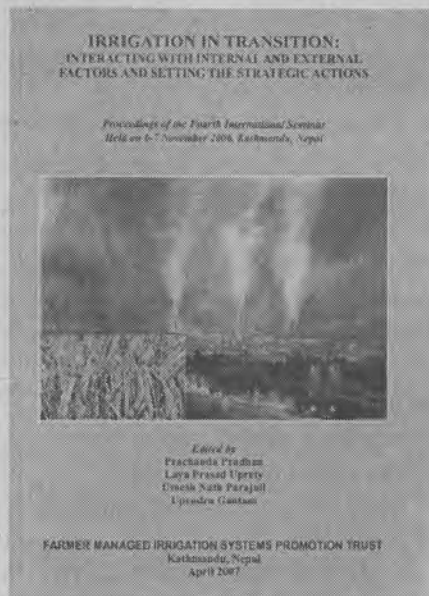
For the farmers of countries like Nepal, the coming days are more challenging as well as filled with difficulties. Transformation taking place in the world following the implementation of World Trade Organization is difficult to understand. Along with the internal, the external factors are also playing predominant role in the changed context.

"Now the irrigation systems are to deal more with productivity of available resources, reduction of poverty and insecurity, promotion of farmers' dignity and empowerment, encouragement to farmers' organization as a strategic means to protect members' interest, assistance to farmers' innovation as a key to making improvements in their livelihood, and development of capability of farmers to encounter an unequal commercial competitions introduced in the name of global trade regime and water scarcity, depletion and deterioration wrought by climate change in variable irrigation ecology. Hence one would come across unprecedented challenges brought by external and internal factors in the irrigation systems management worldview in Nepal as well as in other parts of the world,"

write editors.

In the last few years, a lot of things changed in the farmer managed irrigation system. From structure to characters and institutions, farmers have to live in a totally new kind of situation.

At a time when transformation in



**Irrigation in Transition
(Interacting with Internal and
External Factors and Setting
the Strategic Actions)**

**Proceedings of the Fourth
International Seminar)
Edited by: Prachanda
Pradhan, Laya Prasad Uprety,
Umesh Nath Parajuli and
Upendra Gautam**

**Published by: Farmer
Managed Irrigation Systems
(FMIS) Promotion Trust
Minbhawan, G.P.O Box No
1207 Phone: 4465227
Price: US\$ 15 (NRs: 1000.00)
Pages: 388**

these sectors are taking place, Farmer Managed Irrigation Systems Promotion Trust (FMIS) organized a seminar on Irrigation in Transition: Interacting with Internal and External Factors and Setting the Strategies." Based on deliberations at the two-days international seminar held in November 6-7, the book consists of various interesting articles and discussions.

"The key message of the seminar was loud and clear: Irrigation System can no longer function in isolation and they, in contemporary time, are increasingly influenced by internal and external factors. These factors influence their productivity, inter-generational continuity, operation and management. The seminar attempted to bring home the irrigation system transition issue along with the factors influencing transition environment so that the transition as such helps irrigation systems reaching another relatively permanent phase," writes editors.

Attended by 134 participants including 16 experts and scholars from 10 countries, the papers presented in the seminar were highly academic and based on personal experiences also. In his paper Twenty-Five Years of FMIS Study in Nepal, Prachanda Pradhan, patron, FMIS, highlighted a long history of Nepal's farmer managed irrigation system.

Laya Prasad Uprety, executive member and seminar coordinator, FMIS, presented the Theme of the Fourth International seminar arguing that the socio-economic processes of change and development have influenced the development and management of both farmer-managed and agency-managed irrigation systems.

Ram Bahadur Chettri presented the paper on mountain irrigation systems and their implications. He argued how culturally embedded knowledge on irrigation is thriving in Himalayan villages.

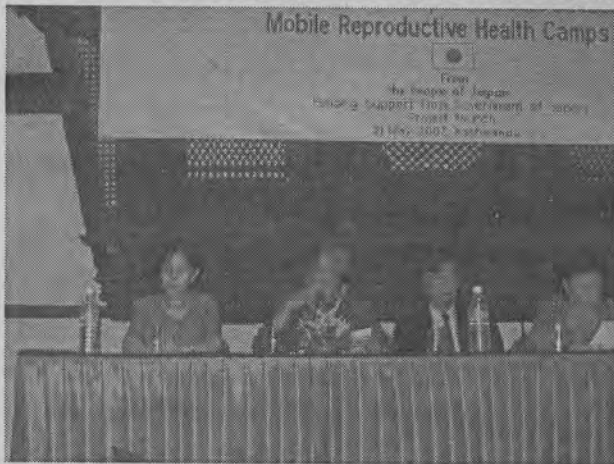
This is one of the interesting books to read as it consists of articles and scholarly works highlighting how farmer-managed irrigation systems are facing challenges in the new context of WTO.

RH Care For Conflict Affected

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Nepal launched, on Monday (May 21), a one year project funded by Japan, to deliver mobile reproductive health services to conflict affected populations. The aim is to organize reproductive health camps in six districts of the far-western and mid-western regions of Nepal, serving close to 25,000 women of reproductive age, and men and adolescents affected by conflict.

The reproductive health camps will provide essential reproductive health services, counseling, lab tests, treatment, referral and surgical care, all of which are urgently needed.

Addressing the launching ceremony, Tsutomu Hiraoka,



Japanese ambassador, highlighted the importance of reproductive health services in rural areas of Nepal, especially conflict affected areas, where people lack access to basic medical and reproductive health services and information.

"Nepal has some of the poorest reproductive health indicators in the world. Nepal's rural reproductive health suffers from modestly trained staff, staff absenteeism, shortfalls in equipment and drugs, limited support to community based staff, a poor referral system, and cultural and geographical barriers. The conflict has exacerbated these problems," the press release by UNFPA states.

"The project will address immediate reproductive health needs of women, men and adolescents in both peri-urban and remote areas of conflict affected districts, while permanent services are being developed," says Junko Sasaki, UNFPA Representative.

"Bringing reproductive health services to conflict-affected villages and communities will not only improve the health status of the most vulnerable populations, but will also build hope and belief in the overall development, fostering confidence in the peace building process".

By increasing access to reproductive health services this project will also contribute to the promotion of human rights, empowerment of youth and women, and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) 1, 3, 5 and 6. ■

Book List

- Fateful Interview, Madhav Kumar Rimal,Rs. 400.00
- Beyond The frontiers Women's stories from Nepal Padmavati 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
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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

CHILDREN'S PHOTOGRAPHY

Inner Expression

Though they are children, photographs taken by girls of SOS Bahini, Pokhara, Nepal shows their strong inner expressions

By A CORRESPONDENT

Kamala, 10, hardly imagined that one day she could catch her surroundings but it came true in the life of more than a dozen girls.

When the girls, who are homeless, orphan, abused or in other desperate situation, aged between 5-16 years of SOS-Bahini of Pokhara, were given camera, they documented their world through their eyes and their expressions were strong enough to be compiled in a book *My World My View*.

Thanks to Sue Carpenter, founder of Asha-Nepal, a British INGO founded with the ambition of combating the trafficking of women and girls from Nepal into the sex industries of India, these girls found an opportunity to express their own creative ideas under a photographic project "My World, My View."

Under this project *My World and My View*, 22 girls captured the scenes, insight feelings about the world and themselves. The photographs of these children include the time of their pleasure, patience, and reality of day to day life, their families and surroundings.

their minds and bringing their creativeness to the public.

"I wanted to live in Nepal and get directly involved with some of these girls, get to know them, hear their stories and give them a forum to make their own statement in society. The terrible life situations that some of the girls at SOS Bahini have endured could well have led to their being psychologically damaged. Their resilience, however, is remarkable. While outwardly they may confirm, or



Kid photographers: Creative minds.

The success behind this project is Sue Carpenter, a professional British photographer, who worked heart to heart with the girls understanding and reading

remain shy of voicing opinions, they have a tremendous underlying vibrancy, joy and humor which come bursting to the surface in their personal interactions and through their photographs," writes Sue in her introduction.

Published by Asha Publications and funded by the British Council, the 114 pages full color book *My World, My View* is a marvelous collection of the photographs taken by the children. "This is a magnificent book," said John Fry, country manager, British Council Nepal.

Launching the book and exhibition of photographs at British Council, British Ambassador to Nepal Dr. Andrew Hall, who has supported the project, says: The photographs are terrific. Their sheer enjoyment in recording the world around them shines through these pictures. I have seen for myself how this project has given them a new sense of self-worth and self-confidence."

The exhibition will last till May 30.



John Fry Country Manager British Council with Children.

Photo By Kalpana

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