



Courage & Conviction

news front

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Nepal Investment Bank sponsored marathon to raise fund for conservation of Patan Durbar attracted massive participation on Saturday.

Bhaswar Ojha

Confession

Prachanda's dilemma, how to say sorry

■ NF Correspondent

His abhorrence for the United States will perhaps not allow him to admit it publicly. But Prachanda seems to have made a confession, that his propaganda about King Gyanendra plotting to kill some U S officials in Kathmandu was a "mistake."

The Maoist Chief is believed to have made the confession to Prime Minister, G P Koirala, when the latter disapproved of the 'irresponsible way' Prachanda went around making accusations. "How will you deal with this?" - Koirala's question posed in Baluwater only yielded a smile followed by a confession, "yes, it was a mistake," sources in the Prime Ministers' office told newsfront. Prachanda's quiet confession came after a series of challenges that Ambassador Moriarty threw upon him: share the information about the plot, prove it or apologise. Yet another foot in the mouth syndrome was repeated in the form of a compact disc that was handed over to Speaker, Subhash Nembwang in parliament by the Maoists claiming it as evidence of King Gyanendra and Crown Prince Paras's "plotting to assassinate political leaders." This has turned out to be a hoax.

The C D which was submitted to the Speaker by Prabhakar, deputy leader of the Maoists party in parliament last week, contained 63 newspaper clippings and annual report of the year 2005, 2006 and 2007 of INSEC, a Human

Rights Organisation, on the country's Human Rights situation.

The Maoists leader is reported to have simply laughed when asked where the proof of the plot was. A power-point presentation of the C D for the members of the Business Advisory committee of the House was organised by Secretary General, Surya Kiran Gurung, on Friday following instructions from Speaker Nembwang, after the Maoists claimed that the C D contained proof of King Gyanendra spending 600 million rupees on the plot "which was hatched by the crown prince."

"It's not yet known how the House will treat the case. The Speaker may inform the house with his ruling or observation about the C D episode," an official of the parliament Secretariat told newsfront. "Prachanda's claim regarding the King's plot to kill U S officials is something that may not be settled down without the Maoist chief clarifying the issue publicly," a senior minister belonging to the Congress party told newsfront. "His public allegation has created a sense of insecurity in the public and that needs to be clarified publicly," added the minister.

The United States has been asserting that Maoists must give a proof of their good intentions by stopping killing, abduction, torture and extortion to qualify their entry into the interim cabinet. ■

On page 2 'Interim government at large'

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Intangible

What shall I get attitude delays Government formation

■ NF Correspondent

Prime Minister G P Koirala applied all tricks in his book including threatening to quit, and coaxing the eight parties with, "a future Nepal which belongs to you, not me". The eight party meeting on Sunday ended without endorsing

his wish list. He had prescribed a cabinet with Deputy Minister of his choice to succeed him, Finance, Home and Defense portfolios to his party nominees, and a commitment from Maoists that they will behave before the formation of interim cabinet.

There are speculations that the

person uppermost in his mind is Sushil Koirala, the senior most leader of the party will virtually be the Prime Minister in the waiting. Koirala (83), in fragile health repeatedly said in most of the meetings this week that "all I want to see is peace process going smoothly ahead and you all with a long future should not squabble over petty issues."

Koirala did not attend the meeting on Sunday leaving it to other leaders to sort out contentious issues.

Maoists have personally assured the PM that they will return properties that Maoists confiscated illegally during the past 11 years of conflict. Koirala during his earlier meeting with Prachanda has made it clear that Maoists would require to notify that they have returned all kinds of property to the rightful owners - individuals, institutions and the Government before they joined the Government.

The submission of the compliance report by the Maoists will determine the date of formation of the interim cabinet which will instantly declare the date of election to the Constituent Assembly. In return the Government will withdraw all pending cases against the Maoist cadres. Both sides have in principle agreed to appoint a high level

committee to monitor adherence to code of conduct and human rights situation as peace process continues.

The U N team headed by Ian Martin will be assisting this committee in observing and monitoring the human rights situation in the country. Under Koirala formula, Maoists need to undertake not to disturb political meetings of any party and to stop their cadres from moving around with arms.

Koirala's wish to have all parties to agree on him being declared as the interim Prime Minister before other things are settled was thwarted as CPN-UML and others insisted there were far more important issues to be settled beforehand. Prime Minister's trusted lieutenants, Dr Shekhar Koirala and K P Sitaula had been pressuring other party delegates to first declare the unanimous choice of the alliance so that PM Koirala could take the oath on Tuesday in the House.

There has however been a broader understanding on composition of ministry which will give 25 per cent each to three major parties - Congress, UML and Maoists and 12.5 per cent to Congress (Democratic). ■



Niraj Sapkota

Maoist chief Prachanda at Tundikhel

Emotion Vs Election



Brasavor Ojha

■ NF Correspondent

Only two things could lead to the election to the Constituent Assembly (CA) in June as pledged by the eight parties. Firstly, if PM G P Koirala's emotional plea, "I will be able to see it in my life time if it takes place in June," gets heeded. Secondly, if a miracle takes place but all other factors weigh against such a possibility.

Koirala has expressed his emotional wish many times before the members of the Election Commission and top leaders of political parties, but the existing legal and security situation do not give much hope. Besides, the Commission needs to procure election related materials through proper tender procedures which are time consuming. Voter lists are not ready yet and the constitution delimitation commission has not been formed.

"We will need proper electoral laws

"This election needs to be very credible given presence and interest of the international community on Nepal's transition to Democracy"

and mandate besides a security situation where we can hold free and fair elections. Every second counts, but I do not feel convinced enough to say I am satisfied", Chief Election Commissioner, Bhojraj Pokharel told newsfront, adding "this election needs to be very credible given presence and interest of the international community on Nepal's transition to Democracy".

As per the indications, the election to the CA will cost the state exchequer around two and a half billion Rupees excluding expenditure on

security arrangements. That may not be a major concern for the Chief Election Commission, but absence of a comfortable security situation and attack on certain political parties by the Maoists is. "All political parties should be free to carry their political activities freely," Pokharel said expressing his unhappiness over the incident in Jhapa and earlier in Lamjung in which the Rashtriya Prajatantra Party leaders were targeted by the Maoists. But the Commission can act only after the election is notified and model code of conduct formulated. "At this stage I can only appeal to the parties to allow campaign without intimidation and violence to all", said he.

Growing 'Congressisation' of the security forces, mainly the police and

armed police seems to have worried not only the Election Commission, but also many non-congress parties including the Maoists who protested against recent promotions awarded to certain officials just before the formation of the Interim Government.

Some of the police officials with 'Pro-Congress' backgrounds were given promotion even though they were under investigation of the Rayamajhi Commission at that stage. The Home Minister promoted his cousin as Chief of the Armed Police Force (APF) while he was still being investigated for his role in suppressing the April movement. Both the civil police and the APF will be playing crucial roles during elections as Nepal Army is going to be kept in the barracks. ■

Correction

In the news 'Serving the underprivileged', carried out on volume 7, page 2, the name of the school was incorrect. It should have read Catalunya School. The error is regretted. -Editor



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Army's impatience

Army's indignation and protest comes in the wake of their assessment that a senior civilian official in the Defense Ministry is leaking vital information to the Maoists

■ NF Correspondent



In what could trigger a new crisis, senior army officials have taken offence to "systematic humiliation" of the institution by the Maoists, and Government's indifference to it.

"There is a limit to everything, and to our patience as well", a message conveyed to the Prime Minister from the Army's top level on behalf of the institution said, after 13 of its vehicles were intercepted by the Maoists in

western Nepal last week. G P Koirala's quick intervention worked and the Maoists released the vehicles claiming, "we never did it."

Army's indignation and protest comes in the wake of their assessment that a senior civilian official in the Defense Ministry is leaking vital information to the Maoists. "We know it and the Prime Minister knows it", said a senior official of the Army.

Gauging the tense mood of the army, Prime Minister has decided to attend the "Ghode Jatra" festival in his capacity as the Defense Minister in an attempt to assuage the hurt feeling of the security agency; an agency which the Government is yet to 'own' despite its having declared that Army will be under direct control of the parliament.

"We are loyal to the Nepal Government and

have been carrying out every order given to us," Koirala was told by the top officer who presented a list of cases in which Ministers and Maoists had systematically humiliated the army. It also cited the case when army vehicles en route to Kathmandu for routine servicing and overhauling were 'intercepted by the Maoists on false propaganda that they were carrying weapon'. ■

Construction halted

The target for completing the Surkhet - Jumla highway by end March is unlikely to be achieved. The construction work has been stopped for the past one week by irate villagers demanding mass compensation for the residents of Khalalgad market area against 'damage caused by explosions'.

The mass protest leading to obstruction was triggered after the house of a resident in the market area was partially damaged when Nepal Army used explosives to blast rocks near the site, to build the road. "Nepal army is ready to pay compensation to the person whose house was damaged after proper technical assessment, but the demand for mass compensation is not proper", an army official said. The stretch of road when completed will connect Kalikot and Jumla, and is expected to give a boost to economic activities and social movement in Nepal's remote Karnali region.

"A central level team will be reaching the construction site to open the track while dialogue continues with the villagers," Bhim Prasad Neupane, member of the National Planning Commission (NPC) told newsfront.

Chief of Department of the Nepal Army's construction Unit Uddav Bista clarified that the construction work would resume after the issue is settled. "We hope to get the report of the technical team soon", said he. As many as 800 NA staff is currently working in the construction of the 50 km Kalikot - Jumla section of road. "We have already transported materials for building the bridge at Serigadh area. That will mark the opening of the highway", an official said, adding, "if construction begins immediately, it should be ready by early April but inordinate delay will cost more both time and money wise."

■ Jyoti Devkota

Surkhet-Jumla highway



No, Thank you

Ram Nagina Singh, the recently retired upright judge of the Supreme Court, chose to act differently from Krishna Jung Rayamajhi, his predecessor. Singh sternly turned down the cabinet decision unilaterally appointing him as Head of the Constituencies Delimitation Commis-

sion, without prior consultation with him.

"This is an affront to me. This is not acceptable at all", he told a cabinet Minister who conveyed the cabinet decision to him last week. The Government however was only following the precedence it created in appointing the Krishna Jung Rayamajhi commission to probe "Misuse of state power and money to suppress Jana-Andolan". Rayamajhi, without any reservation, had not only accepted the post retirement job

offered to him, but also accepted Government nominees on party line as member of the commission.

Singh's refusal to accept the post will have a bearing on the conduct of election as the Government was expecting that Justice Singh would put his signature on the dotted line; since the delimitation and a number of additional constituencies had already been finalised, at least in principle. Singh was chosen since he is from Terai and his reputation as a straightforward judge, would give the process of delimitation the required credibility.

Justice Singh was part of the three-member bench which had declared the Royal commission on corruption appointed by the King during his direct regime as "unconstitutional", that led to its dissolution.

■ NF Correspondent



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Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter. - Martin Luther King Jr. (1929 - 1968)

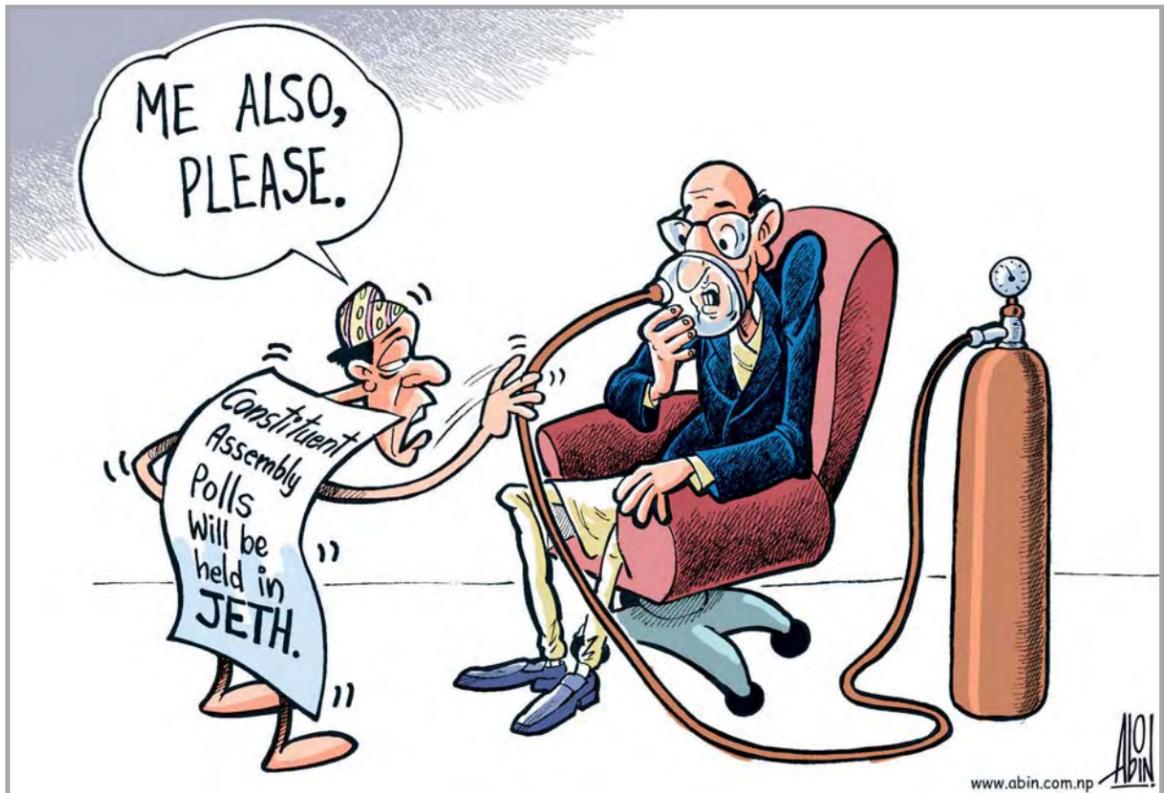
People First

In a democracy, the people have an obligatory role to play in all spheres of national life. Citizenship is not a mere document or certificate of nationality. Conferring citizenship by the state also amounts to reminding citizens of the roles, duties and responsibilities to their country and society. If citizens are always alert towards their duties, foul play by politicians or power centers would be an exception rather than a rule.

Democracy in Nepal, over a period of time, has become more of a label than a process or conduct. Political parties preaching Democracy do not promote or encourage inner party Democracy. As a result, each party is being ruled by strongest individuals, almost like patriarchs and mini kings of yesteryears. The general public is not only unable to influence the parties but their role is reduced to just voting whenever elections take place—mostly having to choose the one who is a 'lesser evil'.

People come to the streets rarely as they did in 1990 or April last year. But once a greater cause is realized, people withdraw hoping that political parties would act differently. Recent experience indicates that political parties, Maoists included, have changed their colours. A civil society, not affiliated to any political grouping could have been an ideal platform for advocating people's empowerment and enhanced role in politics. But that is missing. This does not however, minimise the need of a more effective forum.

There has to be a mechanism where every citizen has the right to question, to be heard, free from any fear. It can effectively take up issues like funding of political parties so that they can act free from interest of donors. Similarly, issue of total independence of judiciary, its separation from executive and functional autonomy of security forces, with full accountability, of course, would not let the Government of the day to act with an agenda of vendetta against its rivals, something that is happening today. New Nepal can not be built if there is no reform on these sectors. ■



Letters

Identity crisis

The article in volume 8 by columnist Sushma Amatya reflects a biased perception of foreigners' view on the identity of Nepali. In most of cases, many hard working Nepali students who want to obtain foreign degrees are many times rejected visas. Some months back Nepali newspapers followed news on a prominent Nepali writer Professor Abhi Subedi who was deprived visa for USA.

Many people I know are suffered from such identity crisis. Even I have a bitter experience to be perceived as Bahadur (a guard) in several Indian tours. But for redemption of our pre-conceptual perception in foreigners' eyes and to create an image of noble identity across the world we ourselves have to clean all spotted identity socially and politically.

Krishna Dahal
mr.dahalkrish@gmail.com

Space to students

In newsfront, I find the way photos are presented attractive. It deals with different current issues analytically. It's coverage of educational issues are appreciable and could be used as good reference points by students and teachers alike. I think newsfront would have a wider market if it devoted some space to students, the school going age group.

NP Sharma
Principal
Budhanilkantha School, Kathmandu

Be more practical

This is the era of science and technology. Everybody has the right to know information regarding social, economic, political and different human interests. Newsfront really reflects the pulse of the people but it has yet to cross the

boundary of urban areas to gain popularity in rural areas. It should also contribute to establishment of the political changes obtained by Janandolan-2.

Min Bahadur Shahi
Chair Person, KIRDARC

Voices of people

Newsfront has succeeded in capturing the voices of the people. The language is simple and easy to understand. There was a vacuum in the media and it has been filled by this weekly that contains a thorough analysis of socio-political issues.

The column "Insight" is really pertinent and touching and more space should be given to it. Design, layout and quality of the paper is good.

Prakash Sayami
Director and film analyst

Good columns

Newsfront is a complete weekly paper in Nepali media replete with facts, in-depth analysis, the salient features of the paper. The columns are good and we think newsfront really captures the voices of real people. However, the front page layout looks slightly odd and we suggest it could be changed and made more catchy and attractive. Sometimes, the pictures and stories don't match well, so more attention needs to be paid to these details.

Uday Pariyar
Kathmandu

Readers, your feedback is most welcome. Please send your reactions, criticisms, comments, suggestions, opinion, anything you'd like to share to: newsfront@bhrikuti.com

Spiritual Corner

Ordinary love is selfish

Sri Yukteswar (1855 – 1936) was a Spiritual Master from India, also the Guru of Paramahansa Yogananda. Sri Yukteswar was a Spiritual Master of great sincerity and sought to direct his disciples through strict discipline. Yogananda said of his Guru that if he did not speak with such sincerity he would have had many more disciples. Sri Yukteswar entered Mahasamadhi (A Yogi's conscious departure from his body) at the age of 81.

Much of what we know about Sri Yukteswar comes from Paramahansa

Yogananda's Autobiography of a Yogi.

Quotes by Sri Yukteswar

"Ordinary love is selfish, darkly rooted in desires and satisfactions. Divine love is without condition, without boundary, without change. The flux of the human heart is gone forever at the transfixing touch of pure love."

(From Autobiography of A Yogi Chapter 10)

"When this love becomes developed in man it makes him able to understand the real position of his own Self as well as of others surrounding him."

"The eight bondages or snares are hatred, shame, fear, grief, condemnation, race prejudice, pride of family and smugness. Removal of the eight bondages leads to



magnanimity of the Heart."

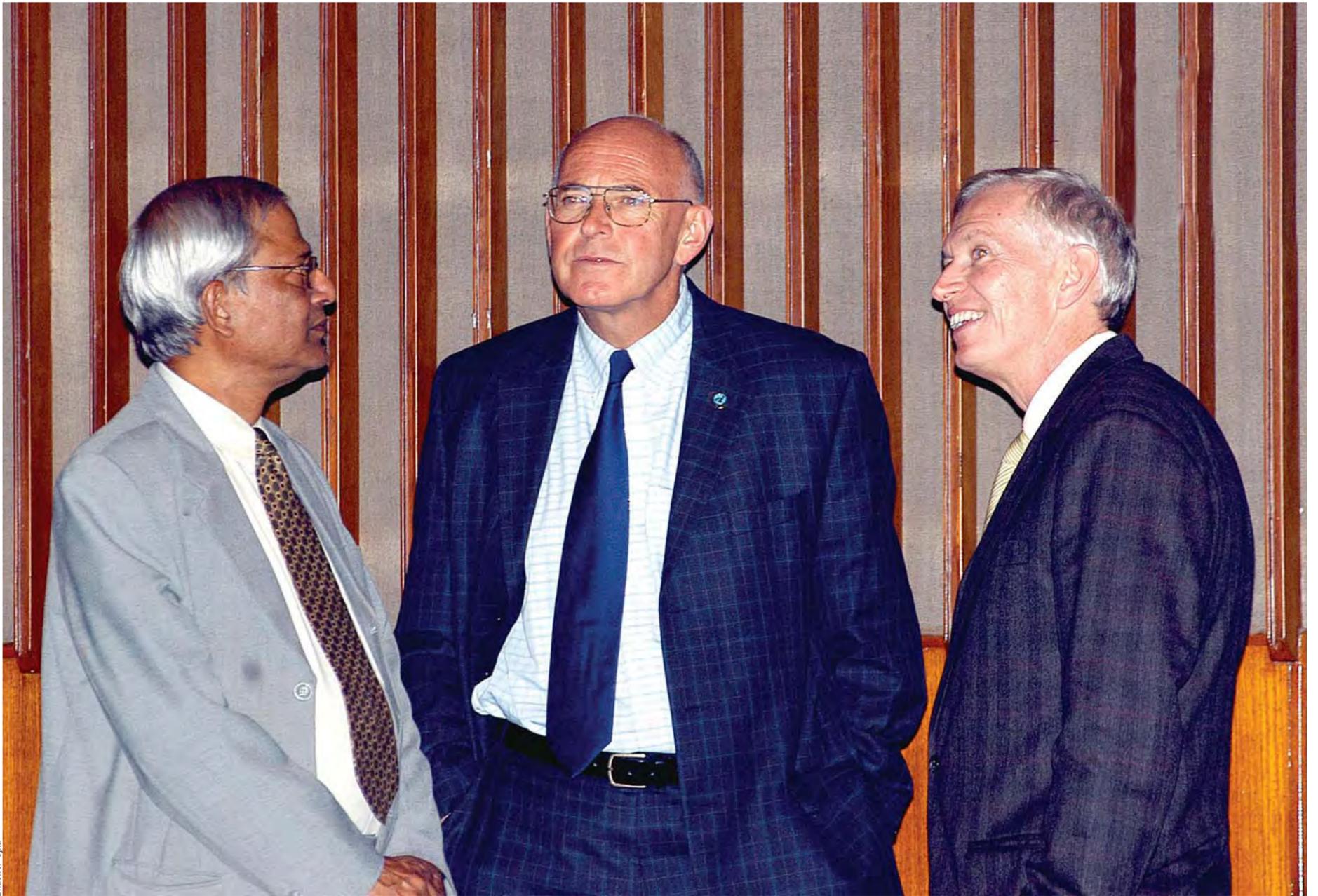
(From: The Holy Science by Sri Yukteswar)

Sri Yukteswar discussion with Yogananda

Sri Yukteswar: "Mukunda (Yogananda's boyhood name), why don't you get an astrological armet?"

Yogananda: "Should I, Master? I don't believe in astrology."

Sri Yukteswar: "It is never a question of belief; the only scientific attitude one can take on any subject is whether it is true. The law of gravitation worked as efficiently before Newton as after him. The cosmos would be fairly chaotic if its laws could not operate without the sanction of human belief."



Blaswoc Ojha

sharing concern: Shiva Shankar Mukharji, Ian Martin and James Moriyarti

Take hold of your reins

A small country like Nepal with high degree of dependence has to be careful



■ Yubaraj Ghimire

International role is often debated in the context of Nepal's domestic affairs. Like media freedom, the issue attracts conflicting stance in terms of opinion and conduct of individuals and political parties depending on which side of fence one stands. It's still a honeymoon period for the 8-parties with the international community which does not have a coherent stance and views as such. In the prevailing situation the United Nations and mainly countries like India, United States, United Kingdom and China, and to some extent European Union and Scandinavian countries would constitute that community.

When Ramesh Nath Pandey was at the helm of Shital Niwas during the Royal regime, he had some ambassadors 'summoned' - an accepted norm of disapproval of their conduct and utterances, for 'interfering' in Nepal's internal affairs. But the reason such a 'summon' was not taken seriously was because the government of the day had been totally rejected at home and abroad. Moreover, Pandey was acting without any adherence to the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs as he was

freely inviting other countries to do so if they supported the Royal regime.

This means that only a regime which has the people's support and has to depend less on the international community can define the grounds and conditions for how much the outsiders should be welcome to speak on internal affairs. This has to be a matter of principle and adherence for all in the Government and the

Traditional wisdom here has been suggesting keeping an equidistance between the two giant neighbours, India and China and encouraging friendship between them.

opposition on every occasion and issue. But in the world so integrated, and Nepal so dependent, it has to be a pragmatic blend of soliciting cooperation and guarded decisions to stand as an independent state.

Traditional wisdom here has been suggesting keeping an equidistance between the two giant neighbours India and China and encouraging friendship between them; although at times we have tried to use one against another, sometimes to our advantage, and mostly in the long run, to disadvantage. A small country like Nepal with high degree of dependence has to

be careful. What happens to our grass if two giants fight? Our grass will not be safe even if the two make love. This suggests that this country needs to adapt itself to changing external scenarios using principles of Panchasheel as the best safeguard that it can have.

Nepal has reasons to feel happy that almost every country and the international organisation

that matters have come forward to help in what appears like a long overhaul of transition that the country is poised for. But has Nepal written the course and areas of help it would require? Ramesh

Nath Pandey received cash in assistance from China to be able to pay the Government servants; and G P Koirala, from India for the same purpose. Does that make us more independent or even fundamentally democratic after the changes in April?

Unless the political leaders, mainly the eight parties are able to tell the people that 'in the days to come, you have to tighten your belt, consume less and work hard,' the country will only be seeking 'help' from outside. For many years now, Nepal has left it to the world outside to fund its developmental activities in the

Government sector and support the non-governmental sectors. Naturally in the process, agendas, brain and manpower have been imported and imposed upon us.

Talking about obligations, take a look at Prime Minister Koirala's predicament on the question of forming interim Government. Under provisions of the understanding with the Maoists, he is already under compulsion to include them in the Government as per the time schedule. As the Head of the Government he is under commitment to dissuade Maoists from violating the code of conduct as pledged in writing. Coalition partners under him are divided on the issue. So is the international community.

India which so far had maintained that 'arms management should be complete and credible,' now wants Maoists included in the Interim Government fast. U S is still opposed to it and wants Maoists to furnish proof of their being honest in the peace process through their conduct to qualify joining the Government. China more or less quietly tows U S line on this issue.

There are signs of the vulnerability of the Nepali ground because of love or fight of the international stake holders on the Nepali issue. But it's largely Koirala and Prachanda as well as leaders of their ilk who should be blamed for this. It needs nothing more than honesty, vision, courage and character to be able to decide Nepal's own course. ■



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11. The British School, Jhamsikhel.
12. Kathmandu Valley school, Maharajgunj
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14. Novel Academy, Pokhara.
15. Orient College, Maharajgunj.
16. Kritika Education Foundation, Biratnagar.



A level is popular because

Why is Cambridge A level programme so popular all over the world?

CIE A Level is so popular because of its international quality and recognition. It is focused on maintaining high standards. When a new syllabus is designed, there is a lengthy process of consultation, research and trial period before the syllabus is published. The delivery of the syllabus is then supported by a variety of means, including specimen papers; face to face workshops for teachers, e-learning courses, online programmes, discussion groups, suggested and endorsed course books and so on. Secondly, CIE syllabus and question papers are international, which means that they are specifically

written with the overseas student in mind. There are no obscure references to UK traditions and no assumptions that students have an understanding of UK current affairs. All students overseas, whether studying in Nepal, Nebraska or New Zealand will find CIE syllabuses and question papers ideally suited to an international context. Finally, CIE's qualifications are recognised by the world's leading universities, and act as a passport to the most rigorous of undergraduate courses. CIE has recently developed a user friendly recognition database which can be found on the recognition pages on CIE online (www.cie.org.uk).

How is A level course running in Nepal?

A Level programmes are popular in Nepal and CIE has registered a number of Cambridge International Centres (CICs) and British Council attached centers. Both British Council and the CICs are responsible for maintaining the integrity of the examinations, making all local administrative arrangements to ensure that students take their examinations under the best possible conditions. All centers are registered with or are in the process of registering with the Ministry of Education.

It is said that Cambridge has made A level syllabus easier, to expand its market. Your comment?

A Level is often referred to as a 'gold standard', meaning that the standard of the qualification is maintained over time. A Level was first developed over 50 years ago and CIE goes to great lengths to ensure that new syllabuses and question papers reflect the original gold standard. Thanks to the good reputation of CIE International A Level, students with good grades are welcomed at leading world-class universities such as Oxford and Cambridge. Syllabus is regularly revised to ensure that their content is

■ William Bickerdike
Regional Manager
Cambridge International Examination



'A' for all

a good student can complete A level in one year

■ Chhatra Karki

A-Levels education is no longer a monopoly of the privileged few. Till a decade ago, the education system that was accessible to only a few from elite families mostly from urban areas is now available widely, including students from middle class and rural areas.

To quote William Bickerdike, Regional Manager of Cambridge International Examination, "Cambridge A Level is so popular because it has maintained international quality..." The Cambridge University has extended this programme to 170 countries.

According to Ministry of Education, 16 schools run A Levels programmes inside and outside the valley (Pokhara and Biratnagar). A good score would mean an opportunity to study abroad, a dream of every student these days. To fulfill that dream, most of the students make it their first choice after passing SLC.

A teacher of Budhanilkantha School, Keshar Khulal, said, "While developing curriculum, creativity is given priority and evaluation is done comprehensively. Because of its recognition all over the world, it has become the first choice of the students."

Planning of A level is prepared by general

certification (GCE) of Cambridge International Examination, UK. GCE develops curriculum, conducts examination and performs evaluation by applying modern methods. This level has to be completed in two years although there is no time limit for talented students. Sudhir Kumar Jha, Principal of Chelsea International Academy said that a good student can complete A level in one year.

Cambridge University has recognized Budhanilkantha School, Rato Bangala, The British School and Kathmandu International Study Centre as exam centers. Students from other Schools and independent candidates have to take exams from the British Council.

Students are evaluated through grading system where A is the highest and E denotes failed. Raghu Aditya, A level Student, said,

"Exams as well as evaluation is more scientific and different from the traditional ones."

Compared to the Intermediate and Plus 2 fees, A level is expensive. There is no uniformity in the tuition fees in different institutions. According to Principal Jha, around two and half Lakhs needs to be invested by a student to complete an A level.

The Cambridge provides exam pin code for institutes having minimum students and infrastruc-

ture. While selecting the A level institute, one has to keep in mind whether an institute is affiliated with the Education Ministry or not. Joint secretary of Education Ministry, Lav Prasad Tripathi said, "Those institutes running A level without taking affiliation are not valid and the Ministry is not responsible for it." ■

(Pix by Tej Basnet)

se of its quality

up to date and relevant.

How is CIE applying a monitoring system on Cambridge registered or affiliated institutions?

There are different checks and balances. Registration with the Ministry of Education is one part of the process. In addition, CIE regularly visits and inspects centers to make sure that their facilities and resources are fit for the purpose. CIE attaches great importance to the quality of faculty members, the extent and quality of library, science and IT laboratory facilities, and the general appearance and cleanliness of the premises and classroom facilities. CIE is delighted that centers in Kathmandu and Pokhara have formed two associations called Cambridge Educators' Association in Nepal (CEAN) and A Level College Association (ALCA) respectively. These professional associations run self-help teachers training for less experienced teachers and are working with the British Council and CIE to improve the quality of teaching and learning in schools.

What are the further plans to increase quality of the Cambridge A level education system?

CIE is constantly implementing fresh ideas for the improvement of quality. A recent example is a series of professional development events called Ask the Examiner, putting teachers in direct contact with examiners and providing opportunities for question and answer sessions on the syllabus and recent examination sessions. CIE continues to develop a wide range of resources for students, which are available at www.cambridgestudents.org.uk. This year, hundreds of A Level candidates accessed the A Level student revision checklists to make sure that they were thoroughly and comprehensively prepared for their examinations. ■



Combating old scourge

The HIV epidemic fuels the TB epidemic. The rapidly growing epidemic of HIV in South East Asia including Nepal poses a major threat to TB control



Rajesh Ghimire



■ Sushil Chandra Baral

Tuberculosis (TB) is perhaps as old as mankind. TB bacillus and human race have tolerated each other for a long time. After Plague, also known as "Black Death" hit Europe in the middle ages; TB came to be known as its counterpart. Ever since, TB continues to be a leading infectious disease in the world and poses a foremost threat to health and development of people in developing countries.

It has been 125 years since Robert Koch discovered tuberculosis bacillus. 24th March is marked as the World TB Day to commemorate that great discovery. Though the drug for TB treatment was available 60 years ago, the world today is not free from the disease and it remains a common cause of death. About 2 billion people, equal to one third of the world's population, are infected with TB bacilli, and accounts for 1.6 million deaths every year.

TB can affect anyone. But thanks to advancement of medical science, it is curable, if diagnosed at an early stage, followed by a full course of treatment. Identifying TB cases at an early stage remains the biggest challenge to the control programmes. Despite interventions made around the globe to establish effective TB control especially in developing countries, TB continues to be on rise that eventually warranted The World Health Organisation (WHO) to declare TB as a global public health emergency in 1993.

In 1994 the internationally recommended TB control strategy, later named DOTS (Directly Observed Treatment Short-course), was launched. DOTS has been a successful strategy implemented in many countries but emerging threat of Multi Drug Resistant (MDR) TB and rapidly growing TB/HIV co-infection pose a major threat to the control programme.

In Nepal, National TB Programme (NTP) estimates around 40,000 new TB cases annually. Most victims belong to the economically active population category. DOTS application since 1996 has been a success, and now available in all the 75 districts. However, many TB patients still opt for outside DOTS treatment, possibly in private clinics. As a result, there is no way to find out whether the patients are receiving appropriate combination of drugs recommended for the whole treatment duration. The consequences of inappropriate TB treatment led to the development of MDR-TB, which is a major threat to TB control.

Poor people with TB face huge barriers in accessing TB services, mainly diagnosis and treatment. TB control targets cannot be achieved without it. Treatment access closer to home has to be accepted as a right of the patient. Studies show that people living in poor communities tend to have limited access to TB

knowledge. This comes as a major barrier in prevention and cure.

TB is mainly diagnosed through sputum microscopy. The diagnosis services and TB drugs are available free of cost under the NTP through several health institutions. But the associated costs for the diagnosis and treatment paid by TB patients and families, and the economic days lost due to TB are enormous, presenting a daunting challenge to poor TB patients, making poor patients poorer. Many TB cases delay in seeking treatment due to economic constraints making the situation worse.

TB also has a social dimension as it is regarded as a disease of poor and ill-fed. The fact is, it has no boundary and can infect any person anywhere. TB related stigma and discrimination still exist and that comes in the way of accessing TB services, especially to those from low socio-economic status. Although, major responsibility of controlling TB lies with the government, it is not possible without involving civil society groups, private sector, community, and people infected and affected by TB.

There are five anti-TB drugs known as first line TB drugs for general treatment. Resistant to at least the two most potent anti-TB drugs (isoniazid and rifampicin) is defined MDR TB, presently known as a threat to global TB control. One major factor contributing to the expansion of MDR is inadequate treatment. MDR-TB cases need second line drugs which are very expensive and toxic, and need to take treatment at least for 24 months. Nepal NTP has started treatment of MDR-TB under the DOTS Plus pilot project. But lack of knowledge, access and cost continue to come in the way of full course treatment.

The HIV epidemic fuels the TB epidemic. The rapidly growing epidemics of HIV in South East Asia, including Nepal poses a major threat to TB control. TB is the leading killer among HIV infected people as a quarter of a million TB deaths are HIV-associated. TB and HIV are major public health problems in Nepal. Although TB burden has remained stable over the period, NTP sentinel surveillance showed four fold rise of HIV infection among TB patients during the period from 1993 to 2002.

Both diseases share common characteristics of vulnerability among the productive age populations i.e. 15-49 years. There is a realisation emerging among key stakeholders in the health sector that these two programmes need to collaborate and formulate joint policy and interventions, and establish functional partnership with organisations working for TB and HIV.

(Baral is a PhD student at the University of Leeds, and affiliated with Health Research and Social Development Forum in Nepal)

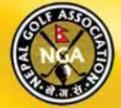





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At least 676 people have been killed in Maoist violence in Chhattisgarh over the last two years.

The outrage in Chhattisgarh

The killing of 55 security personnel by Maoist insurgents in a remote camp in Chhattisgarh's Bastar region is the most devastating attack by left wing extremists in the State in recent times. The deadly pre-dawn assault — carried out by an estimated 300 to 400 rebels armed with grenades and petrol bombs — is the fourth by Maoists on police and paramilitary personnel in 2007. In January, seven Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) men were killed by an Improvised Explosive Device when on patrol; in February, six security force personnel perished in a powerful landmine explosion in the Bijapur area; and in early March, this month, another landmine took the lives of four members of the Nagaland Armed Forces and two policemen on the Chhattisgarh-Andhra Pradesh border. An analysis of the data compiled by the Institute of Conflict Management reveals that security personnel are much more vulnerable to Maoist attack in Chhattisgarh than elsewhere. In 2005, 49 members of security forces were killed in the State (as against 29 in Bihar and 27 in Jharkhand); the corresponding figure for 2006 was 55 (as against 5 in Bihar and 47 in Jharkhand).

With a forest cover of 44 per cent and the presence of a tribal population of 32.5 per cent that has been denied its share of development, Chhattisgarh has for long provided fertile ground for the naxalite movement to take root in.

security personnel are much more vulnerable to Maoist attack in Chhattisgarh.

However, the last three years have seen a marked increase in Maoist activity. It is a result of at least three factors. First, the consolidation of the Maoists after the September 2004

merger between the People's War and the Maoist Communist Centre of India. Secondly, the 'ceasefire' that operated in 2004-2005 in Andhra Pradesh between the State government and the Maoists allowed them to expand their influence in the neighbourhood. Finally, the Chhattisgarh government's inept policies in dealing with the naxalite challenge, highlighted by the hugely flawed Salwa Judum ('purification hunt') campaign. This state-led mobilisation of tribals against the Maoists served only to expose innocent tribals to the wrath of the extremists, displacing large numbers from their villages. The campaign, which was suspended in 2006, exposed the folly of instigating people to fight against extremists without effectively protecting them. The point to remember is that Maoist extremism feeds on popular discontent relating to vital livelihood issues. While it is necessary to tackle the menace with a firm hand, any long-term solution must go deep into the socio-economic circumstances that provide extremists space and opportunities to disrupt normal life and commit anti-human atrocities. ■

(The Hindu editorial on March 17)

Naxal attack

Chhattisgarh govt caught unprepared

After the massacre of 49 police personnel by Naxalites in Chhattisgarh, India there is still a sense of disbelief.

It was one of the biggest ever attacks by Naxalites and the security forces who were massacred were hopelessly outnumbered and outgunned. The administration is trying to cope with the aftermath in the state's Bijapur district.

Still dazed

Bereaved relatives have been given Rs 10,000 in cash part of Rs 2 lakh compensation announced by the government. But most are still too dazed by what happened the night before.

An attack of unprecedented magnitude on the base camp of the Chhattisgarh Armed Force and Special Police Officers all of who

were part of the anti-Naxal operations in the area. Faced by a well-armed group of 500 Naxals, the security forces soon ran out of ammunition and lost 55 of their men.

"Some, who tried to hide in the building were dragged out and burnt. Others were hacked to death," said Mahendra Karma, opposition leader.

"The government's flawed security plan is responsible for the massacre. The government must own up to its failure and resign," he further said.

Forces outnumbered

The government too admits its forces were outnumbered and outsmarted.

"More than 500 naxals were involved in the attack. They used bombs, grenades and automatic weapons. Our forces need better

training in tactics," said OP Rathore, DGP, Chhattisgarh.

At least 676 people have been killed in Maoist violence in Chhattisgarh over the last two years.

Its Special Police Officers like Santosh who need the special training.

A rifle, a bulletproof jacket and a few rounds of ammunition aren't enough for villagers like Santosh to take on the well-armed and well-trained Naxalite.

As expected after the massacre Santosh is having second thoughts about the job.

"Let me see if I want to continue," said Santosh, Special Police Officer.

Getting more villagers like Santosh to fight the Naxals is now the biggest challenge the Chhattisgarh government faces.

(NDTV.com)

Suspended Chief Justice has been quoted saying though he does not have much faith in the Supreme judicial council, he will cooperate with it.



Iftikar Mohammad Chaudhary

The suspension of Pakistan's Chief Justice, Iftikar Mohammad Chaudhary, by President Parvez Musharraf has triggered country wide protests and has become an issue of judiciary's independence in peril, a cause of concern worldwide.

Lawyers boycotted courts and have come on the streets in Lahore, Karachi and other parts of the country. Most media in Pakistan criticised the President for what they called gross interference in the independence of judiciary. Chief Justice Chaudhary was suspended on March 9 following a presidential order for unspecified "abuse of power" with reference to the "supreme judicial council."

In the face of statewide protests and global concern over the independence of judiciary, President Musharraf declared that

"he acted on the advice of the Government and will abide by the final verdict of the council." The motive behind the suspension has however already come under grave doubts as the Chief was to deliver verdicts on many crucial issues which will have bearing on the Government.

Cases awaiting his verdict include whether Musharraf could continue as the Head of the Army when still a President of the country. "This is an infringement on the independence of judiciary. This will have an impact all over the world and we cannot keep silent on this," Nepal Bar Association Chairman Bishwakanta Mainali said after sending a protest letter to President Musharraf.

Similar concerns and protests have been dispatched from other countries. India's leading lawyers F S Nariman and Soli Sorabjee led their community in the protest. Over 70

Pakistan

Judiciary under attack

lawyers, including Queen's counsels (QC), barristers, and solicitors practicing in England expressed their concern over the attack on independence of judiciary. The signatories, among others, included Cherie Booth - QC, wife of Prime Minister Tony Blair. Buoyed by the solidarity and moral support from outside, proponents of free judiciary including citizens, media and lawyers in thousands came out in protests in different parts of the country provoking police action.

Suspended Chief Justice has been quoted saying though he does not have much faith in the Supreme judicial council, he will cooperate with it. The suspension, many think was meant to crush country's fledgling democratic institutions. Political analysts say the growing protest presents Musharraf with the largest challenge of his authority since he came to

power in a bloodless coup seven years ago.

His plea that he would abide by the verdict of the judicial council has not been able to convince votaries of the independence of judiciary. In fact, it took a turn for the worse as Pakistani police on Friday fired rubber bullets into the crowds in Lahore, detained key opposition leaders and stormed the office of the Geo TV, country's most popular independent network, setting a chain of protests from the media.

Musharraf termed it all, 'unfortunate' and Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz visited the studio and expressed his regret, but that has hardly worked." Hamid Mir, the station's Bureau Chief in Islamabad said it was "insufficient" according to Pak media. ■

(Agencies)

Women's day passed silently without any major events to recognize the sacrifices made by women. In a patriarchal society like ours, men are not much interested in recognizing the contribution made by women and celebrating the women's day. But for how long can men undermine women's contribution towards the overall development of the society and take women for granted?

Until the 1970s, the development policies formulated by international development agencies and adopted by the various governments in developing countries were seriously flawed. They were flawed because they undermined the productivity of women and did not consider them as a force in the developmental process. Women were mostly viewed as wives and mothers and policies formulated focused on mother and child health and on reducing fertility. It was only in 1970s, researchers on women in third world countries challenged the fundamental assumptions of international development and demanded a new theoretical approach. They advocated for the addition of gender dimension to the study of development process.

A country that does not recognize the contribution of women will have a tough time inching towards prosperity. Thus, acknowledgement of women's potential and their empowerment is crucial for the overall development of the nation.

Women empowerment means bringing women who are outside the decision making process into it. It emphasizes on access to political decision-making process, in economic sphere, and to market. According to the Nobel Laureate, Muhammad Yunus, empowering women and bringing them into the organizational fold will succeed in curbing rapid population growth in developing countries than the current system of encouraging family planning approaches which he considers to be the intimidation tactics. People tend to choose to have fewer children when they increase their financial economic stability. Couples in extreme poverty give birth to larger number of children for their later economic and social support.

Empowerment is a process that cannot be imposed by outsiders-although appropriate

Women's Empowerment



A country that does not recognize the contribution of women will have a tough time inching towards prosperity

■ Dr. Hari Bansha Dulal

external support and intervention can speed up and encourage it. The best way to empower poor women is to provide them with opportunities to use funds. It is essential to bring hundreds of thousands of women living under abject poverty in Nepal into the decision-making process. The empowerment in real sense will only be achieved when these poor women who are treated as objects are brought into mainstream of developmental process. Although economic development efforts initiated by developmental agencies has led to increase in per capita income, increased literacy rate, and life expectancy at the national level, they have miserably failed to distribute the much-desired fruit of development to Nepalese women that largely marginalized and disenfranchised. The equitable distribution of the benefits of development along gender lines has not been achieved.

One of the ways to empower women is by making them a "small capitalist" through micro-loans. Microcredit programmes that provide micro-loans to poor women bring women into decision-making process. They gain status in their family and society because of their access to credit. Providing women with small loans can be considered as a significant step towards gender equality and empowerment. At societal

level, as women get organized through microcredit programs they gain voice and status in the society. The ideological rationale behind microcredit strategies is primarily based on a neo-liberal framework that firmly believes that empowerment is achieved through individual means. As most of the people in poverty are women and girls, microcredit as a new paradigm in development places feminism as its core.

Empowering women and providing them with opportunities is beneficial for the family and society. Therefore, it is in society's interest to encourage women than discriminate and devoid them of the opportunities. Developmental programs and policies should aggressively work towards bringing women in to the mainstream developmental processes. It also makes sense to get women aboard because women like men do not shirk or flee from responsibilities. They are ready to work hard and sacrifice personal desires for the common benefit of family and society. Women when compared to men tend to save greater proportion of their income on meeting family needs. It's not uncommon to see men in Nepal suffering from alcoholism and females supporting the entire family. Hence, providing women with more opportunities and

enhancing their income also means greater investment on health and well being of children and family as a whole.

Although the Nepalese constitution guarantees equal rights to both men and women, women are yet to experience the same level of equality. Women are considered subordinate to men and are victim of widespread violence in both domestic and public arena. It ranges from eve teasing to trafficking for prostitution. Once women start generating income through micro-credit, peoples' attitude towards them will gradually change. Women will be more respected and treated equal in the society. They will be less vulnerable to social vices such as early marriages, excessive child bearing, illiteracy, and unemployment. Providing women with credit is the best way to ensure welfare of the entire family and equitable development. As women are more concerned about their well-being of their children and meeting household needs, providing them with credit is the best way to ensure that savings are spent for betterment of their livelihoods.

Access to credit enhances the self-confidence of woman and increases their status in the family. Furthermore, it will lead to social and economic empowerment and will change the generalized domination and violence against women. Micro-loans provided by micro-credit programs provide women with a much needed entry point that provide them with entitlement to economic resources. When compared to other policies such as sterilization, which is not acceptable especially in Islamic culture, and a one-child policy, which results in female infanticide, better educational opportunities and liberation or empowerment of women, can be very effective in limiting population explosion. This can be achieved through better education and increased occupational opportunities, also the conventional wisdom of having more children for more help and support in old ages loses its relevance. So, the women should be considered as an agent for social change and equitable development rather than second class citizens. Sooner we realize this, the better off we'll be. ■

(Dulal is a lecturer of Environmental Science and Public Policy at George Mason University, Virginia, US)



■ Siddhartha Thapa

No win situation

The state organs lack the required leadership to thwart Maoist designs

"The mere absence of war is not peace", said J. F. Kennedy during the Cuban missile crisis. This statement is relevant to Nepal's context today. Despite repeated assurances from the Maoists that they have retracted from violent politics, the reality is vastly different. Clearly, the Maoist have made a travesty out of the peace process and arms management. It has become obvious that the elections to the Constituent Assembly cannot be held in the stipulated time frame for mid June. This unfortunate circumstance is mainly due to the failure of the government to confine Maoist to peacetime politics.

This failure consequently led to the rapid deterioration of law and order. The ramification of the postponement of the elections is immense – a fluid political vacuum.

The government still has not learnt from the Maoist war. It is this war, which forced the nation into a grinding halt. It is also the Maoists who have distanced the country from peacetime democratic politics. Deeper understanding is needed to comprehend the issues plaguing the country's transition into a peaceful nation with a sustainable democracy.

Our portly political pundits need to understand that the discontented ethnic groups that have been staging agitations across the country are just now in the initial phase of their revolution. The issues of seclusion and minority rights have the necessary ingredients for the brewing of a greater revolution. Therefore, the continued dillydallying and delay in addressing ethnic issues, has the potential to push country into further quagmire – with the rise of a series of mini and counter revolutions, which could lead to the disintegration of the nation state. The ethnicity dilemma could and should have been solved at the beginning of its insurrection but unfortunately, the demands set forth by the various agitating groups have soared due to continued negligence from the government. On the other hand the Maoist insurgency has served an ideal benchmarking model for agitating groups to attain political limelight and power through the use of arms and violent politics.

The recent turmoil and continued political unrest in the Terai has exposed that in the absence of elections, the major political parties are rapidly losing their base; proving that it is only the Maoists, by using force, and indigenous groups that retain some control over rural Nepal. In more recent times the blatant violation of the peace process by the Maoists and the continued intimidation conducted by

its cadres has been reciprocated with brute force by agitating groups. The Maoist influence in the Terai has been questioned for the very first time. It is interesting to note that the Maoist high command has toured the southern belt as a precautionary damage control measure.

Prime Minister Koirala's effort to induct the Maoist into government was based on the thesis that once the rebels are inducted in government, the vantage of being in opposition would no longer be a luxury enjoyed by the Maoist and they would be forced to change and act within the norms of multi party politics.

Unfortunately the violence and brutality perpetuated by the Maoists has not subsided. Maoists are unquestionably the primary political party in the alliance. The revolt by the indigenous groups for equality indicates that confrontation is inevitable. The demands put forward by the indigenous group contravene Maoist school of thought – radical communism. The ramifications of these developments are critical.

Since Maoists are now a part of the interim government, any attack against the Maoist will be termed as an attack against the government. Prachanda recently declared that the Maoist have been eyeing Home and Defense ministries as a precondition to join government. This means that once the Maoist join

the government, the state security organs might be used to crush any voice or ethnic movement that calls for change and opposes Maoist rhetoric. If these ministries are allocated to the Maoists, it will ignite violent unrest and mar Nepal's transition towards permanent peace and democracy.

It is foreboding that even while in government the Maoists have failed to abide by the peace agreement and renounce violence. As the election date nears, Maoist violence might reach its peak and the Prime Minister be forced to postpone the vote fearing fraudulent and violent elections. Till the time of the elections the Maoist might have incapacitated state organs, political opponents and built a case of public discontent against the government creating an environment for protests engaging in a dual role – government and opposition.

The state organs lack the required leadership to thwart Maoist designs. The Prime Minister has also failed to boost government confidence. Going by the government's lack of policy, the indications are that in any event, the Maoist will capture state power- either through forcing fraudulent elections or by brewing public discontent against the government. ■

Borrowed Lifestyle



■ Neeva M. Pradhan

"You should put everything on plastic", Dianne my roommate advised. Her soft voice betrayed sympathy at my financial requisite to purchase a bicycle. This incident from college days is vivid as if it were yesterday. A senior in dentistry she had three credit cards to her name at age twenty one. She was ecstatic to receive distinctive credit cards in the mail. She was on her way to realize the American dream.

Receiving credit approval limit up to \$20,000 to borrow from was an intensely euphoric moment for her as winning a lottery. I found myself gaping at her gusto and at a novel concept. However, the counsel to apply for credit did not quite concur with my upbringing.

I reflect on that moment to appreciate the profound impact of cultural influence. Emerging from a tradition which associates borrowing and long-term debt with social stigma, I made few insightful observations. Without exaggeration, Dianne's proposition struck a blasphemous chord. The revelation was appalling. I later realized that American society is an epitome of this borrowing culture. The 'rags to riches' story definitely had its support mechanism interlaced with the financial and social norm.

At eighteen, teenagers' dreams are realized to claim their rights and independence both financially and socially. They fall prey to borrowing obsession without even realizing it. Unfortunately education systems fail to provide basic information on the downside of this munificent offer.

"Lenders are much more willing to take a risk on people under 25 than they were 20 years ago," says Nina Prikazsky, a vice president at a student loan corporation. "They will give out credit cards based on a college student's expected ability to repay the bills."

However, for those who never learned to balance checkbooks, this offer can be lethal.

According to a report by USA Today, 18-35-year-olds have grown up with a culture of debt, a product of easy credit, a booming economy and expensive lifestyles. Debt counselors, market researchers and consumer advocates have reported that students often live paycheck to paycheck, using credit cards and loans to finance new cars they couldn't otherwise afford, new gadgets, restaurant meals and other entertainment. Therefore the American youth are 'off the hook' at eighteen from parental bondage. The dichotomy is while the society strives for early independence, the trade off is dependency on financial institutions

Buying on credit is tantalizing. Instead of paying a lump sum it sounds attractive to spread the payments over a period of time. The point of interest payment is completely missed. The tempting offers such as 0% finance on goods purchased, and discounts offered by storecards can be a vice. Studies confirm that clients keep the very first card they acquire, for life. That is why all card companies vie for first place position. It is proven that students will have an average of five credit cards by the time they are out of college.

Movies, TV shows and advertising only reinforce the idea that young people are entitled to have an affluent lifestyle. They are encouraged to overspend and it creates tremendous pressure to keep up. Their elevated expect-

tations make them hostage to this inducement.

The Credit Union League posted the national campaign theme, "It's a disaster that's happening in America" and this coincides with the release of the new documentary and book "Maxed Out." It is an attack on credit card issuers by several national consumer groups. The campaign will call for concrete reforms in lending such as caps on interest rates and binding contract terms.

Conversely there are those who are one step ahead. They are savvy in the usage of this facility without being victimized. Some have financed their college education, purchased automobiles, apartments and other necessities. They earn awards offered by credit companies for recurrent card usage. The payback can be lucrative with tremendous saving potential when they earn 'frequent flyer' mileage (free airline tickets) or dream vacation for their family. To this extent, advantages derived by sophisticated borrowers, exemplify the maxim of the 'land of opportunities'.

Back then, as a foreign student suffering mild culture shock, I felt overwhelmed during college orientation week. I soaked up information to acclimatise in an adopted culture. Now the responsibility to steer clients and counsel from the driver's seat, on sound borrowing practice, has been a cathartic experience. I accept social obligation to educate and analyze their finances and help avoid pitfalls of hazardous borrowing practice. I feel a responsibility to prevent them from vortex of destruction.

Some days I wonder if my roommate was sensible to whet her appetite without over indulging in credit card usage!

(Neeva has worked in the financial field for over a decade.)

Insight

Let truth remain



■ Sushma Amatya

That history should not be distorted is a pertinent issue that is being debated upon worldwide and to which Nepalis need to pay attention. History, a narration of facts and accounts of events in the past should be left undistorted for the benefit of future generations who deserve to know the truth. Twisting history is tantamount to committing a breach of academic, political and ethical values.

That history belongs to the winners is a wrong assumption which events around the world have proven amply. History is sacrosanct, comprises of winner and losers, and evaluates roles in given time and situation, and used as a reservoir of the past.

Distortion, intentional or unintentional, of history has taken place around the world and watchful critics have not lagged behind to quickly point at them and struggled to set it right. To cite a few examples: Gunter Grass, the Nobel Prize winner was criticised for glorifying Nazis in his own country and the USA and UK have received flak for glorifying racism. Japan apologised for its

the knowledge of the sacrifice of the freedom fighters have propelled India to make up for the lost years, turning it into an economic power to reckon with today. This success came about through hard work put in the present and not wasting time trying to dismantle the past or disowning the history by its citizens.

In Nepal, the demolition of statues of kings of yesteryears smacks of radical efforts to erase the symbols of the past, also works of art. The artifacts of yesterday are witnesses to the history. The move to withdraw the recognition given to Pritvi Narayan Shah's role in integrating Nepal by abolishing the status of official holiday on Poush 27, by the present Government was a similar attempt at denying respect to a historical figure whose act of integration, supported by many of his followers, has given 25 million Nepalis their identity.

The Cabinet on March 15 decided to declare Baisakh 11 as Loktantra Day. It was silent on Falgun 7 that has been celebrated as Democracy

Distortion, intentional or unintentional, of history has taken place around the world and watchful critics have not lagged behind to quickly point at them and struggled to set it right

aggression in China after many years. Although, mere apology for events in the past does not change history, it represents willingness to learn from past mistakes. It also can be interpreted as a message not to repeat those mistakes or aggression even if circumstances of the past arise.

A few years ago in India, radical political activists and historians tried to demolish the canopy just in front of India Gate, under which the statue of George V rests. They called it the colonial shadow and saw it as glorifying the legacy. But better sense prevailed when secular intellectuals opposed the move to demolish history—good or bad. Unfortunately, the way things are taking place in Nepal, a greater sense of intolerance towards history is on the rise, in an organised manner.

India's struggle for independence lasted almost a century, beginning from the Sepoy mutiny, or the first war of Independence of 1857 as many would call it. From the date of the establishment of Indian National Congress in 1885, founded with the objective of freeing India, it took one whole generation, almost 62 years to see the light of independence. Through all the historical movement, the fact remains unchanged that India was ruled by the British. This and also

Day. The day marking the end of Rana oligarchy and signifying nation's commitment to have democracy as a political system in the post 1950 Nepal; was announced by king Tribhuvan with full support of veteran democratic leader B.P.Koirala in 1951 upon his return after the Delhi agreement. B P consistently advocated a monarchy in constitutional form—that means with no executive power—and its existence in conciliation with democratic forces or the political parties. Despite having been sacked from power, jailed and humiliated by the king, his doctrine of reconciliation did not change. But his younger brother, G.P.Koirala, by his decisions appears to be pushing B P into the shadows. Falgun 7 and Poush 27 are not two mere dates on the calendar, it has much wider significance.

A nation not willing to pay homage to its heroes and builders, be it kings or commoners, reflects poorly on its character. History cannot be kept a captive. It remains a matter of record for those who wish to review the past objectively. Desperately erasing past doesn't create an ideal present, instead we are only losing a reference point for the future. Only by learning from history can Nepalis not repeat the mistakes made in the past. ■

Drug users usually get stuck in past



Drug counseling by drug therapist, Ragina Shah

My brother always says he will quit drugs from tomorrow but never does it. Why does he use it and why can't he stop?

Ritu Kansakar
Bhaktapur

One of the main reasons why he would keep postponing could be the fear of sickness that comes on physically and mentally when he quits using the drugs he is addicted to. There is bound to be withdrawal symptoms which can be very painful. Drugs could also be giving him a false sense of well being and enjoyment. Drug users are used to instant gratification and the drug provides this for him. He would feel abnormal without it and feel normal while using it.

He may also be using drugs to help him confront his family and society and might be feeling that if he quits he may not be able to face the realities. He might also be under the wrong impression that he is better able to handle his tensions using drugs. Thus the false sense of security becomes dear to him.

One of the most common reasons behind people using drugs is the lack of awareness of its effects and its consequences. Your brother may be in a situation where he does not want to acknowledge the effects of his drug use on him and his family. He needs to be helped to realise the harmful effects of his addiction. The sooner he quits the better his life is going to be.

My cousin-brother acts like an insane person from time to time. Is he into drugs?

Hari Prajapati
Banepa

Children do tend to act up like that when they are unable to communicate to us their problems. This behaviour could be their way of coping with their frustrations and this might also lead to depression especially if he is a teenager.

Also there is a possibility that he is into drugs. One of the manifestations of a drug user is signs of insanity displayed when a person is taking drugs like tablets or injections. This insanity could be brought on by the craving for the drug. It could also be the effects of the drug.

Drug users usually tend not to live in the present and get stuck in the past. Their reality is made up of a composite picture of moments of the past, some of the present and also some created by them, that fits into their version of reality. Their inability to be present in the present makes them appear as insane.

Do sit down and try to communicate with him. Only after interacting with him would you be able to determine the difference and then you can get help for him accordingly.

Please address any queries you have about drugs/addiction to: newsfront@bhrikuti.com

Cate's in Indiana Jones



She was seduced by a school student in her last flick - and it looks like the age gap won't be much different for Cate Blanchett's next potential on-screen affair.

The sultry siren, who played high school teacher Sheba Hart in Notes on a Scandal, has just signed on to star alongside ageing Harrison Ford in an upcoming addition to the Indiana Jones series.

While the specifics of Blanchett's role are being kept under wraps - along with David Koepp's screenplay - it is believed the 36-year-old beauty will feature prominently in the flick.

However, it has been revealed Ford will definitely be reprising the title role he made famous in the '80s - though at 64, and more than a quarter of a century after the original hit the big screen, it's unsure whether he will be more convincing in the role of intrepid archaeologist or one of his fossils.

Not that he is likely to be the oldest

cast member on set, with Sean Connery also linked to the project - reprising his role as Indiana's father.

Steven Spielberg will direct the flick - currently known simply as Fourth Instalment of the Indiana Jones Adventures - when it starts shooting in June, with Star Wars creator George Lucas signing on to produce.

Blanchett received an Oscar nomination for her role in Notes on a Scandal, in which she had to act out love scenes with 18-year-old up-and-comer Andrew Simpson.

Her Hollywood star has been constantly on the rise since picking up the best supporting actress Oscar in 2004 for The Aviator. ■

Arts patron Nasher dies

DALLAS: Raymond D. Nasher, an arts patron who helped establish museums in Texas and North Carolina and made a fortune in banking and real estate, died. He was 85.

Nasher died Friday in a Dallas hospital, said Elliot Cattarulla, the executive director of the Nasher Foundation. Cattarulla declined to release additional details, citing the wishes of the Nasher family.

Nasher and his late wife, Patsy, amassed what one expert described as the "world's greatest private collection of modern and contemporary sculpture." The real estate developer was also considered a pioneer in placing sculptures in commercial retail complexes.

The Nasher Sculpture Center in Dallas, which opened in 2003, includes pieces by Willem de Kooning, Paul Gauguin and Pablo Picasso.

In 2005, the Nasher Museum of Art opened at Duke University, his alma mater. Nasher donated \$10 million to fund construction of the \$23 million museum and loaned his private collection for its exhibits. On display there were Andy Warhol portraits of his wife and their three daughters - Andrea, Joanie and Nancy - that



had previously hung only in the hallway outside the Nashers' bedroom.

Nasher served on the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities under the last three presidents. During Lyndon Johnson's administration, Nasher was a delegate to the General Assembly of the United Nations. Since 1995 he has served on the Council on Foreign Relations. ■



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