As political confusion gets compounded with deterioration in law and order situation, Election Commission wants major parties to be honest and serious if they at all want election on time. ‘Election is no drama’, a soft spoken, no-nonsense Chief Election Commissioner Bhojraj Pokharel told top leaders of eight parties sending chill down their spines, making it clear election is not possible under the existing circumstances.

“If you cannot create law and order conducive enough to hold elections, I can’t do it just for the sake of it”, Pokharel told them. The unarticulated message was loud and clear - that he would not hesitate to quit if the political parties including the Maoists did not cooperate with him. All the chief of the parties except Prime Minister G P Koirala and Maoist chief Prachanda were present when Pokharel spoke his mind today.

When the Commission has just three months time left for conducting elections to the Constituent Assembly, the deteriorating law and order situation including disruption in the voters registration process by the Maoists, slow pace of the Government to set election related laws in place, is making election impossible in Mid-May. The commission has curtailed several normal pre-election formalities, but it sees no point in conducting election if fears of intimidation during the election are not totally eliminated.

Pokharel’s protest is also a sequel to attack on Election in June
No guarantee
‘Election is no drama’, CEC Pokharel tells top leaders of eight parties

Kiran Bhandari

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Prime Minister G P Koirala’s reluctance to axe his Home Minister K P Staula is holding the Madhesh Janadikor Forum (MJF) from approaching the negotiation table. The MJF suspended its movement for 10 days to create talks in a conducive atmosphere. But we also expect the Government to reciprocate our gesture by removing the Home Minister,” said a MJF source. Yadav reinforced those demands through the letter on Saturday. “We have only suspended our movement for ten days to create talks in a conducive atmosphere. But we also expect the Government to reciprocate our gesture by removing the Home Minister.” it however, made it clear that it had no objection to the National Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NFN) holding talks with the Government as announced by its Chief – Pasang Sherpa.

In what appears to be a half hearted measure the government has decided to ask the truncated Commission of Inquiry into Abuse of Authority (CIAA) to look into the findings of the two investigating Commissions and take necessary measures. The CIAA will proceed with the report of the Rayamajhi Commission as well as that of the Ojha Commission, which together cost more than 15 million rupees to the State exchequer.

Inquiry fiasco

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While the Rayamajhi Commission which was formed to investigate cases involving misuse of the State power and money to suppress the movement for democracy, the Ojha Commission was meant to investigate into the conduct and abuse of power of the Bhakti Bahadur Koirala Commission to look into corruption in high places during the Royal regime.

The Koirala Commission which had arrested among others, former PM Sher Bahadur Deuba and Congress Democratic leader, Prakash Mahendra, had been declared unconstitutional by the supreme court. It has recommended action against the members of the Koirala Commission which most likely will lead to their arrest. The Ojha commission has recommended that an Appellate court judge who acted as the secretary of the commission be terminated from the service while in other members’ case it has held them indulging in ‘complaisant and demeaning’ democracy leaders.

The Rayamajhi Commission on the other hand has recommended action against 202 people including politicians, civil and security officials besides some political appointees. Given the controversial manner in which the commission was formed and the way it conducted its proceedings, cabinet task force headed by deputy PM P K

India proposes Nepal silent

Close on the heels of India amending the 1949 treaty of friendship with Bhutan, its move to demonstrate similar gesture towards Nepal has not come through mainly because of the lack of initiative on Nepal’s part. India and Bhutan signed new treaty on Feb 7 upgrading Bhutan’s status from what it used to be an Indian protectorate under the previous treaty.

India after decades of reluctance is said to be in favour of reviewing the 1960 treaty with Nepal but it has not made any headway as there has been no interest shown on Nepal’s part. The issue of modernization in the treaty to take into consideration modern challenges and realities is however pending before the bilateral committee at the foreign secretary level. This is said to be an indicator of India’s seriousness to embark on a relationship with its neighbours which will not be guided by the principle of reciprocity; which it hopes will help India to shed its image of big brother.

South Block sources told newsfront that India was willing to consider various options – review, modifications or replacement – of the treaty if such a proposal came from Nepal. India’s consistent stance earlier was that there is no provision of the treaty being modified but it was willing to go into no treaty regime if Nepal gave a year’s notice for scrapping it as mentioned in the treaty. Various quarters including political leadership and intelligentsia in Nepal have on different occasions demanded treaty’s review on the ground that not only its provisions were unequal, loaded in India’s favour, but it was signed by two authorities not par with each other. The treaty was signed by Mohan Shumsher Rana who was Prime Minister then while CPN Sinha, ambassador to Nepal had signed it on India’s behalf.

Maistots at the moment have been demanding that the treaty be scrapped as it is unequal in letter and spirit.
WE HAVE NOT GIVEN UP ARMED STRUGGLE

Interview by Sankarshan Thakur

Q: What is your understanding of what is happening in Nepal today?
A: At the moment there are two aspects of the political process. There are the revolutionary forces, which would like to push things along and take them to their logical political conclusion. Something remarkable has happened in Nepal. We have a situation in which probably for the first time a despotic monarchy is going to be formally overthrown by the ballot. Monarchies have always been overthrown through violent revolution, but in Nepal, because of the ten-year people’s war and the 19-day street rebellion last year, we have a situation where it is going to be dismantled by peaceful means. That is what we are trying to accelerate. And the struggle that the Maoists waged has meant that even the so-called mainstream political parties are now pushing for removal of the monarchy. And it appears to me that India is also supportive of that, although India seems to want that Maoists should not get the majority.

Q: Why do you think India does not want the Maoists to win?
A: Because once Maoists get the majority, India thinks that a genuine peoples republic will have a people’s republic. Of course, there are people who will complain about it. They are the class enemies, they are the enemies of the people, and we did drive them out. We cannot work to please or appease them. That class will definitely work and talk against us. But as far as the masses are concerned, they are happy because they feel liberated from the feudal system.

Q: What happens to the King once the monarchy is gone? His immense properties, his business interests, his privileges.
A: No privileges. He will have to remain just as another citizen. And a lot of his property is really the property of the state which he has been using as his own. That the state will take back from him. As far as everything else is concerned, the law will apply to Gyanendra as it applies to everyone.

Q: Do you think Gyanendra’s political ambition accelerated the process of monarchy’s downfall? from being treated as an avatar of Vishnu to being a common man?
A: Those are all myths, this avatar of Vishnu business. The reality of the people of Nepal is that they have been suffering at the hands of an exploitative system. It is our scientific ideology that changed the temper of the people. Maybe a long long time ago, the king was worshipped as a god, but the struggle against monarchy has been going on for a long time. People have been wanting democratic rights, that began in the early 1960s. But there was no good leadership. It is the success of the Maoist leadership that has brought victory to the democratic and republican sentiments of the people of Nepal. And, of course, Gyanendra’s behaviour in power forced to people to oppose him more determinedly.

Q: But some of the parties that you are in alliance with are themselves feudal and status quoist in nature. How long is this partnership going to last?
A: It is not going to be smooth. And the alliance is there because it was their compulsion, not ours. Earlier these same parties were allying with the King to fight us. They have killed thousands of our cadres, they have put rewards on our heads. They tried to physically finish the Maoist movement. But now they have come to realize that it was not going to work because the will of the Nepali people was behind the Maoists, we forced them to change and ally with us. I also think they realised that they cannot work with a man like Gyanendra who was an autocrat and wanted the powers only for himself.

Q: Do you think India’s suspicion of the Nepali Maoists has something to do with the Maoist movement in India?
A: Definitely, they do. We have clarified our relationship with the Indian Maoists.

Q: But a lot of the Nepali Maoist activity has been based out of India.
A: Yes, we have seven million Nepali people in India, don’t forget. We have our own network of organizations. We don’t need to take anybody’s help, we can do that in our own way, with the help of our people. There has been enough shelter here, there has never been cause for us to worry on that count.

Gajurel spoke to Thakur, Tehelka’s Executive Editor, in Delhi recently. The interview will be published in Tehelka on Saturday, Feb 17.
Fire brigade approach

Prime Minister G P Koirala, backed by the ruling coalition and the Maoists, have succeeded in dousing the fire in Terai, by acknowledging that any or every citizen has a right to be part of the country one belongs to. And Democracy alone which by its definition and philosophy is inclusive and participation based can instill that sense of belonging among all citizens of the country.

Prime Minister's recent speech could deliver that sense. But charting out basis of polity that Nepal needs to adopt for a foreseeable future institutionalising their stake cannot be accomplished at once. It needs much larger preparation based on transparent process and calls for nationwide debate giving people a chance to have their say rather than going by what Prime Minister said under pressure of the movement. Prime Minister's message should of course, be treated, as the basic framework of federalism and electoral system that Nepal would adopt in future, but the job of working out details and suggesting infrastructural machinery should be best left to the commission of experts. Political parties, with clearly thought out electoral and devolution model, will be able to hassle rising and natural aspirations of the people to be part of the emerging power structure.

A devolution model also needs to take into account the traditional, social, economic and other factors that should be able to promote national integration in which diversities will not be seen as an impediment but basic milestones in that direction. Accommodation of diverse culture, ethnicity, caste, class, region and religion will not only inject a sense of togetherness, but will automatically make the context and acceptability of Nepali nationalism and nationhood much wider.

But all this will require state's visionary, honest and positive intervention and cooperation. State's fairness in this campaign will be the most crucial factor for the success of campaign. Despite fire having been brought under control in Terai, the negotiations have not yet begun. The issue of whether a Home Minister whose mishandling of the situation has cost at least 30 lives should resign or continue in the post should not be allowed to linger. The state, in this case the Prime Minister, should be able to set certain standards—political, administrative as well as moral for who should or should not be in the Government.

What the Government in principle concurred after the martyrdom of 30 people in Terai is that the era of dictation, by the king, or eight parties from the capital is over, and that people will want their say in Governance from the top to the village level. A fire brigade approach no doubt has contained the fire at the moment in Terai, but that definitely is not enough. The least the Government should do at the moment is to constitute an experts team to lay the principles and details for such governance across the length and breadth of the country within a reasonable time frame.

Stop double standards

Congratulations for the first three issues; they are getting better. I wish you all the best for the future issues with more different stories.

I agree with your news story titled "Prophesizing Moriarty". That is a really bad thing to happen to the Nepalese people who after many years of unrest want a lasting peace in the country. But the Maoists' controversial words (I wish what Gajurel said in Delhi is proved wrong!) are trying to shatter the hopes people have.

Maoists in many situations have displayed double standards. Their stance on Terai issue was a mistaken one. Although one would agree that there was invasion by the royalists and the extremist Hindutubadis, the way they acted solve the Terai issue was far from a real political solution of the problem; and in no way was it justice to the Terai people.

Although Moriarty many times speaks acrossing his diplomatic limits and interferes with the internal issues of Nepalese, the statements made by Comrade CP Gajurel provided fuel for his prophecy. So far there have not been any remarks against the statements made by Gajurel; the Maoist Supreme Trio have not made any comments regarding his remarks. This shows perhaps that the statements by Gajurel could be right.

Maoists should stop having double standards. People have real hopes towards Maoist leadership and want Maoists to act wisely and honestly. That will probably pave way towards making a New Nepal.

Dr Khagendra Dahal
Maharajgunj

More arts and entertainment

I would like to congratulate Samaya team for venturing yet another publication. I have read all the 3 issues you have published and they are all good. English readers in Nepal long needed a tabloid which covered news of the country and beyond, opinions and analyses on the current socio-political, economic and development aspects. The Newsfront has them all.

Although the content in general is good one, you could do the following to improve the quality of the paper. Although you have included 2 pages for the news related to art and entertainment, you could include a variety of short news pieces – something on music, cinema, fashion and modelling.

Health issues need to be covered more. Although you have included some public health issues, genuine health related matters need to be focused on. There is very little emphasis on regional and international politics and affairs. Besides, you could have more inputs from the reputed freelancers on various national issues.

Finally, you need to rethink on price-versus-quality equation; either, give more contents to the people or decrease the price if that is not possible.

Paricharya Adhikary
Sedadhara, Kathmandu

More news research

Newsfront is a great achievement of Samay team in Nepali journalism within a short period of time. The language is simple to read and easy to understand but the news are more comprehensive, awesome and time consuming. The layout should be more attractive and cartoon more impressive and space for children and public health, science and technology, sports and entertainment. Though it contains varieties in topics, there isn’t enough researched based news.

Sashi Chapagain
Trishandra Campus

Thanks for reflections

Thank you for your reflections on Nepal and our region. We have much to be concerned about, but you give excellent examples of hope. Whatever our differences, we can talk to one another in a spirit of compassion, really wanting the best for all Nepalese. Let’s put people where they belong, ahead one another in a spirit of compassion, really wanting the best for all Nepalese. Let’s put people where they belong, ahead of policies and ideologies.

Bill Robins
St. Xaviers, Jawalakhel

Letters to the Editor should be addressed to: newsfront@bhrikuti.com

Peace begins at home

Each individual in a family and community should strive to live peacefully with others. Peace must begin in the home and in the schools. In the classrooms we must teach international patriotism — to love the world as Jesus, Krishna, and the great masters have taught, and not to do anything that would lead to international discomfort. It is not our nationality or our color that we should be proud of, but our understanding. We should cultivate our understanding and use it to determine what is truly best for family happiness, national happiness, and international happiness. International happiness should include the well-being of the nation, the community, and the family. The standard of legislation should be merit, not color of skin or any other such distinction. These are ideals to be taught to children.

So long as God’s children differentiate, “We are Indians and you are Americans; we are Germans, you are English,” so long will they be bound by delusion and the world divided. Much war and suffering and destruction will be prevented if we cease to emphasize differences and learn to live without distinction or prejudice. Be more proud that you are made in the image of God than that you are of a certain nationality; for “American” and “Indian” and all the other nationalities are just outer coats, which in time will be discarded. But you are a child of God throughout eternity. Isn’t it better to teach that idea to your children? It is the only way to peace: Establish the true ideals of peace in the schools, and live peace in your own life.

Paramhansa Yogananda
(Extracted by www.aronta.org)
Debating Development

As we are passing through a severe power crisis—three hours of blackout a day for every consumer connected to the national grid, which is going to increase shortly to six hours a day and may be more a little further down the road—the question that comes up to the mind is where did we go wrong?

Being one of the poorest of the poor countries in the world one would naturally assume that resource mobilization in the sector has not historically been adequate to meet the rising demand. The demand for power as well as energy has been rising at a rate of 8.5% annually for the last one and a half decade. One would, therefore, presume that the investment required for meeting this huge surge in demand is naturally beyond the capacity of a small and a poor country like Nepal.

Do facts support this assumption? No, it tells a different story. Since almost all investments are financed through loans either domestic or external, long term loan of Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) could be a good indicator for the quantum of investment in the sector. In 1992 the long term loan of NEA stood at a level of a little less than 11,000 million Rupees whereas in 2006 it was almost 52,000 million Rupees.

In this period the investment in generation side of the utility business has substantially gone to the private sector and therefore the investment by NEA is so much less. Even in such a situation an annual growth in investment by NEA has been to the tune of 11.5%, three percent more than the growth in demand for electricity.

Despite all this the fact remains that neither are new power stations being built nor adequate transmission facilities being added to the system. We have to find money to finance the new projects. One good source of finance could be NEA itself since it charges its consumers a high rate of Rs.6.50 (9 US cents) per kilowatt-hour; it ought to have a surplus for the required investment. But for last half a decade NEA has been continuously in the red.

Let us look at the precarious financial situation of NEA during the last fiscal year, 2005/2006. Total revenue during this year was Rs 14,012.6 million. Total operating expenses were Rs.12,750.2 million including a hefty sum of Rs.6,575 million on power purchase alone. Therefore the operating surplus was Rs.1,262.4 million. But whatever little the operating surplus, it was eaten away by interest on long term loans which was 3,281 million and other expenses which were Rs. 453.5 million thus bringing the situation to a dismal net loss of Rs. 2,472.6 million.

Next source of finances could be the government of Nepal but this picture too is not encouraging. All of us know that the civil war like situation of the last decade has wrought havoc in government finances and almost all revenue goes to meet regular expenditure and hardly any money is left for development works. Moreover hydro power being a very capital intensive proposition, budget outlay for the project has to be concentrated during two or three years of its construction and therefore the essential outlays in social sectors would be adversely effected by it during those years. No popular government would like that.

The only option that remains is the private sector. Is the private sector capable of investing almost nine billion rupees a year so that the rising demand of sixty megawatt of power per year could be met?

Even if the answers to these questions are found to be in affirmative many more questions would spring up like who purchases the power produced by private developers or would they be encouraged to engage themselves in distribution side of the business too, a messy business to say the least. Questions of unbundling the elephantine NEA would have to be addressed. There are difficulties in the road, whatever road we decide to travel on.

But since the evenings are dark and the dark evenings do not provide any avenues of entertainment like reading or watching TV, let us hope, the exercise of serious introspection begins now. That may perhaps bring us the light.

(Upadhyay is former General Director of NEA)
Water gives life. History cites development of major civilizations in all parts of the world along and around water sites. The indigenous civilisation of Kathmandu valley that grew around the Bagmati river was no exception. The people grew to revere the river they depended on for their survival.

Bagmati, the principal river of Kathmandu valley that has its source in the Mahabharat range rises at Bagdwar and drains out through the Chobhar gorge. Beginning its journey from the Shivapuri hills, 25 km north of Kathmandu, at an altitude of 2650m above sea level, its tributaries Bishnumati, Dhobikhola, Manohara, Tukucha and Nakhu meanders through the valley, nourishing, sustaining lives in all its forms. Bagmati is said to have originated from the locks of Lord Shiva. From time immemorial the Bagmati has been revered as a holy river, and its Ghats as holy sites where main transitional points of life are marked and festivals celebrated.

In an attempt to feel the pulse of the people regarding this issue, Newsfront talked with a few who have a special connection with the rivers and possess the know-how regarding the measures to bring it back to life.

The important feature of this valley still possessed its pristine beauty about five decades ago, recalled Satya Mohan Joshi, 86, the well known literateur and poet. He recalled, "then, the water was fresh and was used for drinking too. Just look what we've turned it into now! When I went there for my mother's passing away rites recently, I watched human wastes floating on the filthy canal it has become. It's a painful sight for those people who grew up with Bagmati and whose lives revolved around it. Now, it's a place you visit out of compulsion when you have to burn your dead or when you have to perform the rites."

A civilisation grew around Bagmati, agriculture prospered, culture evolved and a spiritual culture developed. It was a significant river especially for the dying and the dead for whom it provided a holy, peaceful ambiance. The water was in plenty, it used to come up to the Bhakaris. But over the years, we’ve watched it die with all wastes getting dumped into it and irresponsible sand mining. Now the holy aspect of the river is disappearing. All loud political declarations have come to a nought”, he said. Citing lack of city planning as well as lack of love of individuals for the river, he added sadly, “Bagmati was a source of beauty. The irony is that in other countries, they create artificial rivers and here we make our natural resources extinct.”

Huta Ram Baidya, 86, agriculture engineer, who started one man campaign to save Bagmati civilisation 14 years ago through his articles, feels strongly about the river where he played, bathed and performed sacred rites. Bemoaning lack of reverence for the river, he said, “Bagmati has been over exploited. If it is destroyed, Bagmati civilisation will be destroyed."

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The present day scenario couldn’t get worse and is the result of lack of governance where lawlessness is the rule of the day.

Umpteen number of studies regarding rivers, sewage have been made but due to lack of political conviction it only remained in the papers.

Satya Mohan Joshi

Wishram: Sand erosion and dry river bed
Bagmati civilization will be destroyed. The oldest civilization of Nepal, Kathmandu valley and Swayambhu, the oldest heritage all revolved around this river. Now we can see what we have done to it. It’s so dirty people have stopped going to the river for their rituals for the dead. Do we have the right to pollute, do we have the right to destroy nature?”

Baidya continued, “We have to tackle the problem as a whole. It’s wrong to build roads on either sides of the river, it’s wrong to treat it as a dumping site. The media should publicise this problem. Schools and colleges should raise awareness regarding this issue among its students and take them for field trips. It’s no use only blaming each other. Young energy should be channelised to protect this civilisation.”

He added that destruction of the rivers would destroy the ecosystem too. “We don’t see as many vultures that used to clean up the carcasses in the rivers now. The whole eco chain is getting impacted negatively.” He recommended not river control but river protection. “Start small and simple. Construct simple dams before rainy season, raise river bed by stopping sand erosion. There are many poor man’s technologies that exist. During rainy season, raise river bed by stopping sand erosion. “It’s joint effort that’s needed, not just talk.”

There are many poor man’s technologies that work. It’s joint effort that’s needed, not just talk,”

Buddhi Raj Bajracharya, 70, ex-mayor and chairperson of Nepal engineering council, said lack of sense of ownership and integrated perspective is to be blamed for the dismal situation of the rivers. “The mistaken notion that river purifies everything has proven to be it’s downfall. A river can only take so much.” He said that despite the sufficient rainfall of 2000 ml a year, drinking water and waste water management is a problem that has grown ominously. “In the past six years, population has risen steeply but planning, implementation of technical aspects is lacking severely. Water is every body’s business. Flora and fauna depend on it. We don’t really seem to love nature, water. Therein lies the root problem.”

Onda stated stakeholders’ inability to work together and lack of concerted effort as reasons behind lack of proactive steps towards addressing the issue. “Uproot number of studies regarding rivers, sewage have been made but due to lack of political conviction it only remained in the papers. Major stakeholders must sit down with the government and make it a priority; they must invest, participation of stakeholders encouraged and the plan implemented.” He added that community spirit is lacking in our society and individual do not get motivated unless their vested interests figure in it.

Onda prescribed strengthening already existing structures, get individuals to bear responsibility and find alternative ways to dispose of one’s wastes. “Nature continues to give but our ground water level is drying up due to shallow tube wells dug everywhere. And we also need to reuse water around 40 percent of which is discarded after household use, as in other countries.”

Citing examples of severe health repercussions arising from water polluted by hospital wastes and squatters settlements on the river banks that eventually affects every individual living in the city through the food chain, he said the only hope we have now is decisions and implementation at the policy level.

Padma Sundar Joshi, engineer, director of CIUD, center for integrated urban development, said, “the present day scenario couldn’t get worse and is the result of lack of governance where lawlessness is the rule of the day. We do have the technical know-how, resources and capability but the political commitment is lacking. I’m a technician, I can show technical alternatives but the decision makers have to take the decision. Just one single decision can get the whole wheel moving.”

Joshi termed the present situation of the rivers as the tragedy of commons and said we all have contributed to the situation and so it’s no use pointing fingers. “We need to rethink technically and begin investing in decentralised waste water management system.” He explained alarming risks to health due to leakage of sewage water into ground water and drinking water due to broken pipes and shift septic tanks in homes that mostly do not confirm to prescribed design and quality. He also recommended control in visual wastes of the plastics by declaring this zone plastic free area or charging more for waste disposal and less taxes on organic products.

The dismal scenario gets further clouded by the helplessness of the squatters who have created slum areas on either sides of the rivers. A resident in Bishnumati river said, “We are poor. This is the only place we can find to live in. Yes, we throw our wastes into the river. Where else can we throw it?” Sensitivities deadened by poverty and resulting frustration, they are worried more about their own survival than the fate of the rivers. The question looms large, when will we begin to resuscitate life into the dying and dead rivers?”

Bagmati: Swallows all insults thrown into her Tukucha: which has almost become synonymous of filth
Alcohol gives a false sense of power

Ragina Shah, Supervisor of a Rehav Centre in Kathmandu responds queries on impact of drug, alcohol and way to get out of it.

Is alcohol a drug? Yes, it is.

Today alcohol is one of the most commonly abused drug. Being a legal drug it is socially accepted so it is highly abused. In the beginning drinking may just begin with ‘fitting in’ with the crowd or for enjoyment. He never knows when it takes form of addiction, compulsion and obsession.

As with all other addiction, a general negative outlook arises rooted in fear, insecurity and low esteem. Likewise a person is unable to stop this addiction on their own because of the false sense of well being and power. Alcohol is poisonous to the body as it burns up large amount of vitamins in the body. Hence the tiredness and sickness of the body. Continual use brings illnesses such as chronic alcohol pneumonia and bleeding ulcers in the mucus membrane. Heart, kidneys, brain and the nervous system become weak, chronic alcohol hepatitis and cirrhosis is also very common. Excessive continued use of alcohol leads to withdrawal symptoms like nausea, vomiting, shaking of hands and feet, sweating and slurred speech when you stop drinking. Unable to confront these withdrawal symptoms a person continues to drink.

Alcoholism can often be more difficult to overcome than hard drugs like cocaine or heroin because of its availability and peoples denial to its addiction. It takes a lot of effort to change this kind of behavioral pattern in our culture. Making people more aware of its dangers is the first step.

How can I recognise somebody who’s abusing drugs? Anything.

There are various distinct symptoms to recognize a person abusing alcohol. The person will not be able to adhere to any form of routine. He/she will not have regularity of any kind, and will not be eating properly and will suffer rapid loss of weight. In the vicinity of an abuser, things which are of value to the person knowing that ‘lost’ and the things of the house will also be ‘lost’ or ‘misplaced’. Such a person sleeps too much or not at all. A person using alcohol has problems confronting anybody or anything. Communication is minimal, he will start avoiding family members and begin to stay aloof. He will spend less time with parents/family members and more time outside.

A person in drugs abuse will not be able to concentrate and will have very short attention span. He will start doing badly at school. Within 2-3 years into addiction he must probably will drop out of school. Because of the habit, he needs a lot of money to support it. He will be asking for money making many kinds of excuses. An abuser will undergo massive attitude and behavioral changes and will start getting irritated or angry over small matters.

Queries related to addiction of any kind can be addressed to: newsfront@bhrikuti.com.

Outstanding issues will be short listed and dealt with by Ragna.

Those times I spent in the square have helped me learn much more about life in Nepal

Right Outside My Door

Counseling

Nepali Diaspora

Neeraj Pradhan

The old city is a place that I’ve visited many times before. I must have toured the Malla Palace Museum near Hanuman Dhokha and the Kumar’s shine at least a dozen times. My first time was when I was in the fifth grade; I distinctly recall slipping out from under the watchful eyes of family members residing at Ombahal Tole. Unnoticed, I sneaked out to take a meandering promenade about the Dhokha square. Weaving through cows, dogs, pedestrians, and vendors—unfettered by guides or nervous adults—I was able to admire the stunning tapestry of wooden roofs and turmeric laden buildings.

For the city’s natives, such an image of the square might seem pedestrian, even mundane. For that reason, it is perhaps important to explain why this enclave has continued to strike me over the years.

Visits back to Nepal, the homeland of my ancestors and more relevantly my own parents, have always been rushed: Family and social engagements are paramount, one right after the next. The somber downpours of the monsoon season are rivaled by the never-ending surges of the wedding season. Nevertheless, maintaining these relationships is important, and it goes without saying that it is this desire to remain connected that serves as the reason why most of us come back so often. Our family and our roots are here in the valley.

When I was younger, the categorical focus on family amused me. Sure, in America, family is viewed differently from household to household. The rules are local not universal. But it wasn’t simply this difference of philosophy in family values and culture and how we were encouraged to behave that puzzled me about trips to Nepal. I cherished and still cherish the close family and friends I have. The fact of the matter was to me, it seemed as though history and country always had to wait to be consumed in bite-sized morsels; sadly there never was much time for exploration and adventure.

To the eyes and mind of a younger raised on the stories of Verne or Dumas, to venture to a realm as organic and new as Nepal and not jump into adventure seemed a tragic loss to me. Flying across expanses of ocean and continent, getting disoriented through time zones and languages seemed a sunk cost if we were to be plowed in an historic valley of color and possibility only to sip tea and chat.

Impatience and curiosity finally caught up with me, and after a few trips, I decided to branch out. I didn’t speak much Nepali when I was younger, which made being adventure—some all the more delicate an issue with family and friends I have. The fact of the matter aged to behave that puzzled me about trips to Nepal and roots are here in the valley.

All at once, it gave me what my youthful sense of adventure insisted and what my inquisitive questioning for answering demanded. Fabulous goals, dogs, and birds were training around on the holiest of grounds: the grounds of the ancient city temples from which the city derives it her name and heritage. All colors of skin were juxtaposed, from the brown faced men from the Terai and southwards, to the city dwellers, to the northern monks, and, of course, the friendly pesky European travelers.

All manners of exciting merchandise that even a frugal fifth grader could afford, from intricate hand woven trinkets to carved wooden stringed instruments, were readily displayed on the side walk. Within square footage that could not conceivably house a modest-sized stadium sat this mélange of absurdity, adventure, and history.

As I’ve gotten older, it’s struck me how such a crowded, claustrophobic place like Hanuman Dhokha could have managed to be so intimate. You wouldn’t catch me trying to escape away to a realm as organic and new as Nepal and roots are here in the valley.

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More foreign investment in China

partnerships between Chinese and foreign companies could help pave the way for Chinese companies’ inroads

Like anywhere in the world, skepticism about overseas investment’s role in the national economy pops up in China once in awhile. Fortunately, and naturally, for a country determined to embrace globalization, such suspicions have never fundamentally changed the country’s attitude toward foreign investors. The gate for them has opened wider steadily.

A report released this week by a major government think tank served as yet another proof that this country’s mainstream economists welcome foreign investment. They are sober enough to oppose opinions that either downplay the significance of foreign investment in China’s next stage of development or play up its perceived threat to the nation’s economic security.

The 2007 Report on Transnational Corporations in China by the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, under the Ministry of Commerce, states that foreign investment’s role can evolve as the Chinese economy moves to a higher level.

In fact, since the 1980s, foreign companies, while making handsome profits for themselves, have been contributing to the Chinese economy by providing financial resources, fueling economic growth and introducing advanced technology. Foreign investment continues to be needed, especially going to inland provinces, where its presence has been much smaller than in the country’s prosperous coastal regions. Foreign investment can also help promote the country’s sustained growth and its further integration into the world economy.

Service industries will be a key area for the country’s development in the next stage and foreign players’ participation should be a catalyst for the service industries’ growth. Many international companies are pioneers in promoting environmental friendliness and resource conservancy. These companies’ operations in China should have very positive effects in helping transform China’s growth pattern.

As an increasing number of Chinese companies attempt to go global, partnerships between Chinese and foreign companies could help pave the way for Chinese companies’ inroads into international markets. As the world’s third biggest trading nation and its fourth biggest economy, China simply cannot afford to turn its back on foreign investors.

(China Daily)
Nepal is going through a range of re-birth as a nation state. The sense of unification seems to be getting lost in these fluid and turbulent days. This is the result of lack of any effort by any ruler beginning 1765 to date to integrate Nepal. We plotted along as a nation state of a loose cacophony of castes and communities earning respect of a small percentage of world population who knew Nepal as a delightful country with exquisite natural endowments, populated by incredibly naive, tolerant, hospitable and intelligent people co-existing in an amazing fusion of ethnicity and features. As we wait forever for that day of fair governance, burgeoning economy and vibrant participation of it by Nepalis across the length and breath of Nepal, we can recall peace that had been a matter of fact to a greater extent in our living memory in Nepal. Instead of waiting endlessly for peace to prevail and for the government to wake up, there are people who know that this country abounds with umpteen economic possibilities and such people tap upon these resources and create opportunities to sustain themselves and not wait for the government to do it for them.

Fortune Cookie Ventures Pvt. Ltd. was launched on 8th of February, 2007, is such a company led by a group of Nepali entrepreneurs with a background in information, communications and technology. This company is all about incubation of ideas as in hatchery where seeds of ideas eventually fledge into chicken. The eggs are in the form of budding ideas in the field of information technology. Enter Fortune Cookie and its consultants who explore ideas of any aspirant and if they find it bankable and the person committed they would provide for physical resources to tinker with that idea and develop a prototype with assiduous mentoring within a time line and a schedule coupled with equitable contractual obligations. The prototype would then move forward to morph into a product or a service supported by resources towards its enhancement. At the end of it, the aspirant would grow into a budding entrepreneur, a part owner of the product that will debut for serious investment for mass marketing. And needless to add this company will not entertain any hair brained idea. The founders will face tons of business risks and challenges and will have to wade through a sea of details and improve as they go along. Without any pretensions, the concept is a business and hopefully a few of its products will find market at a global level and eventually add serious value to Nepali economy. To retain brains and draw resources to Nepal with its reservoir of ideas and knowledge is the ultimate aim of this company.

The present turmoil in Nepal has raised many eyebrows and given rise to speculations regarding India's motive. Now that Nepal has slipped into a multifaceted crisis that the formula they envisioned for Nepal has failed. South Asia has proven a fertile ground for breeding leftist politics due to large scale impoverishment and caste based issues. Provided that centrist parties fail to address these problems and preach consensus based politics, the left in India and South Asia will continue exploiting differences among centrist parties to rise to power. Although the left parties including the CPI - M may have aligned themselves to democratic principles, deviation from democratic norms is inevitable once they acquire majority to form a government of their own. The crux of the problem in New Delhi is due to the failure of the Congress to garner adequate seats in parliament to form a government of their own. As a result, the Congress was forced to seek help from CPI - Marxist to form a government, who in turn have taken a greater interest in Nepal than the Congress. Consequently New Delhi's foreign policy vis-a-vis Nepal has been directed at the hands of leftist entrepreneurs, Yechury and Bardhan, who have frequented Nepal with the interest of impacting changes in Nepal in keeping with the direction of CPI-M's interest. The prototype would then move forward to morph into a product or a service supported by resources towards its enhancement. At the end of it, the aspirant would grow into a budding entrepreneur, a part owner of the product that will debut for serious investment for mass marketing. And needless to add this company will not entertain any hair brained idea. The founders will face tons of business risks and challenges and will have to wade through a sea of details and improve as they go along. Without any pretensions, the concept is a business and hopefully a few of its products will find market at a global level and eventually add serious value to Nepali economy. To retain brains and draw resources to Nepal with its reservoir of ideas and knowledge is the ultimate aim of this company.

The first task would be for the BJP and the Congress to reach a consensus on Nepal. The onus is on BJP to provide cover to the Congress in parliament vis-a-vis Nepal. Second step would be for the Congress to take Nepal's matter into its own hands. And the third and final step would be for the BJP to guarantee support to a minority Congress government on grounds of reaching consensus on the issue of national security based on the threat of a leftist resurgence.
Miranda Seymour's astonishingly honest portrait, In My Father's House, is, by turns, fascinating and grotesque. Miranda Seymour has written a family memoir whose honesty appals even as it compels, but its secondary achievement is to draw, almost from the corner of its eye, a portrait of Englishness in the last century that encompasses class, ownership, landscape, money, manners and clothes. It is consistently fascinating and occasionally horrifying and will make a good deal of modern autobiography look feeble and colourless in comparison.

At its centre is the story of George FitzRoy Seymour, the author's father, and his obses-
sion, crippling love for a house, a love that transcended anything he ever felt for his wife or his children. Born in 1923, George was a spoilt, priggish child, doted on by his mother but despised by schoolfriends for his airs and graces. (Despite his pretensions to the nobility, he never acquired the title he longed for.) At the age of 13, he was advising his parents on wallpaper for the bathroom and velvet curtains for the dining room. Where such precocity would earn most small boys a clip round the ear, George was indulged, perhaps ruinously. When the war came, he was discharged from the army with 'effort syndrome', which Seymour learns from research was a valid condition affecting soldiers in the field, but a paucity excuse for a 19-year-old who'd done nothing but drill. The death of George's beloved cousin, killed in the last century that encompasses class, ownership, landscape, money, manners and clothes.

devoted himself to its upkeep, determined that it would not suffer the fate of other grand houses left to dereliction after the war. Yet however much he played the squire to his tenants, the aristocratic connections he courted remained indifferent to him, and a Puttoch of the shores, he waited for a social advancement that never came. The first half of the book, dealing with the house, is remarkable enough; the second half, which recounts how this unexceptional, insecure man came to tyrannise his family, touches on the sensational and grotesque. George, who had so little knowledge of himself, turned out to know exactly the weak spots of his nearest and dearest. He mocked his teenage daughter for being overweight and called her into wearing a wig to cover her mousy tresses, with the consequence that her hair fell out. He badgered his mother in a similar vein (she also wore a wig to please him) and instigated a family ‘game’ in which she would be humiliated for her paucity of charms. There is the occasion her mother proudly enters a party wearing a new sequinned dress, the sight of which prompts George to ridicule her in front of their guests and insist she put on ‘something that suits you’. The poor woman meekly complies. Little wonder that Seymour likens her to Giulietta Masina, the sweet, put-upon wife of Fellini’s La Strada, which she often watches with her and notes the look of ‘enchanted recognition’ transforming her face. Indeed, it’s arguable that Rosemary Seymour is the real mystery of this book, and the deeper one reads, the better one appreciates why she would have preferred her daughter not to write it. If the wilfully callous in her husband’s bullying can be assimilated into the refletless of her class and upbringing - don’t make a fuss, keep up appearances - her attitude towards his midlife identity crisis passes all comprehension. This involved George donning leather jackets and biking around the countryside with Robbie, a young man he first met in Leicester Square and who would become his inseparable companion of his last years.

This is, by turns, fascinating and grotesque. (Despite his pretensions to the nobility, he never acquired the title he longed for.) At the age of 13, he was advising his parents on wallpaper for the bathroom and velvet curtains for the dining room. Where such precocity would earn most small boys a clip round the ear, George was indulged, perhaps ruinously. When the war came, he was discharged from the army with ‘effort syndrome’, which Seymour learns from research was a valid condition affecting soldiers in the field, but a paucity excuse for a 19-year-old who’d done nothing but drill. The death of George’s beloved cousin, killed in the last century that encompasses class, ownership, landscape, money, manners and clothes.

I won’t have ‘my father’s coward,’ says Seymour’s mother, whose plaintive interruptions become a trait of Englishness in the last century that encompasses class, ownership, landscape, money, manners and clothes.

What both women agree upon, however, is the absolute centrality of Thornham Hall, the house in Nottinghamshire that George, after years of coveting and wrangling, eventually acquired from a capricious years of coveting and wrangling, Thrumpton Hall, the house in

In the course of our lives, we sometimes get our head knocked out and hearts squashed by people we trust the most.

In the sweltering heat of mid June, the train stopped at a junction en route to Bombay. A young girl traveling alone in a second class compartment stepped out to buy an ice cream hoping for a quick respite from the oven like metal box. Hearing the whistle that announced the departure of the train in a minute, she hurried and struggled to stretch across the wide gap between the platform and the narrow steps of the train. With the cone in one hand, holding her handbag in another, she missed the step and down she fell on the tracks, a good four feet below the platform level. Numbed, for a second she envisioned her worst nightmare, that of being run over by the massive engine but she immediately heard somebody shouting for help and felt herself being pulled upward by several helping hands clucking their sympathy. Somebody picked up her bag and another dusted her dress and somebody else patted her back and asked her if she was alright. Nodding silently, highly embarrassed, she climbed back to her seat and tried to avoid meeting concerned eyes. A middle aged lady next to her quickly whispered something to her husband who got up and went out. He was back with a cone of ice cream in his hand just as the train began to move. He gave it to his wife who approached the girl and offered it, “Come Beta, please take this. You dropped your ice cream and I thought you’d like to have one.” The girl had no more appetite for the treat that already caused her so much problem but she didn’t have the heart to say no and took the cone with a silent nod of thanks, fighting back sudden welling of tears at this show of unexpected concern. This incident that took place sometime in the late eighties still stands vivid in my memory. Ice cream stopped making me happy since then.

Another overnight journey to Assam found me in an empty train compartment with an army man in his mid twenties. Having heard enough nasty stories about army men’s misdeemours I struggled to keep my anxiety under check and vowed not to shut my eyes through the night. The man sat next to me with a book and a地图 in his hand and chose a seat close to the door, the longest distance he could keep from me. After a while, he smiled and told me not to worry and go to sleep and that he would keep a watch over my luggage. Not believing him an instant, I just nodded and continued to keep a wary eye on him. He said no more and went off to sleep.

When my destination arrived, I found him calling out to me. I had apparently dozed off sometime early morning. He helped me with my luggage and asked if there was somebody to fetch me. Realising there was nobody, I thanked the driver and gave it to him instead. Indeed, I still had an hour of bus ride to reach my destination and was at a total loss as to how I’d go about it. But the man soon found somebody traveling the same way and requested the person to make sure I reach my destination. Having reassured myself that I was in good hands, he bid goodbye and continued his journey in the train that soon departed. Pleasantly surprised, I too went my way and reached my destination safely.

I don’t recall the man’s face anymore but the incident remains fresh in my mind. I’m ever so grateful to those and many others who extended a helping hand in different circumstances. They did it spontaneously, without demanding anything in return. I’ve heard of people who appear out of nowhere and step in to help, seem to do it spontaneously, without expecting anything in return. Such people who extended a helping hand in different circumstances. They did it spontaneously, without demanding anything in return. I’ve heard of people who appear out of nowhere and step in to help, seemed to do it spontaneously, without expecting anything in return. Such people who extended a helping hand in different circumstances. They did it spontaneously, without expecting anything in return. I’ve heard of people who appeared out of nowhere and step in to help, seemed to do it spontaneously, without expecting anything in return. Such people who appear out of nowhere and step in to help, seemed to do it spontaneously, without expecting anything in return. I’ve heard of people who appeared out of nowhere and step in to help, seemed to do it spontaneously, without expecting anything in return. I’ve heard of people who appeared out of nowhere and step in to help, seemed to do it spontaneously, without expecting anything in return.

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Obituary

His Eminence Kyabje Chogye Trichen Rinpoche, head of Tsharpa branch of the Sakya Tradition of Tibetan Buddhism passed away on 22 Jan at the age of 87 at his Drubkhang residence in Narayansthan, Kathmandu. He was a renowned tantric master, a dedicated practitioner, an outstanding scholar and primary teacher of H.H. the Dalai Lama.

His Eminence Sakya Trizin, head of the Sakya tradition of Tibetan Buddhism, described the great accomplishments of Kyabje Chogye Trichen Rinpoche: “There are many who have attained the wisdom arising from the study of the scriptures. There are some who have attained the wisdom arising from contemplation of the Dharma. There are few who have gained wisdom arising from meditation. His Eminence Chogye Trichen Rinpoche is one who has attained all three wisdoms. One should consider oneself fortunate just to meet him, which is in itself a great blessing.”

According to Karma Thinley Rinpoche, the Rinpoche had realised the Vajra body, the fruit of Tantric accomplishments, after completely exhausting all Kleshas, or afflictive emotions, all Karma, and all concepts into the nature of reality (Dharmata); and that he was one of the most rare living Buddhist masters who dwell always in that realised state. The Rinpoche maintained the style of a hidden yogi spending much time in meditation retreats and was regarded as a hidden master.

As a humble tribute to the master, here’s an extract from the book he wrote, Parting from the Four Attachments, “...It is capable of evoking realisation as it is spoken, listened to, and learned. It is for this reason that we will use his precious words to understand the meaning of Manjushri’s four – line teaching: May the kind teachers and compassionate tantric deities
In whom I take refuge from my heart
Please bestow blessings upon me.

His Eminence Kyabje Chogyé Trichen Rinpoche, 1920 – 2006

Chogyé Rinpoche was very famous among the Dharma community in Nepal for his Mantra water. Over the years, people regularly brought bottles of water for the Rinpoche to blow Mantras on and put in sacred blessed medicines.

Alive in our hearts

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The Rinpoche stayed in a state of ‘Thukdham’ for 16 days. “His face remained as bright and fresh as when he was alive”, said a monk. Thukdham is a stage of life after death where the body lies in meditative state without decomposing. It is commonly practiced by high lamas of Tibetan Buddhism after death. It is also said that during that period the body maintains the inner air. Maintaining this state of body after death is only possible by people with divine spiritual powers. When his soul left his body on the 16th day, there was a heavy rain fall, considered an auspicious sign.

On the 21st day, his body was brought to Boudha. This event too was marked by several signs that manifest when great spiritual masters leave this earth. “There was a rainbow above Boudha and a halo around the sun”, said Punya Prasad Panjula, a Tibetan and Sanskrit scholar and practitioner.

The Rinpoche was born in Shigatse, Tibet in 1920. At the age of 12 he was officially enthroned at the Phenpo Nalendra Monastery in Central Tibet from where he completed his studies and mastered the monastic scriptural rituals, the rituals of Mandala, and the musical accompaniment of the rituals. He was a master in both Sutrayana and Mantrayana teachings and, also a great scholar of literature, poetry; history and Buddhist metaphysics and a highly accomplished poet.

In 1959, he left Tibet and went to Mustang, Nepal where his elder sister was married to the King of Mustang. For several years from 1962, in accordance with the wishes of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, he acted as the Secretary General of the Council for Religious and Cultural Affairs of the Tibetan Government in Exile in Dharamsala, India.

In 1969, he took leave from the Tibetan government and returned to Nepal to rebuild the Nalendra monastery and the seat of the Tsharpa school in exile. His Eminence founded two monasteries in Nepal, Tashi Rabten Ling Monastery in Lumbi and Jamchen Lhakhang Monastery in Kathmandu. He also founded a Tsharpa retreat center at Lo Gekar in Mustang.

Chogyé Rinpoche was very famous among the Dharma community in Nepal for his Mantra water. Over the years, people regularly brought bottles of water for the Rinpoche to blow Mantras on and put in sacred blessed medicines. Even a small amount of this water was prized by people who knew its effects.

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(Newsfront Report)