A history of conflict and hatred was buried, and a future of hope was sown as Maoists declared the end of their two-regime rule and became part of the interim cabinet under a parliamentary system in Nepal.

G P Koirala (83) took the oath of office as interim Prime Minister with 22 member council of ministers under his wing. He administered the oath of office to the new members; seven members from his Nepali Congress, five each from CPN-UML and Maoists, three from Congress (D), and one each from Nepal Sadbhavana Party and Bannimarcha.

As the first indication of their tolerance towards state’s security forces, Maoist ministers accepted Nepal Army personnel as their ‘security guards’, but there are no indications if their guerrillas and the Youth Communist League will stop extortion and parallel running of the law and order.

But the formation of the much awaited interim Government, already three months behind schedule, appeared as a secret deal between Koirala and Maoists since not only the PM tried to veto the nomination of Sahana Pradhan from the UML as Foreign Minister, but he also took a rigidly anti-Terai posture by retaining K P Sitaula as Home Minister. The minister’s failure in maintaining the law and order situation and inept handling of the Terai problem has resulted in loss of at least 60 lives from two warring sides - Maoists and the Madhesi Janadhikar in the past two months, “but Koirala bowed to Maoists pressure,” a Congress working committee member told newsfront, adding, “this does not augur well for country’s future.”

Koirala entrusted the number two position along with the Peace and Reconstruction Ministry to Ram Chandra Poudel who had on record stated that “Maoists are guided from Nirmal Niwas,” accusing that they were pro-palace forces.

While Maoists inclusion in the cabinet has generally been welcomed, international community apparently would wait and watch going by the cautious ‘welcome’ it has expressed. “A truly unified government should be in a stronger position to face the challenges still ahead: creating conditions for a credible Constituent Assembly election; addressing the legitimate demands of groups in Nepali society calling for more inclusive democracy; establishing effective law enforcement across the country; and providing for the future of former combatants and a wider reform of the security sector,” Ian Martin, Special Representative of the U N Secretary General said.

The US was equally generous in its welcome, but clearly asked Maoists to change. “The Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), which to date has refused to abandon violence, must finally do so. As a partner in the interim Government, the Maoists must now be held fully accountable for their actions. They must meet their commitments and at last join the mainstream as a non-violent political party,” a U S embassy release said.

Koirala is believed to have asked Maoist leaders to begin returning private and institutional property they have confiscated soon so that the international community would start trusting the Maoists.
Winner and Losers

Sushil Koirala’s loss turned out to be a windfall for Ram Chandra Poudel who emerged as the dark horse.

It was purely his ill luck that the prominent Nepali Congress leader, Sushil Koirala had to be dropped as the senior-most minister in the interim cabinet. His loss turned out to be a windfall for Ram Chandra Poudel who emerged as the dark horse. The credit for this largely goes to the Communist Party of Nepal—United Marxist Leninist. Prime Minister Koirala, at one point, even asked UML General Secretary, Madhav Kumar Nepal to have Sahana Pradhan dropped from the party’s list of nominees. The reason was simple. If UML was not going to be very rigid regarding her inclusion in the most-senior position, then he could include Sushil Koirala as the number two who would succeed as Prime Minister in the event of senior Koirala’s resignation, incapacitation or death. But UML stuck to its guns. Not to be undone, G P Koirala put forward Ram Chandra Poudel since his former Deputy Prime Minister and Speaker tag would place him ahead of Sahana. But that came at the cost of Sushil Koirala who had reluctantly agreed to join as the most-senior Cabinet Minister, or a Prime Minister in the waiting, given PM Koirala’s age and fragile health. Sushil Koirala had unsuccessfully contested for the Prime Minister’s post against Sher Bahadur Deuba in June 2001.

Fait Accompli

It was almost a case of heart ruling the head when the eight parties decided to have the election for the Constituent Assembly on June 20 (Ashad 6) completely ignoring the informal advice given by the Election Commission. The commission is believed to have told the Prime Minister and leaders of the ruling eight-party coalitions not to announce the date without the interim cabinet. His loss turned out to be a windfall for Ram Chandra Poudel who emerged as the dark horse. The credit for this largely goes to the Communist Party of Nepal—United Marxist Leninist. Prime Minister Koirala, at one point, even asked UML General Secretary, Madhav Kumar Nepal to have Sahana Pradhan dropped from the party’s list of nominees. The reason was simple. If UML was not going to be very rigid regarding her inclusion in the most-senior position, then he could include Sushil Koirala as the number two who would succeed as Prime Minister in the event of senior Koirala’s resignation, incapacitation or death. But UML stuck to its guns. Not to be undone, G P Koirala put forward Ram Chandra Poudel since his former Deputy Prime Minister and Speaker tag would place him ahead of Sahana. But that came at the cost of Sushil Koirala who had reluctantly agreed to join as the most-senior Cabinet Minister, or a Prime Minister in the waiting, given PM Koirala’s age and fragile health. Sushil Koirala had unsuccessfully contested for the Prime Minister’s post against Sher Bahadur Deuba in June 2001.

Moriarty Mantra

James Moriarty continues to be at the core of Maoist politics

Despite the hatred that Maoists have exhibited for US Ambassador, James F Moriarty, he continues to be at the core of Maoist politics. Maoist chief Prachanda invoked Moriarty’s name on every occasion when coalition partners, mainly the CPN-UML would raise any inconvenient point delaying formation of the interim cabinet. “Are you working under the dictates of Moriarty?” was Prachanda’s poser to Madhav Nepal in Baluwatar when UML’s demand for number two post in the cabinet delayed the formation of the interim cabinet. But that was until yesterday. What the United States and Ambassador Morarty say and do in the wake of Maoists joining the interim Government is being watched with utmost curiosity. The formation of the interim Government coincided with the visit of two senior officials of USAD from Washington. They will evaluate the ongoing peace process and review USAD programmes, food security and disaster preparedness. They are expected to meet with political leaders, civil society representatives, and beneficiaries of USAD programs in Kathmandu and in the far western districts, but avoid meeting the Maoist ministers. “I hope their inclusion in the cabinet will make Maoists much more serious and realistic as US support is crucial,” said a Congress leader, who heard most of what Prachanda said in Baluwatar. Prachanda, however, did not mention other diplomats’ names including that of German Ambassador Franz Ring whose latest criticism of the Maoists was much more strident than that of Moriarty in the past. Ring had criticised Maoists before the recent European Union delegation. Ring’s criticism was provoked by the Maoist leaders justifying the physical assault on two businessmen, Hari Shrestha and Suresh Malla in Kathmandu. “Justifying such crimes and human rights violations is a crime, and a political party which is already in parliament doing that is unthinkable,” ambassador Ring had said.
Crude Diplomacy

“As the meeting got prolonged, no one bothered to inform us”

As a result of what can be termed ‘irresponsible’ behaviour on the part of the Government, at least half a dozen diplomats who were ‘invited’ to attend the ceremony of interim cabinet formation in parliament, returned disappointed if not dejected.

They had reason to be doubly frustrated as the short notice invitation came on the weekend. As utter confusion over portfolio delayed the formation of the cabinet, no one from the Government bothered to inform the parliament secretariat to cancel the invitation to the diplomats. Those who arrived at the empty House which rose for the day without transacting any business on Saturday included British, Russian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi ambassadors and Deputy Chief of Mission of Chinese embassy. Many were however spared as they could not be contacted. Some of them waited there for half an hour and got back without being informed when the House would meet.

Diplomats had been asked to present in the house for the swearing in ceremony at 1 PM on Saturday after Prime Minister’s office informed parliament that the B-party meeting would be over and Koirala would take oath of office as the Interim Prime Minister. “As the meeting got prolonged, no one bothered to inform us,” a parliament secretariat source said. “I think, we, the diplomats, need to reconsider attending such short notice functions,” an Austrian ambassador told newsfront.

However, diplomats being diplomats attended the parliament session on Monday in which a part of the G P Koirala led interim Government with Maoists, took the oath of office on Sunday. Prominently focused by the TV camera was James Moriarty, Maoists bellicose. ■ nf correspondent

Charity first

Got a toothache? Rinse it with alcohol or chew a clove. If it hurts too much, bear with it till it becomes loose and then pull it out with a piece of string. This is what an average Nepali, mostly in rural areas tend to do. Dental services are hard to come by in rural and semi-rural areas. Even in urban areas, where such services are available, people from lower income bracket are reluctant to visit dental clinics where the fees are pretty high. Free dental services are pretty much non-existent. Even in rural and semi-rural areas. Even in urban areas, where such services are available, people from lower income bracket are reluctant to visit dental clinics where the fees are pretty high. Free dental services are pretty much non-existent. Even in urban areas, where such services are available, people from lower income bracket are reluctant to visit dental clinics where the fees are pretty high. Free dental services are pretty much non-existent.

A free dental camp was initiated by Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche and Pakchok Rinpoche with the intention of taking health services to common people to alleviate their suffering. The Rinpoches, overseer Rangjung Yeshe Institute in Boudha, that runs a Buddhist college, publishes books and conducts overall Buddhist activities; and Shenpen organisation which is in charge of philanthropic activities.

Major Resigns

Maj Gen Randhog Limbu has resigned from service citing ‘injustice’ to him as the reason. This is the first instance in the history of the Nepal army in which a senior officer resigned in protest against being superseded.

School Reopened

As the Government seems determined to downsize secretariat arrangements in the Royal palace, some safety measures seem to have been taken before the curtailment policy is implemented. A parallel metallic gate has been built within the Narayanhity palace complex on the southern side. The Government plans to reduce the size of the army from existing 3,000 to 900 doctors bringing down the size of the total secretariat and service staff to less than 200 from the existing 800. The Government is in the process of ‘nationalising’ the property King Gyanendra inherited and bringing the income of the royal family in the tax net.
Freedom and accountability

Press freedom is neither exclusive nor more important compared to other fundamental rights. But media is expected to champion all types of fundamental rights and freedom. Its role therefore becomes uniquely crucial in preservation of rights and freedom. In countries in conflict journalists’ lives are often threatened. Nepal which falls into that category has often been mentioned as an inglorious example of journalists being victimised both by state and non-state actors. In post 2005 scenario, media at the outset responded differently perhaps by expressing sorrow, same by expressing sympathy and a few challenging headlines on the Royal take over. But subsequently, except the Government media and their allies in the private sector, all came out openly against the anti-democratic move. Cuts on the media or press freedom was defined. And that defiance perhaps inspired politicians and many other professional groups besides individual citizens to join the movement for democracy.

Despite the present Government and its constituents including the Maoists playing lip service to the role media played in restoration of democracy, threats to journalists have not receded. This is all the more alarming because it comes at a time when the new Government is out to take away independence of the judiciary by bringing it under executive control. Threat to media by the state actors will not be addressed if the judiciary is not independent. Journalists and editors in different parts of the country continue to be threatened by the Maoists and NJP (Nepal Jana Andolan Party). No action has been taken by their respective leadership against the perpetrators of crime. The threat is a manifestation of their barbaric and anti-democratic view, and therefore, condemnable. Only tyrants and autocrats in the history have believed that muzzled press would ensure their safety, continuity in power and victory. Unfortunately, Government of the day has been demonstrating double standards on such threats, depending which side it has come from.

Media supports democracy for simple reason that it’s the best system in which freedom of individuals and all fundamental rights are guaranteed. But this system cannot be effective without all sections of the society including the media and Government acting in an accountable manner. Media freedom encompasses much bigger responsibility in that it has to be objective, impartial, responsible and at all the same time to have the courage to tell the truth.

Activism when freedom and democracy are in peril is fine, but its overdrive and visible proximity with one or other political parties and the causes championed by them would not only invite a tag of ‘media being biased’, but also make it more vulnerable to attack from rival groups. It will contribute to decline in professional standards as well. While asserting our freedom and safety, it is also high time media reviewed its overstep of political activism and bias in the country.

Really Inspiring

The life story of Amar Thapa, Heart on Wheels, articulated by Sunila Amatya, is really stirring. Life is so uncertain. Who knows what will happen? What Amar Thapa is doing despite his physical disability is inspiring. His contribution to the nation and the society is highly encouraging and appreciable. His story really matters, it encourages especially those who are suffering from disabilities and are reduced to counting the days of their lives. Please find other such hidden stories that show the way to live.

Gyanendra Kunwar

Good HIV/AIDS Story

I have been reading Newsfront from its very first issue. I am very attentive to the eye-catching analytical coverage of this newspaper. ‘The silent Killer’ on its 5th issue is a very important issue. My thanks to Newsfront for the story on this enormous malady. We have to realise that we need to get serious about this threat. Even some educated people in urban areas do not know about this problem. To make sure HIV/AIDS does not paralyse the country, we have to spread the awareness all over the country without delay.

Bishnu Devkota

More Literature

The arrival of Newsfront is good news for English readers with its wide coverage of political, social and different other issues. However, in my opinion, non-political issues should be given priority. Newsfront has created its own identity in a short span of time but it needs more improvement in layout, design and printing quality. I find analysis of political affairs very strong and objective.

Yagya Bikram Shahi

Priority to Marketing

I hope Newsfront will follow its slogan of courage and conviction. What drives me to read this weekly regularly is its news and opinion articles that are published in the Newsfront. I hope this paper will succeed as a credible Nepal product in English.

However, it is disappointing that I cannot get the paper in Banepa and Dhulikhel, which is only about 25 kilometers away from capital. I have to arrange to get it from Kathmandu every week. If you arrange for Newsfront to appear in all major newspapers in and around outside the valley, reader like me would benefit.

It is my suggestion to the Newsfront team that it has to give priority to marketing and distribution. In my opinion, the tourist hub-Dhulikhel is not a bad market for newspaper of your stature.

Suman Shrestha

Dhulikhel

Craving has no end

Swami Chandresh, born in Bengal, has been living in Budhanilkantha Ashram, Kathmandu for nearly three decades now. He spent more than two decades in solitary contemplation in the Shivalipi hills. The renunciates is a master of yoga, an educator, poet, musician and a painter.

The power of action: “Work done with unselfish motive calms down a restless mind causing harmony and peace within, which help to restrain the desires quite easily. As a matter of fact, working for the welfare of others or for serving God is the way to throw tensions overboard. A mind is always craving for materials and worldly pleasures only because it is deprived of spiritual experiences which are capable of rendering a superior kind of joy. Cravings have no end, they are only the diverse expressions of mind’s internal dissatisfaction. And, this ravenous dissatisfaction can never be averted by materials, however precious.”

The human society: “When a society is excessively politicised and mean party politics interfere in every function, its progress is hindered. Even the religion in it becomes contaminated by that. A religion grossly dominated by politics loses its flow and purpose as well and eventually takes the form of a social institution. So, we find that no experienced master with direct perception is produced from a religion which is rigorously controlled by local politics and absolutely institutionalised. Of course, some sort of institution in religion may be needed for the common masses, yet freedom of religion must be there and those who follow religion without enlisting themselves in a religious society should be supported and encouraged by the common masses. Not all people in the world have the capacity to come out renouncing their family life and search for the highest truth with absolute social and personal freedom. And the greatest wisdom as always comes from such people who appear to be completely useless in the eyes of the society, whom people may even revile and persecute, never understanding their inner state of attainment.”

(Extracts from his book, The Ocean in a Drop)
Yubaraj Ghimire

Looking southwards, attributing every major domestic decision to the South is a regular feature in Nepal’s politics and decision making process. Formation of the interim cabinet, an inevitable fall-out of earlier agreements, will not be viewed differently. India, of course, has many ways of commenting and acting, sometimes with contradictions, under the veil of its declared pledge that a peaceful and stable Nepal is in its best interest, but at times Nepali actors and decision makers would deliberately project Indian role, hyped up beyond reality.

Yes, India’s latest stance of silence on a parliamentary system and the Americans, especially the latter, who working in tandem with India especially after it showed so much interest even in the choice of a Chief Minister in any Indian state. -

Maoist leadership, in their current phase of pro-India politics, has often said that it would appreciate India’s genuine interest in Nepal. Once in Government, the Maoists certainly will have to reinforce that commitment. A complete and credible arms management. It perhaps came as a let down to European Union and the Americans, especially the latter, who were under the impression that they are working in tandem with India especially after it chose to treat the not so credible arms – combatant ratio registered with the U N team as a non-issue. It will perhaps be seen as the South’s seeking to assert itself, giving no space for others to expand their interest.

In principle, India seeking to minimise third country role in Nepal is understandable, although its solitary exit from collective move may not be taken kindly by others. But there still are clear exaggerations to what the South has done. Is it correct to attribute everything to the

South block including the rumour that it put pressure on G P Koirala to have the cabinet formed before his arrival in Delhi for the SAARC summit? Koirala is certainly to be blamed. Frustrated by treachery from his own party colleagues including close relatives and dictated by his own habit of trying to appease as many people as possible, he would often shift the blame for denial of ministerial berths to many aspirants to other factors. The South factor always came in handy.

Let us examine some close developments preceding the formation of the interim cabinet in the PM’s office. His current eyes and ears, Dr Shekhar Koirala and Krishna Sitaula, kept insisting that Koirala should go to Delhi as the leader of the country and for that inclusion of the Maoists was necessary. It was much more convenient for the Maoists as well to endorse that view as in that case it would not oblige them to return the illegally captured property of individuals, institutions and the Government.

Yet another Nepali Congress parliamen-tarian, known as a mystery man, kept flexing his mobile phone in Baluwatar and insisted that he was on a hotline with Delhi which wanted the cabinet instantly. Was it a mere coterie tactic or reality? If Koirala is actually dictated by India to this extent, then Nepal is already worse off than Bhutan. But those who know Indian politics little bit, need to understand that Delhi would not be showing so much interest even in the choice of a Chief Minister in any Indian state.

Can Delhi really help if the level of servility from Nepal side goes this far or this low? May be blaming India was equally handy for Koirala to have his favourite K P Sitaula continue as Home Minister despite his utter failure in handling the law and order. "What can I do when there is so much pressure," was the easiest answer that Koirala could give. And the coterie always said India and Maoists would not sitaula out. Interestingly, the 'hotline conversation' by the mystery man and his claim what India wanted took place in the full view and knowledge of Prachanda and Baburam Bhattarai.

India certainly may have its preferences on the timing and choice of people as Ministers or even Prime Minister in Nepal, but it knows its limitations and perhaps draws a line there. We all need to be sure that it was Koirala - Prachanda pact on one hand, and willingness to accept anything the two offered, that decided the timing of formation of the cabinet.

Again, it was the last minute move by the UML, perhaps decided without any external influence, to have Sahana Pradhan as the number two which delayed the swearing in on Saturday. The cabinet was entirely home brewed. India’s real role was perhaps limited to the extent of changing its tone about conditions it had earlier set for inclusion of the Maoists in the cabinet. But its perceived role was much bigger.

Maoist leadership, in their current phase of pro-India politics, has often said that it would appreciate India’s genuine interest in Nepal. Once in Government, the Maoists certainly will have to reinforce that commitment. They however, will have to tread more cautiously in balancing their past of anti-Indian stance as a fundamental principle of their politics, and the present where a good relationship with the neighbour has to be an essential approach of the Government. But in the long run, it will be counter productive to over-stretch the South factor to conceal one’s shortsightedness, helplessness and cunningness, at least on essentially domestic affairs.

The South Fixation

The South factor always came in handy.
Peace talks due to prolonged war-no-peace, ceasefire and violence after a brief spell of no-in the Middle East, Colombia, of the real world yet capable of something rooted in the challenges as the "capacity to imagine tion." He defines moral imagination "terrorism" illustrates that "official politics characterised by a "war on sustainable peace. break the conflict trap and social world" and, therefore, fail to linear and disciplinary models of learning and confidence to end actors and their environment. Lederach opposes both knowledge about the systemic approach brings contextual learning and confidence to end cycles of violence and counter violence. Lederach opposes both linear and disciplinary models of conflict resolution because they avoid "critical assessment of the social world" and, therefore, fail to break the conflict trap and transform violent conflict into a sustainable peace. Lederach argues that the post-September 11/91 international politics characterised by a "war on terrorism" illustrates that "official politics reflects little moral imagina-". He defines moral imagination as the "capacity to imagine something rooted in the challenges of the real world" yet capable of giving birth to that which does not yet exist." He further states that moral imagination provides the people a capacity of seeing oneself in the bigger picture of relationships and of keeping people, not humanity created structures, at the center of public life." He then goes on to discuss the implications of moral imagination in the midst of human conflict and violence. Moral imagination provides the peopl...
Dr. Alok K. Bohara, founder and director of Nepal Study Center (NSC) at University of New Mexico (UNM), Albuquerque, US, is a professor of economics. Extracts from an interview with him by Dharmendra Adhikari of Nepal Monitor:

How did the idea of Nepal Study Center originate?

I was intrigued by the influx of the Nepali young generation students in the US and elsewhere. Many young scholars minored from our part of the world but got lost in this vast land, and I felt that an academic platform could bring all of these minds together and promote Himalayan-related policy research and share it globally, especially with those in Nepal, and registered the Center under the College of A&S (University of New Mexico) as a not-for-profit organization.

How do you ensure a steady flow of funds to sustain the Center and the countries in South Asia.

What are your current research projects on Nepal?

We are looking at various issues such as the linkages between conflict, poverty, and geography. We are also working on health care access issues for women and children. Other ideas under exploration are food security, micro hydro, ethnic and gender discrimination, and environmental degradation in the Himalayas.

You have studied the Maoist conflict from a causal perspective, analyzing data on poverty, vulnerability and conflict. Can you describe in Layman’s terms your approach, and what you found in your study?

There are three types of polarization that took place in Nepal: social, economic, and political. Thus understanding conflict will require a comprehensive approach in dealing with these polarizations, which requires us to go deep into the causal links. Our paper published in Journal of Conflict Resolution finds that the conflicts in Nepal are linked to rugged geography. But most important finding was the effect of social capital. In that, a place with high level social capital did provide less opportunity for conflict. Thus, erosion of social capital (e.g., community oriented program and activities and participation) in the rural area is the big loss for us, and we need to do everything in our power to build it up again.

How do you assess the state of the country’s overall economy?

A conflict ridden country loses its charm as a place for investment. In fact, rural areas have suffered much in terms of basic development activities. As a result, people are either fleeing the countryside to go abroad for employment or moving their liquid assets in the urban areas. This will create more development gap between the rural and the urban areas. So, there is a direct cost of war in terms of damaged infrastructural (buildings, bridges, roads, communication, towns), but the bigger loss is in terms of opportunity cost. Furthermore, expropriation, looting, and robberies all add to the bad business environment and raises the cost of doing business in Nepal.

You have watched Nepal’s development and environment closely. What are the current challenges and the prospects?

I am assuming you are referring to the environment in terms of ecology and not the business environment. As the conflict deepens or does not get resolved in a timely manner, economic opportunities in the mountain and the hill areas become scarce. Reliance on the environment (forest product increases) and it puts migration pressure from the hills to the Terai. This ecological dependence between the two areas can be a problem in the long run. We also have two super powers. We also have tremendous amount of untapped entrepreneurial energy that has come to bear fruits in various growth sectors like IT, banking, education, and media.

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Interview

In politics, things move very fast

The Maoist conflict started out as an ideological war to create a class-less society between the mountains and Terai. This ecological dependence between the two areas cannot be brushed aside. It is the lack of political-economy development that will devastate our fragile ecology.

What type of economic system do you see emerging in Nepal?

What do you think is the best way to move forward?

We have our comparative advantage mainly in the following areas: water, hydropower, tourism, cash crop, and geographic vicinity to two super powers. We also have tremendous amount of untapped entrepreneurial energy that has come to bear fruits in various growth sectors like IT, banking, education, and media. Nepal could develop into an attractive financial opportunity for the region. Just as an example, Nepal needs to invest in broadband technology, highway infrastructure, and education to make it an attractive place for both China and India.

But, Nepal does have more than 80 percent of its people living in the rural area earning less than $1 a day. Poverty is rampant (32 percent below the poverty line) and some basic needs like water, health, and education are still not within the reach for many millions of these impoverished Nepalis. We should and can find a way to solve these problems without sacrificing one for the other. But, a protective, controlled, closed and highly-regulated economic system is not the answer.

(Courtesy: Nepal Monitor)
Unwise decisions in energy sectors are creating energy dilemmas all over the developing world.

All societies are dependent on energy. Affordable energy services are among the essential ingredients of economic development, including eradication of extreme poverty. Modern energy services—mainly provided by liquid and gaseous fuels, as well as electricity—are essential for building enterprises and creating jobs. Convenient, affordable energy is also important for improving health and education, and for reducing the human labour required to cook and meet other basic needs.

Roughly 1.6 billion people worldwide do not have access to electricity in their homes, representing slightly more than one quarter of the world population. The 2.4 billion people who rely on traditional biomass fuels for their energy must collect and burn straw, dung, and scraps of wood to cook their meals. They often go without refrigeration, radios, and even light. The International Energy Agency estimates that if the MDG (Millennium Development Goals) poverty-reduction target is to be met, modern energy services will need to be provided to an additional 700 million people by 2015.

In recent decades, the energy needs of poor people have been met most often via petroleum-based liquid fuels and by extension of the electricity grid, which is powered mainly by fossil fuels and hydropower. These options have been supported by government subsidies and are widely available in world markets. However, these conventional energy systems are often out of reach for people in remote areas, and even in urban slums, it is some of the most times expensive for the poorest to afford. In addition, many developing countries like in Nepal, most of the fuel and many of the technologies are imported.

The economic risk of relying primarily on imported energy has grown in recent years as oil prices have been rising consistently. These rising prices have had a disproportionate impact on poor people who depend on kerosene and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) for their basic cooking and heating. This certainly has increased the development in alternative energy sector since some years now. The rapid growth in solar, wind, geothermal, and biomass energy, coupled with ongoing technology improvements and cost reductions, is making a growing array of alternative energy options in developing countries.

According to the world energy assessment, human development is all about wise energy consumption, based on economic factors and making clever choices. Unwise decisions in energy sectors are creating energy dilemmas all over the developing world. Energy conservation is the process of using less energy, either by making processes more energy efficient or by reducing the demand for energy services. Developing countries being the lowest energy consumers can alleviate this constraint by means of alternative energy and can set an example for the developed world.

Alternative energy is the best tool of energy conservation. Solar, wind and biomass energy are some of the major successful means of alternative energy. Solar energy is very successful worldwide with the current capacity of more than 10GW. It already supplies electricity to several hundred thousand people, provides employment for over 10,000 people and generates business worth more than 2.5 billion US dollar annually. Energy from biomass is popular in the rural regions due to its low cost set up and simple mechanism. Wind power has grown most after hydropower in last two years. Apart from the developed countries, India has been most successful in settling up wind power stations which now generates the fourth highest energy worldwide. Bio fuels such as biodiesel which is the best alternative for the fossil fuels is growing its market all over the world. It is now produced around 40 billions liters per year. Alternative energy can in many ways accelerate the development process of any country. It should be well understood that only smart choice of energy consumption will lead to economic stability. Modern energy from the alternatives needs a strong market in developing countries, for instance the PV cells which is the means of solar energy has to be made cheaper and easily available for the local market. Alternative energy will certainly create employment and make people less dependent on the mainstream energy such as hydropower and fuels developing countries.

The recent IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) report has indicated the current global warming and its increasing trends by the massive use of fossil fuels all over the world. Alternative energy is a safe game in terms of environment. Development is implicit in social, economic and environment terms and this energy plays an effective role in stabilising all three.

The current over dependence of hydropower energy can be fatal in long term for the economic sectors in developing countries especially where large hydropower stations are unavoidable or not owned properly. Nepal in particular has to go for the alternatives as it relies on the amount of rainfall for hydropower generation in dry seasons. Market for alternative energy sector has to be increased and sooner otherwise we will be depleting our economy.

(Madhav is a student of environment management.)
The idea is to make the next 20 years of SAARC, as Manmohan Singh said at the landmark summit of an expanded South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation that will include Afghanistan as its eighth member. The 14th SAARC summit, that began on Monday April 3 at the Vigyan Bhavan convention centre, will underscore a larger global interest in the region with the United States, the European Union, China, Japan and South Korea participating as observers for the first time in the 22-year-old history of the regional grouping.

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Pakistan Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, Bangladesh chief advisor to the interim administration Fakhruddin Ahmed, Bhutan Prime Minister Dhumu Wangchuk, Nepal Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal, Maldives President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, Sri Lanka President Chandrika Bandaranaike and Afghan President Hamid Karzai will attend the summit. Foreign ministers of China, Japan and South Korea, Li Zhaoxing, Taro Aso and Song Min-soon respectively, will make brief presentations at the opening session of the summit. The US will be represented by Richard Boucher, assistant secretary of state for South and Central Asia.

The meeting of the programme committee on Friday will kick off a list of official events in the run-up to the summit. It will be followed by the 33rd meeting of the standing committee at the level of foreign secretaries over the next two days. The Council of Ministers meet on Monday a day before the two-day summit starts. The focus will be on making the SAARC a more efficient organisation and move it towards implementing some of the crucial regional projects that have been long under discussion, Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon said.

The idea is to make the next 20 years of SAARC, as Manmohan Singh said at the last summit in Dhaka, different from the previous 20 years that was mostly preoccupied in producing grand-sounding documents but had little to show by way of result on the ground. “As India's global stature grows and its economy continues to boom, it has a greater stake in promoting economic integration in the region,” SD Muni, a South Asia expert said. SAARC leaders will discuss the contours of a South Asian University, a large part of which will be based in India, the best in the world that attract best students and best faculty. An inter-governmental agreement will be signed to form the university before the details are worked out. Other important intra-regional projects that will be discussed include a SAARC Development Fund, a Regional Telemedicine Network and a Regional Food Bank. The summit will focus on translating these ideas into reality by formulating a time-bound plan.

India will push for greater connectivity in the region. Trade and transit will be the three big themes at the summit. Terrorism in the region is directly linked to its broader agenda of promoting greater connectivity and free trade in the region. Connectivity, physical, economic and mental, is clearly the grand overarching theme of the SAARC summit that New Delhi is hosting after 12 years. India will push for greater connectivity in South Asia with SAARC leaders expected to discuss proposals of SAARC Multi Modal Transport Study to enhance rail, road and air links and economic integration through the elimination of trade barriers and freer flow of ideas. With Afghanistan’s inclusion in SAARC, India will push hard for a transit to Kabul through the land route which has been a stumbling block in its trade relations with Central Asia.

India will also make a pitch for harmonising and simplifying customs procedure and standardisation to simplify transit rules in the SAARC. According to New Delhi, these steps would help in implementing the South Asian Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA). Pakistan’s reluctance to adhere to its obligations has marred prospects of SAFTA, with New Delhi hoping that Islamabad will soon see the light and fulfill its commitment under SAFTA that became operational in July last year.

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Bangladesh confirms bird flu rise

“The avian flu has now spread to 16 farms in five districts so far. But no humans have been confirmed infected,” an official of the Bangladesh fisheries and livestock ministry said. Bangladesh has culled about 60,000 birds since confirming the outbreak of the H5N1 virus simultaneously on six farms near the capital, Dhaka, on March 22. All the culled birds belonged to the 16 affected farms. So far, 30 workers in the five newly affected farms were being monitored after they were given health checks. Earlier, 100 poultry workers were released after no H5N1 infection was detected by a local laboratory, which tested their blood and other samples days after the initial outbreak was detected. Movement of chickens has been banned out side a 10 square-kilometre area around the affected farms, officials said. Livestock officials said that after the outbreak of the virus they had inspected about 10,000 farms containing nearly 1.1 million birds. (news.com.au)
In a monumental miscalculation, the palace had jumped at the weaknesses of the political parties while completely failing to appreciate their collective strength that had both an internal and external dimension.

Within a year of the Janaandolan II, the national mood is back to self-doubt and despair, a far cry from last April's giddy heights. The sense of victory and epochal accomplishment has been overshadowed by anger and accusation, suspicion and cynicism in every quarter. Interestingly, nowhere is this sense of foreboding starker than among the main actors who coalesced to defeat the old order. The sense of victory and epochal despondency, a far cry from last April's giddy national mood is back to self-doubt and安全.

The valley than just the freak snowfall in sixty-two years. While the new dispensation contained several inherent structural and ideological contradictions that had been conveniently glossed over during the movement to overthrow the royal regime, it was the sudden firestorm in the Tera that last April's winning paradigm in tatters. Hubris met its match, and is now gobbling for a rational, a calming narrative to piece together the impossible pieces of thought and action, rhetorical and reality suddenly unhinged and exposed by the Southern salvo. The original critique of New Delhi's 12-Point Pact an essentially one-point instrument of convenience rather than a larger national vision or principle might come to haunt the eight party victors than has been given credit so far. Had there been a more sober rather than a rhetorical assessment of the nature and scope of the April upheaval, perhaps the country would have spared a second thought of apprehension and despondency. Caught up in the euphoria of the moment, many enthusiasts characterised the April change as being unique, unprecedented, and a historic mark on the canvas of the 21st century. The panglossian view even claimed that it was a world-historical event that would allow the world to begin entirely new again. What was forgotten was Marx's caution to his revolutionaries that men may make history, but only within the circumstances they find themselves in.

Objectively speaking, the April episode was not even a regime change. It was simply a case of regime collapse. Basically the supremely incompetent regime in a weak state setting crumbled at the first serious challenge from a combined opposition. In a monumental miscalculation, the palace had jumped at the weaknesses of the political parties while completely failing to appreciate their collective strength that had both an internal and external dimension. It was this elementary political blunder which cost the crown its constitutional authority and much more.

Why succeeded the April's debacle is not even a regime in the strict sense, it is a regime-to-be. With seven constituent members and one external partner, the new regime appears as an internally conflicting hybrid group rather than a coherent government. Paradoxically, the only issue that is still keeping the winning alliance intact is their shared hatred of the Crown that has been put in a kind of political coma by the interim constitution. It is almost as if the republican coalition now has more of a phantom monarchy to fight than the royals ever dreamt of. Of its heydays, the Crown was often hailed as the unifying center of the Nepali nation. History will certainly pass its verdict on that claim, but it is ironic that it should allow the palace negocio to shape the political parties as well. Indeed, where would the grand alliance now be without the benefit of a royal blunder?

Given the character of the new elites and the regional and international environment, it is very unlikely that the new dispensation in Nepal will be able to undertake substantial economic reforms and initiatives that could positively impact the fortunes of ordinary Nepalis. Notwithstanding the occasional political blunder, the new ruling circle will not dare change course from the current peripheral capitalist economy or disregard IMF and World Bank market prescriptions.

The problem with the state quo is that unless something creatively drastic is undertaken, the fundamentals of Nepali economy will remain the same for the foreseeable future: unsustainable subsistence cultivation, export of cheap labor, widening trade deficit, and massive unemployment amidst abject poverty. What the ordinary people need most in this country is growth and employment, but the new rulers at the helm are still without any credible ideas or commitment on this front.

It must be considered a strange twist of fate that just when the communists finally emerged as the dominant force in Nepal, class as an analytical and political category has been replaced by ethnicity and identity as the major frames of intellectual, political, and developmental engagement. Although the initial payoffs might be good, it must be borne in mind that after a certain point, communalism elsewhere has usually proven to be a scoundrel's last refuge. (Triology – 1) (Harvard anthropology Ph.D. Shah teaches at TU)

Even though the Nepali communist parties were formed in the early 1940's, it has failed to sufficiently yield power to impact changes. Firstly the communist parties were divided amongst themselves. Secondly, unlike now, the Indian communist parties were not in a position of power to influence Nepali communist parties. During the Panchayat, the communists were leveraged by the palace to counter mainly the Nepali Congress and other liberal democratic outfits – therefore the communists were not allowed space to exert their beliefs.

The communist party was only leveraged as a hedge to counter right far right and centrist adversaries by the palace. Yet another crucial point is the reluctance of middle class to submit to the ideology of communism.

After the restoration of democracy in 1990, Nepal has so far gone through three general elections and despite consistent failure of the Nepali Congress to sustain a majority government, the UML has failed to garner a majority. Similarly at this juncture of political deadlock the Maoist began their armed revolt sensing the inability of the UML to lead a revolution strictly to impose a communist republic. Constant rifts and splits among central communist parties generated greater disillusionment amongst party workers prompting radical communists to initiate a greater revolution. As the fringe communist parties and the UML failed to impact substantial political break-through – the CPN Maoist came into light. With the chiseling of Maoist as a political outfit, communist politics in Nepal saw a departure from Marxist-Leninist ideology to Maoism. The UML perceived the Maoist as their primary competitor and despondency.

Maoist’s future

Even if the Maoists do come to power which they might through fraudulent and violent elections or a forceful agitation, the solution is not permanent.

Siddhartha Thapa

Maoist atrocities forced them to take the middle class to submit to Maoist ideology. The middle class who are stake holders in the creation of autonomous indigenous armies, and luring rural masses to fight wars of national liberation. On the other hand the political parties were in complete disarray; for four years now neither one party or the other had been in opposition to the Maoist had all but failed to sustain their revolution. The inability of the political parties to muster strength in the face of the embattled Indian army as has been put in a kind of political coma by the interim constitution. It is almost as if the republican coalition now has more of a phantom monarchy to fight than the royals ever dreamt of. Of its heydays, the Crown was often hailed as the unifying center of the Nepali nation. History will certainly pass its verdict on that claim, but it is ironic that it should allow the palace negocio to shape the political parties as well. Indeed, where would the grand alliance now be without the benefit of a royal blunder.

The growing disillusionment among the masses would herald a scenario where the working class, middle class and the apathetic masses would start putting the government and primarily the Maoist in a spot of embarrassment.

Finally, even if the Maoists do come to power which they might through fraudulent and violent elections or a forceful agitation, the solution is not permanent. The growing disillusionment among the masses would herald a scenario where the working class, middle class and the apathetic masses would start putting the government and primarily the Maoist in a spot of embarrassment.

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TV ads make kids fat

Many parents fear their children will consume too much sex and violence on television. But a new study finds that food is the top product served up to kids and teens on screen.

The study, released Wednesday by the Kaiser Family Foundation, found that "food is the number 1 product advertised to kids, followed by media such as music, video games and movies," said Vicky Rideout, vice-president of the Kaiser Family Foundation’s Program for the Study of Entertainment Media and Health.

Rideout directed the study, which was conducted by Indiana University. The study, the largest done on television food marketing to children and teens, found that more than a third of commercials targeting children or adolescents are for candy and snacks — often high-fat, sugary foods that are likely to fuel the ongoing childhood obesity epidemic.

Children eight to 12 years old watch the most food commercials, averaging 21 ads daily, according to the findings. That adds up to 7,600 per year, or roughly 51 hours annually. Teens, 13 to 17 years of age, see 17 food ads daily, or more than 6,000 per year, while younger teens aged seven years of age view 12 foods ads per day, or 4,400 yearly.

"It’s the first time in over a decade that we had national television advertising aimed at children," says Margo Wootan, director of nutrition for the Center for Science in the Public Interest, a consumer advocacy group. "And it’s the first time ever that anybody has looked at television food ads daily, or more than 6,000 the findings. That adds up to 7,600 watching the most food commercials, including 30 times more television programming than has been included in previous studies. Unlike previous studies, it also looked at viewing times when children and teens are most likely to be watching television.

Half of all the ads aired during children's shows are for food. Of all the ads in the study, 34 per cent marketed candy and snacks, 28 per cent were for cereals and 10 per cent promised fast foods.

None of the commercials in the study promoted fruit or vegetables. Only 4 per cent advertised dairy products — a rich source of calcium, which most children fall short in consuming, according to the 2005 U.S. Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee.

"Data like this is always useful," said Lee Peeler, CEO of the National Advertising Review Council and head of a new food industry initiative on marketing to children. "The thing that is most interesting and useful is that it will allow trends to be established.

One thing to keep in mind, Peeler said, is that the report was conducted on television shown in 2005. "A lot has changed since then," he said.

Some companies, including Disney and Kraft, have begun new efforts to promote more active lifestyles and healthier food to children. In November, the National Advertising Council started a new food and beverage initiative aimed at children. The 11 companies participating in that effort represent two-thirds of the products sold to children, Peeler said.

Participants pledge that at least 50 per cent of ads directed to children younger than 12 will be devoted either to "healthier products or healthier lifestyle messaging."

How do drugs affect behaviour?

Kimi Khadga, Kuleswor

Drug addicts attempt to withold the fact that they are using drugs from friends and family members. Gradually, they begin to suffer from the effects of dishonesty and guilt, and as a result become withdrawn and difficult to reason with. They then start to behave strangely.

The more they use drugs and/or attach the guiltier they feel, resulting in increased depression. They begin to sacrifice personal integrity, relationships with friends and family, job, savings and anything else in order to get regular supplies of drugs. This ultimately becomes the most important thing in addicts' life. They gradually begin to lose the distinction between right and wrong actions, their sense of isolation increases and distance between them and other people increases. This further compounds the problem.

What does "drug personality" mean?

Shyam Gurung, Banerawl

"Drug personality" is an artificial state created by drugs. Drug can be classified into various and complexly alter it. An addict begins to harbour hostilities which he/she does not permit to show on the surface. This contributes to establishing the link between drugs and crime which results in breakdown of social and industrial culture. A "drug personality" suffers from mood swings, inability to finish projects, unexpressed resentment, dishonesty, taking advantage of friends and employers, withdrawal from those who love him, isolation of self, appearance of being chronically depressed and stealing from family and friends. All such personalities can think about is getting and using drugs. They lose the ability to control their drug intake and end up disregarding the horrible consequences of their actions.

Do you take drugs even when it is not dangerous?

Gyan Joshi, Banerawl

Most people take drugs out of curiosity. Once they experience the false sense of pleasure induced by drugs, they turn it into a habit. Some also use it as a recourse to cover up - problems in life, unhappiness, sense of hopelessness or physical pain. Those having difficulty 'fitting in' as a child or a teenager, those suffering from anxiety due to peer pressure, or those suffering from shyness or even boredom tend to use it. After using drugs, the artificial sense of being in control of life makes drugs appear indispensable. The numbing effects of drugs or alcohol become a solution to their emotional or physical discomfort. It is just a matter of time before a person becomes fully addicted and becomes a slave of drugs.

Please address any queries you have about drug addiction to: newsfront@tshinikul.com (Your identity will be protected)

Drug personality is an artificial state

Counseling by drug therapist, Ragna Shah

Sushma Amatya

Every member of the parliament (MP) is paid 38,000 rupees and now we have 330 MPs who are being supported by tax payer’s money. Thus it is but logical that the public is entitled to the minimum expectation that the MPs, representing the people, raise issues of the people in the augment body.

The parliament elected eight years ago was dissolved in between and even otherwise its tenure of five years was long over. The revival of the parliament under dictates from the pro-democracy forces in April was a rare and extraordinary political development. MPs comprising 85 members from the Congress, 63 from Maoist and CPN-ML, 48 from Congress (D) and the rest of other smaller parties is expected to abide not by the norms set and followed by parliament all over the world, but also take into account the additional responsibility that the rare event of revival has thrust upon them.

The nation incurs extra expenditure in terms of energy, subsidised canteen, water equipment etc for every extra minute the MPs spend in the parliament when in session. Apart from honestly discharging their responsibilities, the MPs are also expected to justify the cost borne by the tax payers, not contribute to criminal wastage, which we are unfortunately witnessing.

Any failure on the part of the ministers from eight parties is certain to frustrate the people and add to their disillusionment. The entry of certain members and their private security guards with arms into the parliament did exactly that to one instance. As if the scandalous exhibition of irresponsibility was not enough, the members often resort to stalling parliamentary proceedings and not allow any transaction to take place. Due to such unruly behaviour, important legislation that directly relate with the mandate of the people for empowering election commission to hold election to Constituent Assembly in June has already become a casualty. Creating fish market like environment in the parliament is a gross injustice to the people by the parliamentarians.

Martin Luther King Jr. once said that human behaviour cannot be regulated through legislation only. A sense of responsibility and serious attention paid to ones conduct is needed to see the parliament performing in a decent manner. Any apathy shown to the public reflected in the performance of the parliamentarians amounts to wilful defiance of duty. The speaker, who as the Chair is expected to be a custodian of the House, has enormous responsibility to get the members to behave and establish order in the parliament and often becomes definitely a tall order if the members do not realise their folly and improve their ways. As citizens are the ultimate judge and have the right and responsibility to punish and reward political parties and MPs on the basis of their conduct and performance, it is perhaps the right time to bring their activities in line with that of the parliament, and getting people to know whether their representatives are acting and behaving as per the aspirations of the voters. Television, of course, is still more of luxury and an urban phenomenon in the country, but the visuals would have tremendous impact in case MPs behave below the set standards.

The revival of the parliament under one fundamental deficiency in Nepal's parliament today. The absence of opposition party whose legitimate duty is to 'oppose, expose and if necessary depose' the Government through constitutional means. In absence of opposition, the role of the media has increased. While the print media do have an all time access to parliament during the session, similar access to the electronic media equipped with device to present the House to the people, would have much bigger impact. Such an exposure would enable the people to know what kind of 'leaders' they voted for. For a quote by Abraham Lincoln would be appropriate here, "I am a firm believer in the people. If given the truth, they can be depended upon to meet any national crisis. The great point is to bring them the real facts."

Of course, media alone would not make any difference. While the print media, it certainly help in exposing the conduct and behaviour of parliamentarians, but it can certainly help enormously in that direction. Along with it, a direct decentralised process of selecting parliamentarians and enhancing culture of inner party democracy could help in creating MPs of reforms consistent with the qualities and core value of democracy. This will perhaps take care of major deficiencies in which we call, 'Democracy' practiced here.
Manoj Dahal in Jiri

The local people were really excited to be a part of the two-day Jiri Film Festival last weekend in the eastern Bazaar, 180 kms away from Kathmandu. Navin Subba’s ‘Numafung’ and Eric Valli’s ‘Caravan’ witnessed thousands of audience out in the compound of Jiri Technical School where an open theater was established to showcase these blockbusters.

Almost everybody in Jiri arrived to watch these movies. Although ‘Caravan’ was in Dolpali language and the audience didn’t understand the dialogues, they seemed to enjoy the movie for its adventure and its location in the Dolpo region.

Except ‘Caravan’ and ‘Numafung’, all 17 documentaries and a feature film ‘Mukundo’ were screened in an indoor setting and it was hard for the locals to get tickets for these screenings on the spot as all seats were booked in advance. “This is most probably the first open air film festival in Nepal,” Nepalaya’s Arpan Sharma said.

The event received a high profile treatment in Jiri where almost every person in the Bazaar, 7 hrs drive from Kathmandu, participated adding life to it.

Spring at its peak made driving through Dolakha special for the fun of the festival around 50-member team from Kathmandu. Hill sides filled with red carpets of Laligurans was a special treat for those who were traveling to Jiri for the first time, away from the pollution, noise and crowd of the capital. Manna, son of American Ambassador James F Moriarty appeared really excited to be there as were the filmmakers, journalists and others.

Most of the makers of the documentaries and feature films were present in the festival such as Kesang Teeten, Nabin Subba, Mohan Mainali, Dhruba Basnet, Kedar Sharma, Girish Girij, Shekhar Kharel, Kran Krishna Shrestha and Dilbuhan Pathak. The festival was managed and coordinated by Nepalaya, organised locally by FNJ – Dolaka, Jiri VDC, Dolakha Chamber of Commerce and Industries, Jiri high secondary school and Dhungeswari lower secondary school.

Eric Valli and his hero of ‘Caravan’, 66-year-old Thinley were the major attractions of the festival. In spite of his illness, Thinley was in Jiri to watch his movie for the first time with a crowd of two thousand people. When asked how he felt watching his film, he replied, “Amazing! I have never been to this part of country, actually I had not travelled beyond Bhaktapur earlier.”

Another happiest person was Eric who was watching his 9 year old debutante feature film in the open theater. “I am happy,” said Eric, who was in Jiri for the first time. Most probably, he is in Nepal to make another feature film about an aspect of Nepal society. Many other activities accompanied the festival. Local products were displayed and interactions with journalists and filmmakers were held to attract the local youths to such professions. Kunda Dixit, editor of Nepal Times gave a lecture on media to the interested youths. Kesang Teeten and Nabin Subba provided basic information on filmmaking to a young crowd. Former Member of Parliament and a prominent social worker in Jiri, Indra Bahadur Khadka and his straightforward speech attracted a major crowd. He showed the dreams of the people living in Jiri in an interactive program entitled ‘Jirika Sapana’, also a presentation of his vision to develop the Bazaar, a gateway to Mt Everest.

In the festival, a collection of 70 photographs selected from the recently-released picture book, A People War, began its nationwide exhibition tour. Jiri was the first point of its travel. The photo exhibition displayed pictures that showed human and material costs of the ten years of conflict. The photo exhibition will move from Jiri to Chautara, Lahari, Ilam, Narayanghat, Nepalgunj, Dhangadi, Tansen and Pokhara before concluding in Kathmandu a month later. Nepalaya is organising the tour.

In every place, the exhibition will be locally inaugurated either by a person portrayed in the book or by a photographer whose picture is in the book. In Jiri, a victim of the conflict, Naminiaya Kaffe inaugurated the exhibition. Her husband was killed in a Maoist attack on a public bus two years back at Mainapokhari, Dolakha. She is seen breast-feeding her child in an exhibited photo.

Fun of Festival

Jiri Film Festival received a high profile treatment where almost every person in the Bazaar participated adding life to it.

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Eric Valli and his hero of ‘Caravan’, 66-year-old Thinley were the major attractions of the festival. In spite of his illness, Thinley was in Jiri to watch his movie for the first time with a crowd of two thousand people. When asked how he felt watching his film, he replied, “Amazing! I have never been to this part of country, actually I had not travelled beyond Bhaktapur earlier.”

Another happiest person was Eric who was watching his 9 year old debutante feature film in the open theater. “I am happy,” said Eric, who was in Jiri for the first time. Most probably, he is in Nepal to make another feature film about an aspect of Nepal society. Many other activities accompanied the festival. Local products were displayed and interactions with journalists and filmmakers were held to attract the local youths to such professions. Kunda Dixit, editor of Nepal Times gave a lecture on media to the interested youths. Kesang Teeten and Nabin Subba provided basic information on filmmaking to a young crowd. Former Member of Parliament and a prominent social worker in Jiri, Indra Bahadur Khadka and his straightforward speech attracted a major crowd. He showed the dreams of the people living in Jiri in an interactive program entitled ‘Jirika Sapana’, also a presentation of his vision to develop the Bazaar, a gateway to Mt Everest.

In the festival, a collection of 70 photographs selected from the recently-released picture book, A People War, began its nationwide exhibition tour. Jiri was the first point of its travel. The photo exhibition displayed pictures that showed human and material costs of the ten years of conflict. The photo exhibition will move from Jiri to Chautara, Lahari, Ilam, Narayanghat, Nepalgunj, Dhangadi, Tansen and Pokhara before concluding in Kathmandu a month later. Nepalaya is organising the tour.

In every place, the exhibition will be locally inaugurated either by a person portrayed in the book or by a photographer whose picture is in the book. In Jiri, a victim of the conflict, Naminiaya Kaffe inaugurated the exhibition. Her husband was killed in a Maoist attack on a public bus two years back at Mainapokhari, Dolakha. She is seen breast-feeding her child in an exhibited photo.

Fun of Festival

Jiri Film Festival received a high profile treatment where almost every person in the Bazaar participated adding life to it.