Despite government’s rhetoric that it is committed to hold elections to the constituent assembly on November 22, there is a high level conspiracy brewing to stall it. This intends to turn the existing interim parliament into constituent assembly after adding some more members, mainly from the Madhesi and ethnic groups.

The person playing his card close to his chest is none other than the Prime Minister, G P Koirala. Although he has not directly discussed this with any non-Maoist parties in the government, many have already guessed what he is up to. Koirala is getting unpopular and unworthy of trust by the day. The international community and its representatives are sensing that he is either reluctant or incapable of holding elections. Privately, India has warned him that in either condition, his legitimacy would be over and he would be treated no differently from the way king was treated after Feb 1, 2005.

The United Nations and the United States as well as the Election Commission have been warning the government that election must be held on time, but they have made it very clear that the present law and order situation must improve if elections are to be held.

States as well as the Election Commission have been warning the government that election must be held on time, but they have made it very clear that the present law and order situation must improve if elections are to be held.

In the past few meetings, Koirala has been asking Madhesi Janadhirak Forum (MJF) leader, Upendra Yadav to work out how many seats would his forum want in the existing parliament to call off the agitation. Yadav has been blunt in demanding that this parliament does not enjoy people’s mandate, and must be dissolved with a caretaker government in place to conduct elections.

“I repeated the same view before the government headed by Ram Chandra Poudel when we met on Saturday,” Yadav told newsfront. Sources said Koirala is willing to accommodate with adequate representations of Madhesis, Janajatis and Dalit groups, first in existing parliament so that he could secure their support to convert it into the constituent assembly.

With no sign of improvement in the law and order situation and settlement of the Terai problem, conducting elections is looking increasingly impossible. In fact that was the concern UN secretary, General Ban Ki Moon and his special representative, Ian Martin expressed in New York recently.

The quiet exploration to convert existing parliament into the constituent assembly looks like admission on the part of Koirala that effective governance and improving law and order is beyond his capability.
The Nepal army and the Maoists have entered the third crucial round of fight with the Maoists accusing that the army is out to target its five ministers. Decision of the Nepal Army to change these ministers’ guards is being taken as the basis of that claim by the Maoists. “This is a routine exercise and such decisions are not at all taken at the prime minister’s or minister’s level. They are done at a much junior level,” a senior army official said. He asserted that there is no motive other than providing security to the Maoist ministers, behind the posting of these new guards. A cabinet meeting scheduled on Friday was put off as the Maoist ministers wanted a fool proof probe into the MJF leader, Upendra Yadav, accompanied by his forum colleagues, prepares to hold dialogues with the high level government team headed by Minister for Peace and Reconstruction, Ram Chandra Poudyal at Godavari on July 28. Yadav insisted that the parliament should be dissolved and a care-taker election government formed. The MJF government meeting decided to settle the Terai issue by Aug 5.

"security guard issue."

Maoists’ latest criticism of the Nepal Army follows two aborted ones in the past. In the first instance, they crippled normal lives in the country for hours claiming that Nepal Army’s vehicles which were on the way to Kathmandu few months ago were carrying arms and ammunitions much against the peace agreement. But on verification, the vehicles were found empty.

In the second instance, Maoists were forced to withdraw their Bandh after PM Koirala, under pressure from the army, refused to shutdown the Birpur army camp located in Kapilvastu district of western Nepal.

Swelling rivers fed by incessant rains have caused most parts in Terai and landslides in the hills which altogether have taken a toll of more than 30 people across the country. Home Ministry sources said flood has taken into its grip some 37 districts with at least 66,000 people belonging to 16,000 families affected. Reports available here suggested that Dang, Sarlahi, Mahottari, Siraha, Banke, Sindhuli and Gulmi have been affected by the flood and landslides with casualties reported.

Standing crops have been ravaged in several areas, but the extent of damage is yet to be assessed, official sources said. The Home Ministry which has been acting as a nodal agency for relief and rescue operation for the flood marooned people has however, kept Nepal army out of it. But the army is air-dropping relief materials and is engaging in rescue operation in coordination with the Red Cross and other UN agencies.

On Saturday, Home Minister K P Sitaula instructed the home ministry officials to gear up the relief and rescue operation, with an appeal to the affected people to approach UN agencies for necessary materials. He also asked them to work in close cooperation and coordination with the NGOs, INGOs and UN agencies.

The Home Minister’s response followed serious concerns raised by the members of parliament cutting across party lines about the worsening flood situation which has endangered more lives and property. The MPs also decided to give their five days’ salary for relief measures.
Crying degree

Look how mighty Nepalis behave when they go southward. Amareesh Kumar Singh, the powerful Congress parliamentarian, not only burst into tears, but he cried bitterly asking for kind consideration of the teachers in Delhi’s Jawahar Lal Nehru University. University recently. Singh however, succeeded in winning their favour at least for once. As far as regularity and works as a M. Phil student was not up to the mark, his current guide in the School of International Studies in JNU, Prof Sadasivan told him it would not be fair to let Singh continue in his studies. In any case there is resentment in the faculty that Singh, a M.Sc in Chemistry was enrolled as a MPhil student in the international studies, thanks to the special favour that Prof S D Muni showered on him.

Lucrative Melamchi

While the fate of the multi-billion dollar Melamchi drinking water project hangs in balance, the project office being run by the Asia Development Bank here continues to be a lucrative posting. Minister for Physical Planning and Works, Hishila Yami, who has been largely responsible for the uncertainty of the project, has however, been generous in recalling government employees on deputation to the project, and deploying her favourites there. Most of those who were on deputation there from the government have been withdrawn ‘at the pleasure of the minister and new ones deployed’, informed source said.

Thanks to Yami, the project is under review of the ADB as she refused to handover the management of the drinking water supply of Kathmandu to Severn Strem, a British company, despite a cabinet decision earlier to do so by May 15. As a result the project is under review with ADB and some other donors are threatening that it would have impacts on other projects in Nepal as well.

Foot in mouth

It was PM G P Koirala’s turn to be at the receiving end this time. He was challenged and cut short by Yashwant Sinha, Bharatiya Janata party leader and India’s former foreign minister, when the Prime Minister claimed that pro-Hindu forces in India were behind the unrest in Terai. Sinha, a family friend of the Koiralas and someone who owns his entry into politics to Chandra Shekhar, was here to pay homage to Sushila Koirala who passed away recently. “I will take it up all sincerely with Shyamji, but you must give me the evidence,” Sinha told Koirala bluntly. And Koirala could not furnish any proof. The mumbled Koirala cut a sorry figure. Sinha made it very clear to Koirala and all those he met that while Bharatiya Janata Party might have its own approach on Nepal, it will fully accept what the people here decide on the future of monarchy. Earlier, Prime Minister Koirala, Maoists and Communist Party of India, Marast (CPM)’s Nepal hand, had all been consistently saying that the agitation in Terai is being instigated by the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, pro-Hindu outfits which are close to Bhandari Janata Party.

Newsbrief

Crying degree

Home Minister K P Sitaula no doubt has police under him. But he has no quals in performing the job of a police at times. Last month, he wrote a letter to the US embassy which literally was a ‘do-not-give-vita’ plea. He was against US embassy giving visa to Madhesi Janadhirak Forum leader, Upendra Yadav who had been invited by some organisations of the Nepali students based in New York. But the embassy turned down Sitaula’s plea although in most countries of the world, any home minister would be taken very seriously. But what went against Sitaula in the US embassy’s eyes? Perhaps because he is considered much closer to the Maoists and there was an obvious question mark: did he write this letter to appease the Maoists? Or else, was it his interest in writing this kind of letter against Yadav?

Lucrative Melamchi

While the fate of the multi-billion dollar Melamchi drinking water project is going to go for a regular check up into the other one so that we have at least one in operation in the international sector,” Nepal airlines sources said. The airline’s condition has become more critical as it is on verge of losing more and more trained pilots to the private airlines, and there are reports of Delhi and other sectors making huge losses. “We want the government to do justice to the flag carrier,” a pilot in the domestic sector told newsfront, adding either the government should go for immediate purchase of aircraft or shut it down. The Nepal airlines employees on strike have warned the government that it could be prolonged if the government failed to come out with a positive response by the first week of August. Information reveals Delhi alone is accounting for nearly 20 million rupees loss per month and only last week they have asked for 45 lakhs of rupees from the head office to make urgent payments there. In fact the move to have a Druk Airlines plane to fly between Kathmandu and Delhi from August 1 did not work as the aircraft was too small, able to accommodate only 80 people.

Disposable syringe

Everest Med Pvt. Ltd, started a nation wide media campaign last week to create awareness for using safe and reliable surgical products. Nepal’s only disposable syringe manufacturer located in Dhadhikot, Bhaktapur has sated that the agitation in Terai is being instigated by the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, pro-Hindu outfits which are close to Bhandari Janata Party.

Disposable syringe

Everest Med Pvt. Ltd, started a nation wide media campaign last week to create awareness for using safe and reliable surgical products. Nepal’s only disposable syringe manufacturer located in Dhadhikot, Bhaktapur has opted technical guidance from a reputed Korean company for its smooth operation and defect free production. Fully equipped with latest manufacturing machines and testing equipment along with technically sound experienced personnel, the company has been certified by ISO – 9001: 2000 for its management system. The product, Lifeline Disposable Syringe is certified for its quality products. It was established in 2005 B.S. but operation started from...
Maoists and press freedom

There have been several interpretations and misinterpretations of what the Jana Andolan II was all about. But one thing that is universally accepted is that it was a movement for restoration of democracy in every sense of the term. One cannot conceive of a democracy without press freedom.

Maoists who are now a part of the interim government never got tired of proclaiming that they were the cause behind the success of the movement as they aligned with pro-democracy forces, civil societies and human rights groups. The media was one inseparable party to that cause and movement. It was only natural for everyone to expect that Maoists’ alliance with those groups and the values they represented was not mere tactical, and that there was an acceptable dose of commitment towards those values.

But Maoists, through their brazen actions, are fast proving that they have no respect for those values and in pursuit of their authoritarian design; and they are willing to attack them. Media has now become the biggest target for their attacks.

The abduction and murder of Prakash Singh Thakuri - a journalist based in western Nepal, allegedly by the Maoists; a series of arm twisting tactics to disrupt distribution of newspapers and magazines one after another, and now sacking of about 50 journalists working with the Gorkhapatra Sansthan, a government corporation directly under control of the Maoists are all pointers that Maoists still derive pleasure in gagging the press.

Prime Minister G P Koirala and his government have patriotically failed to restrain the Maoists, a major component of the government. Koirala who only appears to care about his chair knows he cannot survive if the protesters win the hearts of the people. Koirala’s lust for power and control is something that will eventually make him more unpopular than the king. Nepali media stood against the king when censorship was imposed and press freedom snatched. Although, the Federation of Nepali Journalist (FNJ) has been very active against the Maoists’ actions. Their failure to do so will not prove through actions that their commitment to democracy and press freedom are genuine. Their failure to do so will only mean they are dishonest to the core; they will also be taken as press freedom are absolutely genuine. Their failure to do so will not prove through actions that their commitment to democracy and press freedom.

We should not be labeled as Madhesis Dalits or Janajatis. Nepali people be they from Madesh, hills or the mountains. Stand united

The new agitation in Terai has attracted the attention of all. Demands posed by Madhesi people are genuine and reliable but the method they are adopting for their quest is wrong. The country is a tryst with sustainable solutions through constituent assembly but it has unfortunately been turned into a utopia for the ordinary, marginalised and backward people.

In my opinion, Madhes is not the only suppressed region in the country. There are many areas in the hilly regions undergoing persecution by the so-called upper class people. Likewise, not only are the Madhes, Dalits and Janajatis out of political and developmental mainstream but there is a majority out there lagging behind.

There is a sort of society that weaves conspiracy to break the unity of people and apply the policy of divide and rule. We need to be aware of such conspiracy and unite all Nepali people be they from Madhes, Hills or the mountains. We should not be labeled as Madhesis Dalits or Janajatis. There are also a majority of Brahmin, hill people living in pathetic conditions that are also suppressed, exploited and prosecuted.

We must stand united. The best solution is to hold peaceful and fearless elections to the constituent assembly. We need to participate in it and decide to elect those who will really act to root out the problems being faced by us all.

Amit Bhandari
Kirtipur, Kathmandu

Maoist ministers alias chameleons

Well done Prachanda. Once again the Maoist leaders have advertised their chameleon like character by expressing their suspicions about the personal security provided by the government. On top of it all, I wonder why a single leader needs 10 to 15 security personnel?

Security forces have always shown restraint and adhered to the orders and instructions of the government. Their contribution to the process of reviving peace and security in the nation is praiseworthy indeed. Security personnel are the true servants of the nation and the people. Why should Maoists doubt the integrity and loyalty of the security forces that fall under their own government? It is obvious now that Maoists ones again have started weaving a web of conspiracy.

If the Maoists have true intentions of joining the democratic mainstream, they should be able to generate confidence among the Nepali people. My sincere advice to the Maoists ministers is try to respect yourselves then only you will be respected, dear comrades.

Arjun Bista
Dhapasi

Hail Diamond

The interview with Diamond Shamsher JBR was one of the finest pieces that appeared in newsfront # 28. At the age of 90, he has proved himself to be an avant-garde not only in the politico-religious scene of Nepali literature but it has also been translated into English, Japanese and French but in more than 20 languages.

I salute the legendary personality and wish for his better health.

Sulav Dahal
Surunga, Jhapa

Point to Ponder

To rule is easy, to govern difficult.
- Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

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Editorial

4

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Spiritual Corner

Coming, going

Dogen was born in 1200, near Kyoto, Japan. When he was fourteen he was formally ordained as a monk and entered a monastery at the foot of Mt Hei to begin his training. In 1217 he moved to Kennin Monastery in Kyoto and studied there until 1221. He then accompanied his abbot, Myozen, to China. The purpose of this journey was to engage more fully with Ch’an Buddhism, the Chinese precursor of Japanese Zen.

In the Chinese monasteries the main type of spiritual practice was the chanting and repetition of mantras. (Mantras are short phrases which help to focus the mind.) However Dogen was rather disappointed with this type of practice. Dogen wanted to return to Japan but under the guidance of a senior priest, Rujung, he learnt the art of silent meditation. In this practice the goal was to silence the mind and lose awareness of mind and body. In this type of meditation the goal is to still the mind, thinking of neither good nor bad things. With this new knowledge Dogen returned to Japan and started to write and teach about these new doctrines. In 1233 he opened Kannondori Temple in Fukakusa and was appointed to be head monk. Dogen was a prolific writer of both poetry and guidance on Buddhism.

Forty years later he wrote his most important work, the Shogai, which set the foundation for what is known as the ‘Soto’ school of Zen in Japan and started to write and teach about these new doctrines. In 1233 he opened Kannondori Temple in Fukakusa and was appointed to be head monk. Dogen was a prolific writer of both poetry and guidance on Buddhism.

Dogen's contributions to the development of Zen in Japan were profound. He is credited with the development of the concept of "zazen" or sitting meditation, which became a cornerstone of Japanese Zen practice. Dogen believed that the path to enlightenment involved a shift in consciousness, from passive thinking to active, direct experience. He emphasized the importance of "shikantaza," or "just sitting," where one should neither think nor act, but simply be present in the moment.

Dogen's ideas and teachings were passed down through a series of lineage holders, and his influence can be seen in the development of the Soto school of Zen in Japan, as well as in the spread of Zen to other countries, including Korea and China.

Dogen's legacy is still felt today in the practice of Zen in Japan and around the world. His teachings continue to inspire practitioners to seek a direct experience of the nature of mind and the interconnectedness of all things.
The 'non-Government' of Mannoharan Singh, by 'outsourcing' India's Nepal policy to the CPI(M), may be wreaking the same havoc that Indira Gandhi had unleashed by sub-contracting policy on Sri Lanka to a group of politicians based in Chennai.

The present non-Government in New Delhi has a non-policy on Nepal. I call it non-Government because of the extent of its not simply non-functioning, but also mal-functioning. I don't think there is an absence of policy with regard to just Nepal. It is also so with regard to all countries. It has an extremely limited focus, mainly on non-issues. For long, we did not even have a Minister of External Affairs. The Prime Minister chose to hold the portfolio himself. Finally, we now have an experienced Minister.

As a preface, I would like to say that it is a well-established fact that mistakes in the realm of international affairs affect many generations with the unresolved issues. In India's case, there are three issues that are still inextricably linked by geography and burning: Jammu & Kashmir, China and burning: Jammu & Kashmir, China and burning: Jammu & Kashmir, China and burning: Jammu & Kashmir, China and burning: Jammu & Kashmir, China and burning: Jammu & Kashmir, China and burning: Jammu & Kashmir, China and burning: Jammu & Kashmir, China and burning: Jammu & Kashmir, China and burning: Jammu & Kashmir, China and burning: Jammu & Kashmir, China and burning: Jammu & Kashmir, China and burning: Jammu & Kashmir, China and burning: Jammu & Kashmir, China and burning: Jammu & Kashmir, China and burning: Jammu & Kashmir, China.

For a long time, the western world looked at Nepal through the Indian prism. For a long time, the western world looked at Nepal through the Indian prism. For a long time, the western world looked at Nepal through the Indian prism. For a long time, the western world looked at Nepal through the Indian prism. For a long time, the western world looked at Nepal through the Indian prism. For a long time, the western world looked at Nepal through the Indian prism. For a long time, the western world looked at Nepal through the Indian prism. For a long time, the western world looked at Nepal through the Indian prism. For a long time, the western world looked at Nepal through the Indian prism. For a long time, the western world looked at Nepal through the Indian prism. For a long time, the western world looked at Nepal through the Indian prism. For a long time, the western world looked at Nepal through the Indian prism. For a long time, the western world looked at Nepal through the Indian prism. For a long time, the western world looked at Nepal through the Indian prism. For a long time, the western world looked at Nepal through the Indian prism. For a long time, the western world looked at Nepal through the Indian prism. For a long time, the western world looked at Nepal through the Indian prism. For a long time, the western world looked at Nepal through the Indian prism. For a long time, the western world looked at Nepal through the Indian prism.

Henceforth, we will probably see more activism by not only the US, but also China, Pakistan and Bangladesh. What the present Prime Minister of India does not realise is that there cannot be a vacuum in international affairs. If India does not act, then others will move in. The American foreign policy platform is currently in a shell-shocked state. I believe their experiences in South Asia - Pakistan and Afghanistan - is not every encouraging.

I don't think Americans have a Nepal policy as such. They have an ad hoc platform, which they wish to employ because now, for the first time, they are physically in the landmass of the sub-continent. They are in Afghanistan, they are in Pakistan. I am disturbed by their role in Nepal.

Dangers of the spread of Maoism

We must recognise the enormity of the challenge that we face today. I believe that the gravest internal challenge is the spread of Maoist insurgency. If the UPA Government permits this Maoist malignancy to combine with the Maoist element in Nepal, then that would be internationalising India's internal problem. I fear not only for the 168 districts that are currently recognised by our agencies as "disturbed" by Maoists, but the entire North-East.

I am not being alarmist, but simply underscoring a situation fraught with danger. It is the gravest internal challenge at the moment. How are we to recognise it unless we identify its contours and the dimensions and then address the many challenges it would throw up?

I also find it totally inexplicable that it has been found necessary to declare Nepal as a "secular" nation. If Nepal is not a Hindu nation, then what is it? It posed no challenge to anybody by upholding that status. Nepal has always been the most accommodating, unassertive country in the world. Anybody was welcome there. That is why it was home to the flower children, the hippies and the Dum-Maro-Dum types on the one hand, and the most ascetic, devout followers of Advaita on the other. I find the imposition of this new consciousness of the citizens who are from the sahastra dharma. I believe that Nepal will always remain a Hindu nation and nothing less.

The present non-Government in New Delhi has a non-policy on Nepal. I call it non-Government because of the extent of its not simply non-functioning, but also mal-functioning. I don't think there is an absence of policy with regard to just Nepal.

The future of the monarchy is really something for the people of Nepal to decide. It is my hope that they will decide wisely and with sagacity. I have always held the view that Nepal has two pillars of stability - a political and a social. A constitutional monarchy and an elected and responsible democracy. You cannot destroy either of these pillars and create a new Nepal from the debris. Both would give stability. Exactly what shape this constitutional monarchy would have is for the people of Nepal to decide, as, indeed, it is for them to work out how the future Parliament is to evolve.

Elections to the Constituent Assembly are due in November. I have no direct source of information as to whether the conditions there favour the holding of polls. The UPA Government seldom shares information with us. It is well-known that the disarming process of the Maoists was only in name and only a third of the weapons were surrendered. The activities of the Young Communist League are indeed worrisome. There are questions about disintegration that continue to hang. How do you hold elections when the forces of law and order enforcement have themselves been disarmed?

It is time India paid heed to the warning signs coming from Nepal. Its present policy is one of the blind following the blind.

(Jaswant Singh, senior BJP leader and leader of the opposition in Rajya Sabha is a former foreign affairs minister in India.)

Courtesy: Pioneer Daily, N.Delhi
Debating Development

Failing Nepal?

For the first time, Nepal’s integrity and survival as a nation — along with that of democracy, has become a matter of speculation.

G P Koirala was crowned as the tallest statesman of South Asia. It was Dr Man Mohan Singh who bestowed that honour to Koirala. He was Jimmy Carter’s hero as well. Koirala may not have disappointed Dr Singh and Carter yet, but he is no more the symbol of hope and change, at least for the people of Nepal.

Mal-governance or total absence of governance, corruption and Koirala’s inability to hold elections to the constituent assembly in June, and doubts over his intentions and ability to do it in November - all indicate that Nepal’s future is not safe in his hands. Koirala lacks vision, seriousness and sincerity about solving the Terai issue and getting Terai together with Janajatis, Dalits and Karnali onto the center stage of the emerging new power structure.

At the crux of it all lies the ongoing peace process. Koirala has failed to take the peace process ahead in a meaningful way. He is known for surrendering and making ‘deals with Maoists’ rather than using his stature to ensure durable peace by addressing the key socio-economic and political issues down to its roots.

But who is to blame for all this? The domestic culprits and the international community’s role in it is no less. After all, access to Koirala that representatives of the international community have is far in excess compared to that of his closest ministers.

India, to a large extent, represented, facilitated and mediated the coming together of the seven parties and the Maoists way back in November 2005 in Delhi. In all fairness, India’s role in the peace process led and dictated mainly by Koirala and Prachanda has never receded.

The past one year has also seen the United Nations expanding fast in the country. Although, visibly not happy with the prevailing law and order situation, the UNMIN plays a crucial role in the peace process whose success or failure will influence how future Nepal will look at the United Nations’ efficiency or relevance. For most Nepalis, UN is their only hope, and any failure on its part is sure to disappoint them.

However, without an effective and sincere government in place, there is hardly anything that the United Nations or the international community can do. For that matter, Koirala is almost going to prove to be more of a liability than an asset now for them.

UNMIN has already come into criticism, mostly from the Maoists, and sadly for having done its job sincerely. It took a firm stance that verification of the combatants and arms should proceed unconditionally. But Maoists are in such a situation now that they cannot unilaterally pull out from the peace process. Nor will its most trusted civil society can side up with the Maoists against the UN.

But the deterioration in law and order situation, confrontation between one or more political parties in the government with the UN on one hand and total invisibility of the government on the other will not be a happy scenario for the UN to work in Nepal. After all, UN cannot substitute the government, nor will it be in a position to fulfill soaring expectations of Nepali people at all fronts.

UN can succeed only if the government succeeds. And for the government to succeed, it needs a strong leadership backed by political parties rising above their narrow party agendas. Security agencies are demoralised. Supreme Court was never so vulnerable in the sense that G P Koirala, the prime minister of the day and president of one political party, is above law by virtue of his appropriating the power of the head of the state.

Maoists want their terror and criminal activities unchallenged and unpunished by the State. Koirala already enjoys above the law status. No democracy in the world pointed it out as an anti-thesis of democracy. No democracy in the world pointed it out as an anti-thesis of democracy.
Maya \textit{Prasad}, Masters in classical music, a teacher, and a proficient Tabla player is the only Nepali lady who has taken up percussion classical music as her career. The vivacious musician talked with newsfront about her life long passion recently.

What keeps you going? My love for classical music keeps me alive. I live for it. It is everything for me — my passion, meditation, my livelihood. I play all percussion instruments and I also play Matka, the earthen pot.

How long do you practice daily? I start playing when I was 12. My father used to play and there used to be gatherings in my house till late at night. I started training formally under my Guru Hom Nath Upadhyaya about 19 years ago.

How long do you practice? I can practice only 2 to 3 hours a day but since it is my work too, I'm involved in it the whole day. I can no longer find time to practice 8 hours as I used to.

How do you think classical music is perceived in Nepal? Classical used to be synonymous with music of the old generation. It was looked upon as something boring since people did not have any knowledge about it. Once we, the young generation stepped in and took it up as a career, people here started taking notice and began to change their views. And there were people like Ganesh Man Singh who agreed to sponsor us and encourage us by having a group of us play in his house. Gradually I see more people interested in classical music and this makes me happy.

What are the negative trends you see developing in your field? When I was a student, we used to revere our Guru and even today I do not start my practice without paying my respects to my Guru. That is lacking today. And as students, we were in no hurry to perform and get on the stage. But today I see that students have no patience. They wish to learn today and get on the stage and start earning the day after. They want quick returns. This trend is harmful. This is not an art that you can perfect in two months and start earning. It requires a lot of love. It is the peak of love that can be understood only by those who have loved truly.

Do you face gender discrimination? I believe both men and women are humans; and artists are just artists. But when I used to play, they used to remark, "oh it is only a woman who is playing," if I played well. If I didn't play well, it used to be attributed to the fact that I was a woman. I did and do feel the discrimination. In our society, there is a traditional distinction. Traditional roles of women are dancing, playing Tabla, going out, earning money used to be something boring since people did not have any knowledge about it. Once we, the young generation stepped in and took it up as a career, people here started taking notice and began to change their views. And there were people like Ganesh Man Singh who agreed to sponsor us and encourage us by having a group of us play in his house. Gradually I see more people interested in classical music and this makes me happy.

Do you feel the need to market classical music? I believe both men and women are humans; and artists are just artists. But when I used to play, they used to remark, "oh it is only a woman who is playing," if I played well. If I didn't play well, it used to be attributed to the fact that I was a woman. I did and do feel the discrimination. In our society, there is a traditional distinction. Traditional roles of women are dancing, playing Tabla, going out, earning money used to be something boring since people did not have any knowledge about it. Once we, the young generation stepped in and took it up as a career, people here started taking notice and began to change their views. And there were people like Ganesh Man Singh who agreed to sponsor us and encourage us by having a group of us play in his house. Gradually I see more people interested in classical music and this makes me happy.

What about the economic aspect of classical music? I believe both men and women are humans; and artists are just artists. But when I used to play, they used to remark, "oh it is only a woman who is playing," if I played well. If I didn't play well, it used to be attributed to the fact that I was a woman. I did and do feel the discrimination. In our society, there is a traditional distinction. Traditional roles of women are dancing, playing Tabla, going out, earning money used to be something boring since people did not have any knowledge about it. Once we, the young generation stepped in and took it up as a career, people here started taking notice and began to change their views. And there were people like Ganesh Man Singh who agreed to sponsor us and encourage us by having a group of us play in his house. Gradually I see more people interested in classical music and this makes me happy.

What are your outstanding development in your field? When I was a student, we used to revere our Guru and even today I do not start my practice without paying my respects to my Guru. That is lacking today. And as students, we were in no hurry to perform and get on the stage. But today I see that students have no patience. They wish to learn today and get on the stage and start earning the day after. They want quick returns. This trend is harmful. This is not an art that you can perfect in two months and start earning. It requires a lot of love. It is the peak of love that can be understood only by those who have loved truly.

Do you feel the need to market classical music? I believe both men and women are humans; and artists are just artists. But when I used to play, they used to remark, "oh it is only a woman who is playing," if I played well. If I didn't play well, it used to be attributed to the fact that I was a woman. I did and do feel the discrimination. In our society, there is a traditional distinction. Traditional roles of women are dancing, playing Tabla, going out, earning money used to be something boring since people did not have any knowledge about it. Once we, the young generation stepped in and took it up as a career, people here started taking notice and began to change their views. And there were people like Ganesh Man Singh who agreed to sponsor us and encourage us by having a group of us play in his house. Gradually I see more people interested in classical music and this makes me happy.

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Identity crisis

Nobody wants citizens of Nepal but want to be Janjatis, Adibasis or Madheshis.

After the April 2006 democratic upsurge, Nepal's political developments marked a substantive transformation in the relationship between the state and its citizens. A centralised Nepal state formed over the last two and a half centuries lost its place under the guise of modern democracy. The institution of monarchy has now been centralised and the same for all women; increased posts for Dalits and marginalised groups; support programs including preservation of endangered languages & scripts, literary programs etc, 20% rebate on land ownership registration for Dalits and the same for all women, increased posts for women and special programs in 40 districts for economic self-sufficiency of deprived, ultra poor, Dalits, Janjatis and Madhesia.

The principal guideline of the budget, according to the government, is based on the prime goal of building a “prosperous, modern, Hindu religion, Nepali language, monarchy and various cultural and religious symbols.

The institution of monarchy has now been suspended until the first meeting of Constituent Assembly (CA). The monarchy is under severe crisis and is gradually weakening. In the interim constitution it has no place politically as well as ceremonially. The state has been declared secular. The interim constitution has recognised the multi-religious, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-cultural character of Nepalese society. The unitary character of Nepalese state will no longer survive in the future since the second amendment in the interim constitution has provisioned for federalism. Interim constitution stipulates to build an inclusive, secular and modern democratic state on the consent of diverse people constituted as citizens through CA.

However, the extreme identity politics has lost the zeal of the modern democracy. This is not a good sign. Nobody wants citizens of Nepal but want to be Janjatis, Adibahais or Madheshris first at this moment. Nobody wants modern democracy and modern politics but everybody wants pre-politics and ethno-democracy or folk-democracy. Consequently, Nepal is at the crossroad of progressive transformation, militarisation and possible ethnic cleansing.

The political leadership lacks the farsightedness to address the diversity and multiplicity of the ethnic and identity politics in Nepal. If the current diverse problems are not tackled within the framework of democratic polity, it may pose a risk to territorial integrity and sovereignty.

The image of ‘our’ Nepal conveys a contradictory message, thanks to the contradictions proven in the speeches and the actions of the political parties. The same ambivalence characterises the concept of a ‘new-Nepal’. All political parties preach inclusive democracy but are doing the opposite in action. By using uncritically such a loaded word, they are transforming it into a chronic condition. From the unbilled corpse of so-called ‘inclusive’ every kind of pest has started to spread. The chaos and problems of Terai is an example.

Nepal requires the citizens to forge a single national identity and the national characters as the representatives of all mini and micro-identities; an identity sustained by a democratic partnership among the stake holders - the state, political parties, pressure groups, civil society and the ordinary citizens, to form a non- Nepali-identity. The greatest strength of polity lies in their capacity to enlist the confidence of ordinary citizens and the groups with grievances to shape the society and the nation.

Without a legitimate social contract through constituent assembly, unifying, strengthening the national integrity and establishing transparent, just and responsive governance cannot be realised. The issues that link the citizens to society, such as legislatures, political parties, civil society and a myriad of mediating social and economic institutions, now require trust, cooperation and collective action based on integrity and national character – that of being a Nepali first.

(Bhurtel is a political analyst.)
Pakistan's newspapers speculate that Musharraf, unpopular and increasingly isolated, may be considering running for another five years. It is as simple as that. I dismissed assemblies to go however, Musharraf met. They got the UAE Prince to mediate and to witness the deal, so the meeting took place, was like a summit, all the issues were decided before they met. Meeting was simply there to clinch it. I think those are the facts and that is the logical conclusion we can draw," Sethi added.

Meanwhile, former Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has rejected overtures by Musharraf's envoys, and is accusing Benazir of violating their understanding by dealing with a military dictator.

"The party leader Nawaz Sharif has very categorically stated that the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) has deviated from the charter of democracy because one of the main issues was to continue struggle against the dictatorship," said Sardar Zulfiqar Ali Khan Khosa, Punjab president, PML-N.

"And in that nobody from among the alliance for restoration of democracy was allowed to make any contact directly or indirectly through emissaries or through person with a dictator and she has broken that," he added.

In an unexpected move the government has called in a session of the Parliament on Monday, political observers say the government wants a move in Parliament will bring more clarity.

While the PPP and the government have denied these reports, it is now almost certain that such a meeting did indeed take place. What is not clear is the outcome of these meetings, an outcome that will determine the future political direction the country takes. (NDTV.com)
Correct factor wrong deduction

The lack of perception of casual observers like Isabel is doing untold damage to the cause of sustainable liberal democracy in Nepal and furthering the Maoist cause.

Kundan Singh Khatri

Psychologists believe that every biased viewpoint is first and foremost a reflexive form of ideological hierarchy inherent in the character of the person or organisation expressing it. Such deep rooted shortcomings often cloud one’s judgment and objectivity. They sometimes lead to situations where, to quote a Nepalese metaphor: one spots a tick on another’s body, but misses the buffalo on one’s own back. Isabel Hilton’s article (Isabel Hilton, Friday July 20, 2007, The Guardian) regarding the visit of Nepal’s Army Chief to the UK portrays that trait in abundance. Her misreading observations are obviously based on very limited knowledge of the real situation in Nepal. It is a classic case of correct factor, wrong deduction. Her portrayal of a Nepal Army filled with only caste bound officers, for instance, is about four decades out of date. Indeed the only army that practices racial bias in the recruitment of Nepalese Gurkhas is the British Army. The national army of Nepal is open to all. In fact, some of the more militarily inclined minority tribes are actually overrepresented in terms of the population ratio. Similarly, India, which has more Nepalese in uniform than in Nepal, retains segregated infantry regiments, but openly accepts any Nepali officer in other parts of the army. Indeed, it is not improbable that the overall British perception of Nepal is prejudiced by an overrepresentation of the minority viewpoint.

Similarly, her simplistic interpretation of the Nepalese conflict as “Gyanendra’s savage war” fails to acknowledge the fact that the Maoists were using innocent civilians as human shields, assassinating their own bluff.”

The Nepalese Army, warts and all, stood firm against the ideological extremists who chose to overthrow the various governments of the day through force of arms. Despite the pitiful state of the economy and untenably disengagement by traditional allies like the UK, the Nepalese Army did prove unequivocally to the Maoists that they were never going to achieve their aim through fighting and helped force them onto the negotiating table.

Today, as any democratic Nepalese politician admits in private, and as some like Foreign Minister Mahat attest publicly, the vastly more aware and responsible Nepalese Army remains the only hurdle against a forceful takeover by the Maoists. However, tone rates its past credentials, today, the Nepalese Army is the last line of defense of democracy in Nepal. If it were not for the existence of a still intact army that PM Koirala can mobilise, there would be no reason whatsoever for the Maoists to even pretend to want to put their hand at true democracy. In the final analysis, that’s not really very different form how the British Army evolved and contributed to Northern Ireland.

As one Nepali-language weekly put it, “Propaganda is a fine tool to use on select target audiences in the pursuit of well thought out objectives. Where it becomes fatally counter productive is when the practitioners and unwitting agents get so deep into the game that they start believing in their own bluff.”

We Nepalese tend to be like frogs in a well and believe whatever is in my well in one and the only truth! This is a dangerous attitude as far as Buddhism is concerned. The Shasta himself said to Chanki in the Mahajina Nikaya that learned people should never say, “This is the only truth” and close their mind to all other possibilities. Going back to Vipassana, there are many powerful Vipassana systems in Laos, Thailand, and Sri Lanka which are pure Theravada systems based on the Theravada Pitaka coming through long unbaked enclaves. In fact, according to Nyan Pankha Thera, a German Theravadin Bhikkhu, the Burmese Sukkha Vipassana lineages all began from Jetavan Sayawat about a hundred and fifty years ago. If this is true, none of the Burmese lineages are broken. But whether they are unbaked lineages or not they are based firmly on the unalloyed interpretation of the Buddha’s teachings and are not mixed with other non-Buddhist views however the Pandit lineages and the Bhikkhu lineages of Burma are unbaked. But if these Burmese Sukkha Vipassana lineages are unbaked lineages (as pointed out by Theravada scholars themselves), then many fine points will be missing. The Marga is not a matter of just looking at Vedana or Chitta etc only.

There are many aspects of the Marga which is handed down in an unbaked enlightened line like the details of when to strive, when to relax, when to recognise that the winds are being disturbed by meditation, what are the medicines for the wind disturbances, what are the landmarks on the path and how to use them, the development of Sariditta which is equally important to become an Arhat or Bodhisattva etc. There are thousands of such things which will be missing in a broken lineage. The richness of meditation lore, experiential lore handed down through the unbaked enlightened lineages cannot be compensated for by reading books or conducting seminars. The experiential richness of a Master cannot be compensated by any other means. The presence of an authentic Master itself acts like a catalyst for the transformation of the practitioner.

There is a story in the Theravadin tradition itself (Anguttara Nikaya) that the Master told one of his attendants not to go to retreat during the three month monsoon period (Vasantakha) but disobeying him, the attendant nevertheless went for the retreat. After three months, he came back and told the Buddha that he had absolutely no experience in those three months of retreat. The Buddha told him, ‘I told you not to go.’ This episode tells us deeply that: 1. The path is not merely sitting down and meditating even if the meditation is correct. 2. Without the backing of a genuine enlightened Master, even if you really sit hard in meditation, nothing authentic is going to happen.

This is a good warning for all those who think they can read books and practice on their own and avoid any contact and interaction with another being who has deeper experience than himself. This avoidance or fear of interaction with another personality is itself a neurosis, which will get one stuck wherever one is and is a sign of a big ego.

(A to be continued) (Sridhar Rinpoche is a Vajrayana Master)
There were vendors and small stalls. Our host in the earlier the scene was different, some of them controlled the lives of the people there. Few decades and colorful. Cultures and keeps the scene of our bazaars vibrant blowing. It reflects the diversity of characters and any set agenda or corporate motif seems mind-movable stands. That these anonymous figures carry sharpening knives, and local herbal medicines on the from fruits and vegetables to mending shoes, spending a penny. You have everything you require the mechanism of a high profile supermarket without market places. 

The amazing fact remains that these vendors keep the street vendors, little bazaars at the end of each traveling in the rest of the world - the small stalls, generally in South Asia is what you miss while the writers encounter in the streets or open air anecdotes involving life dramas of such characters that the writers feel. Streets like New Road, Baneshwore, Putli Sadak, Koteswore, Kalimati, the people on the street with their whole world on stalls or on winnowing discs. On my return the vendors in the street, small open air shopkeepers give me a familiar look and even amicably ask the cause of my disappearance for few months. Nepalese literature is full of anecdotes involving life dramas of such characters for few months. Nepalese literature is full of anecdotes involving life dramas of such characters that the writers encounter in the streets or open air market places. 

The writer can be reached at writer@yuyutsu.de

I have only one son but unfortunately he has been into drugs since two decades. He has stayed in almost all centers of Nepal but still is not drug free. What should I do, send him to a center abroad? Do I really have a ray of hope? 

Mr. Shrestha, Nepalgunj

The first step towards healing your son is for him to accept that he is an addict. Frequently addicts who check into centers for rehabilitation do not take responsibility for their addiction. Thinking that drugs are under their ‘control’ while in reality, it is not makes them unable to ‘cooperate’ with the rehab programme and so it does no good to them. Your son should want desperately to get rid of his addiction. He should feel that getting into yet another rehab center is his last chance and so it is very important for him to follow the routine of the rehab and stay disciplined. Strengthening his discipline will prevent him from slipping into his old ways. 

The other day the sightings of a few supermarkets in New Delhi made me wonder if the drama is being repeated in Asia, in almost similar fashion. Within two years, there has been a sudden rise of supermarkets in India. On TV the other day I saw a housewife in sari claiming to provide the customers with the best mangoes in the world with a wide smile. Reliance, the news goes, would hire a train which shall carry all that there is in India—apples, mangoes, bananas and the vegetables and the rest. I am told Reliance is asking quotations from the leading publishers and distributors in India and shall be publishing selected titles in bulk along with groceries. Soon we would see supermarkets take over the vibrant world of small stalls and street vendors to empower the powerful and mighty, fresh gods of the century ushering in the corporate chaos of the highest order. 

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Another reason why he is not clean by now could be that his real cause of addiction has not been identified. When the real cause is handled he will not relapse again and again. His attitude has to change during his rehabilitation. Unfortunately, sometimes your unconditional love for him can also become a hindrance to his recovery. When he knows that you will be there for him at the end of day, no matter what, he will not ‘grow up.’ It is very important that he becomes honest and not hide anything that he does wrong. If he is not honest, he will try harder to hide his wrong acts; will start to isolate himself from those who have been impacted by his wrongdoing; and will blames them so that his wrongs becomes less ‘wrong’ for him. Blind love from his parents will not let him realise his wrongdoings. He does need your support but he has to realise it and at the same time you should not be blind to his manipulations. Another factor could be that he does not have confidence in himself. Addiction is powerful but he has to believe that he has the power to overcome it and stay clean. He has to convince himself that he can be drug free, ethical and productive. He needs determination.

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

The amazing fact remains that these vendors keep the mechanism of a high profile supermarket without spending a penny. You have everything you require from fruits and vegetables to mending shoes, sharpening knives, and local herbal medicines on the movable stands. That these anonymous figures carry the work of a high profile supermarket without any set agenda or corporate motif seems mind-blowing. It reflects the diversity of characters and cultures and keeps the scene of our bazaars vibrant and colorful.

In Europe most of my friends often complained about the rise of the supermarkets and the way they controlled the lives of the people there. Few decades earlier the scene was different, some of them lamented. There were small shops and stores. There were vendors and small stalls. Our host in the UK took us to the nearby Portabella market every week. Often the act of visiting the small weekly marketplaces seemed a heroic act and we were escorted to these open air markets with same serious intent that we would have while visiting our holy shrines. Also I had a ring of organic food as ideal and healthy as opposed to junk food flown in from different parts of the world by the supermarkets. The working conditions of the people who produced the food were miserable and unhygienic, the activists complained. In fact most of the activism in the West draws its energy, along with anti-war agendas from, to use the Chomsky’s phrase, ‘the tyranny of the corporate houses.’ The Tesco, HM, Woolworth, Albert Heijn, Aldi, Lidl, Walmart, Sainsbury’s and Asda remain the targets of attacks at most of the poetry jams and performing events in Europe.

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Lindsay Lohan might be heading into legal trouble because a man whose foot she drove over is threatening to sue the actress. And two men who say Lohan drove off with their car are also taking her to court.

An intoxicated Lohan allegedly drove off to chase her former assistant Tarin Grahame through the streets of Malibu, California, one night last week. Ronnie Blake who was in the car managed to get out before Lohan sped off, leaving his two pals, Dante Nigro and Jakon Sutter, fearing for their lives inside, hollywood.com reports. Lohan drove over Blake’s foot.

The three men have now hired an attorney as they consider legal action against Lohan. Blake may seek damages for his injuries while Nigro and Sutter are considering pressing false imprisonment and stolen-vehicle charges.

Spears’ guard charged

In more bad news for singer Britney Spears, one of her bodyguards has been charged with misdemeanor battery after an altercation in Las Vegas.

The scuffle occurred outside the Wynn hotel and casino when two photographers approached Spears and her entourage. Spears filed a police report after the incident, alleging one of the paparazzi battered one of her two children.

Photographer Kyle Henderson allegedly bumped bodyguard Julio Camera, who was holding Spears’ son 22 month old Sean Preston.

Camera handed the toddler to Spears and then ran after the photographers,

(IANS)