An intense tug of war among the top echelons in the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoists (CPN-M) and Prime Minister GP Koirala’s refusal to gift them a republic Nepal ‘now’ has brought the government’s neck to a political guillotine.

Maoists inched very close to withdrawing from Koirala led government ending their five and a half month partnership in the eight-party coalition. The last hope that the Maoists would reconsider their extreme move was dashed; after Prachanda and Baburam explained Koirala’s acts of deceits, and pressure from their own cadres to quit the government, when India’s foreign secretary Shiv Shankar Menon met them on Saturday evening. Maoists however, relented to his advice and indefinitely postponed their round table conference rescheduled on September hours before Menon left for Delhi at the end of his two-day trip to Nepal.

There are growing worries within the coalition that the pull-out by the Maoists would have an all round impact on issues like political stability of the country, leadership of Koirala and the credibility of the Maoists themselves. Political observers also believe that this would not only seriously discredit Prachanda-Baburam line in the party in favour of eight-party unity, but would also bring Ram Bahadur Thapa aka Badal, backed by Mohan Vaidya and C P Gajurel, in the forefront of the Maoist leadership.

Home minister K P Sitaula’s shuttled between the residence of the prime minister and Prachanda to save the coalition, with an assurance that a republic Nepal was just a couple of months away, and that collapse of the coalition would weaken that prospect, apparently failed to convince the Maoists. “We have had enough of assurance and we do not trust the Congress any more,” Prachanda is believed to have told Sitaula. The home minister also assured that he would undertake to ensure that the Congress party’s republic agenda is endorsed by the general assembly of the party.

Maoists told Koirala that they were not scared of their future political prospects.

Prachanda and Baburam last met Koirala at his official residence on Saturday to inform him that they were determined to withdraw from the government in protest against his refusal to abolish monarchy immediately. They told Koirala that they were not scared of their future political prospects. The Prime Minister, according to Baluwatar sources, warned them that they would be losing their last chance if they ran away from electoral politics.
Butwal under curfew

An indefinite curfew was clamped in Butwal and Taulihawa after unidentified assailants shot dead Mohit Khan, a leader of anti-Maoist groups, and a violent protest against snow-balled into a communal frenzy. According to incomplete information, at three more places including a policeman were killed, as miscreants targeted a place of prayer. Locals gathered immediately after the news, of Khan being gunned down outside his residence in the morning, spread. They demanded that the culprits must be arrested and punished. Khan had been targeted twice by the Maoists in the past. “We have no clue yet as to who killed him,” said a police official. In the chaos that followed, government offices, vehicles and shops became immediate targets paralysing normal life. In the meantime, an official of Shital Nivas said that the situation along the two border towns were being monitored closely and the government would take it up with the government of India for tight security on their side so that anti-social elements from across the border could not take advantage of the situation.

May all beings be happy

The 64th birthday ceremony of His Holiness Sakya Trizin Rinpoche, the head of Sakya Sect was celebrated under the auspices presence of Dhunse Asanga Rinpoche, Ghar Syajbrung Rinpoche, Guru Lama Niru Rana of Byoma Kusuma Buddha Dharma Sangha, Khenpo Nawang, Khorlo Vagendrasila, Khenpo Nawang Hoser Lama, president of Monastery Development Committee of Chhoyta Lama; at Mustang Samaj’s Monastery located at Stalpaila, Swyamvibh. The ceremony was organised by the monastic & lay disciples of the three Sakya monasteries; Tharlam, Thari and IBA in Boudha. The program commenced by taking refuge on the triple gems and chanting Bodhisattva vowels to liberate all the sentient being from the sufferings of samara. It was followed by 16-Arhat Puja. 16-Arhat were entrusted with the responsibility to protect the Dharma by Buddha himself in his absence. These patrons of Dharma were invoked and offered a Puja, so that Dharma may prevail for a longer time in the purity. Then the Mandala (a representation of the entire world system along with ones most precious possessions) was offered to Guru Sakya Trizin, by the disciples, as a symbol of complete trust and surrendering. This was followed by offering the Shakyamuni Buddha’s Dharmashri, mantra for the long life of the guru; seven-limb prayers consisting of refuge, confession and so forth and a special long life prayer dedicated to the longevity of His Holiness.

Violating world heritage site

The government is in a soup over unauthorised construction of a road in Pashupatinath temple area, a world heritage site. The World Heritage Center (WHC) which oversees cultural heritage and their protection activities on behalf of UNESCO, has sought the status of about 1000 metre long and 20-feet road that passes through Sleshmantak forest linking Tilganga Hospital with Guheshwori temple.

But the government is in total confusion about how to respond to the situation. “The construction of the road is illegal,” a senior official at the ministry of culture and tourism told newsfront, admitting that it violates Nepal’s commitment to protect the world heritage site. “The road was built without any authorisation or permission from the government,” sources said.

However, the road was built with full support and endorsement of the minister for physical works and construction, Hishita Yami. The initiative to build the road was taken by Krishna KC, a Maoist leader, who is now vice president of the Bagmati Sewer Improve-ment Committee. The committee overturned the earlier objections raised by the Department of Archaeology and the Pashupati Development Authority on the plea that no construction can be carried out in the area. As a signatory to the convention for protection of the world cultural and natural heritage almost three decades ago, Nepal is obliged to honour the guidelines regarding any construction works in the listed heritage site. Following the query from UNESCO, the minister for tourism and culture is understood to have asked the chief secretary to formulate government response at the earliest.

Official sources said that the minister also asked senior officials to explain to him the cost of such violation. “We will soon be responding to the UNESCO as well as the world heritage center reaffirming our commitment to protect the listed sites,” a senior government official said. A Maoist leader said that the construction was carried out in view of the local people’s demand and needs without affecting the heritage site.
Poorest leader

Matrika Yadav is arguably the ‘poorest’ of all central level Maoist leaders. But going by what happened last week, Matrika does not fit into that category any more.

Vivek, one of the security guards of Yadav defected to the rival militant section of Terai along with a AK-47 rifle. The central level leaders of the Maoists have at least five private security guards, each with arms. And if each of the security guards is in possession of Rs. 5 lakhs; it gives a rough idea about how rich Matrika must be.

Matrika was quick to return official property and facilities immediately after he resigned from the cabinet last month, but he is still the chairman of the National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC).

Conspirator who?

G P Koirala is a great believer in conspiracy theory. And he brings them out when he is either out of power or when his chosen ally is.

Not long after when he was out of power, he said there was a grand design against national sovereignty and democracy in Nepal with India and the palace as its architect.

But with changed politics that brought him at the helms of state affairs, he was quiet about conspiracy theory till recently.

But last week, he came back to his pet topic, saying, “there are serious threats to Nepal’s sovereignty and I have told Indian, Chinese and Americans that I will not make any compromise on this.”

But everyone knows who Koirala was hinting at as having posed a threat to Nepal’s sovereignty. On Friday, he told some authors that he would not be able to reveal the identity of the conspirators at this moment.

However, those who can easily decipher Koirala’s remarks now say his chair is perhaps getting shabby.

UNMIN protest

UNMIN has asked Maoists to honour its commitments regarding management of arms and armed personnel. The appeal comes in the wake of about 4,000 people’s liberation army coming out of the cantonments in Anurakhoa area on Friday.

UNMIN promptly communicated its resentment to the Maoist leadership reminding them that such activities would create an atmosphere conducive for the election.

A UNMIN statement said, “UNMIN has communicated its concerns directly to the political and military leadership of the CPN (Maoist), who advised that it ordered the immediate return of personnel to the cantonment. Implementing the commitments in relation to the management of arms and armed personnel, without exception, is essential to the overall peace process and in particular to preparing a cantonment…..Implementing the commitments in relation to the management of arms and armed personnel, without exception, is essential to the overall peace process and in particular to preparing a cantonment.”

Promoting diversity

Students of Ullens School in Khumaltar promoted diverse ethnic culture in a different way on the occasion of the Children’s Day on Saturday.

A community meal that consisted of ethnic varieties was also part of the event. A UNMIN statement said, “UNMIN has communicated its concerns directly to the political and military leadership of the CPN (Maoist), who advised that it ordered the immediate return of personnel to the cantonment.”

The idea mooted by CPN-UML General Secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal envisages that top ten leaders from each of the three parties, Nepali Congress, Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxist Leninists (CPN-UML) and the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoists (CPN-M), should get into the constituent assembly virtually without any contest.

Senior UML sources said the idea of reservation for the over-privileged ‘positive move’ that would make Maoists feel comfortable to contest elections. “One reason why Maoists are hesitant to contest the elections is because they are not sure about their prospects, including that of the top leaders,” he said, adding, “If there is a guarantee that at least the top leaders would win, they will not be averse to the idea of facing elections.”

Although Nepal’s idea has found favour from some members of the G.P. Koirala’s ‘osteote’, all the other five parties in the coalition have opposed it on the ground that this goes totally against the principle of the policy and spirit of reservation.

“Is meant for under-privileged or under-represented. There cannot be reservation for over-privileged and over-represented,” a Congress central committee member said.

Sources in the UML said that Madhav Nepal has put forward his idea before Prachanda as well as the Prime Minister and both have not discarded it. There will be first past the post system as well as the proportional representation system of election applied during the election. Although Madhav Nepal has not explained why those top 30 could not be accommodated under the respective parties quota under the proportional representation system, he apparently wants to ensure that the top ones ‘get elected directly’, a category considered more prestigious than the ones in the other category of ‘elected’.

Tsunami fellowship for journalists

Asia Media Forum, a network of media practitioners from across Asia, has announced the grant of Tsunami Journalism Fellowship 2007 to four journalists from the region for an in-depth work on post-Tsunami issues affecting the communities. This is the first fellowship of the kind.

An AMF release said the four journalists will work in Tsunami-affected communities in India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and Thailand. They will collect case studies for their stories around various policy, rehabilitation and rebuilding issues confronting the Tsunami hit communities.

Actionaid has provided strategic and financial support to undertake the fellowship programme. During the two-week fellowship programme, the fellows will come up with their text and visual stories to be printed or broadcast on their respective media. This will mark the third anniversary of Tsunami in December.

The fellows will be given a lump sum grant worth US $ 2000/- (including travel and other expenses) each with some logistic support where they will be working. According to the plan, the fellows will be assigned work in any one of the four Tsunami hit countries and they will be placed there from October 1.

Tertiani ZB Simanjuntak – Reporter; The Jakarta Post, Indonesia; M Satija – Current Affairs Producer, Kairali TV, India; Nartiya Tangsudhit – Senior Editor, The Nation group, Thailand and Hafiy Abdulla – Newcastle, Television Maldives, Maldives.

Bhagirath resigns

Bhagirath Basnyat, former acting secretary in the foreign ministry, has resigned from service. He resigned in protest against being denied promotion in the rank of the secretary in a conspiratorial manner.

Knowledgeable sources in bureaucracy said Basnyat handed over the resignation to the chief secretary on Friday alleging that he was victimised by some powerful elements for not having fulfilled their undue requests.

He is believed to have said it was much more dignified for him to quit than to run around for a promotion for which he was qualified enough. Sources said he complained about his being conspiratorially shifted to the prime minister’s office from the foreign affairs ministry and later denied promotion.

“After having served for 33 years in various position keeping national interest in mind, my conscience does not allow me to continue in the post any more when norms of promotion and denial are followed in such an arbitrary manner,” Basnyat is believed to have told his colleagues who persuaded him not to take the extreme step.

He was being tipped as the ambassador to London, but a last minute change in the list, saw him replaced by Murali Sharma. Basnyat is the second bureaucrat to quit in recent days in protest against political interference in appointment of secretaries, something that is likely to be formalised very soon after the main three ruling parties, Congress, UML and the Maoists, agree on the list of their ‘favourites’.

Let’s be bring together, those who best in all !
Sheer hoax

The parliamentary hearing for confirmation of some key constitutional and diplomatic appointees are over. And there is not much to boast about it. The special committee of parliament miserably failed to show that the members, may be with some notable exceptions, failed to act above narrow party lines. The members clearly acted on the dictates of the parties they belonged to.

Why else would Congress, Congress-D and the Rastriya Prajatantra Party favour en bloc the confirmation of Kedar Prasad Gir as the Chief Justice, and the left block oppose him? Similarly, they went more or less along their party lines in confirmation of the ambassador designates. Supreme Court’s independence has been thoroughly compromised as Gir would now be perceived as a pro-Congress and anti-left Chief Justice. It would have been more appropriate if the committee consisted of independent members with enough knowledge on the subjects they were going to deal with. But a committee that acts purely on party lines would only prove to be a farcical exercise. The committee could not act above and beyond the party line during a series of hearings recently.

Chief Justice was opposed or supported on the basis that reflected the position of political parties. Ambassadors were endorsed because their choice was made on the basis of an understanding among the major political parties to break up positions. Similar was the case of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC).

There has been a debate over a period of time that the lawyers who are members of parliament should not be allowed to practice. But no laws to the effect have come into force. Instead, some of the lawyer parliamentarians are now in the committee with a role in confirming (appointing) judges. This means that the committee hearing system has been introduced without a clearly thought out plan, although it may have had the best of intentions.

A diplomat confirmed by the House committee in the US will have reasons to boast about one’s ability since it’s done by a committee of experts which more or less acts on a non-partisan basis with no party whip. But an ambassador confirmed by our committee will literally have nothing to feel elated about. Each of them was endorsed because their choice was made on the basis of an understanding among the political parties to break up positions to the extent of our political parties’ parties.

The House committee could have given much more meaning, substance and direction to this practice by trying to facilitate the evolution of foreign policy, national security and economic interests besides trying to get members across the party lines on this move. Perhaps, a downsizing of the committee, with not more than 40 members, besides trying to get members across the party lines on this move would have been more appropriate.

**Point to Ponder**

"Any one who doesn’t trust himself can never really trust anyone else." - Cardinal De Retz

---

**Editorial**

Prachanda beware!

Aobin Shrestha is perhaps the most powerful cartoonist in the country today. His cartoons speak volumes about the politics of society — and so simple to understand and enjoy. The one that shows Maoist chief Prachanda first running after election, and now running away from the election says that in small space, the entire truth of the Nepali politics and Maoists’ predicament. Prachanda should take it as a serious warning that not only Abhin understood it, but he has made many Nepalis understand the politics of deceit and dishonesty that Maoists are pursuing now.

Not facing election in a free and fearless atmosphere means Maoists do not believe in a politics where people play a role. That also means they continue to believe that power comes from the barrel of guns.

**Letters**

BP out says GP

GP Koirala may have been a loyal follower of his older brother BP Koirala at one point of time. But now, especially after the successful people’s movement of last year, BP Koirala has become the latest leader of the country. The policy of national leaders of which BP Koirala championed once has become irrelevant. BP may have had reasons to return to Nepal following his differences with Indra Gandhi. But it was again due to GP Koirala’s pragmatic wisdom that he succeeded in securing trust and confidence of India. BP has become irrelevant in present context of Nepal. And GP Koirala has every right to declare, by words and action, that BP and his policies and days are gone.

Sabin Thapa

Tahachal, Kathmandu

Ridiculous banking charges

Most of our banks are still showing their miserly attitude and charging any amount they like, when they issue and renew debit and credit cards of their customers. For example, Nepal Investment Bank charges annual fee and maintenance charge against each customer’s account.

We, the customers are taking the matter lightly and pay anywhere between 200 to 1000 rupees per year as fees. However, such banks make huge amounts collecting those thousands from each of us. This shows banks are making more money from us due to our lack of knowledge and less because of their efficiency and management.

Most of our banks’ CEOs studied in UK and USA and they are aware of the fact that in other countries like Iceland, China, India, American Express etc. from UK and USA do not take any such charges from their valued customers. Our opinion is that such high charging banks should stop levying ridiculous charges on their customers.

Binod Timisina

Kathmandu

---

**Spiritual Corner**

**Tracing a Siddha**

Bhognarthar or Bhogar, the Jñâna Guru of Babaj in the poem “Bhogar Jñâna Sagara” identifies himself as a Tamilian. In the same verse he states that the great Siddha Kâlangi Nâthar initiated him in Jñâna Yoga (supreme self-knowledge).

He belonged to the ancient tradition of Nava (nine) Nîthâ sudhars (sudras ascetics), tracing their tradition to Lord Shiva. There are nine important shrines associated with this tradition, five of which are in the Himalaya Mountains: Amârâdhâr (where Shiva first taught Kriya Yoga to his Shakti partner, Parvati Devi), Kedarnâth, Badrînâth (India), Kailasanâth (Tibet) and Paupâlashâr (Nepal).

Bhognarthar practiced Kundalî Yoga in four stages. The first three stages are described in a later chapter on “The Psychophysiology of Kundalini Pranayama.”

Bhognarthar chose the Palani Matha (mountain) in what is now southwestern Tamil Nadu as the site for intensive yogic practice (Tapas) for the final stage. He attained swaroopa samâdhi at Palani, through the grace of Lord Muruga, or the eternal youth, “Kumâra Swâmi”.

The Kumâraswâmi temple at Palani became the epicenter of his activities. He visited many countries astrally, and physically and through transmigration. In one of his songs Bhognarthar claims to have flown to China at one point in a point of an airplane which he built; he held discussions with Chinese Siddhas before returning to India.

His visit to South America has been confirmed by accounts left by the Myucas of Chile:

“Bocha, who gave laws to Myucas, was a white, bearded man, wearing long robes, who regulated the calendar, established festivals, and vanished in time like others (other remarkable teachers who had come across the Pacific according to numerous legends of Incas, Akres and Mayars).”

He convened a meeting of many Siddhas just before the beginning of the present Kali Yuga, in 3102 BC, to determine the best way for humanity to progress along the spiritual path during the coming period of darkness. The Yoga of love and devotion, Bhakti Yoga, was chosen as the best means. Bhognarthar was entrusted by the siddhas with the task of defining the rituals for the worship of their favorite deity “Palani Andavar”, the Lord (Muruga) of Palani.

Source: http://palani.org/bhogar-biography.htm
Nepali pancake

It is insufficient to argue that bringing hordes on to the streets to commit acts of violence is an expression of the people’s will.

Spam, originally, is nothing to do with the stuff that floods your emails promising sexual delights beyond your wildest dreams, or that rubbish that comes through the post as junk mail, but is a bland, mediocre lump enclosed in a shiny casing which they call SPAM– because they have given themselves –SPAM– because political elite are neither skilful in governance nor one has the skill to govern and is promoting one’s preferred form of governance. Our political elite are neither skillful in governance nor very special. They well deserve the acronym they have given themselves –SPAM– because they are, at the end of the day, just a mediocre concoction passing themselves off as meat, enroiled in a shiny casing which they call democracy.

Democracy does not, however, involve deliberate destruction of everything that has been built up before, it does not involve witch-hunting but rather defends the freedom of expression and it does not involve squabbling for positions and commissions.

In two movements, one with tremendous popular support and the other with a large dose of coercion of the populace whether by fact or fear, we have arrived at the current impasse– an interim government that has failed to govern justly and wisely, has failed to impose law and order and the equality of all before the law; and the most abysmal failure of all which is to give the people of Nepal a voice in their own destiny.

It is insufficient to argue that bringing hordes on to the streets to commit acts of violence is an expression of the people’s will. Sooner or later our interim ‘representatives’ will have to realise that ‘a volunteer is worth ten pressed men,’ and that their misuse of the people’s assets will not buy their status forever. One day their house of straw will collapse.

Vindiciveness has no place in governance; and yet the vindictiveness of a few has led to the mixture of mediocrity we suffer today. Mediocrity is destroying us and depriving us of a voice. It is not democracy when we are obliged to accept the diktats of leaders who wish to present everything to the people of Nepal as a fait accompli without submitting themselves to the people’s mandate. That is autocracy and dictatorship, and it is maintained by fear.

We, the silent majority, are not so stupid as to believe that one single faction brought us to this sad impasse. Politicians might seek personal blamelessness in appointing a ‘whipping boy’ as the dictator which is transparent and honest–no deals behind locked doors and no strikes called out of vindictiveness– a government that accepts that it is there to serve the people and not be served by them; and a government that will keep its fingers off commissions and incitements to destroy the assets of this country. Above all, it must be a government that submits itself at timely intervals to the voice of the people through election, instead of continually trying to avoid the very institution that is the basis of democracy.

To date, mediocrity is destroying the nation and it is time for the political elite to put up and shut up, go to their constituencies– honestly, if they possibly can–and let the people decide, based on past performances and without exchange of money or false promises, whether they can trust them with their future and that of generations to come.
This objective cum psychological development gap sharply divides Nepali people and makes political compromises very difficult. Even if leaders of parties think compromises are reasonable under given conditions, rank-and-file supporters do not accept them. This is especially the case with the Maoists. If Maoist leaders really want reasonable compromises necessary for agreements, grass-roots supporters will not accept them. The grass-roots radicals will organise their own organisations and start new wars against the establishment including their own past leaders.

But in the long term, I am rather optimistic. For an outsider like me, Nepal seems to have developed amazingly. England needed about 400 years and Japan, more than 100 years for democratisation. Nepal history of democracy is about 50 years after 1951, or more strictly only 17 years after 1990. In this very short period, Nepal has admirably developed industries and democracy. We must evaluate history fairly. And we also should not fail to see the growth of the middle class. They are the core people of civil society who can stabilise society and gradually mature democracy in Nepal.

Fortunately or unfortunately, Nepal is very vulnerable in international relations. The global society now can use much influence for the peace building in Nepal. If Nepal government recovers its legitimacy and reliability through peace process, it will be able to give its people a hope of steady step-by-step improvement. Japanese people just after the defeat in the World War II were in miserable conditions. They did not have enough food, clothes, houses and other necessary things for daily life. But the Japanese government with help of the US government could give them a gleam of hope for better future. With the hope, Japanese people could avoid anarchy or coup and follow a way for steady development and democratisation.

Nepal government with cooperation of political parties and civil society can give a hope for better tomorrow. With it, people can accept political compromises for peace, expecting a steady improvement. In this way, peace will come again to Nepal.

One major area of difference is about how to address the cases of gross human rights violations during the years of insurgency. What is your view on this?

To solve problems related to human rights violations is a necessary step for the peace settlement. For this purpose, an independent powerful commission must be established. The government can delegate an investigation power to the commission. After close investigation, the government must compensate for all property damages from national budget or let the concerned persons compensate them.

Theoretically, property compensation is not very difficult. But in practice it is hard to carry out. Maoists caused much damage to houses, land and other properties, so to let them compensate for all these damages is in fact very difficult. The government should let Maoists return confiscated houses, lands and other properties as much as possible, and for the rest the government must compensate the same way as in cases of government caused damages.

Physical and mental damages caused by both sides are much more serious. In this case, a truth reconciliation commission like the one in South Africa is practical and effective. After the facts about damages are fully disclosed and recognised by assailants and victims, the commission requests reconciliation between them.

In Nepal where both parties have waged violent attacks against each other for more than 10 years, punishment due to past deeds tend to result in revenge, so it is not good for the reconstruction of peaceful society. To victims and their families, the government must provide mental care and financial support. Civil society is also expected to contribute much to this victim care and support program.

How hopeful are you about the election taking place on schedule?

Election to the constituent assembly may not be possible on 22 Nov under present circum-

Fortunately or unfortunately, Nepal is very vulnerable in international relations. The global society now can use much influence for the peace building in Nepal.

Masayuki Tanigawa, professor of political science at Nagasaki University, Japan; has published many books and articles including The constitution of the kingdom of Nepal. Improvement of India-China relationship and the Prospect of the peace building in Nepal. Fatalism and democratisation in Nepal. The rationale of the kingship in Nepal. In the following interview that he gave to Newsfront, Prof Tanigawa expressed his critical opinion on election, federalism, republicanism and Japan’s role in the UNMIN.

Are you optimistic about the peace process leading to a settlement of the conflict?

The issue now is how to materialise comprehensive peace agreement into a new constitution in the constituent assembly established by the constituent assembly election. But this implementation of general agreement is really difficult, because it demands many political compromises from political parties.

Politics is a compromise or “the art of possibility.” Parliament is the most important public space for political parties to reach an agreement through mutual political compromises. But these political compromises are possible only in a state in which people are not totally divided into some social groups.

Unfortunately Nepal has serious social divisions among castes, ethnicities, regions, etc. Among them, the most serious is the division between the rich and the poor, or the development gap. Due to economic liberalisation after the 1990 revolution, economic or development gap is growing rapidly. Many statistics testify it. Unfortunately Nepal is very vulnerable in this way as in cases of government caused damages.

Among them, the most serious is the division between their life and latter’s life is tremendous. Now that they know this gap, they cannot endure it anymore.
If component states are set up according to ethnicity, religion, languages and so on and have autonomous ruling power over their respective territories, the majority in a component state can much easily suppress individuals or minorities in it, and the central government cannot defend them effectively because it has the same self-rule. Federalisation is dangerous both for individual citizens and small minorities. For development too, it is disadvantageous. It cannot realise a lasting peace in Nepal, and up to a certain level of development, a strong stable central government might be better than a weak government is necessary for planning and managing development.

What alternative model would you suggest?

It is much better for Nepal to maintain the existing unitary state system while promoting devolution and local self-rule. Japan completely destroyed the Tokugawa regime, feudal or in a sense federal system, by the Meiji revolution in 1867, and built a unitary, extremely centralised modern state. The Japanese government since then successfully suppressed minority groups and cultures, homogenised Japanese society by the national language, national religion, general compulsory education, and modernised and industrialised Japan by strong top-down method. This was a typical development dictatorship.

After Japan, some Asian countries such as South Korea did it and developed dramatically. Japan is still one of the most centralised states though democratic and how it emerged after the World War II. Centralisation of power does not necessary prevent development but, on the contrary, promoted top-down development in states like Japan and South Korea.

However, Nepal is a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural society. The government cannot forcefully homogenise Nepali society, even if it wants it. A unitary state Japan cannot be a state model for Nepal. And Nepal is not a state as the United States that was established by the agreement of several existing states. Nepal has been a unitary state for a long time, so its division into districts is difficult. For example, how to draw border lines and how many states to be created? Artificial forcible creation of states will cause new ethnic or cultural conflicts leading civil war or separation of some parts of Nepal. Therefore, Nepal has to follow gradual step-by-step transformation. It will be a compromise of some systems.

Nepal is a modern state, so its base must be liberal democracy. In public sphere, each person is treated as a person irrespective of his/her ethnicity or culture, that is, an independent individual with equal civil rights. Instead, ethnicity and culture enjoy freedom in private sphere where the government does not interfere. This is modern individualistic liberal democracy of which France is typical. It is liberal, but majoritarian democracy, so it tends to majority rule and, in worst case, to totalitarian democracy. Minority rights tend to be only nominal in it.

Therefore, Nepal as a unitary state must introduce drastic devolution and strong local self-rule. If 75 districts are delegated much power to their own area, it is almost same as federal system. In addition to this, Nepal should be bicameral. The lower house should be composed of representatives of the nation, not of any group or regions; elected on the basis of individualistic liberal democracy. The upper house should be composed of representatives of various social groups.

The lower house is superior in general, but the upper house has veto power under given conditions to those matters related directly to group interests. This bicameral majority in in a typical compromise or combination of two representation systems, and is more realistic in Nepal.

Do you envisage a Nepal minus monarchy? How would a republic be different from a monarchial Nepal?

Ceremonial monarchy is better for Nepal. Many people say that Nepal kings usurped power and were there dictators and so monarchy should be dumped. Nonsense! If so, why don’t you dump election or parliament that Hitler used for getting state power? Systems and their users should be separated. First we evaluate systems themselves, and then consider the risks of human misuse of them. In case of monarchy, an active monarchy is much better than a ceremonial monarchy, or a pure symbol king with no political power, is useful in Nepal.

For example, in Nepal about 80% of the population is Hindu, and people’s daily life is closely interwoven with religion. So, Nepal cannot be completely away from religion. The state must take part in many religious ceremonies. When PM Koilala received the blessings from the priest at Krishna Mandir on 4 Sep; it was initiation of the interim constitution that provides secularism or the separation of religion and politics. Pious Muslims, Christians or non-religious people would never accept this religious activity of the prime minister. If the prime minister continues such religious activities as the head of secular state, non-Hindu people will not accept and this might lead to religious conflicts as in India. This is not the path Nepal should follow.

If Nepal is a ceremonial monarchy, secularisation of politics is much easier. The king performs religious and other cultural ceremonies while the prime minister focuses only on secular politics. Nepal monarchy has an active role in the society and people are used to it. A ceremonial monarchy is suited well with the multi-ethnic, multi-cultural state.

But ceremonial monarchy will be impossible if the king does not accept complete renovation of political power. Unfortunately he has the right of self-rule. To accept it up to now. So, Nepal cannot help but go for secular republicanism. In this case, the republic should have a ceremonial president whom every citizen irrespective of ethnic only religion can respect. This ceremonial president takes part in various ceremonies in order to observe the separation of religion and politics. Ultimately, the ceremonial president system will become almost same as the ceremonial monarchy.

What is the role that you see for Japan, one of the biggest donors, in the peace process in Nepal?

Japan can and should help Nepal peace building by peaceful means. Japan has sent six soldiers to the UNMIN. The UNMIN’s political mission and the soldiers are not armed. Japanese government officially explains their role is to promote peaceful ceasefire. Many people say that soldiers are only there because they were used by other non-military aids. Peace should be realised by peaceful means.

In Nepal about 80% of the population is Hindu, and people’s daily life is closely interwoven with religion. So, Nepal cannot be completely away from religion.
In Nepal, there is a lack of coherent micro and small enterprise development strategies

Micro and Small Enterprises (MSE) play a crucial role in generating employment opportunities and alleviating poverty in Nepal. In Nepal, outside agriculture, MSE sector is estimated to employ 1.6 million persons or more than 70 percent of the persons employed in the non-agriculture sector. It has a crucial role in employment creation. In most countries, the major part of employment can be found in MSE.

These enterprises are also important in unlocking the capacity of entrepreneurship and providing for dynamism in an economy. In most countries, the drastic women workers and employers in micro enterprises is much higher that their share among larger enterprises 60 percent in Nepal. The business environment in Nepal is not only more costlier, but also protect micro enterprises from competition. Rising under unemployment has encouraged people to opt for MSE sector, but it may be able to absorb only a small segment of people coming into the labour market in absence of requisite skills.

Right incentive schemes can make an activity competitive and create a foundation for growth. The basic available are the tax incentives to cottage industries, incentives to promote technology, capital goods and inputs at nominal import duties. However, MSEs generally cannot avail these incentives because they do not import inputs and capital goods directly. There are many diverse support services available in the country at present.

The regulatory requirements for MSEs generally prove to be burdensome to smaller enterprises operated by less educated persons with lesser access to resources. Likewise, legislation requirements are also not clear and have a large segment of micro-enterprises that is not registered.

Better performance on the ease of doing business is associated with more jobs and conversely, where regulations are costly and burdensome, businesses are more likely to operate in the informal economy, remaining very small and creating few decent jobs. There are examples

where, in aggregate, successful regulatory reforms demonstrate significant pay-offs for job creation.

The low levels of protection coverage of labour and labour related laws are an important part of the problem of the decent work deficit in the MSEs as they are related directly to shortcomings in the levels of income i.e. minimum wages, social protection and job security. While the content of the law may be problematic for MSEs in some cases, it is very common that complicated administrative procedures for compliance are more of a burden than the law itself.

It is, therefore, important to simplify the application of labour and labour-related laws by eliminating unnecessary fees, reducing the number and complexity or simplifying the contents of the forms, removing the need for legal verifications and advice. Reviewing the periodicity of cyclical reporting and data collection and strengthening the capacities and transparency of law enforcement agencies, including the elimination of corrupt practices.

The liberalisation of the economy in 1990s has clearly spurred private sector growth. The importance of micro and small enterprises including the home based work was heavily relying on the need to job creation and output growth is now widely accepted in both developing and least developed countries. In Nepal, there is a lack of coherent micro and small enterprise development strategies which account the three dimensions of enterprise evolution (i.e., start-up, survival and growth) We should also identify the characteristics of MSEs in their various stages of evolution, which is another important contributory factor.

In the absence of a coherent policy framework for enterprise development, globalisation and the opening of domestic markets as part of liberalisation policies has had an adverse impact on the enterprise structure and in developing countries and LDCs. In particular, the products of home based works are continuing to lose ground in terms of their competitiveness. Since, these home based workers mostly women produces the niche products. So the focus of these products from collection from each producer should be focused on niche markets.

There is a lack of coherent micro and small enterprise development strategies.
Sri Lankan troops clash with Tigers

The ongoing solidarity fast in support of Irom Chanu Sharmila's struggle to repeal Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) has broadened its agenda congruent with the declarations of past New Delhi (2005) and Lahore (2006) Peaceful South Asia Conventions — demand for a Free Burma and Free Aung San Suu Kyi.

Aung San Suu Kyi is imprisoned under the 1975 State Protection Act in Myamar (Burma), which grants the government the power to imprison persons for up to five years without a trial. She has been intermittently under arrest of one kind or the other since 1990. From Churu to Srinagar — the iron lady of Manipur in India, has been on a continuous fast since 2000 demanding repeal of AFSPA. Despite the restrictions of house arrest, Aung San Suu Kyi continued to campaign for democracy, similar to from Sharmila, who has been under confinement and steadfastly protesting against AFSPA since past 7 years now. Filmmaker Mahesh Bhatt has endorsed this fast along with hundreds of other Countless people are fasting for five days (13-17 September) in Keishampat junction, Imphal, Manipur, to lobby more support to the anti-AFSPA campaign.

The PPF has announced that its chairperson Ms Benazir Bhutto will return to Pakistan on October 18, 2007 and she will land at Karachi airport. TV channels showed PPP workers celebrating in all the big cities of the country, displaying the party’s grassroots loyality to her leadership. Ms Bhutto says that she has not been able to reach any understanding with the Musharraf government, and this has been confirmed by the Information Minister, Mr Muhammad Ali Durrani in Islamabad. The government says Ms Bhutto will not be deported like Mr Nawaz Sharif but that she would have to face the corruption and misuse of power cases pending against her in this country. Ms Bhutto counters by saying that the cases have dragged on for years since the last Sharfi government initiated them and that she has not been convicted in any of them so far. This being so, she is likely to come to Pakistan among her supporters in the run-up to the general election and also present herself before the newly independent judiciary for justice. She says the matter of her becoming prime minister for a third time will be resolved in due course by the new parliament.

Ms Bhutto's return: What will be different?

Significant others from different countries in the world have signed up on www.ashaparivar.org to fast for varying durations from September 13 to support the campaign. The launch of this five days solidarity fast came two days after the 'Apurba Lop' observed Anti-army Act Day on September 11 here to mark the completion of five decades of the act in the North-East. The present UPA Government had constituted the Justice Jeevan Reddy Commission in 2004 to review AFSPA in response to an intensive campaign led by 'Apurba Lop'. By 1988, Burma was burgeoning with pro-democracy movement, fueled by the energy and idealism among the country's young people. There were demonstrations against the repressive, one-party socialist government, Aung San Suu Kyi was drawn into the political fray. The present UPA Government had constituted the Justice Jeevan Reddy Commission in 2004 to review AFSPA in response to an intensive campaign led by 'Apurba Lop'. By 1988, Burma was burgeoning with pro-democracy movement, fueled by the energy and idealism among the country's young people. There were demonstrations against the repressive, one-party socialist government, Aung San Suu Kyi was drawn into the political fray.
Ingo Wagler

Nepal, in its current political transition does not know how it will look like at dawn. Out on streets these days one frequently hears the call for a good and strong leader which reflects the desire to end the lasting uncertainty. The leader of the nation SP Koirala is seen as dying one, what is probably his most important asset of credibility. But who else then, Prachanda, Deuba? The unasked question remains: ‘Who will become the new king’?

Nepal’s desire for a good and strong leader who will reoccupy the vacant position as the head of the nation might be understandable but its fundamentally counterproductive for the quest of establishing democratic rule. Doing away with monarchy and having the choice between various leaders simply because it was the ‘king’ nor the leader deserves uncritical trust. Only a system that limits the role of the leader to a defined mandate in order to prevent autocratic excess. Doing away with monarchy and having the choice between various leaders simply because it was the ‘king’ nor the leader deserves uncritical trust. Only a system that limits the role of the leader to a defined mandate in order to prevent autocratic excess.

Amnesty and maintains accountability to the people have to become active, articulate their interests and dictate them to their leaders. In this respect, the anticipation of the principle of equality remains in a highly blissful, and unifying factor that will represent the nation GP Koirala is seen as dying one. In fact, Nepal had to experience this form of stability extensively, which led to a steady increase in conflicting pressures to the point when it could not be suppressed anymore, with well known consequences. Therefore, the call for unity-leadership is not more than a fallback to old habits of being subjected instead of utilising the opportunity to become an active subject. The fundamental strength of democracies is that conflicts are not being suppressed but released and eventually solved within an institutional framework that does not know the inequality of supremacy.

Nepal has already voted for democracy and after the half hearted hybrid of constitutional monarchy and automatic party democracy has miserably failed, the time has come do away with unsustainable concepts of general leadership. The stabilising and unifying factor that will represent the future Nepal-democracy must not be tied to a personalised leadership. Only then could Nepal become a rare role model for overcoming a symptomatic tradition of autocratic leadership which has in the end caused much more trouble than stability.

(Acharya Mahayogi Sridhar Rana Rinpoche)

Marshland Flowers

Such states can be easily produced and are not considered as either enlightenment or even near to it.

Acharya Mahayogi Sridhar Rana Rinpoche

Here we are talking about genuine high level Samadhis of pure awareness by itself where the person remains absorbed in it for six, 12 or 24 hours without taking a single breath. Even such an experience is not considered as having penetrated the veil of ignorance, what to speak about watered down, thoughtless states of clear awareness where the person is not even in the first Dhyana level. Such experiences of thoughtless awareness by itself without entering into various levels of Samadhis are even further away from the Buddhist enlightenment. Such states can be easily produced and are not considered as either enlightenment or even near to it. In fact, according to all Buddhist traditions especially the Mahayana, such states are considered dangerous and if the correct view is not present, it can be even detrimental to the process of enlightenment.

The great Siddhāraṃsa of Tibet, Sakyapa Ponit said cultivation of such pure awareness without the correct view can cause the person to be reborn either in the formless Deva realm or as Naga etc. To be reborn in the formless Deva realm (Arupa Deva Loka) is considered as the worst birth for a Bodhisattva as once born there, s/he cannot help sentient beings from 10,000 to 80,000 Kalpas. In that state, the yogi remains in a highly blissful, and formless state which can be easily mistaken for the non-dual state from anywhere between 10,000 Kalpas to up to 80,000 Kalpas.

There are others types of Samadha, which are conducive to deep Samadhi that take you to the state of super-consciousness, like meditating on the inner sounds called Nada yoga or in the Shanta Parampara of India as Sabad Surati yoga. There are four states of clear awareness where the person hears various types of sounds like the humming of the bumble bee, the sound of the bell, drums, thunder and the sound of Om (Pranava) and so on. At the Parā level, all sounds subside and only the infinite pure awareness of itself or super-consciousness remains. Likewise another well-known method is to concentrate on the light/sparks of the like seen between the eye-brows. This loc has various stages similar to different levels of Samadhis etc until one reaches the infinite light of the mind or Atman as non-Buddhists would call it.

All of these methods are only variates of Samadhi and, according to Buddhism, these states neither are enlightenment nor do they produce enlightenment by practicing them for a long time. This statement is true of the famous Kundalini yoga methods too; which also ends in the super-conscious state of pure awareness by itself being an absolute infinite. That one can experience such thoughtless awareness through various methods of Samadhi is well-known to Buddhists and is not alien at all to Buddhist literature. However, Buddhism neither regards such a state as enlightenment or liberation nor regards such states or production of such states over and over again for longer and longer periods as productive of enlightenment.

Let me repeat again, that any method that only absorbs the mind on anything belongs to the Samadhi type of meditation. And Samadha meditations, no matter how extraordinarily different or different from other Samadhas, are not enough to attain enlightenment. In this context, Buddhism is very emphatic that only the types of meditation that probe into the mode of existence of all phenomena (Dhammas) to gain insight can cut through the “innate ignorance” (Sahaja Agyan) and thus destroy that ignorance. And this type of meditation (and there are many techniques here) is called Vipassana in Sanskrit, Vipsanasa in Pali, Lhag thong in Tibetan and Kuan in Chinese and Kan in Japanese.

(To be continued.)

(Sridhar Rinpoche is a Vajrayana Master)
Irish champion

I write for ordinary people, someone who wouldn’t require a dictionary to read my stories.

Yuyutsu RD Sharma

“...I didn’t write to make money, there’s no money to be made in the literary novels,” said the Irish novelist and story writer, Harte. He talked at length about the freedom of being a writer and how the publishers commissioning the writers to produce novels curtail the freedom of a writer.

Harte was born in Killeenduff, near Eastley, Co Sligo, Ireland. When he was nine years old his family moved to Lanesboro, Co Longford, where his father worked for Bord-na-Mona. At the age of eighteen, he came to Dublin. He later took up a job on the Dublin docks. He has worked as a bus conductor, a courier, a laboratory technician, an executive officer in the Civil Service, a teacher and a school principal.

Active in Irish literature for several decades and well known, Harte sees similarities between poetry and fiction, especially short story. He thinks that a short story has been an artifact similar to a poem. “A short story goes straight to the imagination and follows all possible line of development like a poem does.” In short story everything is specific, everything wrapped up. “I get tremendous satisfaction after finishing a well crafted short story.”

“Irish Story is not very good, in Ireland respect for short story is nil. It’s only those people who have vested interest in story who care for story. No magazine publishes a good story. The big publishing groups are not interested in short story,” said he. I was surprised to hear such words from a writer of nation that has been a champion of short story for decades; and has produced most famous story writers like Oliver Goldsmith, Frank O’Connor, James Joyce and Liam O’Flaherty. Harte refers to sixties movement of stories and points out there has been no exciting development in short stories in recent times. “There’s a lack of experiment and ingenuity that leaves it so poverty stricken.”

John McGahern, Liam O’Flaherty, Bernard Malamud, Borges and Kafka remain Harte’s favorite writer. He admires South Asian story and seems intrigued by its lively texture and how it employs folklore and mythology in the narrative. In Eastern Europe short story is very popular and still alive, discorns Harte.

Harte who teaches story writing at various universities and creative writing centers in Ireland believes you can’t give talent to your students, you only develop them. Though novel is on the top in terms of readership, what thrives in Ireland is poetry in Irish language.

He believes writing a short story is like beating his head against a stone wall. “When I shape meaning out of my struggle and get a good story, I am content. I am content even if I get just one reader, even if there’s only a small readership. I write for ordinary people, someone who wouldn’t require a dictionary to read my stories. In Ireland short stories have select readerships; it’s like writing a poem to a select audience.”

The writer can be reached at riter@yuyutsu.de

---

Insight

By Sushma Amatya

---

Mro girl in her home, Chittagong hill tracts, Bangladesh.
Six of the top 10 finalists of Indian Idol, Charu, Deepali, Emon, Ankita, Parleen and Chang during a concert in Kathmandu on Saturday. Nepali viewers are keenly watching the Indian Idol contest where Nepali-origin singer Prashant Tamang has reached the final.

Enthusiasm has gripped lakhs from Shillong and Darjeeling to get Amit Paul or Prashant Tamang voted as India’s next singing sensation.

Sikkim CM Pawan Chamling was quoted in Himalaya Darpan, a local daily, on Tuesday as saying he’ll do “much more than any government” to see Tamang, a fellow Nepali, beat the competition. Immediately after the CM’s announcement, Anant Rai, a businessman in Gangtok, announced he’ll give Rs 1 crore to fund the Darjeeling singer’s campaign. Nearly 10,000 students came out in a raucous procession in neighbouring Kurseong on Wednesday chanting “win-Prashant” slogans.

Asked if cadres of Gorkha National Liberation Front and sundry other outfits which fought a bitter war in the 80s against the West Bengal government for Gorkhaland are putting pressure, as alleged by some, on residents to support Prashant, the secretary of the singer’s fan club in Kurseong, Pradip Pradhan, said, “Everyone is doing it on their own. The allegations are baseless. Instead, we hear from outsiders settled in Meghalaya that they are being threatened with expulsion if they don’t vote for Amit.”

But Pradhan agreed that the Darjeeling hills are afire. “Pahad ma aagte laage ko cha (The mountains are raging),” he said from Kurseong, the small town that quietly nestled between Siliguri and Darjeeling until Prashant, a village boy from Tung Sung tea estate who’s now a constable in the Calcutta Police, reached the final of the show. Now the place, known for little more than the mushroom-like sprouting of its English schools, is throbbing with feverish anticipation and tension.

The Amit Paul fever in India’s north-eastern states is equally scalding. Even as Lapang reminded the singer of the laurels Kapil Dev brought to India and said he had similar expectations, Purno Sangma, the former Lok Sabha Speaker, said, “Amit has already created history. He is the pride of Meghalaya and the whole of Northeast. We are proud of him and I personally appeal to all citizens of Meghalaya and Northeast to vote for Amit generously and make him the next Indian Idol.”

Everybody, regardless of political affinity, is pitching in. Laban MLA Jopsimon Phanbuh has donated three PCOs for the purpose of free voting. Meghalaya urban affairs minister Paul Lyngdoh has given out three, Mawlai MLA PT Sawkmie 20 and Pynthorumkhrah MLA AL Hek five.

In all this frenzy, what binds the people of the two regions in their latest obsession to “win” is the distinct awareness of being an alien in their own country. Debojit Saha, a former Voice of India winner from Assam, summed up the sentiment when he said, “Amit Paul and I are both from the Northeast, a region hardly known to the outside world. We know what hurdles we have crossed to reach our desired destinations.”

SAVE Rs. 6000/- as low as 1,350/- per month

(For Limited Period Only)