Prime Minister G P Koirala may have many virtues, but propriety is not one of them. Back from India after attending 14th SAARC summit, he is now accused of having breached simple norms of a leader and of having committed impropriety. The list of such acts is long, but the gravest of them was asking journalists on foreign soil not to address Gyanendra as “King.” “It might make some people including Maoists happy. But it was an act of treachery and impropriety,” a Supreme Court advocate fumed.

The language that Koirala spoke has not been appreciated even in his own party circle, but King Gyanendra’s unpopularity and anti-democratic credentials, apparently makes many people reluctant to criticise Koirala.

But no one supports the PM either. He is ridiculed even in the bureaucratic circles where his criticism until a few days ago was almost taboo. A source in Shital Niwas said, “His actions give enough space for suspicion. He asked his own foreign secretary, his advisors and others to get out of the room when a senior dignitary from India visited Kathmandu after Koirala became the Prime Minister.”

Koirala’s Delhi visits in the past have also brought him into controversy, beginning with him signing the Tanakpur agreement, and later misleading parliament by saying he only signed a ‘Memorandum of Understanding.’

Apart from what he said about the King, and his conscious efforts at keeping his own Foreign Minister, Sahana Pradhan, away from all important business, especially during the meeting with Indian dignitaries is also being taken as lack of minimum courtesy. In all his meetings with Indian leaders, Prime Minister chose the company of his daughter Sujata. Sahana was to be seen nowhere. After returning, she is believed to have lodged a strong protest with Koirala as well as CPN-UML provoking UML General Secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal to suspect ‘Congress—Maoist’ secret deal against his party.

Some of the think-tanks in India including South Asia security expert, Prof S D Muni who is close to Nepali Congress and Maoists believe that UML does not want the monarchy scrapped. “And Koirala probably wanted to give his anti-monarchy image from India, under the influence of those quarters,” a UML leader said. He added, “We will be publicly speaking about the humiliating treatment meted out to our leader Sahana Pradhan by Koirala once we discuss the issue in the party.”

Koirala was not happy with the nomination of Sahana Pradhan as Foreign Minister by the UML, but had to give in as the ministry fell in the UML quota.
Amassadorial Tug O’ War

Shital Niwas sources claim that PM is now in favour of invoking parliamentary hearing only for filling-up the constitutional posts.

The tussle between Prime Minister G P Koirala and Speaker Subhash Nembang over the appointment of Ambassadors to more than a dozen countries appears headed for a major show-down. The Prime Minister seems to be keen on by-passing the provision of the interim constitution which makes it mandatory for the Special Committee of the House headed by the Speaker to confirm (or reject) the government nominees for the ambassadorial appointment.

“Violation of the constitutional provision may not send the right signal,” Speaker Nembang is believed to have told the PM recently. That amounted to the Speaker not endorsing PM’s suggestion to bypass the hearing and confirmation by the House Committee. “The emerging tussle is likely take the form of a confrontation between the executive and the legislature if Koirala insists upon skipping parliamentary hearing,” a Joint Secretary in Foreign Ministry told newsfront.

Koirala seems to have already changed the earlier list of Ambassadors with Murari Sharma replacing that of Bhagirath Bansal for the United Kingdom. Similarly, the Government is also contemplating sending Surya Kiran Gurung who holds the status of special class officer in his capacity as the Secretary General in parliamentary secretariat as Ambassador to Moscow, where normally a Joint Secretary rank officer is posted.

Shital Niwas sources claim that PM is still keen on invoking parliamentary hearing only for filling-up the constitutional posts, and since ambassadors do not fall in that category the House hearing can be done away with. “The Speaker, despite his reservations, did not challenge the Government when Koirala appointed Ajay Prasad Singh as Chairman of the Commission for delimitation of parliament constituencies in Terai with the rank of a Supreme Court Judge. “As the issue was urgent and the commission’s tenure was only two weeks, the Speaker did not object. But now Koirala seems to use that as precedence for other appointments,” parliament secretariat source said.

In fact, the provision of the mandatory hearing and confirmation by the House Committee came in the way of appointing Chief of the National Human Rights Commission, Former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Bithnath Nath Upadhyay, is believed to have agreed to head the commission on request of the PM, but he refused to appear before the House committee, according to the sources in the PM’s office. “I am not going to appear before the House committee and tell members that I am qualified for the post of NHRC Chief, and therefore please confirm me,” Upadhyay is said to have told Koirala.

The ongoing row between Koirala and the Speaker, however, is likely to delay all pending appointments especially in the diplomatic services as well as the constitutional bodies. A Shital Niwas source divulgued that the confusion regarding as to whom the envos coming to Nepal should submit their credentials has been sorted out, only after a couple of ambassador designates had to go back disappointed. Canada’s ambassador designate was one such victim of confusion. “Now it will be submitted to the PM in his capacity as the Head of the State. And the first to do that will be new Chinese Ambassador who is due to arrive here on April 11,” a leader of a Shital Niwas faction said.

Royalty watch

Will King Gyanendra come out with the customary address to the nation on Nepali New Year day on April 14? Breaking or continuing with the tradition will be viewed as politically significant.

There are intense speculations about different possible scenarios - the King might declare, almost in continuity with the one message he delivered on Democracy Day on Feb 19, that he owns moral responsibility for everything good or bad that happened during his direct rule, but that was a sequel to the failure on the part of the political parties. No one thinks that he would declare abdication, but what many still desire is to hear that he could at least admit to the nation now, that the takeover was wrong and that he was waiting for the people’s verdict on the fate of the monarchy.

In the event of any speech that the political parties might find offending, a resolution to remove him might be moved in the parliament. Maoists have already given enough hints that they would not tolerate any positivity by the king. There are speculations that the palace is weighing the cost and benefit of ‘total silence’ as well.

Beauty and Mahara

Being in the Government calls for many compromises, it seems. No one would have realised it more than the new Information and Communication Minister, K B Mahara. From day one, he was clear about one thing and that was, beauty contest should not take place and the television and radio under him should not give the coverage even if it was held. But just the opposite happened. Beauty contest sponsored by Dabur took place. The Government police even applied force to chase away those, mostly Maoists, who had gathered around Birendra International Convention Centre at Baneeshwar, the venue of the contest. Mahara even had to pass his party workers who were wounded when the police used force. And he quietly ignored his party colleagues, led by Minister Hishila Yami who went public saying beauty contest is nothing more or less than body-show and its commercialisation.

Minister Mahara’s dilemma began when he was shown the long term contract between Dabur Valika, the sponsor and Nepal Television. Any breach of contract, by any side would mean incurring huge penalty. Mahara chose to let Nepal Television telecast the contest live in defiance to the contract rather than having Government or his Ministry to pay the penalty as a defaulter.

Familiar Bed-Fellows

They may not be strange bedfellows, but if Dr Shekhar Koirala, Prime Minister G P Koirala’s powerful nephew, can be trusted, the Nepal Congress and Congress (D) will be united in a month’s time. That would mean G P Koirala and Sher Bahadur Deuba coming together, with the latter either as the Working President or as the first Vice President. The possible hierarchy in the united Congress will also ensure that Sushil Koirala will be third in the line of succession to the elder Koirala.

“Yes, Prime Minister is very serious about it and wants to expedite the process,” Dr Shekhar Koirala told newsfront. There is, however, neither any formal committee nor proposal moved by the two political parties for the unification. The Nepal Congress had split in May 2002 at the height of Koirala-Deuba tussle. But there are basic differences in the approach of the two parties. The Nepal Congress (D) wants certain issues like ‘JAMADAMA’ (Janata, Madihali, Daiit and Mahila) empowerment under a common formula; and Nepal Congress is keenere to formalise the merger and settle the issues
Still not enough
Occupying nearly one fourth of the parliament and cabinet berths will not qualify Maoists to avail training and orientation course conducted by the United States or any of the state funded agencies.

To qualify, the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoists (CPN-M) needs to be taken off the terrorist list by the U.S. Government. As a result, the Nepal Chapter of the National Democratic Initiative (NDI), a U.S. Foundation, will not be inviting Maoist parliamentarians for any of the programmes it conducts. NDI has run a series of programmes for training Nepali parliamentarians on parliamentary rules, business, conduct and conventions.

At loggerheads
What has come to be known as Civil Society, especially in the context of the April uprising, seems to have suffered a vertical split. Two of its stalwarts, Dr. Devendra Raj Pandey and Krishna Pahadi, have parted company.

Pandey and his followers within the society have long been accused of siding with the Maoists and the Home Minister, while the other group insisted that over-identification with one group will be suicidal for the vibrant civil society. For the last two months, Dr. Pandey has avoided participating in the meetings conducted by the Human Rights and Peace Society (HURPES).

Political grapevines suggest that two leaders clearly had divergent views on the question of joining the Interim Government. “As a civil society, we will continue to go to the people, we are for peace and human rights and we are opposed to anarchy,” Pahadi told newsfront, adding “if one does not participate in the routine civil society activities, it is escaping responsibility.”

All pervasive conspiracy
Maoist Chief Prachanda’s list of conspirators is ever expanding. The latest addition to his list seems to be Ian Martin, Special Representative of the U.N Secretary General. Hours after his meeting with Martin on Saturday, Prachanda announced publicly that the U.S. and Western countries, and now U.N want to postpone the June elections saying an early election would lack credibility. “This is a conspiracy, and all should unite to defeat it,” he said.
Capital crime

An efficient law and order system is the basic necessity of any society to grow. In a country where people feel insecure, where crime becomes the rule of the day rather than an exception, its growth potential will be badly hindered.

Any Government or machinery of State, like the police ends up becoming abhorred when they cannot fulfill the core responsibility entrusted to them. Nepal Police that bore its share of lives lost in the years of conflict, was simply not trained well enough to combat what many constituents of the present Government called, ‘the terrorists’. appears still ineffective when faced with the current security crisis being faced by the people.

In a modern democratic State, the police, that is run by the taxpayers money is expected to play an effective role by preventing crimes, investigating the ones that take place, ferreting out criminals and prosecuting them under the rule of law. In Kathmandu, in the past 11 months, the crime rate has shot up and the police have failed miserably to apprehend the criminals and to check the crime rate. The police force appears to have turned into a pocket-borough of the Home Minister where the decision makers appear busy politicking than paying attention to their duties.

Less than a decade ago, Nepal Police had declared that Nepal would be the safest capital in South Asia but today burglary, murder, crimes on women and children are rampant. The recent case of burglary in a diplomat’s house in broad daylight exemplifies how weak the hands of the keepers of law and order have become. About the same time, there was an announcement of the capture of a few allegedly local agents of an international crime syndicate. It is but obvious that they should be taken to court with enough evidence and prosecuted.

The alarming growth of crimes seems to indicate not only political interference but also points to a political, police and criminal nexus. Politically speaking, this may have a direct bearing on the elections to the constituent assembly. Accountability to this situation has to be borne by those holding the responsible positions. The Prime Minister owes an explanation to the people on this and needs to take firm decisions on how to check the deterioration, before the whole system fails completely.

If ten men want to enter a house, and only nine find their way in, the tenth must not say:

‘This is what God ordained’. He must find out what his own shortcoming was.

Beloved lives

Deceived by the voice of desire you are unaware the Beloved lives in the core of your heart. Stop the noise and you will hear His voice in the silence.

The Intellectual Quest

The intellectual quest is exquisitely like pearls and coral. But it is not the same as the spiritual quest. The spiritual quest is on another level altogether. Spiritual wine has a subtler taste.

Visit the Sick

Visit the sick, and you will heal yourself.

The II person may be a Sufi master. And your kindness will be repaid in wisdom.

Even if the sick person is your enemy, You will still benefit.

For kindness has the power to transform sworn enemies into firm friends.

For kindness has the power to transform sworn enemies into firm friends.

Even if the sick person is your enemy, You will still benefit.

For kindness has the power to transform sworn enemies into firm friends.

If there is healing of bad feeling,

And if there is healing of bad feeling,

Sworn enemies into firm friends.

For kindness has the power to transform sworn enemies into firm friends.

Even if the sick person is your enemy, You will still benefit.

For kindness has the power to transform sworn enemies into firm friends.

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Love is the cure

Love is the cure, for your pain will keep giving birth to more pain until your eyes constantly exult love as effortlessly as your body yields its scent.
Nepal finds itself in an enviable position to not only advance overall China-South Asia relations but to serve as a key player in helping to further ‘globalise’ the South Asian landscape.

The People’s Republic of China has successfully established institutional linkages with virtually all regional organisations around the world encompassing ASEAN, the European Union, MERCOSUR, the Africa Union, APEC, the Arab League and Pacific Island nations. The truly global span of China’s attention to regional structures is further manifested in the environs of Nepal itself, with China having obtained observer status at the 14th SAARC Summit meeting in New Delhi. The importance of the South Asian region to Chinese foreign policy, in addition to its economic and trading interests, cannot be underestimated.

South Asia is not only the world’s fastest growing region (with more than 7.5% GDP growth over the decade), but it is also home to one third of humanity and a burgeoning middle class, and five nations of the region share a common border with China. Bangladesh would appear to be sort of the sixth with its access to China via India and Myanmar. Migration has occurred across these borders for hundreds of years which seem to further substantiate the need for a larger China-South Asia ambit in contemporary times.

Unfortunately, China-South Asia relations have lagged considerably in comparison to China’s embrace of essentially all of distant Africa in one sweep (in the China-Africa Summit) and similarly with seven Pacific Island countries in 2006 (at the China-Pacific Island Countries Economic Development and Cooperation Forum), not to mention China’s now robust engagement with ASEAN. As China’s cooperation with South Asia accelerates in what appears inevitable, it may be an opportune time to reflect on what role Nepal may play in this process and how it may simultaneously advance its own bilateral relations with Beijing.

The geographic position of Nepal lends her a great capability to serve as a sort of ‘window’ or ‘conduit’ for both the larger South Asian region and China to conduct substantive exchange and interaction for mutually beneficial purposes. Nepal shares an approximately 1, 440 kilometer border with China and nearly 1, 700 kilometers with India. Nepal can be traversed north-south as the crow flies in merely a 150 kilometers, a spectacular range that touches on the ‘Hindi heartland’ on the south to a colossal Chinese state which includes a distinct Central Asian character represented by the Tibet Autonomous Region on the north, with a diverse medley in between.

Moreover, Nepal is separated from Bangladesh by only 15 kilometers of Indian (West Bengal) territory, and similarly from Bhutan by only 88 kilometers of Sikkim, which renders Nepal second only to India perhaps in its ability to straddle a significant portion of South Asia at one end and Central and East Asia in the form of China at the other end. Nepal therefore finds itself in an enviable position to not only advance overall China-South Asia relations but to serve as a key player in helping to further ‘globalise’ the South Asian landscape.

The about-turn taken by Nepal in recent months towards a peaceful and inclusive future by way of a largely internally-driven peace process, plus Nepal’s generally undisturbed religious and communal harmony combined with the country’s universally excellent relations with all its South Asian compatriots and with China, is reason enough for Nepal to assume active leadership in promotion of a dialogue that is bound to acquire increasing relevance over time.

The success of China’s engagement strategy with African and Pacific Island regions illustrates the ‘win-win’ and non-zero sum equations that have emerged, in addition to furthering mutual understanding and arguably producing intricate linkages that are vitally important to staying off conflict between states and allowing for a ‘give and take’ mechanism to address tensions when they do surface.

The recently held China-Africa Summit in Beijing was a reminder of this: China had unveiled US$5 billion in preferential loans and credits, doubled aid to Africa by 2009, revealed ambitious targets of raising Sino-Africa trade to US$100 billion by 2010, signed commercial contracts and agreements worth US$1.9 billion with the continent covering natural resources, infrastructure, finance, technology and communications.

An important passage of the declaration at the conclusion of the Summit indicated that “We propose to enhance South-South cooperation and North-South dialogue to promote balanced, coordinated and sustainable development of the global economy.” The Summit also allowed China and Africa to express their stance on important international and regional issues, and to support each other and closely coordinate in international affairs to safeguard the interest of developing countries.

It may be argued that larger than the sum total of the various critiques leveled against the Summit is the underlying spirit that China and African nations seemed to embrace as a sort of affirmation of Article 51 of the United Nations Charter which states that “Nothing in the Charter precludes the existence of regional arrangements or agencies for dealing with such matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security as are appropriate... provided that such arrangements or agencies and their activities are consistent with the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations.”

**Koirala** is a member of the China Study Center.
Troubling water

Is the minister opposed to the principle of privatisation or is she trying to earn a pro-employee image with an eye on the coming election...?

The minister in charge of water supply, Minister Hisila Yami, has come under scrutiny for her handling of the water supply agency. While the previous government had all the water supply management under the state run utility agency, the minister in charge of water supply, within days of formation of the interim Government, decided to hire a private contractor to manage the water supply. The minister, the minister in charge of water supply, besides mounting the protests, cut off water supply to important places including the ministers’ residence.

In their view, hiring a private agency would increase the cost of water to general public. Within days of formation of the interim Government, the minister in charge of water supply, who represents CPN-Maoists announced that she would not give in to privatisation of Nepal’s water supply management. Let us not forget that the previous Government had all the present constituents except the Maoists when the decision to hire the private contractor was taken.

This is not a simple matter and needs a detailed analysis. Was the minister trying to project the independence of her party by taking a different stand than the other seven political parties? Was she simply trying to earn the support of the protesting employees by acceding to their demands? Does she have a better knowledge about the water supply agency than others? Can she ensure that the agency under the Government would produce a better outcome than a private contractor? Is she opposed to the principle of privatisation or is she trying to earn a pro-employee image with an eye on the coming election to the Constituent Assembly?

Considering the present state of affairs, and the fact that the Government is formed under common Minimum Programme, it is imperative for every Nepali official, especially the minister, to make clear and unambiguous statements. It is the inherent duty of all coalition partners to inform the people, in the best possible manner, of their plan of action for carrying out the constituent assembly elections. After all, Nepal as well as the international community would like to reassure themselves that the conduct of constituent assembly elections would be free and fair.

Although the preferred state in this regard would be to conduct elections without the presence of any regional or international election monitoring groups, similar to what South Africa achieved from just three general elections since the dismantling of apartheid, the present state of mistrust between political parties and weak bureaucracy in Nepal does not instill enough confidence yet. Nevertheless, it is of utmost priority and importance that the upcoming elections be conducted in a free and fair atmosphere for the permanent resolution of major issues facing the nation today. It’s therefore expected that Ministers refrain from playing politics on vital issues like supply of drinking water.

Let us give benefit of doubt to the minister. May be in all probability, she made that announcement with a view of resolving the problem of water supply, without which it could have only added to the existing issues hindering the successful conduct of CA elections. But, regardless of the ideological and operational differences between the coalition partners, the present government must try to act as a unified unit guided by the basic common programs agreed between them. The minister’s individual approach like in the water deal case, only go against that spirit. Although timely preparations are required to get along with development agendas in the political, economic as well as social fields, it might be too hard to come up with development plans at this stage except taking up of the urgent issue of rehabilitation of the internally displaced people and construction of basic infrastructure damaged in the conflict. Even there, lack of firm commitment on the part of the CPN-Maoists to follow the norms of civil political party. For that matter, need to denounce violence and stop all illegal activities.

General state of peace and security all over the country is a prerequisite for the conduct of any election. The credibility of the government alone, a unified stance of coalition partners on policy approach is one fundamental requirement that can ensure the success of the CA elections. Encouraging all political parties and voters to take part in the mother of all elections in Nepal will be another important task.

(Bista is a development economist, works with Boao Forum for Asia in China.)

Promising the moon

Private Sector has brought drastic changes in the standard and quality of education

“A world class education with international curriculum,” Utens School, in Kathmandu, promises in its brochure. “We are trying to assimilate our values and western technology in teaching methodology,” Sudhir Kumar Jha, Principal of Chelsea international school advocates. “Our school is technically supported by Dr. Thomas Wittwer, University of Jena, Germany,” said Birendra Karki, the founder of St. Paul School.

In the past one-year, at least half a dozen schools promising global quality have come up in the country. Some have even started attracting students from some other countries. This might even reverse the trend of a large number of Nepali students going abroad for schooling each year. If the promises of international standard education are delivered here.

Each year, on an average, six thousand students go to Darjeeling, Dehradun, Nainital, or even down to South Chennai and other parts of India in search of quality education. Many others go abroad, mainly the United States, Australia and Netherlands. The amount of money spent on exploring education trips is enormous; some estimate it be around two billion Rupees a year. There is, however, no exact data available for this. Nepal’s conflict has had its own impact on education and the continued exodus. But with peace back and hopefully here to stay, initiatives are on to check that trend.

BN Sharma, Vice president of PABSON, said, “We are working out to establish SHARC model school, here in Kathmandu,” Around 10 thousands students go to India every year and at least 80 Crore Rupees go out from the country. Altogether, 125 students left for India this year alone from a single school, LRI School in Kathmandu. The school principal and founder, Shril Jani Panta said, “We can check this if we establish global quality institution here.”

Private Sector has brought drastic changes in the standard and quality of education, although the minister in charge of water supply, continues to face the accusation that their main motive is ‘profit.’ But there are hardly any effective initiatives to get these private schools to contribute towards creating a good environment across the country. “As lot of Cut situations. Not only America, Canada, Australia, UK, New Zealand, but even China has invited foreign investor in the education sector. That is something, which has created hope that Maoists joining Government in Nepal will not discourage the private sector already in the education sector.

There has been a vast change in teaching methods with many adopting the Montessori pattern. More practical and project works, yoga, meditation and brain storming activities are part of it so that learning becomes fun.

With suitable climate, quality and competitive rates promised, attracting foreign students may not be that difficult. “But for that we need hassle free policy from the Government,” said Principal Karki of St. Paul school. Chelsea Principal Jha goes a step further, “in collaboration with renowned international educational institutes, world class academic programs can start this moment, but the Government has to create an environment for foreign investor.”

And an effective law and order environment, a policy of no-interference in schools by the Government and political parties is the key to delivering the promise in the education sector.
Channelising riches

“Education is the key to freedom and empowerment”

At 72, Ullens now visits Nepal two to three times in a year. Having keen interest in education sector and children’s home, he is now exploring how quality education can be made more accessible to both who can and cannot pay for it.

Ullens have moved to Switzerland now, but their interest in Nepal, as well as China where he represented his company for years until early 2000 has not diminished.

way of helping Nepali children. She would spend most of her savings from her micro-projects on children sheltered in an orphanage. Mimi’s first visit and stay in Nepal brought her to close proximity with an American lady, Olga who has helped many Nepalis, mostly socio-educationally and economically deprived girls from western Nepal. The joy of helping has brought the three of them together as a team.

“Education is very important for the development of this country with so much potential”, said Guy. In Suresh Raj Sharma, Founder Vice Chancellor of Kathmandu University, he found an ideal partner. Guy now funds University’s Engineering Department and is very happy with the progress it has made. “Education is the key to freedom and empowerment”, he said.

It was again through Olga that he met in 1997 two young Nepalis, Som Paneru and Medini Lamichhane, who he calls future leaders in the education sector. He arranged to send and finance some bright young people as future teachers to Bank Street College in New York, so that they would come back and apply that philosophy of education in the school here.

“Medini did so well. Almost every one talked about him as an example in Bank Street,” said Ullens. Ullens have now started Ullens School at Satdobato with Som Paneru as the Chairman and Medini as the Principal. This, he hopes will one day be a model of excellence in learning. Ullens now plans to set up a center for training teachers with the quality of Bank Street; and recycle the teachers in public and private schools so that no area in Nepal is deprived of quality teachers.

“Of course, the Government schools should not be paying for this kind of training,” opined Ullens. The job has been entrusted to the Ullens School team to set up the teacher’s training school soon. Nepal and New York are so physically away from each other, but there are so many similarities. “He added that educational potentiality is one common factor and admitted that though there are uncertainties given political and other factors, the need for education transcends every barrier.

Ullens have moved to Switzerland now, but their interest in Nepal, as well as China where he represented his company for years until early 2000 has not diminished. He stayed on in Beijing to promote Chinese arts. “Chinese contemporary art is as good as anywhere in the world.” He organised exhibition of these arts called Paris-Beijing in different parts of France beginning with Paris in 2002 that gave a huge exposure to Chinese Arts and attracted a lot of interest. He has now bought a former armament factory in Beijing with a sprawling compound, which he is planning to convert into a World Glass Arts Centre. “I have got excellent cooperation from the Chinese authorities,” said Ullens excited about the centre where exhibition of top Chinese and world-class arts would be a regular phenomenon. Apart from other things, he also plans to set up a school for curators there. “It is really meant for students, architects, museum managers and collectors.”

Ullens’ interest in Nepal is however only philanthropic. To him being rich provides an opportunity to face challenges and fulfilling needs besides delivering wide range of services to the more deserving people. And Nepal fits in that category.
Niraj Sapkota

Because of total mismanagement, thought about reforming the police honest officers suffered as a result. Political parties for their career having no qualms taking favors from result, many police officers ended up of command of the organisation. As a focusing on strengthening the community to provide services to the organisation to build well-trained police is the backbone of democracy which guarantees efficient enforcement of law of the land. Building well-trained and professionally functioning police is crucial for any nation. Nepal Police has been the victim of bad politics for over a decade and half. The police force has been exploited a lot by the governing political parties ignoring the basic values of policing. They were forced to fight the Maoists insurgency without proper training and resources. Police managers were coerced to serve the interests of political parties and leaders instead of focusing on strengthening the organisation to provide services to the community.

The leaders in the service never paid attention to the organisational development but concentrated on their personal interests only. The seven-party Government that came to power last May politicised Nepal Police beyond any limits, increasing low morale and frustration in the entire police workforce. The internal mismanagement and political interference of the past one and half decade has brought the Nepal Police force on the verge of collapse. Absolute chaos and confusion reigns supreme. Promotions, transfers, training opportunities are assessed according to the recommendations of the government ministers and politicians. The chain of command, internal discipline and code of conduct of service has become absolutely ineffective. When the current Chief of Police tried to take up these issues with the Home Minister, he was forced to keep shut with a one liner, “You would not have made it to the top if merit and seniority counted.”

Internal oversight and investigation system has become almost non-existent. Officers committing crimes are not reprimanded. Once a very efficient inspectorate professional standard system is now almost unproductive. Just to cite an example, an inspector who tortured to death a detainee in Kathmandu Police station has not been brought to justice because of his connection with the politicians. In the past one week seven businessmen from the Kathmandu were kidnapped by criminal gangs and that was not reported to the police. Businessmen compromised and paid ransom to free their associates, simply because the people have lost their faith in the police and see no point in seeking their help.

Now the eight party Government should rethink and commit to do away with the past malpractices of massive political interference in Nepal Police for the larger interest of the nation. The upper rank managers of this organisation have been rendered absolutely useless as they are handicapped due to interference from top political levels. This organisation needs to be overhauled and restructured. The serve and corrupt upper stratum of this force, those who are sympathizers of their political patrons - who continue to resist changes within the organisation should be retired for the good of the country. Such regressive forces are blocking the normal career development of a majority of young officers and hindering the development of emerging leaders of the future. If it is high time the young generation is given a chance to salvage the institution that is at the verge of total collapse. The country should pay proper attention to ensure that her law enforcement agency is competent, impartial and diligent. Only by rebuilding the institution can the Government reassure its people that they are indeed in safe hands. The people need to be convinced that the police will deal with any challenges that may arise.

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The leaders in the service never paid attention to the organisational development but concentrated on their personal interests only. The seven-party Government that came to power last May politicised Nepal Police beyond any limits, increasing low morale and frustration in the entire police workforce. The internal mismanagement and political interference of the past one and half decade has brought the Nepal Police force on the verge of collapse. Absolute chaos and confusion reigns supreme. Promotions, transfers, training opportunities are assessed according to the recommendations of the government ministers and politicians. The chain of command, internal discipline and code of conduct of service has become absolutely ineffective. When the current Chief of Police tried to take up these issues with the Home Minister, he was forced to keep shut with a one liner, “You would not have made it to the top if merit and seniority counted.”

Internal oversight and investigation system has become almost non-existent. Officers committing crimes are not reprimanded. Once a very efficient inspectorate professional standard system is now almost unproductive. Just to cite an example, an inspector who tortured to death a detainee in Kathmandu Police station has not been brought to justice because of his connection with the politicians. In the past one week seven businessmen from the Kathmandu were kidnapped by criminal gangs and that was not reported to the police. Businessmen compromised and paid ransom to free their associates, simply because the people have lost their faith in the police and see no point in seeking their help.

Now the eight party Government should rethink and commit to do away with the past malpractices of massive political interference in Nepal Police for the larger interest of the nation. The upper rank managers of this organisation have been rendered absolutely useless as they are handicapped due to interference from top political levels. This organisation needs to be overhauled and restructured. The serve and corrupt upper stratum of this force, those who are sympathizers of their political patrons - who continue to resist changes within the organisation should be retired for the good of the country. Such regressive forces are blocking the normal career development of a majority of young officers and hindering the development of emerging leaders of the future. If it is high time the young generation is given a chance to salvage the institution that is at the verge of total collapse. The country should pay proper attention to ensure that her law enforcement agency is competent, impartial and diligent. Only by rebuilding the institution can the Government reassure its people that they are indeed in safe hands. The people need to be convinced that the police will deal with any challenges that may arise.

The eight party Government should rethink and commit to do away with the past malpractices of massive political interference in Nepal Police for the larger interest of the nation. Police institution was used to influence the elections, to bring down the Government and to collect donations from business communities for election purposes. Political party activists were recruited into the service that tarnished the discipline and chain of command of the organisation. As a result, many police officers ended up having no qualms taking favors from political parties for their career development; and the professional and honest officers suffered as a result. The successive Government never thought about reforming the police force. Because of total mismanagement Nepal Police was not successful in delivering the community service which resulted in them becoming unpopular in the eyes of the public. The leaders in the service never paid attention to the organisational development but concentrated on their personal interests only. The seven-party Government that came to power last May politicised Nepal Police beyond any limits, increasing low morale and frustration in the entire police workforce. The internal mismanagement and political interference of the past one and half decade has brought the Nepal Police force on the verge of collapse. Absolute chaos and confusion reigns supreme. Promotions, transfers, training opportunities are assessed according to the recommendations of the government ministers and politicians. The chain of command, internal discipline and code of conduct of service has become absolutely ineffective. When the current Chief of Police tried to take up these issues with the Home Minister, he was forced to keep shut with a one liner, “You would not have made it to the top if merit and seniority counted.”

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In its third decade of existence, SAARC needs to walk the talk

SAARC needs to walk the talk

Terrorism was on top of the agenda for many of the South Asian leaders.

Indian film idol Shah Ruk Khan and cricketing hero Sachin Tendulkar made it to the headline news in India as the two days that leaders from eight South Asian nations were gathered in the capital New Delhi to discuss better co-operation among the nations in this impoverished region.

Hour after hour 24/7 Indian news channels flashed news of Shah Rukh Khan was doll being unveiled at Madame Tussauds museum in London and the raging conflict between Sachin Tendulkar and his team mates and their coach Greg Chappell while the dignitaries attending the SAARC summit managed to get a few minutes of airtime in between. The print media too adopted a similarly step motherly treatment towards the summit pushing it out of the front pages in many publications.

One reason that SAARC leaders who represent more than one fifth of the world’s population get a lukewarm reception from the media and fail to attract the attention that they should be the group’s past record of being only a “talk shop”. “Will this be just another gabfest, all atmospherics and no substance, as has been the pattern with past meets?”, an editorial in The Hindustan Times queried on April 3, the second day of the summit.

The answer to that won’t be known immediately but as evident by listening to the leaders of the SAARC nations that they too are well aware of what ails the association. Its past record of talking the talk but failing to walk the talk is what the SAARC needs to address.

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The SAARC nations that they too are well aware of what ails the association. Its past record of talking the talk but failing to walk the talk is what the SAARC needs to address. terrorism was on top of the agenda for many of the South Asian leaders and on this all member nations agreed that terrorism was a threat to peace and security in the region and called for the implementation of international conventions relating to combating terrorism as well as the SAARC Convention on the Suppression of terrorism and for urgent conclusion of a comprehensive convention on international terrorism.

Another issue the leaders addressed was corruption which was viewed with serious concern and the leaders agreed to exchange information on national experience in combating corruption to effectively address the problem. This was included in the final declaration along with several ambitious pledges meant to overcome the challenges of poverty, disease, natural disasters and terrorism, better economic co-operation and a better life for the people of the region.

The problems are very real but the leaders of these countries have the political will to act on the pledges. While there is unprecedented economic growth in the regions, there is also growing turmoil. The India-Pakistan rift over Kashmir was the highlight on the sidelines of the summit with Pakistan once again stating that it as the key issue for better relations between the two neighbours. The induction of Afghanistan into SAARC was welcomed by all members but the opening remarks by Afghan president Hamid Karzai calling for a ban on extremism and terrorism in all forms and sources, including political sponsorship and financing, was an obvious veiled reference to the role of Pakistan whom the Afghan leader has accused of helping the Taliban to destabilise his government, an issue which received much media converge in India. Grappling among these countries, smaller nations like Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, the Maldives and Bhutan had to work hard to get their grievances heard.

The founding fathers of SAARC envisaged co-operation among the countries to work together towards finding solutions towards their common problems in a spirit of friendship, trust and mutual understanding and to the creation of an order based on mutual respect, equity and shared benefits. It is time to make a concerted and genuine effort to build on these principles if co-operation among the South Asian nations is to reach the levels to which organisations such as the European Union (EU) and ASEAN have climbed and have in turn reaped immense benefits to their people.

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh too adopted a similarly step motherly treatment towards the summit pushing it out of the front pages in many publications.

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Although much is made about the influence of the West and the poverty of the rest, what actually distinguishes the First World from the Third World condition is not economic wealth but the relative degree of order and purposive coherence they enjoy.

While the nature of the economy gives form to the state, it is also equally true that the substantive character of the state guides economic development, social form, and collective values. Some have even gone so far as to argue that a strong and competent state is a sine qua non for material advancement and social progress. A cursory glance at the European past and the Asian tigers today vindicates this relationship.

Thanks to a sustained campaign of external subversion, Nepal has never been allowed to mature into a stable and competent nation-state that can carve out its path to peace, progress, and dignity. Whenever a possibility for internal unity and harmony seemed imminent, a Fifth Column has been raised to scuttle our best hopes. It happened in 1990, 1990, and to borrow Yogi Berra’s unique expression, it is de’ jau all over again.

Thinking beyond boundaries

If we strictly limit ourselves to our national identity for a sense of security and belonging, then in the process we might lose our sensibility to the common bonds of humanity.

Therefore, one can say that dividing the world under different nations has its own pros and cons. The concept of nation which initially evolved to meet human desires for contact and cons. The concept of nation which initially developed to meet human desires for contact and common humanity and get caught in adverse conflicts between different national identities creating many problems for individuals. Today a citizen from a particular nation might feel a threat to his life only because of his nationality. Personally, I feel that even with my different set of culture and beliefs, I am very much similar to everyone else because underneath all these nationality labels of us are united by similar emotions. But we strictly limit ourselves to our national identity for a sense of security and belonging, then in the process we might lose our sensibility to the common bonds of humanity.
Nature striking back

Scientifically, it is readily accepted that global warming presents many problems for the environment and our society that serve as barriers from bringing forward a coherent and timely solution to the table. The recent push by the Supreme Court does not absolve the US from its past reticence on the issue, nor does the fact that the US has one of the highest emission rates excuse any of the world’s other industrial nations. The recent push brings many new challenges to the global agenda. One of the main issues from scientists and lobbyists has been the ongoing research and evidence that greenhouse gases and pollution arising from burning of fossil fuels for energy purposes have been linked inextricably to global warming. One of the ways that this is simply, the gradual warming of the planet’s temperature. Bly to the phenomenon of global warming. Global warming and in its simplest form, one can outline three main problems with trying to phase out fossil fuel usage that stand in the way of policy makers and activists. The first obvious and important is that our lives are becoming increasingly dependent on fossil fuels. Research and development for new sources of energy is ongoing, but reliable sources of clean, renewable energy are still not yet possible as a permanent solution in the immediate future. Another pressing issue is that the US is the world’s most involved in the energy sector has made it difficult for politicians to make any meaningful progress on the issue of phasing out fossil fuel usage, at least in the United States. The recent push by the Supreme Court does not absolve the US from its past reticence on the issue, nor does the fact that the US has the highest emission rates excuse any of the world’s other industrial nations. The recent push brings many new challenges to the global agenda. One of the main issues from scientists and lobbyists has been the ongoing research and evidence that greenhouse gases and pollution arising from burning of fossil fuels for energy purposes have been linked inextricably to global warming. One of the ways that this is simply, the gradual warming of the planet’s temperature. Bly to the phenomenon of global warming. Global warming and in its simplest form, one can outline three main problems with trying to phase out fossil fuel usage that stand in the way of policy makers and activists. The first obvious and important is that our lives are becoming increasingly dependent on fossil fuels. Research and development for new sources of energy is ongoing, but reliable sources of clean, renewable energy are still not yet possible as a permanent solution in the immediate future. Another pressing issue is that the US is the world’s most involved in the energy sector has made it difficult for politicians to make any meaningful progress on the issue of phasing out fossil fuel usage, at least in the United States.
Sitashma Chand, Bandana Sharma and Sweta Shah won the first, second and third place respectively in the Miss Nepal beauty pageant '07. The event took place amidst much hullabaloo created by the protesting Maoists led by Hisila Yami, who termed it commercialisation of female bodies. Among the 19 participants on the stage, more than half were from Kathmandu and ten were from Newar community. Questions have been raised regarding lack of participation by women from outside the capital, once again creating another forum for debate regarding equal participation.

Beauty n' Brains

9-15 Apr, 2007

Event

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- One Year - Rs. 2160/-
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Beauty n' Brains

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Niraj Sapkota