Carter ignored Koirala
Overruled

Former US President Jimmy Carter was received warmly and heard patiently by Nepal’s key political actors during his recent 3-day visit, his second in six months, but his ideas and suggestions made no apparent mark in Nepal’s politics.

Prime Minister GP Koirala was apparently ‘unhappy’ with the visiting dignitary for his having overruled his suggestion that he refrain from going public on his prescription regarding what type of electoral system should Nepal adopt for the constituent assembly.

Informed sources from Baluwatar told newsfront that Koirala had requested Carter not to make public his suggestion for 70:30 component of the proportional and first past the post system. Koirala is believed to have advised Carter not to go public on this when the two met at the PM’s residence on November 24 morning. But Koirala was overruled and ignored as Carter went public on the issue when he met the press before he left for the United States the same day.

However, the Nobel Peace laureate was clearly rejected by the Nepali actors, not the PM alone, if their initial response to his suggestion of - mainly an enhanced dose of proportional representation system and adoption of a resolution in favour of Republican Nepal to be endorsed by the Constituent Assembly yet to be elected, is any indicator. Carter met Koirala and Prachanda twice separately, listened to others
Koirala may ask for ministers’ resignation en masse

Operation Rescue

As Koirala’s legitimacy has come increasingly under question both at home and abroad, fuelled by his inability to maintain law and order in the country and hold elections to the constituent assembly on schedule, spin doctors in the party are making a last minute effort to salvage his position.

An effort to have the ministers resign en masse to give him a free hand to hand-pick ministers of his choice, at least from his Nepali Congress, is on.

An effort to have the ministers resign en masse to give him a free hand to hand-pick ministers of his choice, at least from his Nepali Congress, is on. Khadga Oli in the ministry once again. Similarly, he is understood to have told some Congress leaders that he is now considering going to the polls even without the Maoists, if the former rebels, “create obstacles one after another in conduct of the polls.”

Koirala, sources claim, has now arrived at the conclusion that the Maoists are not at all keen to face the polls and they are changing their goal posts, by putting forth newer demands. But Koirala faces criticism within his own party with at least four dozen leaders including parliamentarians telling him that he must improve the law and order situation before the country goes to the polls.

Party central committee members, Binay Dhoj Chand, Govinda Raj Joshi and Lakshman Ghimire told him recently that if he was not going to make any minister accountable for the current mess, he must at least get all to resign and, “form a government which can go to the polls with an image of efficiency and ability to deliver.”

Demolishing judiciary

The very concept of the independence of judiciary has been demolished.

The interim constitution has undermined the importance and principle of the rule of law as well as the independence of judiciary as the basic pre-requisites of democracy, a senior judge of the Supreme Court has said.

“Democratic governance, values and commitments cannot be promoted without an independent judiciary and the interim constitution – 2003 has somehow missed this point,” Justice Min Bahadur Rayamajhi said.

In a paper, ‘State’s role and responsibility in enforcing verdicts of independent judiciary’ presented at a programme organised by the Administrative Court on November 24 in the capital, Justice Rayamajhi said that the interim constitution has almost demolished the concept of independent judiciary.

“The government has armed itself with the power to depose the Chief Justice and other judges of the Supreme Court and enhanced its representation in the judicial council in a way that gives more say to the executive in appointment of judges.”

Moreover, introduction of the new system of the Supreme Court having to submit its annual report to the prime minister and absence of right to the judiciary to conduct its affairs autonomously all go against the concept of independent judiciary. “In fact the very concept of the independence of judiciary has been demolished,” the paper said.

Justice Rayamajhi, known for his straightforwardness and commitment to independent judiciary also demanded an immediate amendment to the constitution to rectify these lapses. “I am hopeful that the constitution this country is going to adopt in future will not entertain any provision that will adversely affect or demolish the concept of independent judiciary,” Justice Rayamajhi is in the line of succession as the Chief Justice when the incumbent C.J. Kedar Prasad Giri retires.

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Nepalis killed in Kashmir

Kargil, once feared as a nuclear flashpoint, when India and Pakistan went in for a third war within a span of 52 years in 1999, has now turned into a grave for three Nepalis during peace time. At least three Nepalis - Mohira Ghale, Suku Ghale and Bir Bahadur Ghale of Nuwakot district, died instantly when a live shell went off in Kargil on November 22, according to the reports. Their mutilated bodies have been recovered. Earlier, two Nepalis labourers were killed by the militants about a decade ago in Kashmir for which the government of India paid Rs two lakhs each as compensation to the next of the kin of the deceased.

Nepali authorities believe that the insurgency fuelled conflict in the country for the past 12 years has driven many Nepalis, especially the able bodied ones from rural Nepal to India, and take up all kinds of risky jobs as the one they are doing in Kargil. According to United News of India (UNI), a national wire service, there are around 2,000 Nepalis living in Kashmir region including Kargil. They are engaged in various menial jobs, and some are engaged in risky work like scrap collecting. UNI quoted security officials confirm that the three Nepalis died near the army firing range while collecting scarp. They suspected that the live shells might have been lying there since the time of Kargil war.

Journalists at risk

Nepal continues to be on the watch list of the International Press Institute (IPI), a media rights watchdog, as more cases of threats and intimidation on journalists are reported. The decision to have Nepal on its watch list, 18 months after the return of democracy was taken during IPI's executive board meeting held in Germany recently. Other countries included on the list include Sri Lanka, Ethiopia, Russia and Zimbabwe. IPI's Director, Johann P Fritz said Nepal is a very dangerous place for journalists and needed to be on its watch list.

"The IPI watch list is a list of countries in which press freedom conditions have rapidly deteriorated. The guiding principle behind the list is to open up a dialogue with these countries before they slide into repression," a statement by the IPI said. "Widespread disrespect for press freedom still strongly affects journalists and media outlets' ability to report freely. This makes Nepal a very dangerous country for journalists - Nepal's inclusion on the list comes in the wake of the Maoists' abduction of two journalists, Prakash Singh Thakuri and Birendra Saha, and the latter's murder in captivity.

Purification drive

In a clear admission that the Young Commu-

nist League (YCL) has become more of a liability than an asset for the Communist party of Nepal-Maoists (CPN-M), the party has decided to launch a purification drive to weed out bad elements' from the YCL.

The decision to this effect was taken during a central committee level meeting of the YCL in the capital on November 24 which was attended by CPN-M chief Prachanda besides other leaders.

YCL is under direct command of Chairman Prachanda. "It is not the party's cadres, but infiltrators from outside who are indulging in criminal activities. They need to be identified and punished," a Maoist leader said.

Conspirators who?

Crippled victims of Maoist atrocities in Madi said they felt that Prachanda is a liar.

As Prachanda stood as the most powerful and protected leader amidst hundreds of gun wielding guerillas in Shaktikhok on November 24, a group of unarmed - some of them crippled victims of Maoist atrocities, barely 25-km from there, said they felt that Prachanda is nothing more than a 'liar'.

Courage failed the all powerful Prachanda this time as well since he could not undertake the promised trip to Madi where at least 30 villagers lost their lives and about a dozen sustained serious injuries, some of them with permanent disability, when a public transport bus was pelted by the Maoists near 30 months ago.

"We tried to provide a relief package for the victims, but conspirators foiled that," Prachanda said publicly in Pokhara without identifying who the conspirators were. He also blamed the same elements for his Madip trip not materialising so far. "Prachanda is still shedding crocodiles tear for what happened in Madi's Bandamandu area. He must expose those who were involved in the conspiracy and its execution to the public," Madi victims say.

Krishna Adhikary, one of the survivors of the massacre asked Prachanda to reveal who was stopping him from going to Madi to announce the relief package? She appeared before the Saha Sawai programme conducted by the BBC Trust in Chilwan with theposer that made Prachanda almost speechless.

There were many angry faces from Madi grilling Prachanda. He responded to most of them evasively, saying his going there may have an adverse bearing on the ongoing peace process. Maoist victims have been calling him a coward or inhuman since he has been frequently visiting different parts of Chitwan but always avoids going to Madi despite his promises.
Bungled

It was a year of hope for peace and democracy in Nepal which together could have led to economic prosperity. Nepalis hoped that the 13 year old conflict and politics of violence that caused the loss of 13,000 precious lives would be over for good, and then they would own their country’s future destiny.

But November 21 and 22, the first anniversary of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the Maoist Chief and the Prime Minister, and the day Nepalis were hoping to cast their votes to elect the Constituent Assembly, passed off like any other day. That the CPA’s future is in a mess and so is the uncertainty over CA elections has not only injected enormous dose of frustration among the people, but has once again proved that Nepali politicians have not changed a bit, and that this country’s future is not safe in their hands.

Except that the Maoists joined the interim parliament and the interim government, no other provisions of the CPA was implemented. Through circumstantial evidence or conjecture, one can easily say that the top leaders who signed the CPA behaved more like dealers to secure their immediate narrow gains at the cost of the nation’s interest. Maoists were granted immunity for murder of journalist Thakuri’s case on the ground that he was perceived as anti-Maoist. Federation of Nepali Journalists (FNJ) chose to keep silent on this. Frustration among the people, but has once again proved that Nepali politicians have not changed a bit, and that this country’s future is not safe in their hands.

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The international missions and their commitment to assist in the peace process and development and the new slogan of new region have a larger stake in the emerging power structure.

The government that included Maoists in it after April 2007 never formed the monitoring committee to ensure that the code of conduct as agreed by the two sides would be implemented in letter and spirit. Maoists never actually returned the property and assets they had illegally confiscated despite their commitment to do that. Yet, they kept imposing and dictating new conditions that had the effect of discrediting the CPA as well as other agreements of the past. With their demand for 100 per cent proportional representation of people being able to exercise their right to elect the CA has become totally uncertain.

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Point to Ponder

The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy. — Martin Luther King, Jr.

Letters

Punish criminals

Your editorial, ‘criminals who’ was very bold and it represented our anger at the Maoists for abducting the journalist, Birendra Saha and killing him. Unfortunately, there is no visible regret or repentance on the part of the Maoist leaders over the murder and all they have been saying is that they will punish the guilty. Home Minister KP Sharma Oli has all along been acting like someone aiding and abetting these crimes. Can the fate or life of any citizen be safe with him as the Home Minister?

This also points fingers at the political parties especially the Congress and UML who pay so much lip service to the issue of press freedom, but it was there for all to see how they ignored the issue of abduction of journalist Saha. There is every possibility that another journalist, Prakash Singh Thakuri also has met his end at the hands of the Maoists.

Silula never bothered to initiate any search for journalist Thakuri who was kidnapped five months ago. Even the Federation of Nepali Journalists (FNJ) chose to keep silent on journalist Thakuri’s case on the ground that he was perceived as pro-Maoist. If Silula, FNJ and the current regime have a common understanding that only certain elements with certain political belief have a right to survive and that the machinery of the state should not bother about the safety of the rest, then that will only lead to a civil war in this country.

Only by bringing the ‘murderers’ to justice, can these situations be prevented from arising again.

Bishwashnath Kamalpokhari, Kathmandu

More Umravatis

In reference to the article by CK Jha I would like to appeal to the public to unite and thrash these politicians who are defining democracy and their principles as it suits them. The government and the political parties have become mere spectators and turning a deaf ear to the problems of the country. If this continues, there will be more journalists and non journalists killed and there will be more Umravatis.

Rajib Kumar Deo,
Kopundol, Lalitpur

Spiritual Corner

Pure freedom

Sri H.W.L. Poonja, known as Papaji (1910 – 1997) was born in Punjab. He realised the truth when he was 5 years old and it blossomed in his early 30’s when he met his Guru, Sri Ramana Maharishi, the sage of Aurochaita. He left his body in September 1997.

Excerpts from his teachings:

The knowledge is supreme, and if you cannot assimilate it, you cannot get it, then you have to take up austeritys for a long time, not for one age but many incantations, to purify your mind and get ready to receive knowledge. As all rivers enter the ocean, so all the austeritys, practices, will lead you to knowledge. So whatever time we are spending here, it will not go a waste. Surely you will be rewarded.

No need of leaving the kingdoms and going to the forest now. Only get rid of your impediments, and simply stay quiet. With a burning desire, like somebody who is burning, and will run to a well, or a river, or a stream only for water. Someone who is burning must go to the water: he will not go to anywhere else. Like this, if you have the burning desire to be free, in this life, before the end of this life, then you will be successful.

You will have won the game and you will be very happy because freedom, happiness and bliss go together. All kinds of other pleasures that we seek fade away immediately with their contact. As soon as you contact any touch, any pleasure, it will bite like a serpent. Any pleasure, any rose that you pick will have a thorn underneath. Like this, when you enjoy any sense pleasure it will bite you.

Therefore we have to search for very pure freedom, where there is no unhappiness, otherwise in the world there is sometimes happiness, sometimes unhappiness. They go on alternating and this is called the world, and this is the experience of the ignorant ones. When there is unhappiness, they don’t like it; when there is happiness they like it.

So in the case of wisdom, there will be only serenity. There will be total peace. Peace is something else. It has got nothing to do with pleasures and displeasures that belong to the contact of the senses. Bliss has got nothing to do with the senses or the mind or the intellect or even the personality, the jiva or individual soul. This is a transcendental, fourth state. Not waking, dreaming or sleeping. That fourth state is called Turiya in yoga terminology. This state is always available to everyone.
If the current remarks made by Jimmy Carter were to provide any indications, a massive campaign seems to be underway to sideline the only democratic party of Nepal, the Nepali Congress, and thus the people of Nepal who believe in multiparty democratic system.

The role of Carter center in the past several months in Nepal, especially after Jana Andolan II, in trying to provide support to the ongoing peace process is well acknowledged. Yet, the latest remarks on proportional representation as well as republic, despite a defeat of these issues in the parliament voting, casts a serious doubt on Nepal’s democratic exercise-in-the-making.

It is quite baffling to understand Carter’s remarks after he expressed doubts on Maoists participation in constituent assembly election. As if to support Carter’s doubt, Maoist leader Prachanda, appears to have stated that he does not believe in parliament system of democratic governance.

Carter is right on his statement about the comprehensiveness of the peace process in the sense that the CA elections and the peace process are inseparable and must be carried out together. It is virtually unthinkable to achieve one without the other. Deferral of CA elections twice in a row, gives testimony to the fact that without an excellent understanding among all parties, including the Maoists, there can neither be elections nor peace in Nepal.

However, recent statements coming from Nepal political parties (Maoists) regarding India’s agreement/disagreement on a republic in Nepal, prior to the necessary democratic exercise, is adding insult to injury suffered by the honest, peace loving people of Nepal. If the present political parties in power feel it necessary to receive India’s and other countries’ blessings, Nepal is better left with anything but the self-styled democracy of today.

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Reflections

Strings of thoughts all connected to what life has become today - what used to be, what is and what can be done, still...

We all are aware where the twists and turns of our nation’s history have taken us and being a part of it, we know how we have managed to live, and how long we can act as if we are living, bearing the pain. Do we have the courage to continue? Yes definitely. One isn’t born with courage but circumstances and experiences energise and expand it.

Political scenario has transformed a lot in our life time. I still have a fresh memory as an eight year old child sharing with my younger sister the fear of my father being eaten by a tiger when he used to return home late. Since my father was a hunter, for every two months during school winter vacations, I used to be with my dad in hunting camps. My childhood fear was him getting killed by a tiger. It had such a deep impact on me.

Then at the age of 14, a shocking incident occurred which was new for all the Kathmandu cities. People were rushing to the Kalopul (a black bridge that still exists in Sital) to look at a dead body, stabbed and thrown into the Bagmati river. It created a sensation in the valley and everybody was shocked by the killing of a human being. It clearly pictures how peaceful our country was then.

Fast forward to today and the scenario is horrifying. Last year, I had gone to my sister’s place where all the children were playing. The young boys were playing as usual, and young girls were acting like a security officer and few were playing the role of insurgents. They all had toy guns shooting at each other. Suddenly one of the boys threw a big grapefruit in the middle and everyone went hiding under the couch and chairs shouting ‘boom explosion’. It was disturbing to witness the negative psychological impacts on these young minds.

Another incident relates to a little boy aged 13 from Ramchechhap who used to live with his mother in my house. One day, in his room, I found six empty bottles of Coke all stuffed with strip of papers mixed with matchsticks. He was trying to make a ‘socket bomb’, the boy proudly explained in my curiosity. He mentioned the names of various types of bombs ranging from Pan Parag bomb to pressure cooker bomb. As someone from insurgency affected area, he had witnessed the art and technique of bomb manufacturing.

This goes to show that it clearly requires more efforts on our part to give a sound, peaceful and healthy atmosphere to safeguard the rights of our children. Frequent strikes by the political parties and others have taken away the ‘right to education’ from our children. Little boys schools returning happily back home from their bus stops talking about Bandhs, burning tyres in the streets, vandalism, peltting stones and other disturbing activities which they have witnessed have affected their minds. This should be a matter of concern to all mothers.

We have before us the saga of all those war widows from both sides. Last year on Valentine’s Day, I saw an article in a local paper with a happy picture of a top comrade and his wife. The comrade was quoted saying that everyday with his wife is a Valentine’s Day. Then I visualised the innocent thousand faces in white clothes mourning for their husbands killed in the insurgency, thinking how envious they would be if they had seen this picture. Things would have been different if the comrade and his loving wife had understood the meaning of ‘love’ a little earlier.

In our joint family, every evening all the children used to be running around playing all sorts of games but I used to love to be with my father, uncles and other senior neighbours who used to gather at our garden in the evening. They used to discuss mainly politics and share their views. The main issue of the discussion one day was the critical condition of our country because of being small, weak and being manipulated by a ‘big brother’. As a kid, I wondered what that meant. Last year when I listened to an autobiography of BP Koilal abridged and read by Khagendra Nepal, I clearly pictured the vision of a big brother and its role in my country.

Competition among responsible peoples whose plightful race towards power without any self respect makes one feel utterly ashamed and disillusioned. Crimes abound but criminals are neither brought to book nor does anybody own up the responsibility. John F. Kennedy at the time of Bay of Pigs, Cuba invasion, while owning up the sole responsibility of defeat said that victory has hundreds fathers but defeat is an orphan.

It is expecting too much to look for such a national leader here but I think it is high time we women at least now unite and act to protect our children and bring about positive changes in our society. Women are powerful forces as History has proven through many examples. To quote E. Roosevelt, “You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to feel fear in the face… you must do things which you think you cannot do.”

Climate change- a real threat

Climate change in Nepal will bring severe problems due to glaciers melting in the Himalayas and the nature of these risks and vulnerabilities South Asian countries. According to Watkins, limited coping mechanism….We should talk with the impacts caused by climate change.

Kevin Watkins, director of the UN’s Human Development Report (HDR) office and the lead author of Human Development Report 2007/08 Fighting Climate Change: Human Solidarity in a divided world has given a clear message to the world that governments need to get real about the consequences of climate change. A senior visiting fellow with the economics governance program at Oxford, he recently shared his experiences with Asian journalists in New Delhi, India.

Climate change as now projected will create livelihoods risks and vulnerabilities in South Asian countries. According to Watkins, the nature of these risks and vulnerabilities will vary between and within countries. Exposure to droughts, floods and extreme weather events is one category of risk. Snow retreatment in Himalaya is another. As developed countries have invested huge political, institutional and financial backups in adaptation, other developing and poor countries lacks technology, knowledge and skill to cope.

He said, “The rich world has the capabilities to protect citizens from the impact of climate change while the poor and the vulnerable population of developing countries have very limited coping mechanism…. We should talk about the aspects of social justice and the equity dimension of climate change that being the greatest polluters, the rich world need to compensate these vulnerable population of the developing countries.”

He suggests that the governments of developing countries need to be united to pull the resources to respective countries for adaptation to and mitigation of climate change. “The early warning signs are already visible. Today, we are witnessing at first hand what could be the onset of major human development reversal,” Watkins added.

Climate change has resulted in glacier melting and has triggered outbursts of glacier lakes in South Asia. Decreasing number of rainy days, overall increase on rainfall intensity has increased the risk of dry spell and more intense tropical cyclones in the region. This eventually impacts on human health, water resources and agriculture.

While considering Nepal, the greatest impact of climate change will be on agricultural sector on which the majority of the populations’ livelihoods depend. According to Watkins the HDR has projected very deep reductions in large areas of rain-fed agricultural activity in South Asia. The end result of climate change in Nepal will bring severe problems due to glaciers melting in Himalayas which is not a distant future threat. Similarly it is affecting agricultural practices as the emergence of extreme weather patterns.

There are no sufficient researches and studies to show how the rural populations are already exposed to the effects and if at all they recognise this issue. It is urgently needed to bridge this knowledge gap regarding climate change at grassroots level.

Let us hope that the HDR releasing on 27 November will prove an opportunity to view and review climate science and understand what it means to the poor of this globe who lack technology, knowledge and skills to cope with the impacts caused by climate change.
Time for CHANGE

Our leaders fail to comprehend that foreign brokered alliance will never yield positive dividends.

Rarely does a moment come in history when the political leadership is provided with an unchallenged authority to govern in the name of its people. Similarly GP Koirala and the seven parties had been vested with gargantuan responsibilities to steer the country towards stability and peace. However, GP and the seven parties have failed to seize this golden opportunity. It is comical to observe the lacklustre performance of this coalition government even when it had such enormous powers, no opposition to fear and lastly an unchallengeable international mandate to steer the country out of the quagmire.

Today, yet again our leaders have unfortunately succumbed to the fatalistic politics that has plagued the progress of Nepal politics for the last five decades. Therefore, it would be accurate to conclude that it is only through our active participation in the political concourse can Nepal progress towards stability and peace. Hence, it would prove detrimental if we Nepalis continue to allow our leaders to steer our country towards further disintegration by falsely interpreting our concerns and voices. Without any further delay, we Nepalis should ask ourselves some fundamental questions regarding the future of our country. What has been most hurtful is the fact that our government sat silently when the statue of Prithvi Narayan Shah was mutated by the Maoists. All across the globe, in all countries the founders regardless of their background are held in high esteem. We might loathe at King Gyanendra, but we cannot escape from the reality that without Prithvi Narayan Shah there would be no Nepal – this is a fact and our history.

It has become equally important for all of us Nepalis to ponder over the founding principles of our nation. This is important because without identifying the principles that founded Nepal, we cannot defend the principles that founded Nepal. A country like Nepal that is so diverse has functioned harmoniously despite some deficiencies. Unfortunately, we are at the brink of disintegration and chaos. Therefore, it is important for us to understand the logic behind Prithvi Narayan Shah’s call for social harmony and unity. It is social harmony, unity, moderation and toleration that are the founding principles of our nation. And the diversity component has only added to the uniqueness of the nation.

But for Nepal politics to evolve progressively it is important that the younger generation now takes over the mantle. Consequently, a political consensus must be developed and a home grown solution must be found where the people are invited to take ownership of the constitutional process through elections.

The present leaders are responsible for the present state of affairs and they are incompetent. It is wishful thinking for us to expect them to deliver when they have failed repeatedly. Nepal is on the brink of disintegration and even when a forceful radical communist party like the Maoists has posed challenges to the existence of democracy and in tandem disrupted social harmony in the country; even our then leaders remained divided.

There will be no democratic alliance, there never has been one and there will never be one as long as the leaders of the older generation remain in politics. It is only when youthful leaders belonging to the democratic parties and ethnic groups prevail will there be an alliance. I say this because; we non political Nepalis have a common enemy: Maoists and radical ethnic groups.

Politics in Nepal is a catalyst through which politicians and their parties, public institutions and civil society realms as well as in multi-level governance. It highlights the possible success of federalism and its contribution to development.

The advantages of federalism are power sharing, power dispersion and political control, empowerment of regional voices, opportunities for participation, creation of regional political elites, opportunities for specific policy promotion, flexible solution of problems, efficient management, etc.

But, there are also disadvantages of federalism such as tyranny of minority, fragmentation of political power, political immobility, democratic deficit due to unaccountability and non-transparency in decisions, downgrading of other groups and issues, etc. These attributes suggest that leadership has to be very cautious in adopting the model of governance.

Many countries have provided huge lessons to show that keeping the less powerful ethnic communities and social groups out of the centre of economic, social and political opportunities can lead to poverty, instability and unrest situation which can contribute to the development deficit, weaken democratic institutions and generate conflicts of various sorts.

The central problem of any regime is, therefore, to make power accountable. In this sense, it misses one critical point; what kind of federalism is suitable for countries and social groups out of the centre of economic, social and political opportunities can lead to poverty, instability and unrest situation which can contribute to the development deficit, weaken democratic institutions and generate conflicts of various sorts.

Stella Seibert articulates various aspects of the abstract and dynamic concept of federalism. She also provides the underlying critical strictures and offers insights of various federal countries to follow ideal type of federalism that can yield desired dividends. The book introduces the concept, meaning and role of federalism to mitigate ethnic ridden turmoil of Sri Lanka and issues of federalism in peace negotiation process. It offers experiences of various countries to the reader by explaining a variety of federalism and contextual success and failure of different models adopted in a number of countries such as Australia, Brazil, Germany, India, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria, and Switzerland. It elaborates the important terms with brief comparison, such as centralised unitary state, decentralised unitary state, the federal state and co-federal state with core attributes. She says that self-rule and shared-rule is missing in centralised unitary state. In a decentralised unitary state self-rule exists without right to self-organisation.

It broadly analyses the advantages and disadvantages of federalism, identify, resource and justice sharing arrangements at the state, political

Stella Seibert articulates various aspects of the abstract and dynamic concept of federalism.
In 1966, Akira Kasamatsu and Tomio Hirai made a study of Zen meditation in Japan in terms of the wavelengths etc. produced by the brain during Zen meditation. They asked the Zen master to categorise the level the 48 students had reached. These subjects were classified into three groups. Group one had 20 disciples who had meditated from one to five years. Group two consisted of 12 disciples who had meditated from five to 20 years and group three had 16 monks who had over 20 years of experience. Besides these, 18 others from age 23 to 33, and men aged between 54 to 60 years who had no experience in meditation were chosen as control subjects.

It was found that in the Zen master, before he started meditation there was normal beta waves of the waking state. Within 50 seconds of starting meditation, the well-organised alpha waves began in all the regions of the brain. Then after 20 minutes or so, the brain waves began functioning between low alpha waves, going at times into theta waves. At the end of the meditation, alpha waves were seen continuously and two minutes later, alpha waves still persisted. This kind of similar pattern was found in another Zen master also. The result of the EEG study on the Zen master was divided into four stages: Stage I: a slight change which is characterised by the appearance of alpha waves in spite of open eyes. (In Zen as in most of Mahayana meditation methods, eyes are kept open unlike in Hindu and Theravadin methods where eyes are closed); stage II: the increase in amplitude of persistent alpha waves; stage III: the decrease of alpha frequency; and stage IV: the appearance of the rhythmical theta train which is the final change of the EEG during Zen meditation, but does not always occur.

It is interesting to note that another study made of two Raja yogis - B.K Ananda, G.S. Chhina and Baldev Singh showed that the final stage of Kundalini yoga meditation was delta wave which is akin to deep sleep state where too delta waves predominate. This definitely shows that the Zen Samadhi and the Raja yoga Samadhi are not exactly the same.

Then when other Zen disciples were tested and graded, it was found that there was a very close relationship between the master’s evaluation of their stage and the degree of EEG changes in them. From these findings it was found that the degree of EEG changes during the Zen meditation of the Zen disciples were parallel to the disciple level in proficiency as categorised by the Zen master.

(Sridhar Rinpoche is a Vajrayana Master)

This definitely shows that the Zen Samadhi and the Raja yoga Samadhi are not exactly the same.
Sharif returns home

Former Pakistani prime minister Nawaz Sharif arrived in the Pakistani city of Lahore on Sunday after seven years of exile, Dawn Television quoted. Ousted by army chief General Pervez Musharraf in a bloodless military coup in 1999 and exiled to Saudi Arabia a year later, Sharif tried to return home in September, but was sent back to Saudi Arabia within hours.

But this time Musharraf, who imposed the emergency rule on November 3, reluctantly agreed to allow Sharif back from exile in Saudi Arabia to lead his party in a January 8 general election.

Police detained supporters of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and sealed off the airport ahead of his planned return Sunday from exile, stark reminders that the emergency rule imposed by his nemesis President Gen. Pervez Musharraf remains in effect. Sharif was due in the eastern Pakistani city of Lahore on Sunday afternoon. He took off from Saudi Arabia during the last 24 hours with family members, according to a security official at the Saudi airport who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk with the press.

Saudi Arabia is where Sharif has spent most of the past eight years since Musharraf overthrew him in 1999.

Ahsan Iqbal, a spokesman for Sharif's party, said some 1,800 activists were detained in a crackdown since late Saturday in Punjab province, of which Lahore is the capital. However, federal Information Minister Nisar Memon said he was exaggerating.

"There are no arrests as such," Memon said. "About 100 people have been confined so far that they do not commit any crime and also want the same mess as there was in Karachi." He was referring to the huge rally that Sharif led last week after former premier, Benazir Bhutto, when she was allowed to return to Pakistan last month. Bhutto's homecoming procession was torn by a suicide bombing which killed about 150 people.

Both Bhutto and Sharif are seeking to return to power after Jan. 8 parliamentary elections. But the ballot, which the West hopes will produce a moderate government able to stand up to Islamic extremists, has been thrown into confusion by Musharraf's Nov. 3 seizure of emergency powers.

Memon said leaders of Sharif's party would be allowed to greet him at Lahore's Allama Iqbal International Airport and drive him into the city. But Sharif's entourage was suspicious.

"The police action and massive deployment shows that something fishy is going on. They've blocked every single vehicle carrying supporters of (Sharif's party)," said Sayed Hafizuddin, a lawyer for the exiled leader.

Thousands of police were deployed at the airport, some of them manning metal and barbed-wire barriers on approach roads and sidewalks. Passengers with tickets were allowed through.

On the streets of the city, several welcome posters and banners of Sharif were on display, but there was no sign of supporters gathering to greet him.

Authorities have issued no warnings that Islamic militants bitterly opposed to Musharraf and Bhutto for their pro-U.S. policies might target the more conservative Sharif.

However, his arrival comes one day after suicide bombers killed up to 35 people in nearly simultaneous blasts at the heart of Pakistan's security establishment in Rawalpindi, a garrison city adjacent to the capital, Islamabad.

It was not clear who was behind the explosions, which targeted a bus carrying intelligence agency workers and a checkpoint near army headquarters, but authorities said suspicion rested on Islamist militants who are fighting an increasingly bloody insurgency against government forces in the northwest of the country.

The army said Sunday that 30 Taliban fighters and one Pakistani soldier killed in an operation to capture militant positions in the Swat valley, a former tourist destination just 100 miles from Islamabad.

Musharraf cited rising religious extremism as a reason for his declaration of a state of emergency. However, many of those targeted under the crackdown have been political opponents, lawyers and members of the media.

More than 5,500 people have been detained since the crackdown began, but authorities insist virtually all have been freed since last weekend, when visiting U.S. Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte urged Musharraf to restore the constitution.

Sharif's return could prove challenging for Musharraf, particularly if the former prime minister makes an alliance with Bhutto and the two boycott the Jan. 8 elections. But it is also a potential boon for the general, allowing him to prove his credentials as leader of the country.

"Our main goal in the coming stage, which we hope will not take longer than a few days, will be to exert all possible efforts... to end this situation as soon as possible," he said.

His comments came after a meeting with Cardinal Nasrarallah Sheh, chief of the influential Maronite Catholic Church. Under Lebanon's division of power, the presidency is held by a Maronite.

Mr Saniora dismissed a declaration by Mr Lahoud, who before departing the presidential palace said he handed over security powers to the army, saying the country is in "a state of emergency".

"There is no state of emergency, and there is no need for that," Mr Saniora said. "There is absolutely no need for any Lebanese to be concerned about the security situation. The army is doing its job and is in full control of the situation on the ground." So far, 56,000-member military has successfully kept this tyr, fractious country together, surviving one crisis after another since the February 2005 assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri.
Children reflect their parents. They look to it all like a duck to the water and I learnt the language straight from the most authentic teacher, my mother-in-law – complete with art of weaving chiffon saris with diamonds, social skills with all the intricacies. I was a graduate from Lady Shri Ram College, spoke a little French and had worked with AFP, and had already been a disc jockey for several years through college. I had spent hours doing oil paintings on canvasses that are still on the walls of my mother’s home. I did not date like other young folks and was often the alibi for friends who did. It was a unique milestone that led to the emergence of introspection on what then would be the best values of practical life on the birth of my first son. I realised that I wanted him to be able to stand out as an individual with his own mind and realised early that the only way to do that was to let him exercise choices and face consequences for his decisions. For all practical purposes I was determined to allow him simple nutritious food, home stitched sturdy clothes and hours of thinking skills and communication.

The challenges you faced as a non native and a woman in this society and the lessons learned.

In India or at least in my part of the world in New Delhi a sort of invincible attitude can emerge that drives one through many diverse situations and challenges. That also adds to the flexibility that is required to be in touch with challenges of culture and related social issues. However it took me little time to adapt to the life in a Rana household with a protective and peace loving husband and traditional family members, while learning to string Potayas or cooking Au-tama.

The sacrifices at Dasain almost took me away from all non-vegetarian food. Reading books while the family had fun with great food and fanfare and integration became the norm for me. I was a mother of two boys in the first four years and took to role with a zest I now understand as a natural journey to my evolution. I was a boyish, mostly angry, tough kind of girl. But by the time I realised that being a girl would mean a greater struggle and I spoke in the masculine gender for the first few years of my life.

I was boyish, mostly angry, tough kind of girl who took things into her own hands. Maybe the determination and invincible strength grew with me over the years and I now am a great believer in self-construction.

An Indian by birth I married a Nepali ‘aristocratic’ intelligent and suave eldest son of a general and realised there was a world out there that ‘ruled’ but differently from what I had learnt; the power of social status and heritage, the life of aristocratic style in all practical matters of attire, food and living.

My ‘missionary’ style perspective surprisingly when the husband fell prey to alcohol and yet maintained his gentle polite voice loving personally I committed myself further to the ‘destiny’ of life. After his acknowledgement I drive to pass the message of individual growth through one’s own sense of responsibility came to the fore with a vigor that took me through Montessori training and the establishment of the Montessori house in Kathmandu. I knew this was the message I was sent here for, since most other places where I could start such a school already had such an establishment.

I knew that it was here the message to take responsibility for your own life with conscious choices was most needed. It was here that the faith in a higher power to guide you in each moment of life needed to be nurtured from childhood as opposed to the following of rituals and role-prayers. I do not believe in coincidences and realised that even more strongly when I spent two years in Calcutta learning Montessori way of education and the intricacies of business management and educational leadership.

A two bedroom flat and two cases of original Montessori equipment along with the two children and certificates formed Montessori House in 1987. We had every nationality enrolled in the first few years but the local Nepali enrollment took on only much later. Now we serve a majority of our diverse Nepali community in the school.

The second most important lesson learnt was that adults fall prey to addictions when time les heavy on their hands in daily life. All daily life practical skills were managed by household staff while a sophisticated style of life bars the family member from any household chores or from taking responsibility for their own life direction, choices and decisions. Individualism is scorned rather than encouraged; and often roles family members’ plays are dictated by the position of the individual in the family or by the expectations of ‘unsolved’ dreams of an elder.

Exercising control over an educated and self driven woman in the family was unsuccessful from the beginning and definitely created envy, while the faith in the power stood me strong in the face of any challenge. Determination to reach the potential innate in me helped me establish a school that became a success story. And it often created a rough social terrain in my life with some isolation. The staff of the school once trained in similar values of life also felt they were in an oasis in the desert of rituals and status led life.

How is Montessori Method better than other methods of education?

Montessori encourages individualism and freedom of choice within a structured prepared environment where individual pace and space and endeavors pave the path of self construction of the child. The child progresses from one activity to a higher plane through his own effort and concentration and coordination in a non-competitive and multi-age setting.

The child feels psychologically and physically safe to explore and discover concepts and forms solid foundations to build further development. There is a conscious self-driven.
do not comply to the “don’t do as I do – but do as I say” dictates.

The education sector is growing at an alarmingly random manner. It needs to have a direction. Rabindra Nath Tagore’s saying, “The river would never reach the sea without its boundaries” applies here. The leaders need to introspect and frame a structure for this extraordinary country to follow.

Final word?
The Montessori Method is a spiritual message. Give it your support, let your child grow in it. It is the divine light that respects the needs of the individual and provides the way for self-construction and helps realise that we are rich when we realise how little we need for ourselves. We can take responsibility for our lives, our thoughts and actions, and shine with the light that we are born in the image of a divine power inside us.

A true Montessori school provides the environment for such intrinsic spiritual, intellectual and physical growth. Maybe the leaders of the country could join a few sessions at a Montessori Method to realise their impressive inner potentials.

(nneena_rana@hotmail.com)
A large number of Nepali players believe in what others would call superstition and prefer to go by astrological advice when they set out for important matches at home and abroad. Some avoid travelling on a particular day, and others skip shaving and getting haircuts as it may bring bad luck.

Hari Khadka, a national level player of the Nepal football team said, “I will not cut my hair or beard on the day I have to play.” He also distributes sweets among his friends to solicit good-luck before going to the ground.” Khadka is the only Nepali player who has participated in the international game for ten years without any break and scored 12 goals for Nepal.

Others players visit temples and go through rituals or worship the gods they have faith in. Upendra Mann Singh, another football player said he worships his jersey before going to the field. Singh is a former national captain and considered as one of the best goal keepers. Players like Binod Das, Tashi Ghale and Neri Thapa also go through their own kinds of rituals. Binod said, “I do not eat non-vegetarian food once I set out for a game. Besides I always wear a locket believing that it brings me good luck.”

Golf player, Tashi Ghale said, “I avoid traveling on Saturdays.” He said something or the other has always obstructed him from playing whenever he left home on Saturdays in the past. He recently secured second position in the 9th SAF golf championship.

Neri Thapa, captain of the national ladies’ cricket team has a habit of wearing her sports dress and watching sports on television before she descends on the field. Neri is a national badminton player and has played in the 10th South Asian Federation (SAF) held in Sri Lanka.

But there are many others who do not believe in all that. Sangina Baidhya, the only Nepali participant in the Olympic so far, is one of them. Jhanta Katuwal, national recorder of weight lifting said, “If we have ability, confidence and passion in the game, fortune will favour us and we can win any game.”