



Breach of trust

The Maoists need to re-establish their commitment to the politics of consensus

The refusal of Madhav Kumar Nepal to join the Political Coordination Committee (PCC) comes as a blow to Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal, who was hoping that this move would help the Maoists gain the support of the CPN(UML). The former general secretary of the UML declined to head the committee and said that he does not "have much time for useless chatting." However, the real reason for his refusal lies in the fact that Madhav Nepal doesn't want to become a trophy figure. Since the Constituent Assembly (CA) elections, the Maoists have alienated all other political players in their drive to consolidate power. Aware of this fact, Nepal doesn't want to be co-opted into the Maoist game plan. The Maoists aligned with Nepali Congress (NC) and CPN (UML) from the signing of the twelve point agreement to the eve of the Presidential election. Madhav Nepal was in fact assured the post of the President. But it turned out that Maoist had their own candidate ready: Ram Rajya Prasad Singh. This is a telling fact about their intentions.

One may wonder why Madhav Nepal's name has again been raised by the Maoists? The answer is that bringing a leader of Madhav Nepal's stature on board would help the Maoists calm the voices clamouring at them. But it seems, this move will not pay much dividend this time. The other political parties have become disillusioned at the Maoist tactic of betrayal, and are now more cautious when it comes to dealing with that party. Madhav Nepal clearly saw that the Maoists, who by invoking the idea of greater communist alliance, wish to silence any credible voice of opposition against them. In addition, Nepal is aware that he will not be allowed to work independently and may have to toe the Maoist line. He is certainly in no mood to become a laughing stock once again.

This refusal on the part of Nepal poses serious questions to the Maoist leadership. They need to do some soul searching and reorient their political strategy, which has changed drastically since they entered government. In the days after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA) there was an effort to work according to the principles of consensus. At the time, there was an agreement among the political actors and public alike that Maoist should be given time to adjust themselves to the ways of main stream politics. But quite some time has elapsed since then, and the Maoists seem to have moved even further from their stated claim that they would accept competitive multi-party politics. It is impossible to bring the peace process to a close unless the Maoists demonstrate sincere commitment to democratic principles. Instead of complaining against the uncooperative nature of fellow comrades and bureaucracy, the Prime Minister needs to make genuine efforts to accommodate other parties in the political process.

Early marriages

It is important to have a mature mindset to make marriages last

SUJATA KHANAL

Marriages, it is said, are made in heaven, but the truth is that they have to be managed on earth. Just as it is imperative that you have a postgraduate management degree to manage an organisation, it is equally important to have a mature mindset and relationship-management skills to make marriages last.

The reason for many a broken marriage is that boys and girls often get married at an early age for wrong reasons. They are not going toward marriage or their partner, but are getting away from their parents. Often they are looking for an indulgent parent in their spouse, and that's where the trouble begins. Such emotional kids need to grow up and learn to be mature so that they can establish an adult-adult relationship in marriage.

A girl and a boy in my neighborhood were high school sweethearts and had begun dating when they were 15. They got married after seven years of being with each other. The boy confessed, during counselling, that after being with his girlfriend for seven years, he married her only because he felt obliged, as he had made a commitment of eternal love at the age of 15. The truth was that there was a huge mismatch of values and dreams for their future, and yet he married her out of a 'sense of duty'. The marriage began with a 'silent resentment' in the boy, which grew with time, and escalated into everyday

conflict and emotional distancing. Obviously, when the boy made a commitment of undying love at the age of 15, he did not have the maturity or clarity to truly know who and what he was committing to.

The phenomenon of plunging headlong into marriage jolts many a brain only after marriage, and makes them do all the thinking that they should have done before marriage, often leading to a break in the relationship.

A marriage can be termed an early marriage if you are marrying with an idea of romance in marriage, and if you live in a utopian world believing that marriage is the panacea to all your problems in your parental home. The disease of living in a make-believe world with unrealistic expectations from marriage can afflict people of any age.

For marriage to last longer, both partners need to be equipped with life-coping skills, both intra- and interpersonal. They need to know the art of constructive communication and problem-solving. They also need to find personal gratification in vitally fulfilling endeavors other than the relationship, so that both can bring value and joy to the relationship. This will also help to strike the right balance between a shared and mutually nurtured space and individual space for both to pursue their journey of personal growth. It is such maturely managed relationships that last longer, and it is such a marriage in which you can truly be declared 'man and wife'.

POST
PLATFORM

WORDS & ECHOES



ABHI SUBEDI

The Mumbai Taj Hotel terrorist attack by not yet identified militants on Nov. 26-27 has opened up the deep wounds of history in South Asia. Most of all, the legacy of a bizarre post-colonial spectre of partition of the British ruled territory into two states India and Pakistan in 1947 rises every time any trouble erupts like a temperamental volcano in the territories of these great neighbours. We, the tiny neighbours of these precious neighbours, these big brothers have no option but to stay home shell-shocked by watching TV, reading hysterical press reports pouring in from these countries and waiting for greater miseries at our own dooryards, a destiny of everyone in this region that will permeate from here to eternity if war between India and Pakistan breaks out on any pretext. India almost unequivocally blames Pakistan for the attack and Pakistan denies it.

The most brutal killing of the innocent people in Hotel Taj by the well-trained and well-prepared militants has raised many questions and many concerns. The US administration has become vocal especially by the ferocity of the terrorist action, and the stylistics of this operation that reminded them of the senseless but very organised 9/11 attack by al-Qaeda. America revealed that it had passed some information to the Indian administration about the possibility of some form of sea-borne attack on Mumbai. As the civilian government of Pakistan, especially its President Asif Zardari who lost his wife Benazir Bhutto in a terrorist attack less than a year ago, was trying to make sense of it all, a horrid suicide bomb attack in Peshawar killed 20 people and wounded about a hundred. Where do we locate the origin of all this then? This tragedy, this murder of the civilians at the Taj has left all the stunned experts,

Neighbour's voice

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scholars, political pundits, socialists, capitalists and writers guessing.

My interest in this short essay is not so much the anatomy of the event and its aftermath as the historicism that sometimes appears to me like hauntings -- a history that keeps haunting the present moment in this region. I have felt that myself whenever the murders and terrorist attacks have occurred. In Mumbai in three previous attacks from 1993 to 2006, a total of 480 people have lost their lives. The Pakistan-based militant group Lashkar-e-toiba was suspected of being behind the last attack.

Every time people get killed in different attacks and riots involving Hinduism and Islam, I feel that the history of partition rises like an apparition. Whenever the English M.Phil students bring the partition stories of Saadat Hasan Manto, the eminent Urdu writer, to discuss and theorise with me, I secretly try to quell a cyclone rising inside me by saying to myself -- oh, this is only a text, a past; the terri-

are grouping themselves in different warring camps in the country for the aggrandisements of the political leaders at the moment will totally lose directions, and politics will slide into the territories of the privileged and the militants. We will begin to live on the fringe of an atomic history that will rise and fall like a tsunami.

The Western powers under America's leadership are now fighting the war on terror in Asia. The complexities related to that have moved to South Asia. The post-historical and the so-called post-political wars that the West has been fighting in the course of the last decade or so have trespassed not only into others' present reality but also into their historical territories. For example, the Indo-Pak history of the turbulence of partition in 1947 has become part of the global war fought between Muslim militants and the West. It all began in haste and error here. A British lawyer named Sir Cyril Radcliffe came as head of the Boundary Commissions to Delhi in

Most unfortunate of all, India and Pakistan have always waited to make their situation worse. They should have long settled their disputes and created a zone of peace here. They could have easily done so. But they are slipping slowly into a chaos, a disorder that they will create mutually. They will be pawns in the hands of powers bigger than them.

Who are we? We are tiny neighbours. Sometimes we become invisible fringe people to them. We become uncanny because we are suspected to be taking sides and harbouring thugs. But somewhere we matter. I have one very moving experience to share here. I was presenting a paper at a SAARC writers' conference in Lahore in March 2004. My topic was the metaphysics involved in the wars like those between America and al Qaeda and how literary and artistic imagination may approach this problem. I called upon India and Pakistan to realise this matter and solve their problems. My Nepali colleague and I were surprised by the good response to my logic. Next day, the "Lahore Dawn" carried a front-page report under the rubric 'Pakistan & India advised'. I was astonished to find that they had presented the entire gist of my presentation and had quoted me as the one who was making that suggestion.

A little surprised, I asked a concerned person, 'how did my humble presentation become a subject of headline news?' He answered, 'you know, this is a neighbour's voice. We don't get to hear much of this type of suggestions from friends'. He meant small neighbours like us. I was so moved by that observation! I feel deep down that India and Pakistan need some simple neighbours, politicians or otherwise, to suggest that they should end the hostility. We small neighbours don't know where we matter. If our suggestions have any meaning and space there, a suggestion is in order -- your excellencies President Asif Zardari and Prime Minister Manmohan Singhji, please talk on the phone and then fly to Mumbai with your intelligence chiefs and colleagues and talk. I would be very moved again if you published this in "Lahore Dawn" as a neighbour's voice.



torial confusions of Manto's character Toba Tek Singh that the students analyse, was the problem of the moment in history. But my efforts to contain the cyclone prove to be too feeble. I imagine if a war broke out on any of these pretexts between these neighbours, we here in Nepal, like other smaller neighbours, would be in a dire strait too. Our political process will be stopped; our political chaos will deepen; our neighbours will lose interest in our democratic experiments; our energy supply will be disrupted; youths who

1947. In less than five weeks he submitted his 'Boundary Awards' to the Viceroy and went home. But little must he have realised that he had left a huge chaos and most colossal migration in human history, killings, bleeding trains, dislocated people and civilisations involving 12 million people who were dislocated. Hundreds of thousands of women's bodies were branded as Hindu and Muslim. That horror had after-effects. About three million people sacrificed their lives in the present Bangladesh in 1971.

B 19, Jangpura Extension

The Post's New Delhi correspondent finds his bearings in a new city



DINESH WAGLE

"B 19, Jangpura Extension," I told the cabbie soon after landing at the Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi a month ago.

In 45 minutes we were in JE looking for the B block. Four minutes later, we were in B block looking for house number 19. And soon I was in front of the building whose third floor is rented by Kantipur Publications, the publisher of the Post, for their New Delhi Bureau office and residence for the bureau chief. As the cab came to halt, I stood in front of what would be my home for the next several months.

I didn't think that finding a house was that easy in New Delhi. The credit goes to the efficient naming and numbering system that makes the city navigation as easy as finding a dance bar in Kathmandu. The Nepali capital also has similar naming system in place, thanks to the European Union, but it is not as effective as it seems to be in Delhi, whose population cannot be compared with Kathmandu.

Delhi, the capital of India and one of the world's largest metropolises, is home to some 13 million people, which is equal to more than half the total population of Nepal. The roads are wide; double lane and grand flyovers have been built at several locations to tackle the ever-growing traffic situation.

The situation is only getting worse due to the ever increasing number of cars. Drivers struggle to park their vehicles, and because of the way houses are built (even in planned but old residential blocks) there is hardly any space for parking. Therefore, many people park their cars on the street

near their residence. Imagine what will become of the city when Nano hits the road. Nano is the much-hyped 'Rs One Lakh Car' that the Indian industrial giant Tata is working on, and which he claims will be the world's cheapest car. Uncle Mehra, my 75-year-old landlord, joked that they will need a crane in each colony so that the cars can be lifted and parked on the top of the houses.

If there is 'thin traffic' in Delhi, then it has to be the traffic of FM radios. In terms of radio waves, Delhi is primitive compared to Kathmandu. The Indian capital has only 13 FM radio stations compared to around two dozens in a valley of 3,50,000 people. The private stations here cannot broadcast news (only the state-owned All India Radio does that) which might sound monopolistic and grossly undemocratic to a Kathmanduite or any Nepali for that matter. The world's largest democracy doesn't allow private radios to broadcast news. I also miss the BBC World

main jaa yaar rule." (To hell with the rule), said another new friend of mine as he lit his cigarette.

As far as I have seen in the past four weeks, liquor sale is strictly regulated. One can't find beer or whisky as easily as mineral water in a *kirana pasal* as is possible in shops across Nepal. I am not much of a drinker but an Indian friend took me to a nearby 'sharab ka dukan' in Jangpura Extension. My friend introduced me to the shop-owner as a guy from Nepal. "Arrey, I worked there," said the man on the billing desk who remembered his days with a beer distributor in Kathmandu. "Liquor is available everywhere there!" When I mentioned that the government was planning to regulate the sale of alcohol in Nepal, he said, "Then many people are going to lose their jobs."

For me, trees are one of the best things about Delhi. If put together, they will probably make a jungle as big as our Shivapuri National Park. A quick search



Service in Delhi as Kathmandu has a dedicated frequency that brings the BBC brand of news from around the world 24 hours a day.

Smoking in public places like restaurants and offices is banned in India. Since the ban came into effect in October, puffing has become a challenge for many smokers. I was recently in Khan Market with two Indian friends who had to make sure that no policeman was around before taking out cigarettes. They did not flout the rule as they smoked on the street but India the functioning anarchy is not an ideal place for rules to be applied (or followed) strictly. One can see people smoking precisely in those places where it's prohibited. "Arey, bhad

on Google tells me that there are several books on the trees of Delhi and one of them, *Trees of Delhi: A Field Guide* by Pradip Krishen, has received many accolades from reviewers. There are around 252 species of trees in Delhi, said the author, whose wife, Arundhati Roy, is better known to the world. Seems like Delhi has been living with the slogan "ek ghar, ek rukh" (One house, One tree) and dwellers find it hard to keep track of the names. Uncle Mehra who has been living in the three-storey house for the past 55 years did not know the name of the tree that is almost attached to front entrance and is as tall as the building. These trees are home to numerous monkeys that are notorious for sneaking into people's houses, and as Uncle Mehra

recalled, even taking bananas out of refrigerators or attacking anyone who tried to stop them.

A Nepali drama performed by students of GEMS school and Sarwanaam Group at the international children festival of performing arts in Delhi last week highlighted the importance of trees in our lives. After all, we are from a country whose national slogan used to be "Hariyo ban, Nepal ko dhan" (Green jungle is Nepal's asset). Trees are Delhi's lifelines, providing oxygen and greenery to its residents in the midst of pollution, traffic and noise. People here still remember the pre-CNG (Compressed Natural Gas) years when the buses and autos ran by diesel and petrol. Now that most public (and some private) vehicles use environment-friendly CNG, the city has become far more tolerable. "It was difficult even to breathe," said a Nepali who has been living here for the past 12 years. "What you see now is revolutionary improvement [in air quality]."

Another hallmark of the city is its recreational parks which we don't find in Kathmandu. A distinct culture has built around them. People go there to jog, walk around or just relax. Here in Jangpura Extension, every block seems to have a park and the one in my block is guarded by a Nepali from Far West. "My real name is Harka Bahadur but here it's Shyam Bahadur," he said. "Deshi le chindaina." (Deshi do not know my name.) 'Deshi' is a term for Indians in many Nepali villages. The Indians whose cars Harka Bahadur washes and whose property he safeguards and who sleep soundly as he stays awake all night call him "Bahadur". Although it literally means 'brave' in English, 'Bahadur' sounds a bit derogatory. There are many "Bahadurs" in Delhi and in the rest of India. Nepal's poverty is to be blamed for this.

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