

Two big leagues

India is currently consumed by its two great passions: cricket and elections



DINESH WAGLE

This is a season of fierce competition in India. The two great Indian games are going on and, if the television viewership rating reports are anything to go by, both of them are trying hard to hold the whole of India firmly in their grips. The competitions that share the same acronym IPLs -- Indian Premier League (of cricket) and the Indian Parliamentary League (of national elections) -- are full of maverick teams and charismatic players who are, like the leagues themselves, playing against each other with full vigour and energy.

While the likes of MS Dhoni and Sachin Tendulkar are pitched against each other under the banners of Chennai Super Kings and Mumbai Indians respectively in the cricket league, the veterans of Indian politics like Lal Krishna Advani of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Manmohan Singh of the Indian National Congress are involved in an intense fight in the electoral battleground. Some of the matches have already been played in both leagues but the results are equally unpredictable in both.

What is known to the public, however, is the fact that the second edition of the cricket league didn't become as big a hit among Indian viewers as it had been last year. Instead, the news channels that reported and analyzed the parliamentary poll's first phase on April 16 managed to gain audience significantly. "As IPL (cricket) viewership in season two has dropped, elections have been a hit," wrote one newspaper. According to a TV viewership rating agency the first IPL weekend (April 18-19) viewership was 3.5 points while political news garnered 3.6.

This time the games are happening in South Africa thanks to some politics in the sport in India. The central and some state governments led by the Congress party expressed their inability to provide security to the games saying that their priority was the parliamentary polls. The IPL boss Lalit Modi who has a close association with the opposition BJP (particularly in Rajasthan) wasn't amused. The charismatic businessman and the brain behind the IPL concept promptly decided to take the whole game outside India, thereby giving the much needed continuity to the money spinning game and its brand. Some cricketing officials inclined to another regional party openly blamed the Congress for depriving the Indians the opportunity to watch the games in stadiums in India. It was also said that the Congress wanted to take revenge against some of its regional allies who are influential in cricket politics and taking doubtful stands regarding their support to the party in the polls.

While the 20-over matches are swift and intense compared to the original and longer formats (Test and One Day) of the game, the political matches for the parliament seats that also include cabinet berths and the prime ministerial position are even more dramatic and colourful. You never know when a team is formed or dismantled or when an ally suddenly turns hostile. Broadly speaking, there are mainly three groups of teams in the Indian polls that are better known as alliances. (For the record, there are only eight teams in the cricket league.)

The ruling United Progressive Alliance (UPA) is led by the Congress while the main opposition party BJP leads the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). Several regional parties are members of these alliances. Those who are not call their group the Third Front. But all these big banners are valid for the member parties as long as their interests are fulfilled. No one is permanently committed to the alliance and their options are always open. Political treachery and opportunism are part of the games and are closely followed. One day you are praising a person, the next day you spit venom against the same

person only to praise him/her again on next occasion! Like all third world democracies, insults are publicly exchanged by leaders, money is distributed to voters and, in the worst cases, candidates and voters are killed.

Having said all that, democracy is India's biggest pride. It is its democracy that has given India respect globally. Democracy is also a tool for its billion plus citizenry to have their say in the affairs of the state. It is amazing how India manages to organize such a huge spectacle in the span of a month in places ranging from those that are hit by insurgency and secessionist movements to those that experience total lawlessness and anarchy. Not to mention those that receive heat measuring up to 45 degrees Celsius.

Thanks to the democratic and other systems that are firmly in place India can handle any crisis (small or big) with ease. Leadership change in any vital institution like the Election Commission itself in the middle of the electoral process becomes a cakewalk. Naveen Chawla replaced N Gopalaswami as the Chief Election Commissioner last week even as some parties hurled allegations against both the outgoing and incoming CECs. But that is part and parcel of a democracy. "What a system," commented a friend over Gmail chat from Kathmandu. "Just imagine what would happen if the EC were to be changed in Nepal in the middle of elections?" Three days of Nepal bandhs and destroying of public property worth billions perhaps.

But in the age of 24-hour satellite television, the Indian democratic exercise has also become a major source of entertainment that has, as mentioned earlier, defeated cricket in the TV viewership ratings war. And this cricket is not just about bats and balls. It is



an unprecedented mix of games and entertainment which brings us to India's another great passion: Bollywood.

While cricket is considered a single unifying religion in the religiously, linguistically and politically divided nation of India, Bollywood provides a dose of entertainment to the majority of Indians (and many around the world). But Bollywood these days is suffering from strikes. The disagreement on revenue sharing between film producers and theater chains (also called multiplexes) has become so nasty that Bollywood hasn't seen any big releases in the past several weeks. Indians might not complain now as the cricket league will be entertaining them until May 24. Glimpses of Bollywood are very much visible in the games as some prominent stars of the movie industry won some cricket teams.

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Strategic management

The dramatic changes occurring in the health care industry require healthcare organizations to identify and plan for these changes

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The term strategy is derived from the Greek word *strategos* meaning general. The Greek verb *stratego* means to plan the destruction of one's enemies through effective use of resources. The concept was used for both planning and action. Strategy management in health care organizations (HCOs) was introduced almost 38 years ago. Before 1970, planning was disease oriented. HCOs were not-for-profit organizations. In the 1980s, the concept of strategic planning was broadened to strategic management. HCOs were more focused on the market with managerial efficiency, access and cost containment. In recent years, the expansion of HCOs has widened the scope of strategic management. Thus, strategic management concepts have emerged from military, politics and business organizations.

The dramatic changes currently occurring in the health care industry will continue in the coming years. At no previous time have public and private healthcare institutions faced a more turbulent, confusing and threatening environment. The greatest challenge for HCOs is identifying and planning for these changes.

Managing activities internal to the healthcare organization is only a part of a modern executive's responsibility. The modern executive must respond to the challenges posed by the immediate and remote external environments of HCOs. The immediate external environment includes competitors, suppliers, increasingly scarce resources, government agencies and their numerous regulations and consumers whose preferences often shift expectedly. The remote external environment comprises economic and social conditions, political priorities and technological developments all of which must be anticipated, monitored, assessed and incorporated into the executive decision making.

Healthcare managers deal with important, complex and sometimes conflicting issues. They bring new opportunities and threats to HCOs that have yet to be identified or fully assessed. It seems certain that there will be more changes in the health care industry in the next 10 years than there have been in the past 10. It is important to set the decisions and actions that result in the formulation and the implementation of plans designed to achieve the objectives of HCOs. It is important for formulating their mission including a broad statement about its purpose, philosophy and goal. It assesses the company's internal conditions and capabilities as well as the external environment including both competitive and contextual factors. Moreover, it analyzes the hospital's options by matching its resources with the external environment which identifies the most desirable options by evaluating each option in light of the hospital's mission.

A strategy may be viewed as a sequence of decisions, an organization's behaviour or a plan. Integration of what the organization should do, wants to do and can do in order to develop decision making guidelines is strategic planning. Forces in the external environment influence the strategic behaviour of the organization and suggest "what the organization should do". Strategic

behaviour is additionally influenced by an organization's internal capabilities and represents "what the organization can do". The consistency of the behaviour is driven by a set of common organizational values and goals. These values and goals are often the result of considerable analysis by top management and indicate "what the organization wants to do".

When management considers all of these forces and develops a series of consistent top level decisions, the organization has a strategy. Only when there is consistency is there a strategy. When there is a formal planning process, decision consistency is born out of excessive situational analysis and that is strategic planning. Hence, strategic planning is defined as a set of processes in an organization to understand the situation and develop decision-making guidelines (the strategy) for the future.

Management gets the job by working with and through people to achieve organizational objectives efficiently and effectively. Strategic management refers to the strategic decisions and actions of top management related to

ment, not just to ensure compatibility and survival but also to understand or alter the environment trends well enough to "create the future". It represents moving and flowing processes of analysis and evaluation to continuously monitor the environment and adapt the organization. Strategic management is the process of organizational leadership.

Strategic decisions are a direction towards defining the organization's relationship to its environment and take the whole organization as a unit of analysis. Strategic decisions encompass the definition of business, products and markets to be served, functions to be performed and major policies needed for the organization to execute these decisions to achieve its objectives. Strategic decisions search for effective positioning in relation to its competitors. The decisions must be multifunctional in characteristics. That is, it must depend on inputs from a variety of functional areas. The strategic decision also provides direction for and constraints on administrative and operational activities throughout the enterprises and is important to the suc-



the implementation of strategy to achieve long-term objectives. It involves decisions about allocation of significant resources which greatly impact the long-term performance of the organization. Resources can be people, money, technology, time or information.

Strategic management provides an ongoing structure for rational thinking about the plans and actions of an organization. It attempts to orchestrate a fit between the organization's external environment (political, regulatory, economic, technological, social and competitive forces) and its internal situation (culture, organizational structure, resources, services and so on). The process of strategic management defines where the organization is going, and sometimes more importantly, where it is not going. It creates organizational definition and focus. Strategic thinkers constantly relate the organization to its external environ-

ment of the enterprises.

Mission, customer mix, product mix, service mix, goal and objectives, competitive advantage and outside relationships are several decision areas in the strategic management of HCOs. When making strategic decisions, inputs from a variety of assessment are relevant. Hence, the core of any strategic decision should be based on three types of assessments. The first concerns organizational strengths and weaknesses. The second evaluates competitors' strengths and weaknesses because organizational strength is of less value if it is neutralized by a competitor's strength or strategy. The third assesses the competitive context, customers and needs, the market and the environment.

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President's position

The news article titled "What put Maoists on backfoot" published on Friday (April 24, Page) quoted an anonymous staff from the President's Office. The President's Office would like to make the following statements regarding the news:

1. The President's Office has been taking a clear stance that the dispute that emerged in the wake of the government's decision to seek clarification from the Chief of the Army Staff ought to be settled through political understanding by upholding the spirit of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the Interim Constitution. The President's Office would also like to inform that the President during his meeting with the Prime Minister and other leaders of the political parties, has advised them to seek an outlet as per the constitution.

2. The President's Office urges you to contact the official staff before publishing any news concerning this office in the future.

Mani Ram Ojha, Joint Secretary
The Office of the President

Nepal Army's rebuttal

1. The news reports that were published

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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(April 24, Page 1) in Kantipur (Ke Ke Bhayo Sena Bhitra?) and The Kathmandu Post (What put Maoists on backfoot?) have seriously drawn Nepal Army's attention.

2. NA officially refutes the news reports, which are baseless, misleading and are intended to spread rumours. Through this statement NA wishes to bring to the notice of the general public that the institution has always remained united and disciplined and shall always abide by the rule of law and function according to its chain of command.

3. NA also reminds that it is continually committed to safeguarding the freedom of the country, sovereignty and territorial and national unity. It firmly adheres to democratic norms. The news reports were ill-intended, a premeditated conspiracy to create a chasm between the Nepal Army and the Government of Nepal. The NA urges the national and international community not to be misled by the news reports.

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Sovereign nation?

With reference to news story "What put Maoists on backfoot" (April 24, Page 1), Nepal always boasts of being an independent and sovereign nation whenever debates originate pertaining to nationalism, history of colonialism, and foreign interference. But the direct order of the Indian ambassador to the prime minister of Nepal not to sack Army chief has obliterated the illusions of national-ity and sovereignty from the minds of Nepali people. The Maoist decision to ask Army Chief to furnish clarification may be unscrupulous but the government has every right to seek clarification from the employees of organisations within its purview. The Interim Constitution, Comprehensive Peace Accord and all other laws of the land confer prerogative to the elected government to manage, control, mobilise and maintain the security forces. Undoubtedly, strong backing by Nepali Congress, other parties and international support has emboldened Army chief to defy government orders.

We take pride in being the youngest democracy in the world but clap our hands when the Army challenges civilian authority and plots to impose a coup upon the democratically elected government. More importantly, foreign ambassadors are now dictating the government to heed their suggestions or face dire consequences. Meanwhile leaders of so-called democratic parties assert that democracy has won. What has happened is irreversible, but we no longer want such brazen foreign interference in the internal matters of this nation unless this country is excluded from the list of independent and sovereign nations.

Ushak Karki, Old Baneshwor

Political instability

This is in reference to the news article "Report: Instability stunts Nepal's growth" (April 22, Page 1). It is bad news for Nepali people that political instability is the main barrier to economic growth and business climate. I am particularly worried to learn that

labour productivity in Nepal is the lowest in South Asia due to excessive politicisation of labour, frequent strikes, and problems in managing labour costs, etc. I think that our economic, social and educational performance is going to deteriorate day by day due to excessive politicisation of educational institutions, hospitals, courts, factories, government offices, etc. I would like to request our senior political leaders to please think about the poor Nepali people. Otherwise, history itself is going to remove you from the leadership position like it did the monarchy.

Dakkal Pandit, Tinthana, Kathmandu

Ceremonial president

The Maoists have stated that the president was transgressing the bounds of the constitution and civilian supremacy (April 23, Page 4). I totally agree with them. The president should not forget that he is only ceremonial and cannot actively participate in political matters. He has no authority to send a letter to the prime minister, who is the executive head of the government, in order to make him reconsider the decision made by him and his party. Dr Ram Baran Yadav should only focus on the job assigned to him by the interim constitution.

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