

## A prelude to big bloodshed?



### WM Correspondent

With the Nepal Army (NA) and the UCPN (Maoist)'s People Liberation Army (PLA) directing their respective troops to remain in high alert, the national politics has moved to the dangerous zone.

The alarmingly augmenting discord between the ruling coalition and the Maoists can be ascribed to the onset of the likelihood of a renewed military conflict.

Both the sides have ordered their

respective armed forces not to stay in leave. Those who are in leave have also been told to return back their respective barracks or cantonments.

The press statement issued by the PLA headquarters states, "We direct all units to maintain high alert and adopt all defensive measures for possible retaliation. Also keep the information system effective and command their areas effectively."

The government ministers have also been threatening to leverage every

security apparatus including the NA to combat the Maoists, which have announced "decisive" and "indefinite" street protests beginning May 1 to topple the current coalition.

"The army is fully authorized to play an intervening role if the Maoist's agitation invited bloodshed," said Shanker Sharma, spokesperson of the Madhav Kumar Nepal-led government.

According to the Maoist stalwarts, the agitation is designed to take a peaceful course. "However, the nature

of the same hinges upon the postures displayed by the government," they warned.

The government's passivity to extend the term of the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) after its existing term expires on May 21, also suggests space for optimism is elusive. On the other hand, the Maoists have announced that they would not allow CA termed to be extended until the incumbent government resigns.

The Maoists have brought thousands of supporters from various districts in the capital to numerically swell their announced showdown and subsequently bring the valley to its knees.

They have also announced an indefinite general strike beginning from May 2 if the current government does not resign before May 1.

In order to cope up with the Maoist rage, the government has ordered the police to remove the party's cadres from both public and private installments where they have congregated in a huge number.

The Maoists seem tenacious to oust the current government. They have told the cadres to manage food and other essential for a month. There is a huge challenge for the Maoists to sustain the movement for a longer period.

It is also suspected that they might resort to the method the red-shirt

agitators are adopting in Thailand by blocking and taking control of key areas.

The Maoists are also preparing to mobilise masses across the major towns of the country to magnify the scale of their "crusade" against the government.

On the other side of the picture, the Maoist leaders refused to attend a dinner program hosted by president Dr Ram Baran Yadav saying it was a gimmick plotted by him to take over after the termination of May 28, the deadline set to promulgate a new constitution.

The myopically ceaseless scuffles

amongst the parties to secure their own petty and rapacious interests have almost completely dimmed the prospects of meeting the deadline.

The Maoists are somewhat jittery about the possibility of the president overstepping his territory to assume executive power after the expiry of May 28. And, their anxiety can be related to the advisors of the president who have propelled him to do so.

The flat denial on the part of Dr Yadav to comply with the decision of the then popularly elected Maoist-led to remove the then army chief some time back has also reinforced the suspicion of the Maoists.

## Reassuringly self-centric

### WM Correspondent

The latest political somersaults displayed by the senior leaders of the three largest parties—UCPN (Maoist), Nepali Congress (NC) and the CPN (UML) – indicate that the country will continue to reel under the yoke of uncertainty at least for some more time.

During a public dialogue organised by Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) on Wednesday with the top brass of these parties, the sharp discord among them was glaringly visible in three most key issues—integration and rehabilitation of the Maoist combatants, formation of national consensus government and

constitution writing— related to the peace process.

They may not reach a compromise or will take a long time to reach consensus on these issues until trust building measures are taken immediately.

The Maoists repeated their version that the doors towards the rapprochement would be opened only after the current government decided to descend from the power corridors.

The two other parties also recited to their old mantra that cooperation from the Maoists for managing their arms and armies of the Maoists was mandatory to [Cont. on page 4]

## Shocking spending, shocking outcome

### WM correspondent

The already depleting national coffer was further emptied by over Rs. 2.8 billion rupees to arrange the super jumbo set up of Constituent Assembly (601 members) - also dubbed as Legislative Parliament - two years ago.

The government has been spending nearly Rs. 70 million a month for the process of scribbling a new constitution and parliamentary affairs.

Each CA member is reveling in the allowance of over Rs. 60,000 a month.

In the current fiscal year, the CA has already spent a handsome amount of money out of its allocated sum of over Rs. 770 million.

Of course, the billions of rupees have already been taken out for making constitution from the state coffer.

And, no less amount of money has been disbursed by non-governmental organizations for the same purpose.

But, the outcome of this colossal investment so far has been palpably pathetic.

The constitution writing process is in the doldrums.

Various thematic committees of the CA have failed to submit their respective recommendation due to wayward discord among the political parties.

The CA has no work to do when there is less than a month to promulgate the new constitution.

The political myopia and rapaciousness has completely aborted the prospects of promulgating new constitution by the set deadline of May 28.

Now, the political talks have been boiled down to the question: Will it be better to extend the CA's term or not after the deadline.

Until and unless the parties cease from displaying petty wrangling for

consensus, even the extended period will not be helpful to write constitution in time.

The CPN (UML) and Nepali Congress (NC) have said that they were in favour of extending the CA term whereas the Maoists have maintained that there is no meaning of doing so if the current government does not step down.

The former rebels have announced large scale mass protests beginning from May 1 with the demand of formation of a national consensus government under their leadership.

However, the current wobbly coalition led by Madhav Kumar Nepal is hell-bent to prolong its period.

It is also trying to bypass the Maoists while taking any politically significant move.

The appointment in constitutional bodies took place sans the presence

of the Maoist chairman.

There should be a representation of the leader of opposition party in the decision making of constitutional council as per the existing law.

In fact, the Indian establishment is dictating its ruling disciples in Nepal not to share any power with the Maoists. The mandarins of New Delhi want to compel the Maoists to soften their stance through this tactic.

The increasing hostility amongst the parties has sent the political crisis into the stratosphere.

The political honchos continue to push the country to the precipice of an unimaginable political catastrophe for the sake of their partisan interests.

In the absence of the CA, there will be a political vacuum and the frenzy scuffle for filling it among the various stakeholders may only fuel the chaos in the country.

## “Mysterious” shortage of Indian rupees

### WM Correspondent

If you ask for a small amount of Indian currency in cash from any bank, the possibility of getting it easily is virtually rare.

Although Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) has promised to provide IC in other draft/TT forms, a large chunk of the people are willing to get the currency in cash.

The central bank is suspicious about the present IC demands in cash. To check if the bank has provisioned that the banks could exchange maximum INR. 25,000 with a person.

Moreover, it has issued a call to the bank and financial institutions (BFIs) to encourage people to get IC in the means of documents.

According to the reports, there has been wide black marketing of the IC in the bordering areas with India where the people are facing toughness to get the currency even in the exchange rate of Rs. 165 per INR 100.

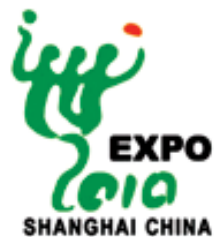
The NRB has been pumping IC in cash in the market by purchasing it from the Reserve Bank of India.

The central bank has also promised to provide IC at required amount through draft/TT and other related formats.

However, the demand for the IC in cash is simply high in volume.

General people cannot be expected to require unusually exponential amount of cash in any form for personal purposes. [Cont. on page 4]

## Shanghai Expo 2010 : A Platform for Broader Well-being



### ■ Prem Kumari Pant

In fact, the World Expo that began in 1851 in London with the exhibition of industries was regarded as galleries of human inspirations and thoughts.

The concept of the World Expo combines not only political, economic and culture features, but it is also focused on demonstrating the latest

stage of innovations in economic, social, cultural, scientific and technological fields.

In essence, this concept is all about exhibiting milestone achievements made by the human beings in various dimensions.

In a series of World Expo, the next expo is being held in Shanghai, China, which is slated to kick off on May 1.

It is the first time, the mega global event is being held in any developing country. It also solidly establishes the fact that China has indeed made a quantum leap in almost every field, which has simply amazed and enthralled the entire international community.

Nearly 140 episodes of World Expo have taken place in different parts of the world so far since its inception.

The Shanghai Expo 2010, which will be participated in by 142 countries, will

last for 184 days from its beginning. About 70 million people from both home country and abroad are expected to visit the expo to be run for the six-month period.

The theme of the expo which reads "Better City, Better Life," represents the common wish of the entire humankind for a better living in terms of factors like basic facilities and environment, among others.

The theme sounds very pertinent in the light of the fact that over 55% of global population is living in cities, and the rate is growing at a rapid pace.

All the participants will exchange experiences of urban developments and explore new approaches and avenues pertaining to urban strategies and sustainable development to create eco-friendly society.

"The demand of better urban life is run throughout the history of human

civilization" is the sub theme of the expo, which provides an extraordinary educational and entertaining platform

economic prosperity in the city based on innovation and creativity of people, and the harmony of economic

composing, housing ownership structure, improved infrastructure, pleasant accommodation and



for visitors.

The expo is gravitated towards blending of diverse cultures in the city to promote the harmonious coexistence as well as the integration of cultural identifications.

Likewise, it is also focused on

developments and environment.

The theme of the expo also advocates for innovations in science and technology in the city in conjunction with the protection of non-renewable resources, remodeling of communities with reasonable residents

environment, sufficient employment and opportunities for establishing business, as well as profound social cohesion. The theme also suggests the harmonious developments between urban cities and rural areas.

[Cont. on page 8]

R.No. BA. 39/027/028

Published by : Weekly Mirror Publication (P) Ltd.

Editor : Prem Kumari Pant

Sub-Editor : Nirjal Dhungana

Prithvi Man Shrestha

New Plaza, Ram Shah Path, Kathmandu

Tel No. 4412074, Fax: 977-1-4412410

Printed at : Dhimle Printing Press, Dillibazar

Email: weeklymirror@ntc.net.np

weeklymirror@gmail.com

## Editorial

# Deception in its most brazen form

Nepali politicians have once again proved that they are too myopic and too rapacious to comply with the legitimate needs and aspirations of the common people.

In their ceaseless bid to protect their own partisan and parochial interests, they unhesitatingly reneged on their promise to promulgate a new constitution by May 28.

Nepali Congress and CPN (UML), the second and third largest party respectively in the 601-member constituent assembly (CA), have already admitted that the new constitution cannot be promulgated by May 28. And, they are in favour of the extension of the term of the CA by one year to draft a new statute.

The Constituent Assembly was elected in early 2008 with a specific tenure of two years to draft the constitution. The interim statute has a provision for a six-month extension but this can be given only if the country has been placed under emergency rule.

CPN (UML) wants the interim constitution quickly amended to remove this emergency clause and to extend its term by one year.

However, the UCPN (Maoist), the largest party in the assembly with nearly 40% of seats, is saying that the idea of extending the assembly's term would not be palatable to them if the incumbent prime minister did not resign.

The Maoists believe that the country will not get a constitution nor will the ongoing peace process reach its logical conclusion as long as the present coalition remains in power.

They have long been terming the present coalition a puppet designated and dictated by the Indian establishment.

The Maoists are also venting their ire over the government's decision to recruit personnel for the Nepal army in apparent defiance of restrictions in the peace accord concluded between Maoist rebels and the government in 2006. The peace agreement prohibits both sides from making additional recruitment.

A widening gulf among the major parties has delayed the management and integration of the some 19,600 Maoist combatants, currently in United Nations-monitored cantonments, into the security apparatus, including the army. Moreover, the plan of rehabilitation for those not willing to go into government service is also in the doldrums.

On the other hand, the Maoists have announced a "decisive crusade" against the present regime by intensifying street agitation mainly in the capital, Kathmandu, and the eastern township of Biratnagar, from May 1. They have also said that this will lead to the proclamation of a "people's constitution".

Common people are highly jittery about the consequences of a possible showdown.

It has become crystal clear that leaders have bypassed mandate of the people brazenly to work coherently until a new constitution was enacted.

It is also suspected that major leaders have made a tacit agreement to deceive the public.

*"You must come to Kathmandu with shroud cloth wrapped around your heads and flour in your bags. It will be our last battle. If we succeed, we survive, else it will be the end of our party."*

— General Secretary Badal of the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)

There are moments when Kathmandu does not feel like a city on the edge of revolution. People go about all the normal business of life. Vendors sell vegetables, nail clippers and bootleg Bollywood films from the dirt, cramping the already crowded streets. Uniformed kids tumble out of schools with neat ties in the hot weather. Municipal police loiter at the intersections while traffic ignores them, their armed counterparts patrol in platoons through the city with wood-stocked rifles and dust masks as they have for years. New slogans are painted over the old, almost all in Maoist red. Daily blackouts and dry-season water shortages are normal for Nepal's primitive infrastructure, not the sign of crisis. Revolutions don't happen outside of life, like an asteroid from space — but from right up the middle, out of the people themselves.

Passing through Kathmandu's Trichandra college campus after meeting with students in a nearby media program, I walked into the aftermath of bloody attack. Thugs allied with the Nepali Congress party student group had cut up leaders of a rival student group with *khukuri* knives leaving one in critical condition. Hundreds of technical students were clustered in the street when I arrived by chance. The conflict most often described through the positioning of political leaders is breaking out everywhere.

Indefinite *bandhs* [strikes] are paralysing large parts of the country after the arrest of Young Communist League (YCL) cadre in the isolated far west and Maoist student leaders in Pokhara, the central gateway to the Annapurna mountain range. The southern Terai is in chaos, with several power centres competing and basic security has broken down: banditry, extortion and kidnapping are now endemic. Government ministers cannot appear anywhere without Maoist pickets waving black flags and throwing rocks.

With no central authority, all sides are claiming the ground they stand on and preparing their base. It's messy, confused and coming to a sharp point as the May 28 deadline for a new constitution draws near with no consensus in sight. The weak government holding court in the Constituent Assembly can't command a majority, not even of their own parties. Seventy assembly representatives of the status quo Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist-Leninist) party signed a letter calling on their own leader to step down from the prime minister's chair to make way for a Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) — UCPN (M), known simply as the Maoists — national-unity government. He refuses, repeating demands that the Maoists dissolve their popular organisations and return lands seized by the people who farm them.

The Maoists have more pressing concerns than the legalism of the parliamentary parties. If they can't restructure the state, by constitutional means or otherwise, the enthusiasm that brought their revolutionary movement this far may turn to disillusionment. With no progress in the assembly, the leaders of the status quo parties now say there will be no resolution on time. The Maoists have rejected any extension as a stalling tactic and are turning to the people. With now-or-never urgency, they are mobilising all their forces for a decisive showdown in Kathmandu.

Nepal braces for May 1  
Posters for May 1 appeared overnight announcing the Maoist call for workers and villagers to converge on Kathmandu for a "final conflict". The Maoists are calling for a sustained mobilisation, with the hope that an overwhelming showing can push the government out with a minimum of bloodshed.

May 1 is International Workers' Day, the traditional day of action for

communists around the world, but the mobilisation has already begun.

Thousands of recruits are being trained by YCL cadre in districts throughout the country, drilling with bamboo sticks in place of rifles. With threats from Nepal army commanders to put these protests down with force, the Maoists are preparing to defend their mass organisations, the marches, the party and the people from attempts at counter-revolution. Their meetings include political orientations and anti-disinformation training to combat the confusing fog of manufactured rumours and lies that are already in the air.

National assemblies of radical students, artists, intellectuals, ethnic federations, women, unions and trade organisations convened widely during the month of April. All sectors are receiving the same message: the Maoists will not return to the jungle, or replay a guerrilla struggle. They will not retreat. The conflict will be decided frontally in the cities.

**Dual power — class struggle at the tipping point**

Nepal has two mutually exclusive power structures: one is the revolutionary movement led by the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), which has a powerful mass base among the people, a disciplined political militia in the YCL and its People's Liberation Army. The other is the apparatus of Nepal's state — held over from the monarchy, unreconstructed, backed by the rifles of the Nepal army and the heavy weight of feudal tradition.

Land seizures co-exist with plantations. Old judges still sit in their patronage chairs dispensing verdicts to the highest bidder while revolutionary courts turn off and on in the villages. Large-scale infrastructure like hydropower remains largely under foreign ownership, but only operates when, and how, the Maoist-allied unions let them. In short, the semi-feudal, semi-colonial system of Nepal is in place but the organised workers and Maoist-led villagers hold a veto.

When urban civil uprisings wrested a parliamentary system from King Birendra in 1990 nothing changed for the people, save those whose hands got greased for government services. When rising expectations crashed into the closed doors of *realpolitik* of elite "democracy" — the Maoists blew it open, building an army up from the people themselves. From bases of support in Rolpa and Rukum, the People's War spread to 80% of the country in 10 lightning years. More than 13,000 people lost their lives in the greatest uprising in Nepal's history.

Yubraj Lama, a prominent actor/director thrust into radical politics by the movement against the king, put it simply: "It was the failure of the political parties to bring democracy, any real social change for the masses of people that fueled the People's War. This is what the Maoists changed. People were very fatalistic, looking up to politicians like princes. That is over."

People who had never thought social change was possible now believe they can end their poverty. Women and girls are more than a way to have male children. The heavy hand of foreign domination and its imposed backwardness can be challenged. The Maoists changed the concept of politics from appeal-if-you-dare to revolution from the ground up.

Everyone isn't happy with the way the wind is blowing. It is easy to find haughty conservatives who think any hope from the poor comes at their expense and who want to see the Maoists crushed.

With all the paranoia of the United States' white-fright militias, Nepal's reactionaries conflate rudimentary democracy, let alone the communist program of the Maoists, with the very end of the world.

Nepal's embattled elites also can't simply be brushed aside or nuanced into reform. They to have an army, the former Royal Nepal Army, renamed but

By Jed Brandt

unreconstructed. The officer corps is steeped in caste ideology and disdain for the common people, supplied with modern weapons and not-so-secret Indian and US advisers.

The PLA is training and waiting within UN-supervised cantonments — military bases scattered across the countryside. The YCL, led by former PLA commanders, is training new militias throughout the country. And for its part, the Nepal army is confined to its barracks, concentrated in and around Kathmandu.

The politics of this moment are intricate. Many forces parry and manoeuvre for advantage. But the basic situation is this: dual power has produced a highly unstable stalemate between a revolutionary people and a weakened regime — a paper tiger with real claws — and the moment of decision is fast approaching.

**Democracy is just a word**

Over the last 20 years, passion has only grown to see the people decide Nepal's future, to have some form of genuine popular democracy. It erupted first in the 1990 *Jana Andolan* civil uprising. It fueled the People's War that started in 1996 and animated the powerful mass movement that brought a big change.

One of the fruits of that sustained struggle was the current Constituent Assembly — where elected representatives of the grassroots were supposed to craft a new framework for a new society, with both open election to seats and sectoral representation to ensure that women, minorities and workers had direct representation. The very idea of such a constituent assembly comes from Maoist demands — it was their answer to bourgeois democracy.

Maoists made 40 demands of the N.C. Govt. in the mid-1990s before launching their guerrilla war. Despite consistent flexibility on almost everything, a constituent assembly was the only demand that was never negotiable. It's profound, the idea of an empowered assembly drawn from every corner — including elected representatives of the poor, women and minorities — for the purpose of remaking the very basis of government and society. This was to be the workshop of a New Nepal.

In a short-lived alliance with the parliamentary parties brokered in 2006, a popular uprising in Kathmandu forced the king out and secularism was established. Elections were held in 2008, and the Maoists emerged the largest party, with more delegates than the old standbys CPN (UML) and Congress combined. The rest of the seats went to a score of minor parties.

This unprecedented assembly has been gridlocked since it convened. On one side, the old political parties want an Indian-style parliamentary system that is quite compatible with rural feudalism and caste oppression. And opposing those parties, stand the Maoists who speak of a radical new people's democracy where those excluded from politics will now set the terms.

The Maoists have used their days in this assembly to flesh out their plans for a New Nepal. They drafted and popularised constitutional provisions for a future people's republic — including land reform, complete state restructuring, equality for women, autonomy for oppressed minorities and an end to Nepal's stifling subordination to India. Ambitious plans to redirect government investment in basic infrastructure like roads, sanitation and vastly expanded public education were all scuttled when the Nepal army refused to recognise civilian control after the Maoist victory. Maoist Prime Minister Prachanda resigned, leading the Maoists out of government and leaving the Constituent Assembly in gridlock. They are the largest party, the legal and extra-legal opposition.

The same callous ruling classes, who ignored the bitter poverty of people for decades, now claim to be Nepal's only "democratic" alternative to the Maoists.

Yet everyone knows it was those

Maoists who went deep among the people, who fought with guns, braved torture and sacrificed many lives for constitutional elections — winning a popular mandate in that voting. Who, then, are the true democrats here? Who really speaks for the people and their aspirations for power?

**Time itself is accelerating**

All the political forces in the country have now spent the last years in slow-motion manoeuvring. They have revealed their programs and exposed their natures — before a closely watching population.

The Maoists are refusing to wait any longer. Leaders of Congress party and CPN (UML) admit a constitution can't be delivered by May 28. The Maoists reject any postponement of that May 28 deadline. No more stalling, they say.

Hundreds of thousands have been mobilised in peaceful mass marches over the last months. Such marches have been a vehicle for intensive mass organising. They have been used as a gauge of growing partisan strength. The logistics of moving people through the streets to each of the main government offices is practice for seizure. In short, they can be understood as dress rehearsals for a revolution.

On April 6, 2010, Maoists held powerful rallies in all of Nepal's 75 districts demanding that the unelected prime minister resign to make way for a new Maoist-led government. Further rallies are scheduled leading up to May 1.

The Maoists' program is unlikely to be met by parliamentary procedure and they know it. Maoists have discussed a double-barreled approach: build on the base areas and social transformation of the People's War to launch popular insurrection in the city. Nepali revolutionaries have been incredibly patient, refusing to over-extend their hand. They are seeking to apply one of Mao Zedong's most famous principles, the mass line:

*It often happens that objectively the masses need a certain change, but subjectively they are not yet conscious of the need, not yet willing or determined to make the change. In such cases, we should not make the change until, through our work, most of the masses have become conscious of the need and are willing and determined to carry it out. Otherwise we shall isolate ourselves from the masses. Unless they are conscious and willing, any kind of work that requires their participation will turn out to be a mere formality and will fail.*

This is what Prabhakar, deputy commander of the PLA, meant when he said: "We will not take any action against this government. People at large will decide the fate of this government".

The Maoists have been working hard to make the next push — for the final seizure of power — an act of the people, not a self-isolating putsch by the communists alone.

On April 15, YCL commander Sonam was arrested in Kathmandu on weapons charges. Thousands of people mobilised within the hour for a torchlight march to the jail. Sonam was released.

Backed by the defence ministry, commanders of the 96,000-strong Nepal army began new recruitment this week in direct violation of prior agreements. UCPN (Maoist) leader Ashok calls this a "conspiracy to invite civil war".

For all its complexity, dual power in Nepal rests on two armies. The middle ground is disintegrating under the pressure. Splits are appearing within all kinds of political forces — including the moderate leftist CPN (UML) and reportedly among the army rank and file. The UCPN (M) openly says it is seeking to make its case "directly to the soldiers".

"If the army acts against democracy, the people won't stand for it," said Bishnu Pukar. A human rights activist and former leader of the revolutionary teacher's union, Pukar was arrested twice in the fight for a new Nepal by the military. "Too many lives have been lost. There will be general rebellion."

In short: The Maoists are forcing a question of ultimate power that the people of Nepal will have to decide. Look to May 1 and the days that follow.

# China is all geared up to unveil Expo 2010



The Expo, which will reflect the true essence of "New China", is going to be held in Pudong, Shanghai, China.

Expo 2010 Shanghai China is going to lift its curtain in the coming week.

Following is the speech delivered by the Chinese Ambassador Qiu Guohong at an interaction programme organized by Nepal-China Executive Council:

In 1910, a 32-year-old Chinese writer named Lu Shie wrote in his novel "New China" that a world exposition is going to be held in Pudong, Shanghai, China, and tourists from both home and abroad will come to visit Shanghai. One hundred years later, in 2010, World Expo, which is also regarded as economic and cultural Olympics, is coming to Shanghai, and Chinese people's centennial dream for hosting World Expo will come true one week later.

World Expo is a large international exhibition of the achievements that human beings have made in the field of society, economy, culture and science and technology. The first International Exhibition was held in London, UK in 1851, 150 years after that, nearly 140 world expos were held all over the world, China's participation

in the World Expo can be dated back to 1851 when a Chinese businessman called Xu Rongcun sent 12 packs of silk to the 1st World Expo and a gold award was given to the product. Later on, Chinese product appeared in many world expos held in UK, USA, France and so on. Since China's reform and opening up, China's relations with the world expo have become even closer.

This is the first time for China to host such a comprehensive International exhibition, and this is also the first time for the World Expo to be held in a developing country. Expo 2010 Shanghai China will start from May 1 and last till October 31, totally six months, 184 days. Till now, 242 countries regions and international organizations have confirmed their participation in Shanghai Expo, and more than 100 leaders from other countries have expressed their willingness to visit to Expo. It is estimated that 70 million visitors from all over the world will attend the Expo 2010 within six months, and average of 400,000 visitors per day and even 600,000 visitors per day at the peak season, which will be the largest number in the Expo's history. There are more than 100 different venues and pavilions in the Expo. Site including Expo Axis, China pavilion, Theme Pavilion, and Expo Center. The construction area for venue is 740,000 sqm, and the total construction area is 2.3 million sqm, which have created a new record for Expo.

The Theme of Expo 2010 is "Better City, Better Life". This is the first time in the 150 year history of World Expo to set "city" as the theme, which has

obtained active response from the accepted by the international community. "Better City, Better Life" is a common concern of human beings. Expo 2010 will play an active role in passing on the theory of sustainable development and become a good platform to discuss the way to build a harmonious family for human beings.

The Emblem of Expo 2010 is inspired by the shape of a Chinese character "iv", depicting the image of three people holding hands together like a happy family, or abstracted as the big family of mankind you, me, him/her to chase for beautiful lives, pushing forward the ideology of "understanding, interaction, get-together and cooperation" of World Expo and emphasizing the people-first pursuit of Expo 2010.

The name of mascot of Expo 2010 is "Haibao", meaning for "treasure of the sea". The name and the figure of Haibao are integrated, representing luck. "Haibao" is created by Chinese character which defines human beings, embodying the features of Chinese culture and echoing with the designing concept of Emblem of Shanghai World Expo. The structure of Chinese character discloses the theory that the better life needs the joint effort of you and I. As long as all the human beings support each other and mankind and nature, mankind and society, people and people could coexist harmoniously, the city will be better and the life will be better.

The activities of Expo 2010 could be divided into three catalogs. The first catalog is pavilions. There are more than 100 pavilions in Shanghai World Expo 2010 and the national pavilion day will be held almost every day. The second catalog is cultural performances. There will be nearly 100

performances every day during the Expo, the total number for performances will exceed 20000 during the Expo.

Moreover, the participants of the expo will have their own events in their pavilions separately and there will also be some more events held before or after the opening of the Expo. The third catalog is Expo forums. During the Expo, there will be one summit forum, 6 thematic forums and more public forums.

Nepal is an active participant of Shanghai World Expo 2010. The Nepal Pavilion is named Arniko Center to memorize Arniko, the Nepalese architecture veteran's contribution on architecture and China-Nepal friendship. The Nepal Pavilion, copying the style of the Arniko times after 11 century, is an exquisite work of art with a large Buddhist pagoda as the centrepiece, surrounded by several fold houses representing styles from different periods. I believe that the Nepal pavilion will be one of the most welcomed pavilions with profound concepts and may visitors.

Up to now, the Organizing Committee of Expo 2010 Shanghai China has already conducted several rounds of trail operation, tested various works ranging from security, transportation, telecommunication, control of flow of visitors and response to emergencies, all of which have been in good conditions. The open, harmonious and advanced China and warm and hospitable Chinese people are expecting that visitors all over the world will visit China to know more about Shanghai and experience Expo 2010 by their own. I'm sure that Expo 2010 Shanghai China must be a successful, marvellous and unforgettable world expo.

## That eleventh hour magic!

It seems no one knows better about the secret cure-all power of this magical eleventh hour than our political leaders! Because, nowhere is this syndrome of doing things at the eleventh hour, that is to say resolving differences only at the last minute, as pervasive and pronounced as in the major political parties of Nepal. As things stand now, it is becoming crystal clear that neither the peace process nor the constitution drafting will be completed within the stipulated timeframe. Rather than trying to stay united in a spirit of understanding and togetherness, our political leaders are bitterly engaged in a war of attrition, if you like, and appear inexorably unrelenting to yield any ground. The hectic security training reportedly unleashed by the Maoist Party across the country, their formal announcement to launch the "third Janaandolan from Baisakh 19, the seemingly helplessness of the government in the face of the crumbling law and order situation and the continued deadlocks in efforts to take the politics to the center by extricating it from veering extreme right, or extreme left are the somber presage of the uneasy times ahead. The situation looks indeed pretty forbidding. Amidst such a depressive scenario, one can only hope and pray that sanity and prudence will descend upon our self-styled wise leaders, even if it means at the eleventh hour. Our leaders have faced similar situation time and again in the past and yet kept the house from falling apart, at the eleventh hour, through demonstration of a politics of compromise and concession. So, hopefully that magical eleventh hour will strike at the end of the day dispelling the dark and ominous clouds looming over us.

**Unfulfilled commitments**  
Without a shadow of doubt, the historic Janaandolana-2 was waged against dictatorship and attempts at throttling democratic values and principles. The unprecedented internal and external support was possible because the major political parties,

including the Maoist, had made unequivocal commitment not only to reestablish democracy but also to embrace the fundamentals of democracy as irreversible features of the future system of governance in Nepal. Unfortunately, many of the commitments, including the meaningful conclusion of the peace process and the drafting of a constitution remain largely unfulfilled. One of the major players of the big three parties has now begun to interpret those commitments in a different manner by declaring to launch yet another Janaandolan. The growing contradictions and ambivalences seen in this Party have further compounded the already fluid transitional politics, apart from eroding its national and international image as a party coming gradually into the mainstream of peaceful competitive politics. Its reluctance to proscribe the culture of violence, intolerance, extortion and intimidation and branding of western democracies as imperialists and India as interventionist, when things do not go its way has raised further suspicions in its real motives. This is going to do a great harm to a party which is looked upon as a crucial change-maker in the history of Nepal in favor of the subalterns and the downtrodden. It may be unpalatable for the Maoist Party but the truth must be told. The Nepali Congress Party does have the impeccable democratic credentials since its inception; the UML has gradually morphed itself into one - a peaceful, and democratic political party. Despite the numerous vices many of their leaders are notoriously famous for, the two parties' over- all adherence to democratic pluralism, peaceful and competitive politics is total. But the Maoist Party has yet to be fully transformed into a party committing itself to these democratic ideals to enable it to win the full trust and confidence, both at home and internationally.

**International system**  
It is a known fact that the current

international system is premised on certain universally agreed values and principles- the principles of democratic pluralism, respect for human rights, rule-based system of governance, individual liberty and press freedom, among others. Nepal cannot afford to remain outside this international system. Our geo-political situation, level of socio-economic development and other inherent vulnerability requires us to be part of this international system. No matter which party comes to power, a firm commitment to, and pursuit of, those universally acclaimed principles and the constructive engagement with the international community is absolutely crucial. Undoubtedly, without the support, assistance and cooperation of the international community, including our immediate neighbors, it will not be possible for us to undertake and complete the massive task of post conflict peace building and long term socio-economic development. Leaders in the Maoist Party who are well cognizant of this fact must not allow themselves to be the victim of hubris of a few of their dogmatic fellow comrades. The only option and the best option for them will be to embrace the ideals of democratic pluralism and the pursuit of a peaceful politics to stay relevant to the present international system.

**A silver lining**  
Events in the past have shown loud and clear that Nepalese people are not going to give up these universally accepted norms and values of the international system at any cost. Failures of attempts in the past at wresting freedom must open everybody's eyes. Moreover, a vibrant free press, a highly proactive civil society, a sizable intellectual community, scores of NGOs and well enlightened local communities are there to stand rock-solid as sentinels, should the need arise for defending these democratic ideals. It is well established that Nepalese people did not throw the dictatorial regime, only to be replaced

with another totalitarian one; they don't want to remain as international pariahs, just like North Korea and Myanmar. The Maoists may have hoped to succeed eventually to impose a system based on coercion and fear, but at the end of the day such a misadventure will prove too costly for them. Therefore, at such a fluid and critical time as we are going through now, sanity and prudence demand against stoking any irrational and unwarranted flame of narrow nationalism, ethnicism, and extreme radicalism by any political party. These will serve only as fodders for colossal internal disorder and possible unpleasant and gratuitous external intervention. And who else could be the biggest loser other than the Maoist Party, if that were to happen?

Even as the political leaders are engaged in a political brinkmanship there still is a silver lining in this difficult situation; the leaders of the three big political parties have not closed the doors for dialogue and the Maoists have affirmed again and again that their upcoming protest will be peaceful. It is but natural for Parties with different political ideologies to differ in a number of issues. This is more so, for the likes of the Maoist party which is in the throes of a peaceful political transition. But in the ultimate analysis, there is no alternative to searching for, and agreeing on, a middle ground solution. Unmistakably, the fetish for a culture of violence and the pursuit of a politics of brinkmanship, unless eschewed before it is too late, is going to spell doom for the country. So, let us hope and pray for the magical eleventh hour to arrive the soonest. Because, who knows just like the last minute wedding planning of my relatives that turned out to be flawlessly perfect, our political parties may also be able to reach an understanding and compromise at that magical eleventh hour! And they ought to. Nevertheless, even as we keep our finger crossed for that magical eleventh hour, relentless pressures from all quarters must be brought to bear upon our leaders until they agree on a middle- ground solution!

~ News ~

## PM gets re-invitation for Pakistan visit

Pakistani Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani, who visited Nepal on route to Thimpu, Bhutan to take part in 16<sup>th</sup> SAARC Summit, re-invited Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal to visit Pakistan.



During the meeting between the two counterparts, the Pakistani Prime Minister informed his Nepalese counterpart that Pakistan has finalised assistance package of Rs. 13.17 million to Nepal for development in different sectors under its Special Assistance Programme for South Asia (SAPSA) in fiscal year 2009-10.

He also said that Pakistan offered 29 scholarships last year and this number would go up in the future.

He explained that the assistance include donation of ambulances, scholarships for Masters Degree courses in Mass Communications and increased slots for the Nepalese trainees in different fields.

Two sides are also going for Free Trade Agreement and the proposal for initiating negotiations on bilateral investment treaty between the two countries is presently under consideration of Nepal government, according to Pakistani side. "The efforts should be made to finalise Preferential Trade Agreement between the two countries to increase trade volume," Gilani said. Nepal and Pakistan have cooperation on banking sector. Gilani said it could be extended in the fields such as setting up of cement factories, construction sector, infrastructure, tourism, agriculture sector.

Pakistan also offered more support in the area of defense. Nepal had purchased small arms and ammunition worth US\$ 2.23 million in 2007. Pakistani Prime Minister also said Pakistan would continue accommodating officers of Nepalese Armed Forces in its defense and defense production training institutions.

Gilani also stressed the need for early decision on the part of Nepal to conclude a Bilateral Extradition Treaty which is pending with the Nepalese government since 2006. Nepal has also been facing Indian pressure to sign extradition treaty that would allow extradition of third country person which is presumed targeted mainly at Pakistani national.

During the talks, Prime Minister Nepal thanked Pakistani counterpart for offering assistance to Nepal and lauded Gilani's reconciliatory approach to achieve constitutional reforms.

Gilani also met with president Dr Ram Baran Yadav during his two day visit to Nepal.

## China quake toll reaches 2220

The death toll from a 7.1 magnitude earthquake in northwest China's Qinghai province that happened on April 14, reached to 2220 as of April 25, China said. Seventy people trapped in the earthquake are still missing and more than 12,000 people injured and tens of thousands of residential building collapsed caused by earth quake.

All residential houses in Gyegu town of Yusu, the epicenter, were submerged and 80 percent of brick-concrete structures were toppled. "Others are in severe condition and dangerous to live in," said Chinese ambassador to Nepal Qiu Guohong, talking to journalists on Tuesday here.

China had suffered similar quake two years ago right before the Olympic game in western Sichuan region that had left more than 68,000 dead.

Chinese authorities have intensified rescue efforts. According to the ambassador, 59,093 tents and 207,957 quilts had been distributed to the survivors in the quake zone. "Goods and materials met most of the needs of the survivors."

## Artists urge Maoists to make protests peaceful

Leaders of the End to Violence campaign have urged the Maoists to make their upcoming protests peaceful.

They met with Maoist vice chairman Baburam Bhattarai today and urged the Maoist party to make their May 1 demonstrations peaceful. Campaign leader Kul Chandra Gautam asked the Maoist leaders not to give provocative speeches during the protests.

Artists Madan Krishna Shrestha and Haribansha Acharya also told Bhattarai to make the demonstrations peaceful as violence would do no good to anybody and whoever dies or gets injured in violence will be a Nepali.

Actor Rajesh Hamal asked the Maoist leader to forge political consensus to give outlet to deadlock as consensus and compromise among the parties is a must to take the country forward.

Bhattarai in turn replied that the May 1 demonstrations will be peaceful and pledged not to let his cadres commit any violent activity.

He said the parliamentary parties considered the Maoists weak and ignored poor people's voice and that's why the Maoists are organizing the demonstrations to show that the majority of the people are poor.

He said there is still chance for political understanding before May 1 and the party will call off the demos if such agreement is reached. He asked the campaign leaders not to doubt the Maoists' commitment to multiparty democracy as the party had already embraced it through the Rolpa meeting seven years ago.

# India's anti-Maoist strategy under fire

Seventy-six security personnel were killed in an ambush by Maoists in the forests of Chhattisgarh's Dantewada district a fortnight ago, kicking up heated debate in India over the

By Sudha Ramachandran

The Maoists have scored significant victories over the past two months. In February they overran a security forces camp in West Bengal, killing 25

in a radius of at least 800 meters and that would affect many people who are not insurgents.

The government has ruled out using



government's anti-Maoist strategy.

Civil society and rights activists who are opposed to the government's military approach maintain that the ongoing military operations in Maoist areas made the security personnel vulnerable to attack. Others, however, believe that the approach is not robust enough. While some are calling for better training and equipping of police and paramilitary forces currently deployed there, there is a section too that is in favor of the army and air force being inducted to combat the Maoists.

Immediately after the Dantewada debacle, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Home Minister Palaniappan Chidambaram said that "all options were open" in dealing with the Maoists, triggering speculation that the government was considering deploying the armed forces.

Described in 2004 by Manmohan as the greatest internal security threat to the country, the Maoist insurgency is several decades old. An uprising in the late 1960s in the village of Naxalbari in West Bengal spread like wild fire but was quickly suppressed, only to re-emerge in other parts of the country in the 1980s. In the years since it has waxed and waned but has never been defeated.

Maoist influence has grown remarkably in recent years. According to Home Ministry figures, in 2003 a total of 55 districts in nine of India's 28 states were affected by varying degrees of Maoist activity. That number rose to 156 districts in 13 states by 2004 and to 170 districts in 15 states by 2005. Some 223 districts (of India's 626 districts) in 20 states are reportedly affected by Maoist activity today.

The scale of Maoist attacks too has grown phenomenally in this period. Maoists have stormed jails and freed hundreds of their comrades. They have blasted railway tracks and telecom towers, looted police armories and hijacked trains. In the past they depended mainly on hit-and-run attacks and grenade explosions, increasingly they are displaying a capacity to stand and engage the security forces for several hours.

policemen. Then on April 4, 10 policemen were killed in a landmine blast in Orissa. Two days later came the big ambush at Dantewada in which almost an entire company of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel was annihilated. This is the largest single blow suffered by India's counter-insurgency forces.

The ambush at Dantewada evoked heated discussions in the media, with some experts calling on the government to give the Maoists a "fitting response", including the deployment of the army and launch of air strikes in Maoist areas. "They seem to have drawn inspiration from the Sri Lankan government's aerial bombing of Tamil areas and believe that a similar combination of armed forces and air strikes would help eliminate the Maoists," a retired army commander who was involved in counter-insurgency operations in the northeast in the 1980s and in Jammu and Kashmir in the 1990s told Asia Times Online.

However, the use of the army and the air force against the Maoists is hugely controversial as it would involve turning heavy weaponry against one's own citizens.

Aerial bombing is counter-productive in tackling insurgencies. The large civilian casualties that come in the wake of aerial bombing fuel anger against the state and increase support for the insurgents.

This has brought an unlikely combination of the armed forces and tribes activists together on the issue. Army and air force officials have been among the most vociferous of those opposing their deployment in Maoist areas.

A day after the Dantewada ambush, Indian Air Force (IAF) chief Air Marshal P V Naik drew attention to the unsuitability of the armed forces for anti-Maoist operations. "We are not trained for limited lethality," he said. Pointing to the likelihood of high civilian casualties if the armed forces carried out combat operations, he said that although the air force had "the capability to conduct strikes with utmost precision, if a 250kg bomb is dropped at a spot, its impact will be

the air force in combat operations for now. The Home Minister clarified that the government was only examining whether "some special forces" were needed to supplement the paramilitary forces currently deployed in the counter-insurgency operations and was considering the use of aircraft for surveillance, logistics and evacuation. He did not elaborate, however, whether the "special forces" would be drawn from the army.

Home Ministry officials that Asia Times Online spoke to some months ago said the government was considering deploying the Rashtriya Rifles, a counter-insurgency force that was formed out of deputed army personnel and was specially raised in 1990 to tackle the insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir.

Home Ministry officials say that unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) "have been used off and on in Maoist areas for surveillance purposes and this is likely to increase. Helicopters have also been used for rushing in forces and evacuation of injured personnel."

But reconnaissance by UAVs has limitations - especially in counter-insurgency situations. "It can give information about a number of people gathering at a spot but it cannot tell you whether it is a group of armed insurgents or ordinary tribals and villagers," the IAF chief said. "Moreover, aerial survey may not be possible in dense jungles as the devices cannot see through a canopy of trees, bushes and shrubs."

The use of aircraft, even if only for logistics and evacuation, is fraught with problems.

The Maoists have fired at aircraft and caused damage. A Mi-8 helicopter came under fire in November 2008 in Chhattisgarh's Bastar region, killing an IAF sergeant and a Mi-17 chopper was fired at in April last year in Gadchiroli in Maharashtra.

The IAF is reported to have asked the government last year for permission to engage in retaliatory fire if its aircraft come under Maoist attack. It is not known whether the government granted it permission.

But, the NC and UML leaders said as no party has an absolute majority, any party is in position to lead the government.

Specially, UML chairman Jhansu Nath Khanal has been airing this view time and again.

During the interaction, he however said that he would take the responsibility of making the incumbent Prime Minister resign if the parties sort out their differences for the sake of consensus.

On the urgent topic of constitution making, the top leaders flippantly admitted that the constitution can not be promulgated by May 28, the set deadline set by the interim constitution.

Not surprisingly, they ventured into blame game for the delay in constitution making process.

# BRIC Ready to Recast World Order

All the BRIC leaders came together, for the second time in history, to address various ways to overcome the consequences of the crisis, gear up for the G20 meeting and make the case for a new financial world order.

First coined by Goldman Sachs back in 2001, the term "BRIC" only gained full political and financial prestige in the beginning of the U.S. credit crunch in 2007. The recession that plagued developed countries pushed the emerging economies to the forefront as growth leaders and fundamentally changed the balance of forces on the global arena. BRIC countries have repeatedly called for a new world order in which emerging economies would have more say.



This time around was no exception. BRIC countries unanimously agreed that they had the right to more influence in such international organizations as the World Bank and the IMF. They also urged that reforms be initiated by the next G20 summit in November.

The parties also signed a memorandum outlining ways for the global economy to recover from the aftermath of the financial crisis. They placed special emphasis on preserving the stability of the main reserve currencies and countering any form of protectionism to ensure free trade.

On the summit's sidelines, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev met with his Chinese counterpart Hu Jintao to ventilate business cooperation and international issues. President Medvedev offered China any assistance, on any scale, that Russia could provide in connection with the earthquake in the country's Qinghai province. In turn, the Chinese leader said that he appreciated Medvedev's consent to cut the summit short, since the earthquake forced him to return home immediately. Notably, both parties set much store by Sino-Russian relations.

Before he set off for China, however, Hu Jintao met with Brazilian leader Luiz Lula da Silva, and the countries managed to strike a number of deals to further develop bilateral partnerships, including those in trade and energy. For one, China is set to build a steel factory in Brazil, and is also interested in developing railway service in the country.

Another important step forward made at the summit was a memorandum of cooperation signed between the Bank for Development and Foreign Economic Affairs State Corporation (Vnesheconombank), Export-Import Bank of India, China Development Bank and the National Bank for Social and Economic Development of Brazil (BNDES). Under the memorandum, the first practical document within the BRIC format effectively aimed at creating an efficient funding infrastructure for multilateral trade, economic and investment cooperation, authorized financial development and exports support institutions will band together to work out funding schemes, including those for high-tech, innovative and energy efficiency projects, the Russian bank's press office said.

Vnesheconombank's CEO Vladimir Dmitriyev also announced that the bank was currently in talks with Brazil's BNDES and aircraft manufacturer Embraer over a joint project to design and build a 50-seat jet for Russia's regional air forces. The deal could involve a license to produce the jets, particularly at Tatarstan's Kazan-based aircraft building plant, Dmitriyev clarified. Investment in such a project could reach hundreds of millions of dollars.

## UNMIN shows concern on Maoist agitation

United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) has expressed serious concern over possible violence and infiltration during the mass protests called by Unified CPN (Maoist) on May 1.

UNMIN chief Karen Landren met Maoist vice chairman Babu Ram Bhattarai at the latter's residence in Shanti Nagar, Wednesday morning and expressed concern over the preparations for the May Day protests.

She also expressed concern about the PLA commander arrested in Chitwan with explosives. In response, Bhattarai said, the commander in question was on a home leave and that the party has no information about the grenade in his possession.

We are committed to comply with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, none of the combatants have come out of the camps with arms, Bhattarai said.

At the meeting with Landren, Bhattarai also said, UNMIN's presence in Nepal is essential until the peace process completes.

- Nepolean Chepang

## Reassuringly ...

resolve the current stalemate as well as to complete the peace process.

The Maoist leadership also claimed the other parties are downplaying the status of its People's Liberation Army (PLA). They insisted that the Nepal Army (NA) and PLA should be treated on an equal footing.

On the other hand, other two parties expressed denial to comply with the urge of the former rebels to treat the PLA at par with the NA. They also complained that the Maoists didn't cooperate to bring the PLA under the Special Committee for Integration and Rehabilitation.

The Maoist leaders were tenacious in their stance that the peace process and constitution making process should

go hand in hand but other parties insisted peace process should end first. There is a wide difference about the modality of integration and rehabilitation of former combatants.

The UCPN (Maoist) has long been clamoring for the bulk integration of its combatants into the security apparatus but the other parties want a one-to-one basis recruitment based on their merit.

According to the Maoists, the recruitment modality of integration suggested by other parties is a ploy to enteeble them. But the other parties say the bulk integration will politicize security agencies.

Regarding the issue of power sharing, the Maoists said they, as the largest political party, are fully entitled to lead the consensus government.

But, the NC and UML leaders said as no party has an absolute majority,

any party is in position to lead the government.

Specially, UML chairman Jhansu Nath Khanal has been airing this view time and again.

During the interaction, he however said that he would take the responsibility of making the incumbent Prime Minister resign if the parties sort out their differences for the sake of consensus.

On the urgent topic of constitution making, the top leaders flippantly admitted that the constitution can not be promulgated by May 28, the set deadline set by the interim constitution.

Not surprisingly, they ventured into blame game for the delay in constitution making process.

## "Mysterious" ...

But, the reality is that the country's currency market is reeling under the shortage of Indian notes.

Two factors could be ascribed to this currency clamor.

First is the substantial capital flight and the second one is related to the people's tendency to hugely accumulate IC to benefit from possible devaluation of Nepali rupees against IC.

The concerned government officials are airing comments about the devaluation.

Finance Minister Surendra Pandey and other related officials recently talked about the possibility of the Nepali currency against the Indian one is also said to have spurred the storage of the later.

Yet there is another argument,

which says people have cash in IRs 500 and IRs 1000 which could not be exchanged in small denomination, thus causing shortage of the IC in the market.

The shortage of Nepali cash in the market linked with the rising holding of high denominated IC that can not be exchanged in Nepal. When gold was smuggled to India, people got money in high-denominated IC which could not return back to the banking system. If the transaction had taken place through banking channel, it would have come into foreign exchange in the banking system.

But, the exact cause of IC shortage is yet to be arrested.

The NRB policy is correct in terms of discouraging wide use of the Indian money since it is also seamlessly linked

with the sovereign status of Nepal.

It is the reality the use of IC rather than the NC is higher in the bordering areas with India.

The NRB has also admitted that rising use of IC is also simultaneously augmenting Nepal's chronic dependency on India.

People may feel easier to have IC in cash for personal purchases in India. Further more, Nepal is visiting India can withdraw deposits with their debit cards even in India.

They don't need IC in cash for major transactions as they get facility of draft/TT from the banks. The use of banking channel as far as possible for transaction helps to make healthy economy. Further more, efforts should also be taken for wider use of domestic currency to gain economic independence too.

# India-US relations and Pakistan's concerns

By Shahid R. Siddiqi

During his recent meeting with President Obama in Washington, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh sought to solidify a relationship transformed under the Bush administration from mere friendship to that of a 'key ally' that led to nuclear cooperation deal and unprecedented security collaboration. He is also reported to have sought Obama's support for his bid for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council. He was given assurances that the US will not neglect India while pursuing close ties with Pakistan and China.

Senators Hillary Clinton and Joe Biden played a key role in bringing the two countries closer to serve each other's agendas during Bush presidency. India needed western technology; the US needed the Indian market. India had regional aspirations, a nuclear and military strength which it was keen to expand and had estranged relations with China; the US under Bush needed a regional ally ready to contain China and serve as its proxy for policing the region. And with 9/11, came a new role that India could play for the US in Afghanistan.

Both Pakistan and China carefully watch the changing dynamics of this deepening relationship which affects not only South Asia, but also China. They feel that if this partnership becomes too cosy for the comfort of others in the region, it will not serve peace that is already uneasy.

Pakistan has felt uncomfortable that India is receiving US assistance in the development of nuclear power industry even though India has refused to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Obama's assertion that 'Indian leadership is expanding security across the region' will find no supporters in Islamabad or Beijing.

The acrimonious relationship between Pakistan and India over several disputes and India's blatant role in dismembering Pakistan in 1971 has been exacerbated due to India's refusal to engage in a meaningful dialogue with Pakistan.

As an old American ally, Pakistan's concern over the increasing US 'tilt'

towards India, was quite natural. Pakistan's own relationship with the US has kept swinging from being the 'most allied ally' to being the 'most neglected ally' and then to being the 'most sanctioned ally,' depending upon how much the US needed Pakistan's services at a given time. Pakistan fears more belligerence from India in view of American support despite Pakistan's sensitivities.

The announcement by President Obama that his administration would begin to pull out its troops from Afghanistan after 18 months has given rise to apprehensions in Pakistan that he may install India as a proxy power to protect US interests.

Motivated by its sinister designs to weaken Pakistan, India is actively promoting an East Pakistan style insurgency in Balochistan. Once its military gains a foothold in Afghanistan it will squeeze Pakistan from the western border, while using rogue elements from the tribal belt, which it has already recruited, to destabilise Pakistan. Ample evidence of these activities was handed over to Indian prime minister by his Pakistani counterpart.

The US-Indian belief that India can hold the fort for the US in Afghanistan is a fallacy. The Afghans being fiercely opposed to foreign occupiers, it would be naive to expect that Indian forces would be welcome to stay after the Americans withdraw. Notwithstanding the support of the Northern Alliance and Karzai's weak government, the Taliban, who are bound to gain political influence in Kabul sooner or later, will reject Indian military presence on their soil, as it will represent American interests.

As of now in the current US matrix, cordial Sino-US relations are very important, mainly owing to American reliance on Chinese economic support that is not going to end any time soon. Obama cannot promote relations with India at the cost of its relations with China.

Besides, the US cannot also ignore that China has an abiding interest in

South Asia due to its regional security concerns and close relations with Pakistan.

Given the history of Sino-Indian rivalry this is unpalatable for India, which considers South Asia as its exclusive domain. Only recently the Indian officials, says a Washington Post report, in an outburst of Brahmanic self-importance expressed concern that New Delhi has been relegated to the second tier of US-Asian relations because Obama did not mention India in his speech on US relations in Asia recently. The speech, delivered in Tokyo, focused on the Asia-Pacific region and not South Asia. This, the Indians believe, is Obama's failure to recognise India's broader regional aspirations. The Indians were upset that 'Washington was leaning too closely to China.'

Then to India's chagrin, in the joint statement on conclusion of Obama's visit to China, Obama suggested that Beijing mediate between India and Pakistan. 'China and the United States,' the statement said, 'are ready to strengthen communication, dialogue and cooperation on issues related to South Asia and work together to promote peace, stability and development in that region.'

'A third-country role cannot be envisaged nor is it necessary to solve disputes between India and Pakistan, was the immediate Indian Foreign Ministry response.

Ashley Tellis of the Carnegie Endowment said, 'The joint statement prompted new fears that somehow the United States and China would collude to manage events in South Asia.'

Tellis said this has caused neuralgia in India because tensions between Beijing and New Delhi have risen over border claims. India is also upset over Chinese plans to divert Brahmaputra River that originates in Tibet and flows into Northeastern India. In addition, Indians are concerned that the Obama administration, unlike the Bush administration, views India as part of the South Asian problem, which includes the instability in Pakistan.

These Indian sensitivities will keep the US on the edge. Since both seek to serve their respective geopolitical objectives, which are very divergent in nature, the relationship will neither be smooth nor lasting. In a sensitive region, where the US must protect its own bilateral interests with China and Pakistan, truntings on the part of Indian leadership could make the new partnership difficult to sustain.

Therefore, before rushing into a collaborative arrangement with India and offering highly sensitive nuclear technologies, Washington will be well advised to first test out the prickly world of relations with New Delhi.

The US need not be impressed with the tall claims about India being the biggest democracy. India's human rights record is dismal, particularly in dealing with minorities. It has a long way to go in ensuring equal social status to Dalits (untouchables) who form 20 per cent of the population. Ethnic and religious cleansing of minorities remains a common occurrence.

If the US could make a political issue out of Tiananmen Square and Obama could refer to human rights issues during his China visit, why India should not be held to the same standard during Singh's visit.

As for the Indian request for a permanent seat in the Security Council, India's own involvement in Kashmir dispute that is pending before the Security Council and whose Resolutions it has refused to honour cannot be ignored. This dispute has led India to fight three wars with Pakistan and one with China. Its security forces subjugate the people of Kashmir, killing thousands and sexually abusing thousands of their women.

In response to a similar bid earlier, India was advised to first settle the Kashmir dispute. Then the US-India relationship had just begun to take shape with limited US influence over India. But now that the US enjoys a greater clout, it could more effectively pressure India for a negotiated settlement, which is in every one's interest, including regional peace.

## Region :

### Sporadic Wrestling with SAARC Reality

By I.A. Pansohta

The statement of Indian Home Minister Chidambaram that he is all set to travel to attend the SAARC Home Ministers conference in Islamabad, scheduled to be held in Islamabad on 18 or 25<sup>th</sup> February, 2010. But it is not clear whether he will enter into the dialogue with Islamabad nor not. His hint at the two major obstructions i.e. finalization of agenda points and myth about their approval by the competent authority would keep at least our foreign ministry guessing till final decision is made public. His reply to a question that he does not know about the Indian hand in the Mumbai firing on 26 November, 2008 triggers more ambiguities and cast its shadows on the forthcoming dialogues.

Referring to the statement of Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi that gap in the bilateral talks creates an atmosphere of mistrust and breeds violence. His emphasis that only talks between the two countries can help find an amicable and just solution of the problems now sounds like a cliché now. To comply with FM's instruction, Pakistani Ambassador in New Delhi met the high officials of Ministry of Indian External Affairs to finalize the agenda of the forthcoming meeting, but nothing about its agenda has been divulged. But this story of one party's so keen interest while the more significant partner attaches no significance to any such talks. It is also significant to mention that there has been no ministerial visit from India to Pakistan since 2008.

The terrorism spree, which Pakistan confronts in the garb of suicide bombing resulting into thousands of men and billions of material losses, is more real than apparent. The question who patronizes or perpetrates, may give India some benefit of doubt. The country is practically enmeshed in social and political storm. But what is the biggest problem this subcontinent faced during the last 62 years is the lack of sincerity that has not only hit the peace process at every stage but this trust deficit is also raising the political temperature, due to any credible achievement on the contentious issues like Kashmir, water row, Sir Creek and Siachen issue, besides gnawing Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) process, resumption of bilateral trade, visa regimes, exchange of visits, over-flights and a multitude of other pending troubles, lying in the cold-storage to be addressed, charted in the SAARC agenda.

The reality that conflict promotes more conflict. The views expressed by Mr. Qureshi that lengthening the gaps in bilateral talks not only multiply confusions but also provides ample chances for an exorbitant growth of human evils - shaking the fragile attempts ever made to engage, both India and Pakistan in some fruitful exercise. On the other hand Islamabad's patience is wearing thin, in the wake of New Delhi's strategic defiance, art of feigning itself as victim of terrorism and purported double speaks about the lurking threat from Islamic militancy. If the same tendency continued, the chances of pushing the affairs to finally confront head on collision between two rivals cannot be ruled out. Pakistan now is committed to turn the SAARC forum a wind beneath the new paradigm shift for peace, if India too moves a step forward.

The global community often expresses their bewilderment over the estrangement and lack of any appreciable achievement in the relations of these two countries despite ever-increasing level of awareness and enlightenment, computer knowledge and rewards of new technologies or innovations to bring these two countries closer. Since, all the bitter foes of yesterday like France, UK, Germany, Vietnam, Japan, China, Russia and ASEAN have finally concluded to forgive and forget their past and join together to usher new era of peace and prosperity, why the countries of South Asia could not follow the same recipe.

India believes that her dreams of reviving the 'Golden Era' through its long cherished reveries of 'Akhund Bharat' a reality, believing that it has pushed Pakistan on the brink of collapse is nothing, but a hallucination that will never come true. Rather, such an ideology would ultimately prove a self-defeating strategy - set into motion through its new 'Hindutwa' vision. The fact that New Delhi is sowing the seeds of violence through its millions of religious fanatic groups like RSS, VHP, VHS and a number of smaller parties would trigger new wave of terror in the world - a sort of Pandora's Box of terrorism in the South Asia.

If we look at the confidence building measures, there has never been so cordial or favorable situation as it prevails now. The tendency of quick fixes or resorting to make-shift measures, to bring the two countries on the negotiation tables is not needed, as had been in the past by different countries like Russia. It is time, to take some concrete steps to repair the broken ties between the two rivals to turn SAARC forum into a bridge of peace and prosperity. The past riddled with intrigues and conspiracies, generating confusion and stoking more and more violence should be done away. It is time to bury all differences, megalomania, bigotry, schizophrania, discontent and other vanities to make a new beginning, for our coming generations.

# Some facts about discovery of Lord Buddha's birth place

By Ashutosh Shrivastav\*

Some Indians are trying to build duplicate Lumbini in India to spread illusion among international community about the birthplace of Lord Gautam Buddha. Here are some historical evidences that clearly elucidate Buddha was born in Nepal.

Nepali authority had identified the birth place in Kapilvastu, Lumbini long before Dr Fuhrer first entered Nepali territory in March 1895.

The family seal of the Palpa rajahs, of whom the last Raja Pritivi Pal Sen or Sena, was overthrown by the Gorkas in 1801 proves that Buddha was born in Kapilvastu Nepal.

At the centre of the seal is a Buddhist stupa, complete up harmika umbrella and central axis. This indicates that they regarded themselves as protectors of the Buddhist stupas within their territory in the Tarai.

Similarly, the upper section of the broken Ashoka pillar at Nigilva Sagar near Taulihawa carries a second inscription reading Sri Ripa Malla.

It suggests that King Ripu Malla in the fourteenth century clearly knew of the significance of Lumbini.

General Khadga Shumsher Rana, exiled to the Western Tarai by his younger brother Prime Minister Bir Shumsher and appointed Governor of Tansen/Palpa in 1887, knew all about Lumbini and the Nigilva Sagar upper pillar. The first British official to hear of pillars and inscriptions in the Nepal Tarai was Dr William Hoey, Commissioner of Gorakhpur.

Here is a quote from Hoey: 'In 1893 I came to know Kharga [Khadga] Shumsher Jan, Governor of Tansen [Tansen/Palpa], and he corresponded with me about Buddhism in Nepal, and he even sent me rubbings from pillars, but these were not of Asoka lettering. I did nothing, as I could not go to the place, but I had supplied Kharga Shumsher with heel-ball, and instructed him how to take rubbings. The rubbings he sent were taken under my direction.'

These rubbings were of the two pillar inscriptions made by King Ripa Malla, because the Ashoka inscriptions were at that time buried under ground.

Also aware of pillars and inscriptions in Nepal was Major Jaskaran Singh of Balrampur, whose family owned land on both sides of the border.

In March 1893, he wrote of an inscribed stone pillar somewhere inside the Nepal territory. As a result the British Resident in Kathmandu applied to the Nepal Durbar for permission to allow a British archaeologist to enter the Nepal's Tarai.

That permission was granted in February 1895, and in March 1895 Dr Anton Alois Fuhrer of the Lucknow Museum entered the Nepal Tarai - but further to the west of Taulihawa. He was then redirected to the

Taulihawa area - almost certainly by order of Gen. Khadga.

He then found the Nigilva Sagar with its Malla inscription beside the lake and then made the genuine discovery of the stump of the pillar with its Ashoka inscription, which was almost buried in the undergrowth. We must give credit to Dr Fuhrer for this discovery but it is only credit he merits.

Dr. Fuhrer did not discover the Lumbini site as all the books state and as he claimed. In September 1896, the Nepal Durbar gave Dr Fuhrer permission to return to Nigilva Sagar to continue his excavation under the strict supervision of a Nepali liaison officer with some Nepali sappers.

In November 1896 he reached Nigilva Sagar but was met there by a messenger from Gen. Khadga telling him to come to his camp at Padariya village. When he met the general at Padariya village Dr Fuhrer was taken to a site a mile to the NE, where he was shown the (Lumbini) pillar sticking out of the ground. Of this pillar, Gen Khadga himself wrote three years later that when he received orders from his brother Bir Shumsher in Kathmandu to meet Dr Fuhrer at Nigilva Sagar he had at once written back 'to report the existence of the Padariya monolith which had already struck very much for its unique shape and

surroundings characteristic of Ashoka-pillars'. He was himself planning to excavate round the pillar but needed to get his brother's permission: 'It is only needless for me to remark that I had a mind to clear the debris round it for finding any inscriptions, the existence of which to me had seemed very probable'

Gen Khadga then received permission from Bir Shumsher to excavate at Lumbini and it was for this reason that he summoned Dr Fuhrer to Padariya.

Dr Fuhrer did not excavate at Lumbini. It is quite clear from his account and from Gen. Khadga's account that he was taken by Gen. Khadga to see the pillar and advised him that if there were an Ashoka inscription it would be found (if a search was made below the surface of the ground).

He then left the site. When he returned Gen. Khadga's sappers had dug away at the base and had uncovered the Ashoka inscription. This was witnessed by a British planter from across the border, Duncan Ricketts.

Gen Khadga then took two rubbings of the inscription which he (unwisely) gave to Dr Fuhrer, who immediately went back to his camp at Nigilva Sagar and afterwards claimed the discover of Lumbini for himself.

\* Shrivastav is associated with United Nationalist Nepalese.

श्रम गर्न विदेश जाँदा तत्काल फाइदा भए  
पनि दीर्घकालीन रुपमा सामाजिक र आर्थिक  
विचलन आइपुग्ने हुँदा मुलुकभित्रै परिश्रम गर्नु  
(पसिना बगाउनु)मा नै सबैको भलो छ ।



नेपाल सरकार

सूचना तथा सञ्चार मन्त्रालय

सूचना विभाग

# A role of Dharmachari Guruma : In promoting Buddhism

**Dharmachari Guruma is a highly revered name in the realms of Buddhism in Nepal. She was not just a follower of Buddhism but a true giver in terms of promoting and developing Buddhism in Nepal from her early stage. Here is an excerpt of her biography written by Lochan Tara Tuladhar and translated by Soongma Tuladhar.**

Laxminani was born in a middle class family during the night of Laxmi Pujā in the year 1898 A.D. She was the fourth daughter of Man Kaji Tuladhar and Ratna Maya Tuladhar of Ason Tole. Her early years were not much different from the other girls of her age. As she grew up she learnt to play with her friends and sisters. Later on she learnt to look after her younger brothers and sisters, help her mother with lighter domestic chores and run errands for her. But she was different from other children in one important way. Laxminani believed that only through learning one can understand the pure form of Buddhism, the meaning of life and liberate oneself from the darkness of ignorance. Her poems written in her later life emphasized the need for educating women and protested child marriage.

As was the custom in those days, she was given in marriage at an early age to Seti Kaji Baniya of Ilum Bahal. She was then ten years old. Her husband's family specialized in compounding herbal medicines. When she was eighteen years old, she gave birth to a son and the whole family rejoiced. But the happiness did not last long. Her son died when he was only eight months old. Two years later death cruelly snatched away her husband when she was seven months pregnant with a second child who was born posthumously two months later. The birth of a baby daughter gave her some consolation but the deep rooted pain wouldn't go away. Understandably she was distraught at the loss of her near and dear ones. In her despair, she turned to religion for solace and moral strength to accept her fate. She visited temples and religious sites dedicated to various gods and goddesses. She took part in many religious pujas and *astami bratas*. She even took part in the religious ceremonies performed by Tibetan Lamas of Mahayan Buddhism. One day one of her such visits took her to the recently renovated Kimdol Bahal located to the south-east of Swayambhu Hill. The resident priest at Kimdol Bahal belonged to the Tibetan Mahayan sect, and that day he was holding the *nyungne* practice (a fasting retreat honouring Avalokitesvara). Laxminani also joined other devotees and took part in the *nyungne* practice. Kimdol Bahal at that time was also a venue for holding *astami brata pujas*.

But her own trouble never seemed to end. For around 1927 A.D. her daughter suddenly died at the age of eight, thus severing her last attachment to her family. After this, she began to spend more and more time at Kimdol Bahal and busied herself with religious activities. She learnt in detail the process of conducting the *astami brata puja* from Harsha Ratna Bajracharya. She later also learnt how to conduct *mandala pujas* and started a mission to educate and

liberate those women who were living in the darkness of ignorance and superstitions and share with them her knowledge of the Buddha and his teachings.

The only type of Buddhism practiced in her days by the Newar Buddhist community was Vajrayan Buddhism, full of rites and rituals. Till 1930 A.D. the people of Kathmandu Valley had no idea of Theravada Buddhism, had not seen any saffron-clad bhikkhus (monks) and had never entered a vihar. In the year 1930 A.D., Karma Sheela returned to Kathmandu after being ordained as a Samanera (a novice bhikkhu) in Kushinagar. He was fully ordained as Mahasthvir Bhikkhu Prayagananda at Kushinagar in 1932 A.D. His return to Nepal marked the revival of Theravada Buddhism in Nepal.

On his return to Kathmandu as a Samanera, he was invited to reside at Kimdol Bahal. Here, he tried to present the teachings of the Buddha in a contemporary setting. He discouraged blind faith, superstitious beliefs and conservatism. He made no distinction between men and women; he treated them equally and emphasized the need for active participation both by men and women in the task of preserving the values of the Buddhist philosophy and the pure form of the Buddha's Teachings. He introduced the practice of taking the Triple Jewels, the practice of the Five Percepts and the Eight Percepts, and Parirān. His dedication and his simple but lucid presentation of the Buddha's life and teachings appealed the lay Buddhists. Among them Laxminani was the first to become Upasika. With encouragement from Samanera Karma Sheela many of those *upasaks* and *upasikas* later became *Bhikkhus* and *Bhikkhunis* (Buddhist monks and nuns).

Laxminani, who attended religious programmes at Kimdol Bahal, began to see Buddhism in a new light. And she began to question many of the traditional practices and superstitious beliefs, and tried to bring about changes in those practices. One of such practices was the sacrificing of goats at the annual *deopuja* celebration, in the belief that the sacrifice of goats pleased the family deity. After a long discussion with the family elders, she succeeded in persuading her family elders in giving up the barbaric practice.

Laxminani kept herself busy with social service works and religious programmes at Kimdol Bahal. Around this time, Kimdol Bahal was undergoing a noticeable transformation. Panchashila, *astashila* and *dharma desana* were beginning to replace the *nyungne* practice and *astami brata*. At the same time, Samanera Karma Sheela hit upon the idea of propagating the Buddha's life and teachings by organizing Gyanmala Bhajan — a group of people devoted to singing songs of moral values. But all those activities, though popular among the

Newar Buddhist community, also attracted the unwanted attention of the prime minister Juddha Samsher Rana. He summoned Laxminani and other lay Buddhists to the Jawalakhel Palace. The prime minister ordered the people assembled there to follow their traditional occupations and not to deviate from them. He warned that no woman should go about reading stories and giving lectures to large crowds. Though the lay Buddhists were not detained, the incident frightened away many lay Buddhists from participating in the Kimdol Bahal programmes.

As she became more and more involved with the religious activities at Kimdol Bahal, she realized that she would be able to devote her energy and time to propagating the true form of Buddhism only if she entered the religious order of *bhikkhuni*. With this realization, she left all her family property to her nephew of Ilum Bahal and left for Kushinagar. From Kushinagar she and her companions left for Arkana in Burma. After completing her studies and training, she was ordained Bhikkhuni Dharmachari at Kushinagar in 1934 A.D.

All this time, life at Kimdol Bahal continued as usual. The *bhikkhus* and *Samaneras* went out in the morning with their alms bowls and returned after two or three hours with rice and some money. The *bhikkhunis* then prepared meals for the whole Kimdol Bahal community. The *bhikkhus* and *bhikkhunis* combined their energy and effort to promote the teachings of the Buddha through *dharma desana*, Gyanmala Bhajan and other programmes. They traveled to distant towns and villages where they organized talks and programmes related to Theravada Buddhism. New viharas sprang up in many towns and villages. More and more people began to take part in programmes at viharas, especially at Kimdol Bahal and Ananda Kuti Vihar. And the number of people entering the monastic life of *bhikkhus* and *bhikkhunis* kept increasing. All this progress however was made under difficult conditions. After 1940 A.D. (the year when some politically conscious people tried to topple the Rana oligarchy), conditions became worse. Fearful of further conspiracies and popular uprisings, the Rana rulers became suspicious of any organized group: be it religious, social or cultural. So they intensified their surveillance over public gatherings. But the success of Theravada Buddhism did not go well with the Rana rulers and they wanted to curb the activities of the *bhikkhus* and *bhikkhunis*. Accordingly, the Rana government officials summoned all the *bhikkhus* and *bhikkhunis* to the government office. There, they were called one by one and ordered to sign official documents promising not to perform Buddha pujas in viharas, not to give sermons on Buddhism and not to ordain lay people.

To the *bhikkhus* and *bhikkhunis*, who were committed to promoting the teachings of the Buddha, these conditions were unacceptable. So they refused to sign the document,

well aware of the consequences of their refusal. Consequently, the then ruling prime minister Juddha Samsher Rana, in a true dictatorship fashion, decreed that the *bhikkhus* and *bhikkhunis* be banished from Kathmandu valley. Four *Bhikkhus* and five *Samaneras* were to be deported immediately under police escort, but the *bhikkhunis* were to be deported four months later. The banished *bhikkhus* and *samaneras* took refuge in different places: some went to Nautanwa, some to Calcutta, some to Trisuli and some to Kalimpong.

Despite the numbers of repressive acts from the Rana rulers, the popularity of Gyanmala Bhajan didn't reduce but instead it became more and more popular among the Newar community of Kathmandu. People formed groups in different places and sang Gyanmala songs. On certain occasions, different Gyanmala bhajan groups would gather at Swayambhu and go around singing Gyanmala hymns. This became the turning point in the promotion of Buddhism in Nepal as a whole.

In later years, as the number of *bhikkhunis* increased in number, more room was needed. And after consulting with the *upasaks* and *upasikas*, Guruma Dharmachari decided to build new living quarters for the *bhikkhunis* and decided to name it Nirvanmurti Vihar, which was later renamed as Nirvanmurti Upasikaram meaning an accommodation for *bhikkhus* and *upasikas* coming from distant places. Immediately after this, the Nirvanmurti Upasikaram Construction Committee was formed to plan and collect necessary funds for its construction. At the same time, the land-holding right was transferred to Nirvanmurti Upasikaram. With the help of the *upasaks*, *upasikas*, well wishers and the members of the fund-raising committee the building, including the guest-house, was finally completed at the end of March 1968 A.D. Again, she also identified another pressing problem that troubled Guruma Dharmachari. It was the need for health ailments. She knew from experience how expensive medical treatments could be. So, she wished to establish a trust or a scheme that would take care of the sick *bhikkhunis*. But, sadly she did not live long enough to see it through. For, she passed away in 1977 A.D. at the age of seventy-nine, after a long well-lived life.

Today, Dharmachari Guruma is not among us. But her purpose of promoting Buddhism and educating women is now continued by Dr. Dharmabijaya Guruma and Dr. Daw Molini Guruma at the recently renovated Nirvanmurti Vihar. Guruma Dharmachari had lived a long purposeful life. True, it had not always been smooth and easy. But, resilient, determined and forward looking, she always managed to move forward, overcoming difficulties and problems. Her contribution in promoting and developing Theravada Buddhism in Nepal will always be remembered by the Buddhist community of Nepal.

## Constitution: Will missing deadline start Tsunami?

By R.K. Regmee

Nepalis feel hurt and disheartened to know that the Constituent Assembly they elected two years ago would fail to produce the Constitution by May 28, 2010 as per their mandate and expectation. No explanation for missing the deadline would be able to balm their pain. One or the other excuse will, of course, be forwarded as explanation of the failure by way of formal announcement to this effect.

The time constraint — only 36 days to go — does not give any room for completing essential procedures for promulgating the Highest Law of the Land. Moreover, the political parties have not yet developed consensus on a number of issues to be incorporated in the Document. Neither do they have any possibility of ensuring, in the present political circumstances, two-third majority in the parliament, a must for adopting all components of the Constitution.

Sandwiched between the missing deadline and the need for final script of the Constitution is the reality: the situation created by People's Movement II would not be able to take a meaningful shape for the citizens in absence of the Document. That reality has put Nepali political parties at crossroad at the moment: allowing hitherto constructed structure to crumble down and push the country into chaos or crafting some democratic way to finish the job of jolting down the Constitution beyond the originally mandated date and chart a fresh roadmap.

The former would be suicidal: it would please those who are not happy about PP II and do not feel comfortable with all gains and developments after the same historic movement: besides it opens opportunities for reactionaries of all sorts to fish in grubby water. The latter would, although belatedly, not only give the people what they expected: it could also be the honest way of being accountable after not being able to perform well on time.

Keeping in view the all powerful sovereign status of the people's body — CA, the extension of term through appropriate amendment to the Interim Constitution could be pursued. This, however, should be done with emphasis on one clearly focused agenda: getting the Constitution ready in fixed extra-time without fail. Anything short of that cannot be acceptable.

Mess

How did this political mess develop? Did the political parties represented in the CA not know about it in advance? Could they have not avoided it? Questions such as these are being raised in public: the same issues are troubling all politicians and parties day in and day out at present. Although all of them have their own ways of explaining the cause of the present hassle, some appear to be more interested in escaping responsibility by blaming others for the trouble.

The crisis of confidence and misunderstanding among the leading political parties of CA — Maoists, Nepali Congress and CPN UML — triggered specially after the formation of the Legislative Parliament appears to be the sole cause for the present difficulty. Leaders could not address these problems with political wisdom because they got themselves centered on self-political interest and lust for power. The in-party problems also kept them highly engaged and compelled them to speak double language: one for the party and the other for the country. This victimized the collective approach to fulfillment of PM II mission.

Way out

Sensitive political issues related specifically to federalism, restructuring the state, president-centred power structure or prime minister-centred one for the Republic of Nepal, integration of Maoist People's Liberation Army presently housed in cantonments were completely evaded by political parties. It seems as if they wished the issues would find their own 'miracle' solutions in course of time.

Perhaps the political parties had also nurtured a false confidence of working out a solution to writing Constitution at the last minute. Past experience may have taught them to have this sense. They, it might be recalled, had tackled serious decisive problems related to finalizing Interim Constitution, holding CA poll, declaring Republic, and forming governments at the last minute in different times. Behind that ability was the PM II spirit of compromise, peace and mutuality, which politicians have now forgotten. There is, unfortunately, none to remind them of that noble spirit at the moment. The absence of a democratic political mentor like late Girija Koirala has created a vacuum and made a difference.

If they could revive the spirit now, the Constitution would be a reality. None should fear a political Tsunami in the country in the aftermath of missing deadline. The institutional framework of democracy presently intact under Interim Constitution would not allow any undemocratic elements to lead the country into confusion. Nepal is a democracy and the democratic process would lead her comfortably out of the present problem and take a definite direction for future. Will those who made PM II a success try this approach once again?

## High air pollution in Lele and Chapagaun

A majority of people in Nallu, Lele and Chapagaun areas here are found suffering from chest infection due to the high degree of air pollution caused by the numerous stone quarries in the area.

Chief of the Anandaban Hospital at Tikabhairab, Shovakar Kandel said the incidence of respiratory diseases is high in these areas due to the dust emanating from the quarries and the dusty roads.

There are more than a dozen stone quarries around the area and around 500 trippers carry stones and pebbles to

Kathmandu from here daily.

Operation of such a large number of trippers on these dusty roads has not only affected the health of the people living in this area but it has also made their travel difficult.

Three hundred and fifty people underwent health check-up at a health camp organized on Saturday and most of the people coming for health examination were found to be suffering from respiratory diseases, according to doctors.



# San Miguel BEER

International :

# The Afghan War: "No Blood for Opium"

## The Hidden Military Agenda is to Protect the Drug Trade

By Dr. John Jiggins

It was common during the opening of the Iraq war to see slogans proclaiming "No blood for oil!" The cover story for the war – Saddam's links with Al Qaida and his weapons of mass destruction – were obvious mass deceptions, hiding a far less palatable imperial agenda. The truth was that Iraq was a major producer of oil and, in our age, the Age of Oil, oil is the most strategic resource of all. For many it was obvious that the real agenda of the war was an imperialistic grab for Iraqi oil. This was confirmed when Iraq's state-owned oil company was privatised to western interests in the aftermath of the invasion.

Why then are there no slogans saying "No blood for opium!?" Afghanistan's major product is opium and opium production has increased remarkably during the present war. The current NATO action around Marjah is clearly motivated by opium. It is reported to be Afghanistan's main opium-producing area. Why then won't people consider that the real agenda of the Afghan war has been control of the opium trade?

The weapons of mass deception tell us that the opium belongs to the Taliban and that the US is fighting a war on drugs as well as terror. Yet it remains a curious fact that the opium trade has tracked across Southern Asia for the past five decades from east to west, following US wars, and always under the control of US assets.

In the 1960s, when the US fought a secret war in Laos using the Hmong opium army of Vang Pao as its proxy, Southeast Asia produced 70% of the world's illicit opium. After the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Afghanistan production, controlled by US-backed drug lords, took off, till it rivalled Southeast Asian production. Since 2002, Afghan opium production, encouraged by both the Taliban and US-backed drug lords, has reached 93% of world illicit production, an unparalleled performance.

The graph below from the UN World Drug Report 2008 shows the astonishing increase in Afghan opium production that followed the US invasion.

In the 1980s the US supported Islamic fundamentalists, the Mujahideen, against the Soviets in

Afghanistan. To pay for their war, the Mujahideen ordered peasants to grow opium as a revolutionary tax. Across the border in Pakistan, Afghan leaders and local syndicates, under the protection of Pakistani Intelligence, operated hundreds of heroin labs. As the Golden Crescent in Southwest Asia eclipsed the Golden Triangle in Southeast Asia as the centre of the heroin trade, it sent rates of addiction spiralling in Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and the Soviet Union.

To hide US complicity in the drug trade, Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) officers were required to look away from the drug-dealing intrigues of the US allies and the support they received from Pakistan's Inter Service Intelligence (ISI) and the services of Pakistani banks. The CIA's mission was to destabilise the Soviet Union through the promotion of militant Islam inside the Central Asian Republics and they sacrificed the drug war to fight the Cold War. Their mission was to do as much damage as possible to the Soviets. Knowing the drug war would hasten the collapse of the Soviet Union, the CIA facilitated the operation of anti-Soviet rebels in the provinces of Uzbekistan, Chechnya and Georgia. Drugs were used to finance terrorism and western intelligence agencies used their control of drugs to influence political factions in Central Asia.

The Soviet army withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989, leaving a civil war between the US-funded mujahideen and the Soviet-supported government that raged until 1992. In the chaos that followed the mujahideen victory, Afghanistan lapsed into a period of warlordism in which opium growing thrived.

The Taliban emerged from the chaos, dedicated to removing the war lords and applying a strict interpretation of Sharia law. They captured Kandahar in 1994, and expanded their control throughout Afghanistan, capturing Kabul in 1996, and declaring the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.

Under the policies of the Taliban government, opium production in Afghanistan was curbed. In September

1999, the Taliban authorities issued a decree, requiring all opium-growers in Afghanistan to reduce output by one-third. A second decree, issued in July 2000, required farmers to completely stop opium cultivation. Ordering the ban on opium growing, Taliban leader Mullah Omar called the drug trade "un-Islamic".

As a result, 2001 was the worst year for global opium production in the period between 1990 and 2007. During the 1990s, global opium production averaged over 4000 tonnes. In 2001, opium production fell to less than 200 tonnes. Although it was not admitted by the Howard government, which claimed the credit itself, Australia's 2001 heroin shortage was due to the Taliban.

Following the attack on the Pentagon and the World Trade Centre on 11 September 2001, the armies of the northern alliance, led by US Special Forces, supported by daisy cutters, cluster bombs and bunker-busting missiles, shattered the Taliban forces in Afghanistan. The opium ban was lifted and, with CIA-backed warlords back in control, Afghanistan again became the major producer of opium. Despite the official denials, Hillary Mann Leverett, a former US National Security Council official for Afghanistan, confirmed that the US knew that government ministers in Afghanistan, including the minister of defence in 2002, were involved in drug trafficking.

After 2002 Afghan opium production rose to unheard-of levels. By 2007, Afghanistan was producing enough heroin to supply the entire world. In 2009, Thomas Schweich, who served as US state department co-ordinator for counter-narcotics and justice reform for Afghanistan, accused President Hamid Karzai of impeding the war on drugs. Schweich also accused the Pentagon of obstructing attempts to get military forces to assist and protect opium crop eradication drives.

Schweich wrote in the New York Times that "narco-corruption went to the top of the Afghan government". He said Karzai was reluctant to move against big drug lords in his political power base in the south, where most of the

country's opium and heroin is produced.

The most prominent of these suspected drug lords was Ahmed Wali Karzai, the brother of President Hamid Karzai. Ahmed Wali Karzai was said to have orchestrated the manufacture of hundreds of thousands of phony ballots for his brother's re-election effort in August 2009. He was also believed to have been responsible for setting up dozens of so-called ghost polling stations – existing only on paper – that were used to manufacture tens of thousands of phony ballots. US officials have criticised his "mafia-like" control of southern Afghanistan. The New York Times reported that the Obama administration had vowed to crack down on the drug lords who permeate the highest levels of President Karzai's administration, and they pressed President Karzai to move his brother out of southern Afghanistan, but he refused to do so.

"Karzai was playing us like a fiddle," Schweich wrote. "The US would spend billions of dollars on infrastructure development; the US and its allies would fight the Taliban; Karzai's friends could get richer off the drug trade. Karzai had Taliban enemies who profited from drugs but he had even more supporters who did."

But who was playing who like a fiddle?

Was it the puppet President or the puppet masters who installed him?

As Douglas Valentine shows in his history of the War on Drugs, The Strength of the Pack, this never-ending war has been a phony contest, an arm wrestle between two arms of the US state, the DEA and the CIA; with the DEA vainly attempting to prosecute the war, while the CIA protects its drug-dealing assets.

During the Nineteenth and Twentieth centuries, European powers (chiefly the UK) and Japan used the opium trade to weaken and subjugate China. During the Twenty-First century, it seems that the opium weapon is being used against Iran, Russia and the former Soviet republics, which all face spiralling rates of addiction and covert US penetration as the Afghan War fuels central Asia's heroin plague.

~ News ~

# US-NATO Occupation Forces in Afghanistan: Pullout or Chased Out?

By Bunn Nagara

Foreign occupation troops in Afghanistan are caught between an anticipated withdrawal and an expected rout.

TWO days ago, Nato came to an inevitable conclusion: start handing control of Afghanistan back to the Afghan people later this year. That was the thrust of the Nato meeting in Tallinn, Estonia, during the week.

The eventual pullout might not have been part of the original plan when US forces invaded and ejected the Taliban regime in 2001. After all, Afghans live in a strategic region with layers of intrigue overlaid with oil pipelines in or around Central Asia, the Caspian, and certain transnational corporations running through some nations while bypassing others.

Oil as a geopolitical factor has been as influential as it has been invisible, and the Bush administration that invaded Iraq and Afghanistan has been the most informed by oil interests yet. Besides, like Saddam Hussein's Iraq, Taliban Afghanistan had posed as such a convenient and tempting target when they refused to "cooperate" quietly.

Nonetheless, a projected winding down of US-led occupation forces later this year accords with US President Barack Obama's plan to withdraw US troops from July 2011. Officially, this would first need to be approved by the Afghan government this July.

However, the proposed schedules are still very tentative when seen from either the Nato or the US standpoint. Realities on the ground indicate that various militant groups in Afghanistan or in neighbouring Pakistan are regrouping, and raring to "test" local government strength once the occupying forces withdraw.

Equally, the presence of foreign forces does not discourage militant attacks on them or on local villagers in the way. The status of foreign troops as occupiers only affirms their role as legitimate targets, for nationalistic, religious, local political or some self-interested purposes.

Then when the occupation forces retaliate against suspected insurgent hideouts, innocent bystanders often get maimed or killed as well. Militant groups and local communities have different reasons for riding their country of foreign occupiers, that being a hallmark of Afghan history.

Such are some of the undercurrents of the occupation that the foreign forces have had to improvise to stay ahead, or just stay alive. This constant need to evolve policy in the field is crucial, albeit seldom appreciated in central headquarters in Washington.

The latest need involves deciding the future of small, remote military outposts that come under frequent militant attack. These attacks resulted in the troop withdrawal from Korengal Valley in mid-April, and now the issue is whether to maintain positions like Combat Outpost (COP) Spera in eastern Khost province.

Militant attacks usually involve a mutual exchange of fire with some casualties, without the insurgents defeating the occupation troops. But the larger questions are how long these outposts can continue to endure a war of attrition, and whether remote outposts are worth the trouble.

Operationally, the militants know where the occupation troops are, but not vice-versa. The militants then attack at will, usually at night, making the troops sitting ducks before melting away in the darkness.

Whatever the balance of casualties, the insurgent attacks do exact a toll in terms of morale. And what do the small remote outposts actually achieve anyway?

The standard answer is that they help check the cross-border passage of militant fighters and their weapons. Khost is only a little over 100km from Kabul, and when outposts there are referred to as "remote", it shows how much more of the country the Afghan government does not control.

More significantly perhaps, Khost is only some 25km from the Pakistan border. The fact that many of the Afghan Taliban as well as Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda fighters are now based in Pakistan, and make border crossings with apparent ease, also shows how little effective policing is done.

It also shows that militant threats can no longer be contained within separate national jurisdictions.

Militancy and defending against it are practically seamless in this version of a "borderless world", as acknowledged by the now-common collective term "AfPak".

Defensive actions by the authorities, however, are different in generally remaining inadequate. The asymmetrical, unstreamlined, non-harmonised policies between the Afghan and Pakistan governments instead only encourage militants to be bolder.

And yet the situation could still get worse: besides al-Qaeda and the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban, others like Lashka-e-Taiba, the so-called "Indian Mujahideen" and assorted others might yet coordinate and cooperate among themselves more than they have ever done.

The Taliban themselves have already shown a greater resilience and tenacity than any of the occupation forces had expected or thought possible.

For example, after Pakistan and occupation troops celebrated action that "flushed" the Taliban from South Waziristan, the result was only that they moved to North Waziristan.

Politically, occupation troops would look better leaving on their own terms on schedule rather than get chased out like so many others in Afghan history. The challenge then becomes leaving before things get too rough, making withdrawal look like defeat; but would the militants oblige?

Amid these developments, Nato is talking the long talk. It said its forces would not leave before the job of soundly defeating the militants is done, and that the transfer of control to Afghan authorities must be sustainable and irreversible.

Doing all that may require abandoning all known deadlines for withdrawal. Nato's hopes amount to little more than a pep talk, but when troop morale is declining even a pep talk should help.

# More than 50% of US Government Spending Goes to the Military

By Rady Ananda

Recently, Live Science published a chart showing that the US spends about one-fifth of its budget on the military. But this aggregate view hides how Congress prioritizes spending, when you consider what is discretionary and voted upon

the years 2009 and 2010, according to the National Priorities Project (NPP). NPP describes these charts this way, explaining the difference between 'mandatory' and 'discretionary' spending: "[These charts show] the breakdown

remainder of the federal budget is called 'mandatory spending.' Fiscal Year 2009 will run from October 1, 2008 to September 30, 2009.

"Note that this chart includes the war-related spending requested by the administration as supplemental to the regular budget proposal."

"Congress directly sets the level of spending on programs which are discretionary. Congress can choose to increase or decrease spending on any of those programs in a given year...."

"About half of the discretionary budget is 'national defense,' a government-defined function area that roughly corresponds in common parlance as 'military.' However, this category does not include foreign military financing, security assistance, and other programs commonly thought of as military. Other types of discretionary spending include the budget for education, many health programs, and housing assistance."

"Mandatory spending includes programs, mostly entitlement programs, which are funded by eligibility rules or payment rules. Congress decides to create a program, for example, Food Stamps. It then determines who is eligible for the program and any other criteria it may want to lay out. How much is appropriated for the program each year is then determined by estimations of how many people will be eligible and apply for Food Stamps."

"Unlike discretionary spending, the

Congress does not decide each year to increase or decrease the Food Stamp budget; instead, it periodically reviews the eligibility rules and may change them in order to exclude or include more people."

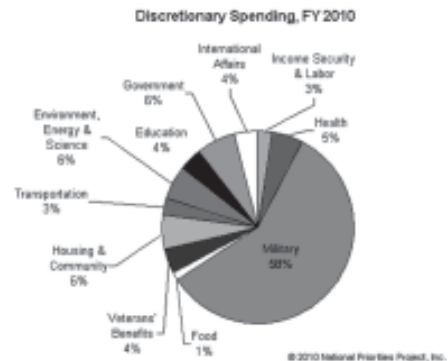
"Mandatory spending makes up about two-thirds of the total federal budget. By far the largest mandatory program is Social Security which makes up one-third of mandatory spending and continues to grow as the age demographic of the country shifts towards an older population. [See more at National Priorities Project.]"

Also see discussion at How Are Our Federal Tax Dollars Spent? which shows that the military budget is one-fifth (21%) of our total budget.

But, which is the more realistic view of military spending? Which captures how Congress prioritizes spending? Which is more relevant to us?

Arguably, discretionary spending is most relevant to ordinary citizens, as we continue to suffer under rising unemployment, increased foreclosures, banker bailouts, million dollar industry bonuses while the minimum wage remains below poverty, all amid a global financial crisis.

And what does that 58% of discretionary spending amount to? In 2010: \$1,027.8 billion, or over a trillion dollars, according to Robert Higgs of the Independent Institute, at Defense Spending Is Much Greater than You Think: more than \$1 Trillion a year.



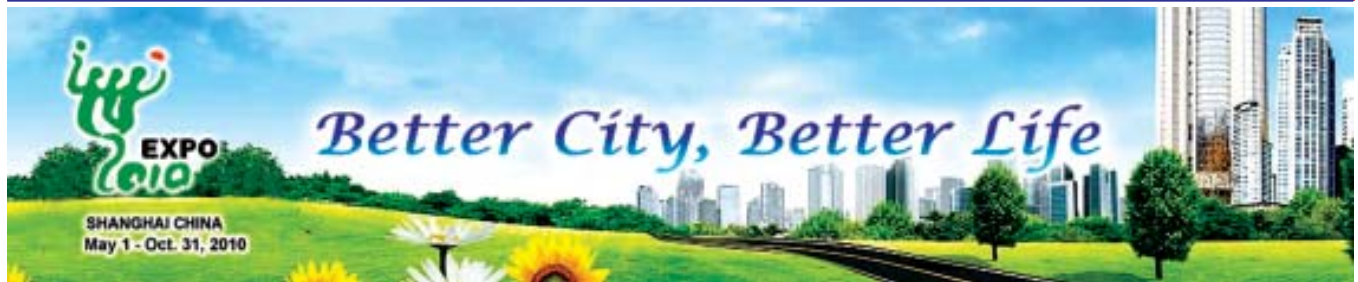
each year. A more salient view of these figures segregates 'discretionary' spending from 'mandatory' spending. During the severe economic downturn of the past two years, how has Congress prioritized spending?

When it comes to discretionary spending, Congress gives 58% to the military. Here are US budget charts for

of the proposed federal discretionary budget for fiscal year 2010 (or 2009) by function area.

"The discretionary budget refers to the part of the federal budget proposed by the President, and debated and decided by Congress each year. The part of the budget constitutes more than one-third of total federal spending. The





## Shanghai Expo 2010 : A Platform for Broader Well-being

... Another major highlight of Shanghai Expo is the cross-culture dialogues, which are important for future's understanding, cooperation and development for the sake of greater good of the dwellers of this planet.

Before the conclusion of the Exhibition, the Shanghai Declaration will be issued which will act as a spiritual legacy of urban development.

### Preparation

With some days remaining for the grand unveil of the World Expo 2010, China's financial capital Shanghai is looking to seize the limelight with its promises of incredible amount of glitz and glamour.

China is the first developing nation to host the World Expo and officials hope the event, will improve Shanghai's position as a global city.

Shanghai is doing its best to impress visitors with the city government already splashing out more than \$700 million on renovating the

expo will have their own events in their respective pavilions.

The third catalog is expo forums in which a summit forum will be organized, six thematic forums and more public forums will be held.

### Theme Pavilions

There are five central theme pavilions at the Expo 2010, exploring different aspects of urban development. They are called *Urban Footprints*, *Urban Planet*, *Urban Dwellers*, *Urban Beings*, and *Urban Dreams*.

Some of the theme pavilions are located in a central exhibition building constructed by the Chinese hosts. Covering an area of 11.5 hectare, it is the largest structure of its kind in the history of world expositions. The total exhibition space of this building is 80,000 square meters.

### Urban Footprints Pavilion

Concept and design for the *Urban Footprints* Pavilion were contributed by

"Ideal Fantasy City", showing both its Western and Eastern characteristics. The exhibition uses high tech installations as well as cultural relics loaned from international museums.

### Urban Planet Pavilion

The *Urban Planet* pavilion is located in the central exhibition building on the Expo Axis. Concept and design were contributed by the German communication agency Triad Berlin Projektgesellschaft. The company, which had already designed a pavilion for the Expo 2000 in Hanover, won an international bidding contest against more than 150 competitors.

With its total floor space of 12,000 square meters, the *Urban Planet* pavilion addresses the complex processes marking urbanization. According to its designers, the scenography combines Western forms of artistic expression with ideas stemming from the Chinese Feng shui heritage. In Feng shui, dynamic



innovation and technology in the service of an ecological renewal for the future.

### Urban Dwellers Pavilion

The concept for the *Urban Dwellers* pavilion was contributed by the agency of the Dutch designer Herman Kossmann. The residents of modern cities are the focus of this exhibition. According to Kossmann, its guiding principle is the awareness that city planners have to address the urgent needs of their residents as "the prerequisite for the city's sustainable development."

In the *Urban Dwellers* pavilion, video clips narrate the exemplary stories of six real families. The continents are represented by their home cities of Paris (Europe), São Paulo (Latin America), Phoenix, Arizona (North America), Lijiang City (Asia), Melbourne (Oceania), and Quagadougou (Africa). The circumstances of life of the six families are presented in five chapters concentrating on the issues of home, work, relationship, education, and health.

examines the growth of the infrastructure of modern cities, presenting the perplexing networks of both traffic and of water and energy supply as core elements in the urban "organism".

The exhibition rooms include a "Dynamic Station", reminiscent of the architecture of huge train stations in the early 20th century. Train models from different generations are presented here. Visitors will also walk through a "Circular Pipeline", where they find insight into the workings of that underground infrastructure of the city, which is usually hidden from their eyes.

### Urban Dreams Pavilion

The *Urban Dreams* pavilion is located in a power plant of the early 20th century which was reconstructed for this event. The exhibition was designed by the Spanish agency Ingeniaque in cooperation with the Chinese artist Bu Hua. The concept involves an imagined travel into the future, adopting an optimistic view of opportunities for developing hospitable cities via a combination of technological progress and tradition.

put into practice in such diverse cities as Beijing, Kōbe, Freiburg im Breisgau, Canberra and San Diego. The high point of the tour is an animated movie shown in a 35-meters-high hall. It presents a colorful fantasy world.

### Nepal's participation

Nepal is set to act an active participant in the Shanghai Expo. Nepal pavilion is named Arniko Center to memorize Arniko, the famous Nepali architecture veteran's contribution to Nepal-China friendship. The Nepal pavilion, copying the style of Arniko times after 11 century, is an exquisite work of art with a large Buddhist pagoda at the centre, surrounded by several folk houses representing systems from different periods.

The government assigned the Implementing Expert Group, a professional institution working in making pavilion, to make preparation of Nepali pavilion. Nepal will showcase the country's culture, heritages, and tourism destinations during the event. According to Nepali organizer, it has invested around Rs. 300 million (US\$ 4 million) for preparation of pavilion. According to him, Nepal's Pavilion, covering floor space of 3, 600.

Nepal has planned to bring one million tourists in 2011 by announcing Nepal Tourism Year-2011.

With the Chinese tourists' arrivals picking up increasingly in the recent days, Nepal's fine-tuned efforts towards tourism promotion during the expo could be fruitful.

Nepali participants will distribute millions of leaflets printed in Chinese language during the expo in order to promote the image of Nepal in China.

About 10 million people are expected to visit Nepal pavilion and gather various information related to Nepal.

The proximity of Nepal pavilion with Chinese pavilion in terms of distance will also be helpful to promote tourism among a large number of potential Chinese tourists.

China has emerged as the one of most lucrative tourism markets for Nepal with massive growth in the number of Chinese outbound tourists.

Moreover, it can be anticipated that the Nepal pavilion will also be able to draw the attention of millions of visitors from other countries that can eventually give a whole new boost to the Nepali Tourism Industry.



Bund riverfront, as well a whopping \$45 billion to upgrade transport and infrastructure.

Massive constructions of new metro lines have been undertaken for years in order to serve the traffic demands of the event.

While Shanghai is stripping hawkers and various eyesores off its streets, as Beijing did before the Olympics, the event is not targeted primarily for an international audience. Officials expect only 5 percent of their expected 70 million visitors to be from outside China.

And much of their tourism promotional efforts have been targeted at the potential of China's domestic tourists to make a trip to Shanghai for the Expo.

Officials acknowledge, however, that the showcase exhibition, complete with musical fountains from France and bratwurst sausage from Germany, will be beyond the means of many Chinese.

### Major attractions:

The activities of the Shanghai Expo can be divided into three catalogs. The first is pavilions. There are more than 100 pavilions and the national pavilion day will be held on almost every day. Second catalog is cultural performances. There will be 100 performances every day and total number of performances will exceed 20,000 during the entire period of the expo.

Moreover, the participants of the

the Shanghai Museum. The pavilion portrays the growth of the cities as a

processes of life may lead to harmony between the elements, but they can



decisive factor for human progress over the ages. The exhibition consists of four segments. In three rooms, the "City Origins", "Urban Development", and "City Wisdom" are explored. The 3000-square-meters lobby is devoted to the

also unleash destructive forces. Building up on this idea, the exhibition is characterized by a dichotomous structure illustrating the two-faced character of the city as both a consumer of environment and as a place for

### Urban Beings Pavilion

In the bidding contest for the *Urban Beings* pavilion, a joint proposal of the China Central Academy of Fine Arts and of the Land Design Studio in London prevailed. The exhibition

Visitors walking through five exhibition rooms will find examples of sustainable solutions for urban problems concerning living, traffic, energy supply, and city planning. There are specific references to innovations