

May 28: A dreaded date



WM Correspondent

Political actors have been predicting the post-May 28 (the deadline for writing a new constitution) situation in a manner that best suits their respective parochial interests.

With the political leadership fervently engaged in petty posturing and haggling, the possibility of scripting the new statute on time is becoming implausible day-by-day.

All the 11 thematic committees of constituent assembly (CA) are yet to submit their respective report to the constitutional Council (CC).

Such being the reality, the CC has been unable to prepare the draft constitution. With no agenda on the table, the CC has decided to take an indefinite break.

The UCPN (Maoist), the largest

party, is in no mood to support the current coalition to carve the new constitution by the set deadline.

They have also been unsupportive to complete the integration and rehabilitation process of the Maoist combatants.

But, they are likely to move a proposal of extending the duration of the constituent assembly (CA) if the CA fails to promulgate the constitution by the set deadline.

The Maoists obviously don't want the CA, in which they have the lion's

share, to be dissolved.

On the other hand, political advisor of Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal Raghuj Pant has floated the proposition of holding a new election for CA if the new constitution is not promulgated on time.

It is speculated that this idea might have emerged from the government itself.

Pant even told the press that the CPN (UML) and other democratic parties should act in conjunction to defeat the Maoists in the new election.

On the other side, the advisors of the president are advocating in complete favour of him while talking about the post-May 28 scenario.

They have been claiming that the president will be the sole legitimate political force after May 28 if the CA fails to promulgate new constitution by this timeframe.

No wonder, New Delhi is also keenly interested to know about possible political ramifications in Nepal if the May 28 deadline is missed.

It is not for nothing that the Indian political honchos passionately asked president Dr Ram Baran Yadav about how Nepal's political process would move ahead in the future.

The possibility of the Indian

establishment capitalizing upon the post May 28 situation to enteeble the Maoists cannot be ruled out in the light of the acrimony between the two sides.

In his recent visit to the southern neighbour, Dr Yadav signed four agreements with India on behalf of Nepal, which belies his ceremonial status.

Such agreements are signed only in the visits of the executive head.

It implicitly depicts India's willingness to strengthen president as means to counter the Maoists, claim some experts.

It has been learnt that the signing of these agreements during the president's visit has even left the Prime Minister in a awkward situation.

Do the continuous unfolding of ominous developments in political stage prelude to a possible confrontation between the president backed by Nepal army and the Maoists equipped with People's Liberation Army (PLA)?

Moreover, since almost every political party is showing flippancy towards timely draft of a constitution and logical conclusion of the peace process, the possibility of the country being trapped in a vortex of disaster is augmenting.

Conundrum of government change

WM correspondent

Once again, the hubbub about the possible change of the current coalition has hit the political stage.

According to media reports, top leaders of the three largest political parties agreed to do away with the current dispensation for the timely draft of a new constitution.

The stalwarts of the UCPN (Maoist), Nepali Congress (NC) and CPN (UML) reportedly agreed to replace the current government with a new national government.

Simultaneously, some reports stated that NC president Girija Prasad Koirala assured Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal that the current government would not be changed.

However, some NC leaders have maintained that Koirala is not happy with the performance of the current government.

What exactly the octogenarian Koirala is looking for is hard to extrapolate.

One majority faction has been advocating in favour of the continuation of the government while another is

As per the proposal, the UCPN (Maoist) must turn combatants by integrating and rehabilitating its

combatants, discontinue the exercise of running parallel government at local level, withdraw the declaration of ethnicity based states, dissolve the semi-militant structure of the Young Communist League (YCL) and return back the



But, it is suspected that his latest gestures are furtively gravitated towards grabbing plum share in various appointments including the chiefs of the constitutional bodies and other sectors.

It may be pertinent to recall that the NC chieftain had foxily compelled the prime minister to elevate his daughter to the post of Deputy Prime Minister.

On the other hand, the ruling UML is clearly divided into two factions regarding the current wobbly coalition.

seeking an appropriate opportunity to replace the same.

A committee formed under the leadership of the UML standing committee member Bharat Mohan Adhikari has proposed seven pre-conditions for the Maoists if they want to command the possible new national government.

confiscated properties.

Likewise, the committee proposes the largest party to express commitment to complete the constitution writing process in a timely manner and resist from intervening in the political activities of other parties at local level.

[Cont. on page 4]

Shaky commitment

WM correspondent

No doubt, Nepal has been adopting one China policy and every successive government is reiterating commitment for the same.

However, sometimes, the behavior displayed by political actors cast blight on this commitment

Lately, the media reports that president Ram Baran Yadav, foreign minister Sujata Koirala and other senior ministers were planning to visit a function of the religious group supporting the Dalai Lama has exposed Nepal's fragility towards one China policy.

The high-placed officials were set to visit the function organized by Sechen Maha Bouddha Bihar to mark the 100th anniversary of Dilgo Khenche Rinpoche.

The planned visit was cancelled at the 11th hour after Chinese military

attaché expressed reservation over the same

On the one hand, this incident indicates at the ineffectiveness of Nepali intelligence as it seems oblivious of the anti-China activities being carried out by the Dalai Lama clique from Nepali soil.

If the visit had not been annulled, the age-old intimate relations between Nepal and China would have gone through a bad patch.

The northern neighbour has valid reasons to be highly cautious about the activities carried under the fake banner of "Free-Tibet". And, since Nepal lies in strategic place, Beijing cannot afford to overlook any anti-China somersault displayed here in the country under any pretext.

Relevantly, the uncontrolled anti-China activities in Nepal will also not augur well for its interests.

Rulers themselves are reveling in corruption

WM Correspondent

Ruling Tarai Madhes Loktantrik Party (TMLP) recalled Education Minister Ram Chandra Kuswaha for his alleged involvement in corruption while distributing relief quotas for each teacher across the country. The TMDP has replaced him with Sarbendra Nath Shukla, a senior leader of TMLP.

The government also formed a three-member committee under National Planning Commission (NPC) member Tirtha Raj Khaniya to investigate the irregularities.

The government had to force Kuswaha to step down as international donors demanded action



against him to for continuation of funding of billions of rupees for the

School Sector Reform Programme (SSRP).

In fact, the donors said they themselves detected unscrupulous activities on the part of the minister while selling relief quotas charging anything from Rs. 100,000 to Rs. 300,000 for each teacher.

If the donors ceased from extending their largesse, it would be the biggest setback to Nepal's quest to achieve the target of universal education by 2015 as per the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The nine donors including the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and Danish government have pledged

support to basket fund to be spent for the programme.

Nepal is almost completely depended on "munificence" of donors for educational expenditure.

According to PAC officials, the biggest irregularities have taken place in Terai as Kuswaha belongs to this region.

Five months back, the PAC had found the minister's indulgence in irregularities in the purchase of printing materials for the state-run Janak Sikshya Samagri Kendra Limited, the sole authority for printing textbooks of government schools.

[Cont. on page 4]

WM correspondent

It seems that those belonging to the UCPN (Maoist) are getting more obsessed with power and privileges.

That might be the exact reason that propelled the party with revolutionary background to form the largest central

committee in entire South Asia region. The numerical size of its central committee will be such a gigantic that it will comprise of 275 members.

After the unification of the party, it had been agreed to form a 175-member central committee.

However, the UCPN (Maoist) recently decided to stretch the size of its central committee beyond the wildest expectations.

The central committee of the Communist Party of China, which boasts the largest party members in the world, has just 204 members.

The irrationally swelled central committee also implicitly highlights the deepening internal strife in the party.

The party has failed to hold general convention for the last 18 years.

Although it planned to hold general convention this year, there has been no move taken towards that end.

The extreme numerical expansion of the central committee might help the party to reign over growing internal dissension to some extent.

However, it could also hamper the efficiency and efficacy of the UCPN (Maoist) while making vital decisions.



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Editorial

Economy on the brink of collapse

The recent revelations of mid-term evaluation of the current fiscal year 2009/10 are by all means not rosy.

It has cut the forecast of a modest growth of 5.5 per cent to a revised one of a mere 4 per cent, citing poor performance of the agriculture sector, the largest contributor to the GDP.

The unfavourable weather condition this year is expected to reduce the paddy and maize production — the major contributors to total agricultural production — by 11.05 and 3.91 percent, respectively

Projections that the agriculture production would increase proved hollow as agricultural yields were affected by the reduced downpour during the monsoon.

Furthermore, other factors including the liquidity crunch in the market, the increase in imports and reduction in exports, and the decline in the remittances played significant roles in the goal set not being met.

The export-import at present is about 1:8 and even worse, there is no possibility of reversal in the trend in the foreseeable future.

Manufacturing sector also did not do better enough to compensate the decline in the production in the agricultural sector.

As such, the government failed to bring down the inflation to the set seven per cent which instead on an average remained at a high of 10.1 in the first six months of the fiscal year.

The national treasury has shrunken to the tune of Rs 75 billion due to excessive investment in importing gold.

The half-yearly review also revealed that the special security plan and hike in government employees' allowance has added an additional burden of Rs. 14 billion to the government.

It said providing budget to the numerous commissions and committees formed by the government at different times has become a financial burden.

Foreign trips by high level government officials including the prime minister have cost the nation Rs. 100 million. The first six months saw a huge surge in the expenditure on foreign trips. The government had allocated Rs. 85 million for this purpose in the current budget.

Of course, fluid politics resulting in bandhs, alarming price increases of essentials, poor market monitoring, slack law and order situation, extended load shedding hours etc, have also played havoc with the economy at large.

Several factors relating to the economic, and monetary policy operations, trade and manufacturing pattern, foreign currency inflows and, top of all, and the absence of political will have pushed the economy to the brink of collapse.

China — the all time superpower

Fortunes and misfortunes always go side by side. Pakistan is fortunate enough to have a friend like China as a neighbour but unfortunate to have a neighbour like India who never desires for stability and prosperity of Pakistan. The Pakistanis must be thankful to God for making China its neighbour because the situation could have been much painful for them if there were no China in the region. Pak-China friendship is time-tested and progressing by leaps and bounds every moment. Unluckily this friendship is proving itself much agonizing for those countries which dream of ruling this region on the basis of economic and political exploitation. This close cordial relationship between Pakistan and China has always been a target for such countries.

According to the reports the US authorities and other western countries always feel uneasy when they find the exemplary friendship between the two countries going 'higher than the Himalayas and deeper than the ocean'. That is the reason they always try to create hitches and hurdles between the friendly relations of Pakistan and China. It is also said that the USA is providing nuclear support to India just to counter the increasing influence of China in the region. USA is very well aware of the fact that China is the only country which has a capability of giving tough time to it and this capability shall certainly increase manifold if Pakistan keeps on strengthening its relations with China. That is why there have been so many efforts to create misunderstandings between Pakistan and China. When we cast a look at the past ten years we find a long list of Chinese workers who lost their lives while working at different development projects in Pakistan. The terrorists targeted these Chinese workers simply to alarm and warn the Government of China that it must not send its workers to Pakistan. But in spite of all these threats China never backed out of its determination to make Pakistan strong and prosperous. Be it

Ali Sukhanver

the Karakorum highway project or the Gawadar Port Plan, the heavy water reactor at Khusab or the manufacturing of JF-17-Thunder Air Crafts, China is always there to support Pakistan. The friendship between the two countries is becoming even stronger as time goes by.

Pak-China relations began in 1950 when Pakistan was among the first countries to recognise the People's Republic of China. In 1962, the worsening Indo-China relationship turned into a series of hostility. That time Pakistan proved itself a very strong well-wisher of China by providing it all type of favour. It would not be an exaggeration if we call 1962, the title page of the story of love and friendship between these two countries. Since then this relationship is becoming stronger and stronger resulting in a variety of agreements of economic, military and technical assistance. The Pak-China friendship is a two-way journey. The whole of the Chinese nation is thankful to the people of Pakistan for their precious support on issues concerning China's sovereignty, such as Taiwan, and Tibet. The Chinese leadership has always acknowledged the significant role of Pakistan in the early 1970s, which enabled China to break its isolation from the West and the US. Pakistan also helped China become a member for the United Nations. Pakistan has always played an effective role in bringing the Muslim world closer to China.

On the other hand China has always proved itself a very strong support to Pakistan through every time of trial and tribulation. The people of Pakistan can never forget the role of China during Pakistan-Indian tensions in 2008. That was the time when the Chinese leaders very openly promised unlimited financial and military aid to Pakistan. There could have been a very serious type of nuclear war if China were not there to support Pakistan. Above all, China has always provided

a very staunch support to the Pakistani stance regarding the Kashmir issue. This affectionate assistance is something very positive for the people of Pakistan but very much discouraging to those who desire and plan for a weaker Pakistan. The countries like India are doing their best to dispel the clouds of vagueness and ambiguity between the two friendly countries. Recently it has been reported that the agents of Raw are trying to invade Xinjiang, the Chinese border province, in the guise of Islamic extremists. The RAW has provided them fake Pakistani identities. These agents are directed to create law and order disturbance in the peaceful land of Xinjiang. Most of these agents are the Hindus by creed but they are so well trained that it would be very much difficult to recognise their actual identity. According to the details some of these agents would intentionally surrender them before the security forces of China after being involved in some act of terrorism. The only purpose behind is to give the Chinese government an impression that Pakistan is trying to promote religious extremism in Xinjiang.

The Xinjiang is situated in the border area of northwest China and occupies an area of 1.6649 million sq km, accounting for one sixth of Chinese territory. It has a land border of 5,600 km bounded by eight countries. It was an important section of the ancient Silk Road. According to statistics, a few years back, Xinjiang had a population of 19.25 million. Other than the Uighurs, the vast majority of whom is Muslim, there are 47 ethnic groups in Xinjiang including the Hans. This province is considered one of China's five autonomous regions for ethnic minorities. It is because of the Muslim majority in this area, the western media in collaboration with the Indian think tanks has been yelling at the so-called flourishing Islamic extremism in Xinjiang for the last many years. A

recent proof of the western uneasiness over the situation in Xinjiang is exposed through an article written by Rodger Baker who represents the strategic intelligence analyst group Sirafor. In this article Rodger Baker has discussed different elements and factors giving birth to 'extremism' in Xinjiang. The group analyst argues that he sees emerging 'a Turkistan Islamist movement with links in Central Asia, stretching back to Afghanistan and Pakistan, blending Taliban training, transnational jihadist experiential learning, Hizb al-Tahrir (HT) frameworks and recruiting, and Central Asian ties for support and shelter.' Rodger calls the extremist movement 'a different entity than what China has faced in the past and comments that the situation is surely 'not pretty.'

Whatever is the situation in Xinjiang is simply an internal affair of China. The Uighurs are an ethnic group. This group is annoyed over the rapid influx of the Han Chinese settlers. In 1950 the Uighur tribes were 94% of the whole population of Xinjiang but now they are less than the half. The Uighur tribes have a lot of cultural similarities with the people of Central Asia and are not ready to welcome the Hans Chinese settlers. This conflicting situation is being exploited by India on two grounds: the first one is certainly that India is a tool in the hands of the Western forces that are afraid of strengthening China; secondly India is trying to settle its old scores with China. The recent report regarding the influx of the RAW agents in the guise of Islamic extremists exposes the hidden Indian desires of destabilizing China and portraying Pakistan behind this disturbance. The conflict between the Hans and the Uighurs is neither a separatist movement nor a symbol of extremism; it is simply an internal affair of China. The propaganda portraying this conflict as 'Extremism' is simply the artistic work of the forces hostile to the expected supremacy of China in the near future.

India bows to pressure

Diplomacy is to do and say, the nastiest thing in the nicest way

By Azam Khalil

A change of heart on the part of India to invite Pakistan for the resumption of talks has come mainly due to international pressure. The Americans had been trying to nudge India to the negotiating table to ease tensions with Pakistan that is engaged in the war against terror on its north-western border, and in some areas of Balochistan. The theory propounded by the Americans is that if Pakistani fears from Indian designs were calmed down, it may commit more troops to the battleground against the Taliban and elements of Al-Qaeda. Defeat of Al-Qaeda and Taliban on the Pakistani side would mean that the insurgents fighting the US/NATO forces in Afghanistan would also be weakened. And the same theory holds good for Pakistan that would feel easy if the Americans won their war against the insurgents in Afghanistan.

The Indians who have their own hegemonic designs in the region had been avoiding to talk to their Pakistani counterparts on various flimsy reasons and the latest one was when an act of terror was committed in the Indian financial hub, Mumbai. This was done in spite of the fact that the Indians have belatedly admitted to the fact that the attack on Mumbai was coordinated from within India and that handlers of the terrorists were Indian nationals.

The Government of Pakistan had all along insisted that the negotiating table was the best bet for the two countries. And the sooner they resume talks, the better it would be for India and Pakistan. PM Manmohan Singh's government on its part was a coalition government and, therefore, not entirely independent in its actions. This was proved after the Indian prime minister met with his Pakistani counterpart Mr Yousuf Raza Gilani in

the Egyptian city of Sharm El-Sheikh that created a mini scandal for the Congress-led government in India. This forced Singh to back pedal on some of his commitments made with Gilani. It was only after that the Congress 'queen' Sonia Gandhi endorsed the statement issued by her prime minister in the lower house of Indian Parliament.

The Indians, as usual, are now trying to scuttle the talks even before they have begun and contradictory voices are being heard across the border that are being issued by some members of the Indian Cabinet. Such an attitude will not help restore the mutual trust that is essential for the two sides to move forward and make any progress in their scarred relations. It would have been entirely appropriate if both India and Pakistan had agreed to resume the talks from where the Indians had abandoned the composite dialogue. Like this, time can be saved and real progress can be achieved between the two countries that will then be conducive to resolve more complex problems like the issue of Jammu and Kashmir. On the other hand, if the Indians harp on the old tune that Kashmir is an integral part of their country and is, therefore, not negotiable then no fruitful outcome can be expected.

Moreover, the Indians have lately committed a serious breach on the arrangement of water distribution between the two countries and this question has taken an acute turn that is no less serious than the thorny issue of the Kashmir dispute. They have nearly succeeded in depriving Pakistan of its legitimate requirements of water from the rivers Jhelum and Chenab that

flow into our country (Pakistan), through Kashmir, creating a serious problem for irrigation. Hence, the Government of Pakistan has now agitated that the issue of water sharing should also come on the table, so that it may not degenerate from where a point of no return is reached. If this happens, the destiny of both the people in India and Pakistan will be seriously jeopardised and ultimately leave no winners.

One hopes that the Indians realise the situation and will not go to the extent which will force Pakistan to take the extreme option that is available to it. And before that point is reached they try to make an amicable settlement with India on the issue of water sharing. In this backdrop, the resumption of dialogue between India and Pakistan has become extremely significant for both the countries because further delay could have only increased the misgivings which already exist between the two neighbours. But while the Indians want the issue of cross-border terrorism to be the only point on the agenda, the Pakistanis want that the two countries should embrace all outstanding issues and then move forward. Otherwise, the peace talks would degenerate into a talk shop and achieve no fruitful purpose.

It would be beneficial for India and Pakistan if the abandoned Eight-Point Agenda is taken up by the Indian and Pakistani foreign secretaries, who are scheduled to meet on the 25th of this month. And also finalise and prioritise the agenda for future negotiations. It would be quite appropriate if the two countries agree to move forward, even if that means to take small steps

forward, and resolutely decide that whatever the circumstances they will continue to move on the agreed agenda without wasting time. Then again, it would also be conducive if statements like the one issued by Indian Army Chief General Kapoor are avoided in which he threatened to take on both China and Pakistan at the same time, and tilt the war in the favour of India within 96 hours. However, the Indian political leadership is aware of the fact that even if the volume of Indian economy was double than that of China, still it would not be possible for them to take on China and Pakistan together.

The Indians are also aware that in case of any military misadventure, their major industrial and military complexes will be wiped out by the Pakistani armed forces in the very beginning of the war. It is, therefore, unthinkable and sheer madness if some Indian leaders think that the Indians will survive a nuclear exchange with Pakistan; their human loss would be far in excess of Pakistan's.

The Indian leadership should discourage such statements because such irresponsible utterances only harm the process of negotiations and are a reason for the present setback that are seen between the bilateral relations in the two nuclear powered nations. While there is not much hope that both the sides would relent from their stated objectives, yet the good thing about the resumption of negotiations and contact at a responsible level is that both India and Pakistan are once again talking to one another. This is the only way both the countries can move forward and hope to resolve their outstanding differences in future.

— Isaac Goldberg

Ven. Master Buddhahadra and his contribution to Buddhist heritage of China

By Min Bahadur Shakya

Introduction

Ven. Buddhahadra was a great Nepalese Buddhist Master and also a monk who visited China in the year 409 C.E. He spent his entire

sea voyage. When he arrived at Chang'an he was received very elegantly by the emperor Yao xing. He invited Buddhahadra to teach the dharma in the palace.



life for the promotion of Buddhism in China and died in the year 429 C.E.

Although there are some historians and western scholars who hold conflicting views that Master Buddhahadra was a scholar born in Nagarahāra, Central India or in Kashmir, but the historical and textual evidence support the fact that Buddhahadra was a Nepalese scholar born at Kapilavastu, Nepal.

Buddhahadra was born in Kapilavastu in the year 359 and was taken to Uddiyana or Jalalabad by his grandfather for his business purpose in his early life. Very shortly Buddhahadra came back to Kapilavastu again after the death of his parents with his grandfather when he was still a child. He studied Buddhist philosophy and meditation intensively.

Study in Kashmir

When he attained the age of 17, he was fully ordained as a *bhikkhu* and learnt Buddhist meditation the *Vinaya* under Master Buddhasena in Kashmir (Jibin). He learnt the Sarvāstivāda doctrine thoroughly under him and became well known as Buddhist meditation master.

It seems that he spent most of his time in meditation and learning Buddhist doctrines from famous Buddhist masters of his time. When Zhiven with his five member party arrived at Jibin to invite an illustrious Buddhist master he was there at Jibin (Kashmir?). Everyone recommended him for Buddhahadra mission to China.

Visit to China 406. A. D.

He travelled to China via Burma and arrived at Chang'an in the year 409 C.E. with many difficulties. Since he was enlightened being (*Anagami*), he demonstrated his miraculous powers to save many beings in his

Chang'an. He then established a thriving center of meditation learning. Not only did Senuri reportedly seek Kumarajiva's instructions on meditation as soon as the later arrived in Chang'an, the respect he received from the court of the Later Qin was also initially due to his mastery of the Kumarajiva style of meditation.

It was in such an atmosphere that Buddhahadra could not have found a more receptive audience than the Buddhist community in Chang'an. The reputation Buddhahadra had as a foremost authority within the monastic circle than the self-styled Kumarajiva.

Conflict with Kumarajiva:

In this way, Buddhahadra came into conflict with the 'official' monks of Kumarajiva's school who were sponsored by the Later Tsin court. The followers of Kumarajiva fabricated charges against Buddhahadra. It is said that some people, who became very jealous of Buddhahadra's learning and popularity, tried to defame him by fabricating certain charges. Afterwards, when the truth was revealed, they repented. This resulted in the expulsion of Buddhahadra from Chang'an. In 410 CE,

But later due to jealous nature of his followers he was expelled out from Chang'an and moved to Lushan where he was received by his disciples such as Huiyuan. He stayed at Tsung lin Monastery and began to teach meditation courses to many Chinese disciples.

Buddhahadra and His Disciples in China

Buddhahadra's contradiction with Kumarajiva brought a great change in his Sangha life. The Emperor, Yao Hsing invited Kumarajiva with other three thousand Sangha member at the palace but Buddhahadra did not go with Kumarajiva, his several hundred disciples did not join Kumarajiva.

Although Buddhahadra's disciples at that time cultivated, they also claimed to have certified to the first, second or third level of Arhatship. Buddhahadra was aware of all their feelings, thus he wanted to return hometown. His disciples always created trouble for him; Buddhahadra's disciples were headache for everyone in the Sangha members at that time. There rumors and false claim created a great problem. People at Government became angry for their activities and want to arrest them. His disciples were frightened and some changed their names and escaped. At last only forty disciples remain with Buddhahadra.

For the bad conduct of Buddhahadra's disciples Tao Heng through Buddhahadra expelled out from Yao Qin. Tao Heng said Buddhahadra "Your disciples don't follow the rules and so according to the Buddha's precepts, you can't stay here. From today onward, you'll have to leave right away! Get out." Buddhahadra regretted that he could not express his knowledge to them. He left Yao Chin capital with his great disciple, Hui Kuan and four other disciples.

Buddhahadra wanted to spread Buddha's teachings, he brought the way to China and at the night time he and his disciples escaped to Lu Mountain.

When the Emperor Yao Hsing heard that they had gone, he said to

Tao Heng, "Master Buddhahadra brought the Way to China, intending to spread the Buddha's teaching. How could you throw him out for such a small matter? This is not right. How could you let such a trivial thing deprive the entire populace of a Good Knowing Advisor?"

The Emperor immediately sent a party out to apologize to Buddhahadra but when they found him, Buddhahadra said to the attendant, "The Emperor has been most compassionate towards me, but I can't return with you. Please tell him I can't obey his command". That night he and his disciple escaped to Lu Mountain.

Buddhahadra's Translation Works

We can say, now what is the popularity of Buddhist tradition and philosophy in China is the cause of the previous translation of Sanskrit Buddhist literature in the ancient period of Chinese history. Before Tao religion was popular in China later many Chinese Buddhist scholar visited Nepal and India.

Among the Nepalese Buddhist Scholar who worked for the promotion of Buddhism in China Master Buddhahadra was the one who worked tirelessly to spread Buddhism in China. He translated many Buddhist literatures from Sanskrit into Chinese. Some texts are fully translated by him and some are jointly with Chinese and Central Asian intellectuals like Fa-xian, Kumarajiva and so on.

Buddhahadra was one of the most important historical personalities of Buddhism in China. Following are the texts which are available now and were translated by Buddhahadra while he was in China.

1. Dharmatara Dhyāna Sūtra in A.D. 398-421

Buddhahadra, who came over to China in A.D. 406? His translation of Dharmatara-Dhyāna Sūtra (which is said to have been preached by Bodhidharma himself when he was in India) and that of Avatamsaka Sūtra may be said with out exaggeration to have laid the corner-stone for zen. He gave a course of lectures on the Ch'an Sūtra for the first time in China in A.D.413, and it was through his instruction that many native practitioners of Chan were produced, of whom Chi Yen (chi-gon) and Huen kao (gen-ko) are well known".

2. Huayan Sūtra or Avatamsaka Sūtra A.D. 420 (Flower Ornament Sūtra)

Buddhahadra was the translator of the *Mahāvaiṣṭyabuddhāvataṃsaka Sūtra* or simply the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*, and in Mandarin as the Hua Yen Jing. His was the first full translation from Sanskrit to Chinese (60 fascicles) and was completed by around 420 A.D. (*Avatamsaka Sūtra*: 60 fascicles, Taisho catalog reference T278.9.395a-788b.).

This Sūtra was translated into Chinese by Buddhahadra in 421 C.E. (T 278). This translation, consisting of sixty fascicles and divided into thirty-four chapters, was based on a Sanskrit text that had been brought to China from Khotan by Chih Fa-ling. Thus the Sanskrit text of the Avatamsaka was compiled before 400, probably by 350.

The Sūtra is also well known for its detail description of the course of the course of the bodhisattva's

practice through fifty-two stages.

Sanskrit texts of several sections of the Avatamsaka are extant. The *Daeabūhūmika* and the *Gandhavyūha* have been published from The Mithilā Institute, Darbhanga and elsewhere.

The *Gandhavyūha* concludes with verses concerning Samantabhadra's practices and the vows. The Sanskrit text of the verses has been published as the *Bhadracaryapranidhana* raja several times in Nepal alone.

3. Wu-Liang-Shou Ching: Amitābha Sūtra

"Wu-liang-shou ching consists of two volumes and is traditionally thought to have been translated in 252 A.D. by Samghavarman of the Wei dynasty. However, it is now thought to have been jointly translated by Buddhahadra (359-429) of the Eastern Ching dynasty and Pao-yun (376-449) of the Liu sung dynasty. This is the most popular and commonly used of the five translations".

The translation was carried out in the Tao-chang ssu Monastery in the city of Yang-tu (present-day Chiang-tu hsien, Kiangsu).

4. Mahāsāṅghika Vinaya (with Fa-xian) or

The Great Canon of Monastic Rules (Chinese: Mo-ho-seng-ch'i-lu) - 40 Fascicule

This work known as Mahasāṅghika Vinaya is thus a collection of the monastic rules transmitted in the Mahasāṅghika tradition, and describes in detail the precepts to be observed by ordained monks and nuns. Later he translated the first thirty-six thousand verses of the Avatamsaka Sūtra and helped Dharma Master Fa-xian to translate the Mahasāṅghika Vinaya.

5. Mahāparinirvāna Sūtra 6 Fascicule (with Fa-xian) 416-418

The Mahāparinirvāna Sūtra, a translation by Fa-hsien and Buddhahadra in the Eastern Chin dynasty (317-420).

This Sūtra, which is supposed to be the account of the Buddha's final sermon prior to his passing away, stresses the fact that all sentient beings possess the Buddha-nature and that all beings, even icchantikas (incorrigibles), will become Buddhas.

6. Yogācārabhūmi Sūtra (Taisho No.618)

Chinese: Ta-mo-to-lo ch'an-ching 2 fascicule, Taisho No.618

7. His other translated works were the *Anantamukha Sādhakadhārani Sūtra (Ch'u Sheng wu liang men Ch'ih Ching)* in the first year of Yuan Hsi of the Eastern Tsin Dynasty in 419 CE in Yang Tu.

8. Similarly, he also translated the *Bhadracaryāpranidhāna (Wen Shu shih li fa yuen ching)* during the second year of Yuan Hsi of the Eastern Tsin Dynasty in 420 CE in Tao-Chang Ssu monastery.

9. He translated *Dhyāna Sūtra (Ta mo to lo Shan Kin)* during the Eastern Tsin Dynasty at 420 A.D.

10. He also translated the *Manjusri Pranidhānotpada Sūtra (Wan-shu-shi-fa-yuen-Ching)* in 420 CE.

11. Another translation of Buddhahadra was that of the

Tathāgatagarbha Sūtra (*Ta fan len-ju lai Isang Ching*) in one fascicle in 420 CE during the Eastern Tsin Dynasty.

12. He also translated the *Buddhayaṇa Samadhisāgara Sūtra (Kuan fo san-mei hai Ching)* from 420 to 423 CE in Yang Chou.

13. *Mahāsāṅghikabhikkhusuni Vinaya*: Buddhahadra also translated several other Buddhist texts, which include the *Mahāsāṅghikabhikkhusuni Vinaya (Mo ho seng ch'i pi ch'iu ni chien pen)* during the Eastern Tsin dynasty in 414 CE.

14. The *Pratimoksa Sāṅghika Vinayamāla (Po lo thi mu kha san khi kie pan or Mo ho seng ch'i lu ta pi Ch'iu Chienpen)* was also translated by him. In total he is said to have translated 13 works in 125 volumes contributing greatly to the development of Chinese Buddhism

His Last Days

In 418 A.D. he was invited to Chien-Yeh, the modern Nanking. There he became the senior translator at *Tao Chang Ssu*, giving guidance to more than a hundred monks engaged in putting the Buddhist scriptures into Chinese. This monastery was the main center of such work in China. He continued his activities until his death at the age of seventy-one in the year 429 A.D.

Thus, he worked tirelessly to expound the Dharma to the Chinese intellectuals. In this way, by spending twenty one years in China, he laid a strong foundation for the propagation of Buddhism. His works made him a renowned Buddhist Master in China.

It is said that Buddhahadra was a well-known Chan Master who gave a course of lectures on the *Dhyāna Sūtra* for the first time in 413 CE, and it was through his instructions that many native Dhyāna practitioners were produced of which Chi Yen and Huan Kao became well known.

Even Hui-yuan, the founder of the White Lotus Society and the Chinese Pure Land Buddhism practiced Dhyāna with the help of his instructions. Buddhahadra's translations of the Avatamsaka Sūtra and Dhyāna Sūtra may be said without exaggeration to have laid the very cornerstone for Dhyāna ideology in China. Very recently, the tomb of Ven. Buddhahadra has been discovered in China.

Conclusion:

It seems that Buddhahadra's activities are although great, his popularity as Nepalese Buddhist master has been left in oblivion due to dubious nature of his nativity. In China, most of the translator's name from Sanskrit is credited to Indian origin although some of them are of Central Asian origin. Since he was born in Kapilavastu, in Nepal as described in *Gaosheng chuan* there should not be any controversy now. There is dearth of writing on this issue; therefore a humble attempt has been made here. There are many areas for exploration and sight visits have to be made for confirmation of these sites where Master Buddhahadra stepped in. More researches are necessary to appreciate the works of this Nepalese Master of Buddhism.

(This paper on the biography of the Buddhist Master Buddhahadra is based on three Chinese sources : 1. *Gaosheng chuan by Huijiao (T.N 2059)- Eng. tr. by Sung Jung Tang, Fudan University, Shanghai, China.* 2. *Ch'u san - tsan chi - chi by Seng Yu (519 C.E)* 3. *The Records of High Sanghan by Master Hsuan Hua)*

The fuel behind bank-teller

By R.K. Regmee

The banking sector, despite experiencing frequent hiccups because of political instability and the accompanying vulnerability of economic policy, shows two encouraging trends in Nepal. Innovative packages for the urban bank-users are emerging day by day thanks to creative financial marketing. Micro-financing for grass-root farms and enterprises in villages also is making its presence felt in a noticeable manner due to the democratic sense of making economic development meaningful at people's level.

Both could be termed as ventures which aim at linking banks with the way people live while transacting, earning, spending, saving, investing and profiting. If they are allowed to operate normally as per the financial game-rules, they are sure to change the economic landscape of the country in not too distant future.

They possess the message that people understand. They are in a language that users are familiar with. They, however, might end up as glittering but passing shadows, if not

allowed to complete their logical cycle.

Critics might argue that a discussion on the ventures of urban banks and micro-financing would lose meaning in the backdrop of the economic mess that the country is in at the moment. The pain of liquidity crisis, frustrated remittance growth, trade deficit, BOP deficit, depleting foreign exchange reserve, declining production, stagnating inflation and militancy in labour front and some other indicators do not, obviously, allow them to be optimistic.

The story of banking relates to less than a third of Nepalis, and it cannot be a priority theme, they might maintain referring to the World Bank 2006 statistics of 26 % of households in Nepal having bank account. They might not show interest in the prospect of extending bank users' club in future besides engaging ranges of other people who are not in the banking-net at present.

The multiplier effect of the competitive packages of some 240

financial bodies including 26 commercial banks, over 60 development banks, 77 finance companies and 15 micro-finance outfits would be quite substantial to generate atmosphere for engaging more Nepalis in the periphery of banks for making a difference in the economic component of their lives. This cannot be simply ignored.

Nepal has witnessed a sort of banking revolution in the past three decades. Initiated shyly by just three private banks under controlled economy of Panchayat dispensation in '80s, the revolution got lubricated by 1990's liberalization. The democratic role assisted banks in Nepal to redefine their role and scope. As a result of that banks today are able to unearth numerous loan portfolios, practice smart electric clearance and explore fresh playing fields. They are thinking about introducing reliable Nepal-wide e-payment facilities and myriad modes of straight processing system.

The 2010 - mid-February pledge by Second Micro-Finance Summit to cover three million more poor people in the next five years heralds yet a new era for social mobilization at grass root level through banking process. This aspect cannot be sidelined as people discuss banking issues in contemporary Nepal.

Yes. Unfortunately there are some failure cases of the sector that raise their ugly head from time to time. They not only provide fodder for scripting sensational headlines in media but also threaten the very trust which serves as the foundation for banking culture in the economy. The latest example of fiasco of Nepal Development Bank and series of reported malpractices of the sector dishearten all. They could darken the future prospects as well.

However, prompt response by the healers of economy could check such disappointing practices. Will those who umpire the economy as a matter of obligation to state listen to this? Or will they neglect it allowing the buoyant sector lose face and injure the economy?

Women and domestic violence

Social observer

Domestic violence is the crime of physical and sexual abuse perpetrated against one family member by another family member. It is a broad term encompassing spouse abuse, child abuse, sibling abuse and an abuse of a parent by a child, abuse of an elderly or handicapped family member. It is an area that has usually been left out of the ambit of public discussion, because the familial space is considered sacred. The UN has only a declaration against violence, which itself makes the issue seem less important.

It could be theoretically debated whether gender discrimination leads to gender based violence or the reverse.

because they are tremendously dependent on the woman and are threatened by any moves on her part towards independence.

Some men batter because that's the only way they know how to be close or relate to a partner. Some men grew up in violent households, where they watched their mothers abused by their fathers and where they themselves were abused. Some men become violent under the influence of drugs or alcohol, although the substances themselves do not cause the violence.

Some common conclusions have been derived regarding the problem of

children from the abusive partner, but do not guarantee a home, food of health care or an opportunity for long-term financial stability. And anti-poverty schemes focus on increasing economic resources and access to program without addressing the impact of violence on family's basic human needs and do little to prevent a partner to harm the wife's job.

Poverty reduces options for battered women. Safety planning strategies require significant life changes like, moving, separation or divorce. Some require extensive use of the civil legal system to obtain orders

for women to seek help.

Rural domestic violence victims are in more isolated locations and may have difficulty accessing health care and other services due to lack of transportation or poor weather and road conditions. Emergency response time is often slower in rural areas.

A shortage of health care providers is a constant challenge, particularly when addressing survivors of domestic violence who may need physical or mental health treatment to recover from the effects of abuse.

Domestic violence survivors may be in need of legal assistance but in rural areas, it can be more difficult to find an affordable lawyer or legal aid.

What is challenging now, is to see how at a time when women's empowerment, human rights, gender equality have been endorsed by international community, the current economic climate is trying to shrink the national states so that resources required to put in these agendas are withdrawn. What strategies can then be promoted for women's empowerment and poverty alleviation in today's market crisis, continued structural adjustment, cuts in welfare state and globalizing market all disrupting the provision of reproductive health, education and medical services for poor communities and especially for poor woman and girls.

Different forms of abuses

- Physical abuse including assaulting, damaging the physical beauty of a spouse by torture, indecently abusing, beating and mistreating the wife by the husband on being drunk, torturing the wife by the husband being influenced by others, maltreatment, misbehavior, torture or assault upon a domestic servant by any member of the family.

- Sexual abuse that abuses, humiliates, degrades or violates the dignity of woman:

- Verbal and emotional abuse including insults, ridicule, humiliation, name calling specially with regard to not having a child or a male child. Repeated threats to cause physical pain also are considered to be emotional abuse.

- Economic abuse includes deprivation of all or any economic or financial resources like household necessities for the aggrieved person and her children, stridhan, property, jointly or separately owned by the aggrieved person, payment of rental related to the shared household and maintenance.

- Psychological abuse: (i) intimidation, harassment, denial of food or drink for adequate sustenance, denial of salary or expenses, threat of physical or psychological abuse by any member of the family to the other or others

domestic violence: Domestic violence was found to be all-pervasive among all women but varying in volume and frequency across class, age and education level. Further inequalities existing in the household, as represented by education and employment gaps between husbands and wives, were linked to domestic violence. The impact upon the survival of the household economy was found to be significant as well.

Efforts to escape violence can have devastating economic impacts. Leaving a relationship might mean a woman will lose her job, housing, health care, child care, or access to her partner's income. Often criminal and civil legal remedies are necessary to safely leave a relationship. But women are at highest risk of injury or violence when they are separating from or divorcing a partner. Women can be very intimidated by a partner and the consequences of her leaving. It takes a long time for a woman to give up hope in a relationship and to recognize that the only way she can be safe is to leave him. Also, legislation, policy, services and advocacy often focus on physically separating the battered woman and her

for custody, child support or protection. Woman must be able to financially support herself and her children after she leaves her abusive partner. In many locations there are programs that provide housing and temporary cash assistance, child care and free legal representation. However, most of these programs have limited funding, offer short-term resources. As a result some low-income battered women simply are without the income, government support, or access to services necessary to fully implement safety plan.

Low-income women also face multiple levels of bias and discrimination that reduce options for safety and financial security.

"Rights" are valuable to individual freedom but does not take into account issues of gender justice within the family and community.

Ill-health is one of the major factors besetting poor women. The most telling statistic is the increase in maternal mortality in the last decades. Gendered differences are reflected in patterns of health and illness around the world.

The culture of some rural communities can make it more difficult



The UN Declaration on Elimination of Violence against Women (1993) is a seminal text, because most of the South Asian countries which have in the decade of 2000 enacted or are in the process of enacting laws on domestic violence are influenced by the definition of domestic violence in DEVAW.

The definition in DEVAW includes physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation.

Domestic violence as a legal term comes within the legal discourse in the South Asian countries only in the 2000s after a decade of women's movements pressurizing the state(s) to recognize violence within the domestic sphere and proposing legal solutions to it.

Domestic violence perpetrated by partners and close family members on women has long been a matter of silent suffering within the four walls of the home. Usually, men who batter are seeking a sense of power and control over their partners or their own lives, or

~ News ~

Pakistan donates vehicles

Pakistan on Tuesday provided two ambulances and a van to Nepal aimed for health institutions of the country. The vehicles will go for District Hospital



Sunsari, health post at Hadiya village development committee in Udayapur and Health Service and Relief Association, according to a press release of Pakistan embassy.

Pakistani ambassador to Nepal Syed Abrar Hussain gifted the three vehicles to foreign secretary Madan Kumar Bhattarai amid a function.

Deuba against creation of Tarun Dasta

Senior Nepali Congress leader Sher Bahadur Deuba has flatly rejected the notion of forming a semi-militant youth wing of the party, and said that Maoist-aligned Young Communist League and UML's Youth Force should also be dismantled.

The remark by the former prime minister and influential leader of the second biggest party in the Constituent Assembly comes at a time when another NC leader Khum Bahadur Khadka has been warning that the very existence of NC will be in danger if Tarun Dasta - the proposed youth wing of the party - is not formed soon.

Deuba, who was speaking at a press meet organized in Argakachi Tuesday, was of the view that youth wings were only a nuisance that can jeopardize the peace process, adding that YCL and YF should also be dismantled to ensure security to the people and establish peace in the country.

Call for trilateral dialogue

Vice president of Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization (AFPSO) Hiranya Lal Shrestha has pointed out the need of a trilateral dialogue mechanism between Nepal-China-India to discuss security concerns in the region and discourage the extra regional powers from intervening in the regional issues.

"Such mechanism is necessary to tackle security concerns of our neighbours in Nepal," said Shrestha during the meeting of AFPSO last week.

He also stressed on becoming alert over the imperialist design to instigate separatist and extremist elements against Nepal's neighbours. "Occasionally, terrorist outfits are also misusing Nepal-Indian open border."

He also called for nuclear free-South Asian region given the likely nuclear fallout across the region in case there was nuclear war.

RPP-Nepal demands referendum

The Rastriya Prajatantra Party, Nepal (RPP-Nepal) picketed Singha Durbar, the central government secretariat, today calling for promulgation of new Constitution in the stipulated time and holding referendum on important political issues.

President of RPP-Nepal, Kamal Thapa said his party has organized the Singha Durbar picketing programme to exert pressure on the State to hold referendum on important political issues, stressing that the present Constituent Assembly has no right to decide on key topics with long-term implication on the nation like Hindu nation, federalism and the institution of monarchy.

President Thapa is leading the party workers holding a sit-in at Bhadrakali Chowk. Cadres of RPP Nepal are holding sit-ins at Maitighar, Hanumansthan and Kalikasthan, on the way leading to Singha Durbar.

The party is also holding a joint mass meeting at Khula Manch same day.

Conundrum of ...

Leaving aside other points, the UCPN (Maoist) are unlikely to be completely ready to get its arm unit amputated until the new constitution is written.

The presence of combatants has been one of the major factors for the Maoists to enjoy an edge over other parties.

Of course, the Maoists have been putting the agenda of replacing the government in the High Level Political Mechanism (HLPM) time and again.

And, they simply want to lead the new national government by themselves.

The Maoists have ceased from castigating Koirala and his daughter Sujata. And, this strategy has much to do with their intention to derive the support of Koirala to lead the new government.

But, other parties are still uncomfortable with the proposition of the Maoists steering the next government.

It will be naive to think that the possibilities of forming the new government are only related with the internal political components of the country.

The role of New Delhi will, by all means, not be negligible in this regard. In all likelihood, the Indian establishment, which is fully backing the current government, does not want to see the Maoists again ascending to the power corridors.

Given the acrimony between the

southern neighbour and the Maoists, the elevation of the latter to power can prove counter-productive to the interests of the former.

Rulers ...

Earlier, foreign minister Sujata Koirala was also summoned by the PAC as she abruptly cancelled the tender procedure vis-a-vis the printing of machine readable passports (MRP) to "pocket huge commissions from Indian government owned company—Security Printing and Minting Corporation".

She has been charged of canceling the tender process to get undue financial benefits from the said company by entrusting it with the task of printing MRPs.

Koirala "bravely" boycotted the tender process although some four companies had already been pre-qualified for the purpose.

As per the policy of International Civil Aviation Organisation, paper based passports will not be valid after April 10, 2010.

More interesting is the fact that Minister Sujata exhibited gross waywardness while being quizzed by the PAC to justify her decision regarding the MRPs.

In her attempts to conceal her apparently shady acts, she ventured into undermining the very significance of the PAC.

No doubt, the fixation of high-placed people with commission has long proved a major impediment in controlling corruption in Nepal.

Region :

Are Pakistan's strategic Nuclear assets threatened by terrorists?

Ignoring a breach of nuclear security by the world's nuclear guru, the United States, its officials, law makers, defence experts and journalists continue to pontificate on threats to Pakistan's nuclear arsenal and lecture it on nuclear safety on the grounds of a possible Jihadist takeover.

This unabated outcry ignores assurances by Pakistan that its nuclear safeguards comply with international standards. General Kidwai, who heads the Strategic Plans Division, which is tasked to ensure security of Pakistan's nuclear assets, said to David Sangers of New York Times, "Please grant to Pakistan that if we can make nuclear weapons and the delivery systems, we can also make them safe. Our security systems are foolproof."

Consistent refusal to accept Pakistan's position should ring alarm bells in Islamabad. Is this an orchestrated effort aimed at targeting Pakistan under a false pretext, just as it was done in Iraq?

Living in the mountains and caves of Tora Bora, OBL could not be accused of possessing WMDs but he could certainly be accused of 'having an interest in acquiring them'. The supposed meeting of a renegade Pakistani nuclear scientist, Bashiruddin Mahmood, with Al Qaeda leaders was used as 'proof' of this interest. And since Pakistan happened to be the nearest destination where nuclear weapons could be found and since a band of rag tag militants from Pak-Afghan border areas had created an environment of terror inside Pakistan, a picture perfect theme was presented: 'Pakistan's nuclear arsenal was at risk of being grabbed by the Jihadists for use by Al Qaeda against the West'. 'Experts' such as Seymour Hersh also rushed to support the thesis.

The story line is ridiculous. Every one, barring some nuclear and terrorism experts and journalists in Washington, understands that due to the high level of difficulty in acquiring and using nuclear weapons, very few terrorist entities are capable of or have shown significant interest in seeking nuclear weapons or material. There is no conclusive evidence that Al Qaeda is one of them. In fact, chemical and biological weapons are far easier to produce, transport and use and are therefore the weapons of choice for the terrorists.

To spread doubts about the security

By Observer

of Pakistan's nuclear assets, the western media and experts frequently advance the arguments that: *Pakistan is not a viable state; Pakistan government will capitulate to the terrorists; Pakistan's nuclear weapons are in danger of falling into terrorists' hands; The A.Q. Khan episode could be repeated, etc. Interestingly, however, they shy away from addressing the questions: Are the terrorists trained and equipped to snatch and transport fissile materials or the bomb? Where is the evidence that Pakistan is about to collapse? Where is the Al Qaeda's team of nuclear scientists standby to take over nuclear facilities once Pakistan collapses? And how will the terrorists transport these nuclear weapons to the US and launch them?*

Despite bad governance during 62 years of its life, the viability of this nation of 170 million has never been in doubt, even under the worst of circumstances. On the contrary it shows promise. It has a strong agricultural base and is self sufficient in food. It has an aggressive entrepreneurial class, a vibrant industry and efficient workforce. Its roller coaster economic performance notwithstanding, its growth rate until recently stood at an impressive 7.5%, behind China and India, when the world economy was in doldrums. Pakistanis are fiercely nationalistic and loyal to their country and have always rallied behind their nuclear-armed million strong defence forces in times of crisis, which are counted among the best in the world. If these factors do not make a nation viable, what does?

There has never been nor is there today any danger of Pakistan's collapse or of the country falling to the terrorists. Contrary to Western perception, Pakistan is a country of moderate Muslims that rejects religious bigotry and extremism and it does not swarm with ultra conservative religious militants. Michael Krepon of the Stimson Center, Washington, correctly says: "Pakistan has not been a revolutionary state to date, and the mullahs have not made deep inroads in the political life of the country."

Had the US been serious about helping to end this terrorism, in no time could it choke terrorist supplies coming from Afghanistan and tell Mossad and RAW to back off. But since it chooses

not to, it would be logical to conclude that this is happening with its tacit consent. There may be a method in the madness.

It is ridiculous to take such attacks as the worst case scenario. But for the corporate media this means more breaking news and more business. For their patrons - those who mastermind these acts, the propaganda serves to convey that power of the security apparatus of the state is crumbling.

Condemned by almost the entire nation and religious leaders of all creeds, they represent a minuscule segment of the population drawing support from a tiny minority of orthodox, uninformed, illiterate and poor tribal and rural populations.

With no capacity to defeat Pakistan Army or conquer Pakistan they do not pose existential threat to society of the state. Maulied in the recent army operations in Swat and South Waziristan and having suffered heavy losses, they are on the run.

Pakistan Army remains the chief arbiter in matters related to defence. It holds the country together, plays the role of its guardian and savior and deals with external and internal threats. Conscious of the dangerous geopolitical environment, it gives no quarter even to the political government to make strategic mistakes or give undue security related concessions to any one that might endanger state security.

Pakistan Army is the largest military branch in the country. Pakistan Army has the reputation of being powerful, experienced, and professional. Pakistan Army with an active force of 619,000 personnel and 528,000 personnel in reserve makes Pakistan a seventh largest military force in the world. The main responsibilities of the army is to protect the borders, security of administrative areas, and defending the national interests of Pakistan within the framework of its international obligations.

Pakistan Army has a rich combat experience. This comes with fighting multiple wars throughout the short history of Pakistan. Pakistan Army now also specializes in counter-terrorism efforts due to its collaboration in the War on Terror. In addition to its role on the War on Terror, Pakistan Army is also responsible of contributing towards the United Nations peacekeeping efforts.

Pakistan Army recently grabbed the title of being the largest active force in the peacekeeping efforts by the United Nations.

Chief of Army Staff, General Ashfaq Pervez Kiyani currently has the honours to lead this prestigious military organization. Currently Pakistan Army's active duty personnel as well as the reserves continue to protect our nation day and night from the terrorists and other anti-Pakistani national interests.

Pakistan has successfully put its strategic weapons program under formalized institutional control and oversight. National Command Authority effectively controls, manages and monitors strategic organizations, prevents tangible and intangible transfers or leakage of sensitive technologies and material - measures in line with IAEA safeguards. An over 8000-men strong Security Division secures nuclear assets and materials and guards against malevolent activities. Supported by the strategic forces, it is fully capable of ensuring nuclear security of components even in transit.

Pakistan's nuclear controls also include the functional equivalent to the two-man rule and Permissive Action Links (PALs) that most nuclear states rely on to protect against loss of control, inadvertent weapons use, accidents, and other mishaps.

Pakistan's nuclear material or radioactive sources have remained safe from theft or pilferage nor has there been any attempt by terrorist elements to gain access to weapons or materials. Lamenting the Western attitude Peter Lavoy (National Intelligence for Analysis) states, "Since the 1998 tests, various pronouncements, publications in the Western press, and events in the region have eroded the credibility of Pakistan's nuclear command and control, overshadowing the efforts that have been made since 1999 to harness a coherent command system to ensure management of its nuclear capabilities..."

After the militancy was routed by the Pakistan Army, one hoped that Western fears would subside. Instead, new doubts surfaced, this time about the possibility of a coup by officers sympathetic to Al Qaeda who could take over nuclear assets. For those who have any idea about how Pakistan's defence forces are organized.

Afghanistan awash with innocents' blood

Mohammad Jamil

When Americans and Europeans are killed in a terrorist attack like the one of 9/11, the champions for the cause of human rights throughout the world mourn; they light candles and place bouquets at the venue of their graves. But when other people are killed in similar attacks or by the ruthless and callous invaders' bombings and air strikes on the innocent people in Afghanistan, there is no outside mourner. What different breed are Taliban from their compatriots who fought against the Soviet invaders, which the West called jihad (holy war) and its fighters they called freedom fighters and mujahideen, while Soviets called them bandits. It is up to the historians to write the true history, but for the present Afghanistan is awash with civilians' blood. Of course, we would not hold brief for the Taliban, and in fact we had criticized them when they tried to export their version of Islam or revolution to other countries.

At least 27 civilians were killed in what they call a mistaken Nato air strike, in Gujran district of Daykundi province carved out of Uruzgan province, on three mini-buses in southern Afghanistan carrying the people of a marriage party, which will increase hatred against the US and the West. Nato said: 'It hit a suspected insurgent convoy, but ground forces later found a number of individuals killed and wounded, including women and children'. One does not understand as to how such incidents could take place when the US and the Nato forces have all the facilities to determine the identity of the people on the ground? One Nato commander said that this was not a deliberate act but sometimes they have to take snap decisions. A Nato statement said: 'It was thought the convoy contained Taliban insurgents on their way to attack Afghan and foreign military forces'. There is a perception that apart from erroneous intelligence, there could either be a deliberate attempt to terrorise the people. It could be an act of frustration and desperation on the part of the troops. However, it belies the claims that the US and Nato forces are in Afghanistan to protect the people from the militants.

Such callous acts are bound to push even the neutral people to the Taliban side. Last year, General Stanley McChrystal, the Nato and US commander in Afghanistan, introduced much tougher rules of engagement in a bid to minimise such casualties but to no avail. They have the 'pendant' to teach Pakistan's forces how to fight insurgents, but it appears that they need to learn from Pakistan's armed forces that have conducted operations in Swat and South Waziristan, and there was not a single incident to collateral damage. It is not an exaggeration because media in Pakistan are free, and if there was any such incident, it would have found place in print and electronic media. It is pertinent to point out that Pakistan with outdated equipment as compared with US and NATO forces have fared well in dealing with insurgents, and achieved what otherwise would look like a wishful thinking. Anyhow, the invaders should stick to the norms and conventions applicable during war or even occupation.

Anyhow, the governor of Uruzgan province told the BBC that all of the dead were civilians. He said the air strike took place in an area which is under Taliban control. The Afghan government condemned the air strike, calling it 'unjustifiable' and 'a major obstacle' to effective counter-terrorism efforts. There have been quite a few incidents of hits killings. On December 29, 2001, a wedding in the Qalbi Niaz village in eastern Afghanistan was bombed, killing dozens of civilians. The United Nations said 62 civilians were killed in this bombing, while others put the figure as high as 107. In early May 2002, Britain's Royal Marines launched Operation Condor after Australian troops had allegedly come under fire from al Qaeda and Taliban forces, and called in American bombers to launch an attack. But according to an Afghan press agency, the men 'engaged' by the Australian troops and later bombed by US forces in fact 'belonged to a wedding party, whose traditional AK-47 firing celebrations had been mistaken for offensive fire'. In 2008 and 2009, hundreds of civilians were killed in Kunduz province, Farah province and Herat province.

The bombing of wedding parties reveals much about the directionless and aimless war in Afghanistan. According to a report, key Afghan commander complained earlier this year that 'the Americans never contact us; they are just doing it themselves. US forces' failure to go on the ground to sound out potential allies for information and ideas has resulted in a dearth of intelligence'. But the question is that why the US-led invaders are in Afghanistan in the first place? If it was because of 9/11 attacks, there was no justification because Afghanistan was neither involved in it nor planning was done there. The assault was plotted in Germany and perpetrated by the Arab youth who had studied in western universities and trained in America's aviation schools. If it was for Al Qaeda, they should have put enough boots on the ground to apprehend al Qaeda leaders and fighters. But instead they let them flee. In 2005, they had wound up a special task team they had formed to capture Osama bin Laden, dead or alive. This means that they have some other ulterior motives for the region because bin Laden may be dead already.

Americans and Europeans are harping on the tune that they are fighting in Afghanistan to secure their countries, but Afghans are paying the price with their innocent blood - the blood of their civilians, their children and their women. Last year, Mullah Omar had issued a directive to Taliban fighters to eschew actions that could cause civilian fatalities though their actions were directed mostly at military targets. The saddest part is that there are no tears in Western eyes on colossal massacre of Afghan civilians. Not a single human rights activist has so far made an issue of this civilian carnage as if Afghans are no human beings. Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch keep mum over this tragedy. Western hearts bleed on the deaths of their troops, and if Afghanistan war is becoming unpopular in the West, it is because of increase in mounting casualties and injuries of their armies. And they feel no qualms over killings of innocent people of Afghanistan, as if they are no human beings.

But then we have to live with the shenanigans of Western powers that they have arrogated to themselves the right to brand a people or state rogue, and they bully and blackmail the way they like. They did it with Saddam's Iraq after branding it a rogue state and it was all pogrom of Iraqi civilians first carried out by manipulating UN sanctions on the country. Hundreds and thousands of children had died because of shortages of baby food and medicines. They also concocted stories of weapons of mass destruction; procuring uranium from Nigeria and Saddam's contacts with al Qaeda, which could not be proved. They, however, attacked Iraq and killed countless Iraqi citizens though the United Nations Security Council had disallowed waging a war on Iraq. In fact, US-led war party should be tried for their crimes against humanity. Of course, it is not possible for the time being, but there is hope how faint it may be, because historical evidence suggests that many civilisations and empires had emerged and waned. And there would be no 'immunity' to American and Western empire, and it would collapse one day.

China circled by Chain of US anti-missile systems

Washington appears determined to surround China with US-built anti-missile systems, military scholars have observed.

According to US-based Defense News, Taiwan became the fifth global buyer of the Patriot missile defense system last year following Japan, the Republic of Korea, the United Arab Emirates and Germany.

Quite a few military experts have noted that Washington's latest proposed weapon deal with Taiwan is the key part of a US strategic encirclement of China in the East Asian region, and that the missiles could soon have a footprint that extends from Japan to the Republic of Korea and Taiwan.

Air force colonel Dai Xu, a renowned military strategist, wrote in an article released this month that "China is in a crescent-shaped ring of encirclement. The ring begins in Japan, stretches through nations in the South China Sea to India, and

By by Qin Jize and Li Xiaokun

ends in Afghanistan. Washington's deployment of anti-missile systems around China's periphery forms a crescent-shaped encirclement".

Ni Lexiong, an expert on military affairs with the Shanghai Institute of Political Science and Law, told the Guangzhou Daily yesterday, "The US anti-missile system in China's neighborhood is a replica of its strategy in Eastern Europe against Russia. The Obama administration began to plan for such a system around China after its project in Eastern Europe got suspended".

Tang Xiaosong, director of the Center of International Security and Strategy Studies with Guangdong University of Foreign Studies noted that the ring encircling China can also be expanded at any time in other directions. He said that Washington is hoping to sell India and other

Southeast Asian countries the Patriot Advanced Capability (PAC)-3 missile defense system.

Analysts say that China is closely monitoring US-India missile defense cooperation since any integration of India into the US global missile defense system, would profoundly affect China's security.

However, according to former Chinese Ambassador to India Pei Yuanying, India is unlikely to be part of any such US scheme against China.

"New Delhi needs to develop relations with the US, but it wants to be an independent international power on the international arena," he said.

Pei said it was necessary to take multiple aspects of China-US relations into consideration. "The US has followed the policy of engagement plus containment with

China for a long time and that overall policy will not change during Obama's term," he said.

Defense News quoted John Holly, Lockheed's vice president of Missile Defense Systems as saying the outlook for the missile defense market remains sound.

Pointing to missile programs in Pyongyang, Teheran, Moscow and Beijing, Holly said "the world is not a very safe world and it is incumbent upon us in the industry to provide (the Pentagon) with the best capabilities."

Beijing has frequently criticized US missile-defense development and has been making efforts to restrict missile defenses through the United Nations forums.

Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi told a UN disarmament conference in August in Geneva that "countries should neither seek for absolute strategic predominance nor develop missile-defense systems that undermine global strategic stability."

A House in the City

Where are you originally from? Where is your home? This is a Nepali question one usually confronts.

If the questioner is an elderly, he will ask: 'Mool ghar kaha ho (where's your ancestral home)?'

Then that will almost always lead to this question: 'You (your family) have a house here in Kathmandu?'

It is obsession speaking!

Most Nepali people aspire to build a house in Kathmandu more than anywhere else in the country, and it is also a benchmark with which Nepalis gauge the economic status of their fellow countrymen. It is indeed a unique cultural phenomenon, which can perhaps be better explained by a scene in Samrat Upadhyay's novel 'The Guru of Love', in which the main protagonist is hounded by his in-laws for not having a house in the city.

'You must build a house, Ramchandra babu,' they said to him at family gatherings. 'Without a house of one's own in this city, it doesn't matter what you do.'

Dream house

It is universal: A house becomes a home when we live there with our families. It is where you return for warmth and rest after a long day of work or after a long travel. It gives you a sense of belonging; it is your address, an important part of your identity. No matter what part of the world you go, people are seen putting their hard-earned money to build/buy the house they always dreamt of.

Like the quandary faced by the character in Upadhyay's book, the life of majority of Nepali people is defined by whether they have managed to build a house in Kathmandu. If they have then they are successful; if not, then they must be a failure, it really indeed doesn't matter what they do.

A Nepali can have a house in other parts of the country, but nothing adds to his or her pride (and perhaps prestige) than having a nice house in this city. Every Nepali worth his salt will, if not actually build one, at least aspire to own a house in the city. And, why not? Kathmandu is the nation's capital and largest city in the country; and has since ancient times been a center of power, culture, history, religion and economics. (And other parts of the country have just been bearing the ripple effect.) It was from here the past rulers and despots ruled the country with iron fist. Kathmandu was in fact the state itself, and like colonized subjects, people from outside the valley called it Nepal (and still many old folks outside the valley and in the far-flung regions of the country refer to the city with that name). And no matter how much you complain that the city is becoming unbearable to live in with appalling pollution level, uncollected garbage, bad traffic and lack of urban planning amidst haphazard construction and rising population (made worse with the unavailability of basic things as water and electricity), the valley's urban cosmopolitan character still has the pull on the nation's imagination.

It is a long cherished Nepali dream – to build a house in Kathmandu. After it is fulfilled, your status suddenly changes. You are no longer an outsider. You are now a Kathmandubasi, a city-folk. The village or the small town from where you came from, which you used to regularly visit during festivals when you were new to the city, seem like a distant place. You are sucked into the mythical Kathmandu khaldo. You will

rarely go back to where you came from. You will leave behind your past. Kathmandu becomes real, present and you disappear in this city.

But this all-Nepali dream - of building a house in Kathmandu - is increasingly becoming ever hard to realize.

Property boom

It was when the Maoist insurgency was at its peak a decade ago that Kathmandu's population suddenly saw a marked increase.

The violence and conflict in the rural parts of the country drove people in hordes to small towns; and from the towns to Kathmandu. A small city that actually grew from tiny villages and settlements of yore, Kathmandu never actually saw a proper architect who applied urban planning methods to build this city like most other international cities of the world. Meaning, it was not built to cope with the modern day pressure of increasing population, large number of vehicles and rapid urban expansion. With a continuous influx of people, the population of the three district valley steadily increased within a short span of time to reach the two million mark. As a result, more houses were needed to accommodate the new migrants coming to the city. At one time, two hundred thousand houses were constructed in Kathmandu each year. Small townships filled up with houses emerged where virtually few years back there were mustard or paddy fields. This put immense pressure on the city's infrastructures like road, sewer system, water supply, garbage disposal and host of others essential services. They eroded, broke down and added to the city's problem. And there was of course the immense environmental degradation resulting from economic and human pressures. Not given to many parks, recreation centers or public spaces to breathe or for children to play, Kathmandu was fast becoming ugly, an urban nightmare.

The money sent by millions of Nepalese people working mostly in low-paying, sometimes even high-risk jobs mostly in the middle-east, south-east Asia, in South Korea and Japan – called remittance in economic jargon – not only supported the country's economy hit hard by the war and years of corruption and mal-governance, but also went into purchasing land in Kathmandu. The trend soon caught up and the demand for land increased. The real estate boom started.

With the Maoists coming into the peace process, ending their decade-long insurgency in 2006, there was a feel good factor in the country's economic sectors. Banks, which flourished with the same remittance money, saw opportunities in the real estate sector and started putting in its money. It started issuing loans for micro-credit, in the form of 'home loans' to customers. Housing companies took hefty loans from banks to build more multi-storied apartment buildings, housing colonies, and luxurious gated estates to cater to the people's desire for modern, high-end accommodation. They started doing extremely well as people went for readymade houses due to difficulties in construction.

As banks started making more investment in housing business and giving home loans in easy terms, more residential colonies and apartment buildings were being constructed due to surging demand. [The readymade

houses were such a hit that they were booked even before they were finished] This created more dearth of space in Kathmandu and land prices were sky-rocketing. Land speculation was rife and brokers played a catalytic part in it. Result: A piece of land anywhere inside the ring road area of the city started costing four or even six times as much than what it used to cost couple of years ago. Those who had recently invested in land, or who had large ancestral estates in Kathmandu, were becoming millionaires overnight. Seeing people making hefty profits in few months after investing in land, more people invested in real estate. The bandwagon effect made the property business a very lucrative, money minting sector. Big businessman, industrialists, politicians, top bureaucrats, your friend's uncle, his brother – they all began plotting large tracts of land and sold them in hefty profits later. More ambitious went into building residential colonies and apartment buildings. Newspapers were awash with advertisements of new planned plots, apartment buildings, readymade houses and luxurious condos. Indian and Chinese housing and construction companies saw money in the sector and joined the fray. However, the ordinary Nepali families with average income, the group that had played an important part in the property and real-estate boom in the city in the first place, stopped being the focus of the housing companies. The up and coming middle-class, upper middle-class and neo rich clientele from NGO's, INGO's and banking sector were now their target group. Housing companies soon stopped building budget houses and turned their energy into building luxurious accommodations.

As lands became increasingly scarce in the core areas of Kathmandu valley (or just too high for a common Nepali to afford), land developers began plotting lands in semi-urbanized regions in the outskirts of the city. However, the buyers didn't mind, even if they were far from the city center. Till the place was inside the Kathmandu valley, their investments were not in vain. Because of this, what was left of arable land in Kathmandu was near about finished. Other urban centers of the country bore the ripple effect soon, leading one politician against federalism to complain that the whole country was being broken up into small plots and sold to individual buyers.

However, many 'planned plots' in the outskirts of the city – which were selling like hot-cakes – started to violate the benchmark set by the government as land developers went for maximizing their profits. As against the strict government guidelines for plotting works to make future dwelling planned and safe, the land developers didn't care about easy road access to the plotted areas, the breadth of the road leading to it or to the housing blocks and individual houses. Similarly, access to drinking water, sewerage, electricity lines, telephone services and other facilities were simply non-existing. Such was the land plotting craze in Kathmandu, there were news about developers plotting public lands and protected areas, even those near the river (in one instance, even burying them to create the effect of 'parks' to make their plots look more attractive to potential buyers). Even dangerous looking slopes in the hilly areas of the

valley were not spared, as they were leveled with big bull-dozers to begin plotting works. And, amazingly they all sold, despite the hazards of building a house on them. And all this right under the nose of the government and municipal officials. It was clear that they too getting a cut from the millions the land developers were making.

People stories

And in one of those 'planned plots' a friend of mine bought a piece of land just big enough for a small house. In his eagerness to buy land in a 'planning area', he didn't see that the breadth of the road leading to his plot was so small that only a motorcycle would hardly enter. That there were no drinking water and sewerage facility, and the electricity poles were devoid of any lines. It had cost him a fortune to buy this land. The entire savings of his family plus some additional loans from the bank.

Despite that, he said he was fortunate enough that the land didn't had sandy base, like the one recently purchased by one of his friend. He said he was also very lucky than another man he knew who had mistakenly purchased a small house built just below a High-tension power line!

There were other consultations too. As the place was located at a good altitude, one had a beautiful view of the valley. Though it was a little far from the city, the place was not fully infested with houses like in the core areas of Kathmandu. There were still some empty spaces. One could see the hills nearby, trees and get an unobstructed view of the sky and landscape for miles without random buildings or electricity wires in sight.

At the Swayambhunath Stupa on the top of a hillock overlooking the city, the same friend said in a sarcastic tone, 'Look at the sheer number of houses huddled together in this city. They look like matchboxes to me, placed one against the other. So unplanned!'

Taking in the entire city at a glance, all that can be seen are houses stretched from one point to other. Only few landmarks like Singh Durbar and Dharahara, and few tall commercial and apartment building stand out amidst the sea of houses. There are no high rises. You don't see wide thoroughfares, roads; there are no green patches to speak of, no big public buildings, bridges, complexes or stadiums. Everything seems to be consumed by the huge mass of houses. Kathmandu looked simply exhausted, tired, and unable to breathe. Maybe even on its way towards decay, becoming uninhabitable.

What if a big earthquake as powerful as that in Haiti hits Kathmandu? I read that more than half the city will be destroyed and millions will die, the friend said again.

He was about to continue on the tirade, but again saw no use of complaining and grew silent. The evening was giving way to night. And in the twilight hours, the lights of tall hoarding boards, big buildings and houses slowly started blinking. The noise, rush and craziness of the city didn't reach here. Tourists and local visitors alike were looking at the bowl-shaped city surrounded by mountains. They were pointing at its various landmarks while talking among themselves.

'But no matter what, I have to build a house in this city,' my friend continued, 'this is my city, I can't go anywhere else. And, I always wished for a house in Kathmandu.'

~ News ~

Tyamke Hill to become tourism spot

People here are determined that there is a great potential of Tyamke hill, located at the border between Khotang and Bhojpur districts with an altitude of 3,200 meters above sea level, to become a tourism spot.

Civil society of Khotang and Bhojpur districts have been working to make it a tourism spot as movement to it was difficult for lack of physical infrastructure.

A joint Tyamke Conservation Committee of Ratanchha, Khidima, Chyandanda VDCs of Khotang has been constituted to develop Tyamke as a tourism spot, said Committee Chairman Sitaram Rai.

Likewise, a Tyamke festival is to be organised in 2011 to attract hundreds of thousands of internal and external tourists to develop it to increase tourist arrival, said Rai.

A Tyamke Festival Main Organizing Committee has been constituted jointly of Khotang and Bhojpur to hold the Tyamke hill festival, which now lacks enough infrastructure of development.

A seven-member main organizing committee has been constituted under the conensorship of Nandamani Rai of Bhojpur and works are moved ahead, said Festival Main Organizing Committee Vice Chairman Sitaram Rai.

The Ministry of Tourism has given financial grant of Rs. 500,000 for developing the hill as tourism spot.

The hill has been touched by Ratanchha, Khidima and Banjhe Chyandanda VDCs of Khotang and Nagi (Dilpa), Khawa and Lekharka VDCs of Bhojpur.

Tourists are lured to the sceneries that could be viewed from here of the Mt. Everest and surrounding peaks as well as the towns of the Terai.

Locals through the place from mid-February to mid-April to see the beautiful views of sunrise from here.

Political parties have also seen the possibility that it will contribute to the development of the whole country if Tyamke beautified by the rhododendrons, chimal and michelia champaka is made a tourism spot.

Closer cooperation between Nepal and UK

British MPs have called for closer cooperation between Nepal and UK in areas of mutual interest.

Addressing a function organised by the Nepal People Contact Coordination Committee (NPCC) UK in London on Sunday in honor of the newly appointed Nepali ambassador to UK, Labour MP for Ealing North, Stephen Pound, recalled he did not regret for voting against the gov't's motion on Gurkha issue.

In a vote on right to settlement to all ex-Gurkhas in the House of Commons last year, Mr Pound had crossed the floor and voted in favour of right to settlement for Gurkhas against his own party's decision. Mr Pound, who was a junior minister at the time lost his post after his vote. 'You destroyed my political career, but how could I vote against the Gurkhas?' he said.

Saying that Nepalese community in the UK is hard-working, law-abiding and family-oriented, Mr Pound said they should integrate into the British society, but not assimilate. 'Don't ever lose your unique quality that makes you Nepali. There are no other people on earth like you,' he added.

Speaking on the occasion, Labour MP from Ealing Southall, Virendra Sharma, recalled his recent visit to Nepal as part of the British parliament's International Development Select Committee delegation. Mr Sharma said there were many areas where UK and Nepal could work together.

Addressing the function, Nepali ambassador to the UK, Dr Suresh Chandra Chalise, said nearly two centuries old bilateral relations between Nepal and UK had been excellent on fronts. Saying that thousands of Gurkhas had sacrificed their lives in the Second World War, Dr Chalise appreciated the support and assistance extended by the UK government in development endeavours of Nepal. 'We must work very closely to deal with trans-national issues like fighting terrorist, climate change and controlling diseases,' said Dr Chalise adding, 'Nepal looked for support from the international community to protect Himalayan environment and ecology.'

As a gesture of goodwill, ambassador Chalise offered all the distinguished guests Nepali cap and khada and also invited them to visit Nepal on the occasion of Nepal Tourism Year 2011.

A minute-long silence was observed in memory of Nepal's democratic fighters and photo of late B P Koirala was garlanded at the start of the program.

बालबालिकालाई पढ्न पठाऔं, उनीहरूको सुख भविष्यलाई सुनिश्चित गरौं ।



नेपाल सरकार

सूचना तथा सञ्चार मन्त्रालय

सूचना विभाग



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International :

Haiti: A Victim of Naked Imperialism (2)

By Ghali Hassan

The estimated death toll from the January earthquake remains at over 230,000, with many more wounded and some two million left homeless. Around three million Haitians – more than a third of the country's population – have been affected by the earthquake. Some 500,000 people will be moved to camps outside the capital of Port-au-Prince.

The UN estimates that at least two million Haitians need immediate food assistance and shelter. The UN says it will need enough food to feed some two million people for at least fifteen days. Distribution of food aid has been limited. The World Food Program (WFP) had reached about 200,000 in Port-au-Prince and 113,000 in other areas. Hundreds of thousands of Haitians are still in need of food and shelters. Displaced Haitians living in tent cities around the capital Port-au-Prince say they have nothing to eat. Media reports reveal dire shortages of food and medical supplies amidst fears the conditions will encourage the outbreak of preventable diseases. Meanwhile, Brazilian forces with the UN mission to Haiti (MINUSTAH) fired tear gas at desperate Haitians crowding a relief centre with scarce food aid.

Bill Quigley of the Centre for Constitutional Rights, who was in Haiti recently, said: "You can walk down many of the streets of Port-au-Prince and see absolutely no evidence that the world community has helped Haiti. Twenty-three days after the earthquake jolted Haiti and killed over 200,000 people, as many as a million people have still not received any international food assistance. Over a million people are displaced. About 10,000 families are in tents, the rest are living under sheets, blankets and tarps [...] Haiti and the United Nations estimate 250,000 children under the age of 7 are living in temporary housing. Most need vaccinations".

The U.S. response to the earthquake disaster has been another case of American hypocrisy. A few hours after the earthquake struck Haiti, the right-wing think-tank American Heritage Foundation declared: "Amidst the Suffering, Crisis in Haiti Offers Opportunities to the U.S. In addition to providing immediate humanitarian assistance, the U.S. response to the tragic earthquake in Haiti earthquake offers opportunities to re-shape Haiti's long-dysfunctional government and economy as well as to improve the image of the United States in the region". In other words, the earthquake disaster is an opportunity for the U.S. ruling elites to reshape Haiti in the way they want to see Haiti, as an impoverished nation with labour costs still lower than those in Bangladesh. James Robbins, a special envoy to Haiti under President Bill Clinton, suggested "breaking up or at least reorganizing the government-controlled telephone monopoly. The same goes with the Education Ministry, the electric company, the Health Ministry and the courts".

It is important to remember that Haiti remains an American plantation and a giant sweatshop. Haitians have been exploited to the point of starvation to produce products for the U.S. market. As reporter John Pilger writes: "When I was last in Haiti, I watched very young girls stooped in front of whirring, hissing, binding machines at the Port-au-Prince Superior Baseball Plant. Many had swollen eyes and lacerated arms. I produced a camera and was thrown out. Haiti is where America makes the equipment for its hallowed national game, for next to nothing. Haiti is where Walt Disney contractors make Mickey Mouse pyjamas, for next to nothing. The U.S. controls Haiti's sugar, bauxite and sisal. Rice-growing was replaced by imported American rice, [destroying domestic rice farming], driving people into the cities and towns

and jerry-built housing. Year after year, Haiti was invaded by U.S. marines, infamous for atrocities that have been their specialty from the Philippines to Afghanistan". American ruling elites think they own Haiti. They see Haiti as part of U.S. "sphere of influence" and must remain oppressed and poor.

The U.S. government response to the earthquake disaster was to send in the U.S. Marines, the Army's 82nd Airborne Division, and other military forces to occupy the country for the fourth time since 1915, using so-called "security" as the pretext to justify an outright illegal invasion of a defenceless and traumatised nation. The military occupation of Haiti is an illegal military occupation and cannot be justified by natural disaster and security. It is an assault on the nation's national sovereignty. Moreover, the full-scale U.S. naval blockade is designed to prevent Haitian refugees from reaching U.S. shores. It makes the U.S. argument of "providing aid" to Haiti ring hollow.

The media response to the disaster in Haiti is normal and consistent with Western media role in perpetuating Western propaganda. In the case of Haiti, the media overlooked the man-made disasters and the struggle of the people of Haiti against ongoing Western interference in their nation's affairs. Instead, Haitians are portrayed by the media only from the side they did not cause, and as if they are responsible for the situation they are in today. Demonising Haitians and painting Haiti as a tinderbox ready to explode is an outright racism and part of Western imperialism. The Western cliché of "we are good-hearted and they [Haitians] are looters and criminals" is devoid of moral responsibility and truthfulness. As always, the Zionist-controlled BBC takes the credit. "Anything will do as a weapon: a hacksaw, a stick, and of course all the machetes and guns that you cannot see. Patience is running out and all the ingredients for unrest now exist: a whole city of destitute people hoping for help, and at the same time you have a substantial criminal element and a history of violence. None of this bodes well for Haiti. If the anarchy spreads, the US troops may soon find themselves patrolling the streets in what will look like a full-scale military operation", wrote the BBC's most bigoted and warring journalist, Matt Frei (BBC News, 19 January 2010). Frei is a chronic liar and lacks moral principles to expose his own country's (Britain) criminal role in perpetuating and aiding violence around the world.

Natural disasters have become one of the major pretexts for U.S. military invasions and for U.S. capitalist corporations to move in to profit from the disasters in what is described as "Disaster Capitalism". In other words, disasters provide the opportunity to impose Western neoliberal policies and spread poverty. It is important to remember that in 2008, Myanmar (Burma) – devastated by Cyclone Nargis – refused to allow the Western military to infringe on its sovereignty disguised as "humanitarian aid". The Myanmar regime rightly accused Washington and its Western allies of using the disaster as a pretext to seize the geographically important and resources-rich nation. The "humanitarianism" pretext failed because Myanmar was not a defenceless nation and therefore did not qualify for Western "humanitarian" invasion. In 2003, Iraq did qualify, and was deliberately destroyed in the most barbaric fashion by the Anglo-American fascist forces.

The U.S. military occupation of Haiti's main airport (Toussaint L'Ouverture Airport) in Port-au-Prince hampered serious humanitarian traffic

and needlessly caused the death of thousands of people trapped beneath the rubble of collapsed buildings in Port-au-Prince and Léogane. Only a few search and rescue teams from Cuba, Iceland, Venezuela and China were able to move swiftly to provide aid to the people of Haiti and entered Haiti before the occupation of the airport and the U.S. decision to re-route relief flights to the Dominican Republic. Indeed, more than 400 Cuban doctors and healthcare professional are working in 227 of Haiti's 337 communes, offering free health services to the Haitian people. Assistance from these and other small nations remains underreported in Western media.

A large number of rescue organizations and charities accuse the U.S. military of denying them landing rights to provide necessary medicines, food and water to the millions of Haitians stricken, injured and homeless. Haiti's capital "looks more like the Green Zone in Baghdad than a centre for aid distribution", reported Al-Jazeera on 17 January 2010 from Port-au-Prince. "These weapons they bring, they are instruments of death. We don't want them. We don't need them. We are a traumatized people. What we want from the international community is technical help. Action, not words", an unidentified Haitian citizen told Al-Jazeera.

The Geneva-based charity Médecins Sans Frontières criticised the U.S. takeover of Haiti's main airport, saying hundreds of lives were being put at risk as planes carrying vital medical supplies were being turned away by American air traffic controllers. The Spanish aid group, Intervención, Ayuda y Emergencias, in Port-au-Prince, denounced the U.S. militarisation of the earthquake. The UN World Food Programme (UNWFP) plane carrying food, medicine and water for three days was blocked from landing because the U.S. military gave priority to flights ferrying U.S. troops and equipment and evacuating Americans living in Haiti.

The label "humanitarian" was used even when the U.S. and British governments were murdering innocent civilians in Iraq and Afghanistan. Haiti's earthquake is another example of a disaster as an opportunity for Western governments to claim the moral high ground. The corporate media concentration on rescued individuals by Western-based charities and NGOs is nothing more than PR designed to mislead the public at home.

To accept Western "humanitarian aid" as valid is to be deluded to the point of mental incapacity. Western aid in time of disaster has become a propaganda instrument. While most Western governments and corporate media are using the Haiti earthquake disaster to claim the moral high ground, they are supporting Israel's murderous regime besieging and terrorising 1.5 million Palestinians in Gaza. In addition, during the Israeli criminal attack on Gaza last year when more than 1,400 innocent Palestinians (a third of them children) were viciously and brutally murdered by Israeli forces, most Western governments not only turned a blind eye, they applauded Israel's "right to defend itself" against a defenceless population. The Zionist propaganda organ, the BBC, refused to air an appeal by the Disasters Emergency Committee to aid the Palestinians because it will offend Israel.

Finally, the appointment of former U.S. presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush to head the fundraising "efforts" in Haiti is an insult to human morality. Both Clinton and Bush played their parts in Haiti's man-made disasters. How can they be trusted to help black Haitians? Both war criminals

were responsible for the premeditated murder of more than 2 million innocent Iraqi men, women and children. Clinton, in particular was responsible for the death of more than 500,000 Iraqi children under the age of five, callously justified by his administration as "a price that was worth it". In addition, Clinton and Bush were responsible for the wanton destruction of the nations of Iraq, Afghanistan and Yugoslavia. Their appointment to help earthquake-stricken Haiti is mind-boggling.

The January earthquake is just the latest of natural disasters compounded and worsened by man-made disasters to devastate Haiti. While the people of Haiti showed resilience, courage and a capacity to survive, ongoing Western interference in Haiti's affairs undermines Haiti's ability to recover from the earthquake disaster.

The situation in Haiti today is the result of centuries of imperialist domination, isolation, occupation and economic strangulation by the U.S. and France. "Haiti is a net product of the colonial, capitalist and imperialist system imposed on the world. Haiti's slavery and subsequent poverty were imposed from abroad", writes former Cuban President, Fidel Castro. In 2008, Haiti's total foreign debt was \$1.4 billion, or 40% of its GNP. In 2009, Haiti debt service payments to its creditors amounted to \$50.9 million. These payments are hindering Haiti's ability to build an adequate education system, healthcare services, and vital infrastructure. This odious debt is the primary factor in Haiti's ongoing poverty.

"It is uncontested that poverty is the main cause of the horrific death toll: the product of teeming shacks and the absence of health and public infrastructure. But Haiti's poverty is treated as some baffling quirk of history or culture, when in reality it is the direct consequence of a uniquely brutal relationship with the outside world – notably the US, France and Britain – stretching back centuries", writes Seumas Milne (Guardian.co.uk, 20 January, 2010).

Thirty years ago, Haiti was self-sufficient in staple rice and exported surplus rice and sugar. Today, Haiti is not only importing all of its rice and sugar, but unable to feed its people. The U.S. uses Haiti as a dumping ground for cheap U.S. subsidised agricultural products, which has destroyed Haiti's agriculture and forced its farmers into destitution. According to a 2008 study by UNWFP, about 75% of Haiti's population (4.5 million people) lives on less than \$2 per day, and 56% live on less than \$1 per day. In other words, the majority of the Haitian people (80%) live in abject poverty.

"The collapse of the Haitian nation resides at the feet of France and America, especially. These two nations betrayed, failed, and destroyed the dream that was Haiti: crushed to dust in an effort to destroy the flower of freedom and the seed of justice [...] The sudden quake has come in the aftermath of summers of hate. In many ways the quake has been less destructive than the hate", writes Professor Sir Hilary Beckles, principal of the Cave Hill campus of the University of the West Indies.

In a time of desperation, Haiti needs all the aid it can get. The first action must start with the abolition of Haiti's multi-billion dollar odious debt. Haiti is in need of grants to build its healthcare services, its education and its civilian infrastructure.

The capability of the people of Haiti to surmount the aftermath of natural disasters and build their nation can only be strengthened by the withdrawal of U.S. and other foreign military forces from Haiti. Support to the people of Haiti must include opposing Western governments' use of humanitarian aid in natural disasters as a pretext to enforce U.S. imperialist domination of the region.

~ News ~

Strike reverberates NATO

Amid growing European discontent over the war in Afghanistan, the head of United States and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces apologized on Monday for an air strike that killed at least 27 civilians in the central part of the country on Sunday.



Sunday's attack consisted of a US helicopter firing on several vehicles as they traveled towards Kandahar, the largest city in southern Afghanistan.

The political implications of the attack, which, according to some reports was carried out by helicopter-borne US Special Operations Forces (SOF), could be serious, not just in Afghanistan itself but also in Europe and Canada, where electorates have become increasingly opposed to their militaries' involvement in the war.

This is especially true in the Netherlands, whose government collapsed on Saturday amid negotiations on whether to keep troops in Afghanistan. The air strike took place in a district controlled by the Dutch army, whose role, if any, in the attack has yet to be clarified.

The attack was carried out on the apparently mistaken belief that a convoy of vehicles was transporting Taliban fighters toward eastern Helmand province, where US and allied forces have launched a major offensive. That it took place in an area where Dutch forces are concentrated is likely to strengthen those factions in the Netherlands opposing any extension in The Hague's participation in the war beyond August.

The Dutch troops have been central in the war effort, despite their low numbers. The Dutch troop contribution to the Afghanistan mission is one of the highest per capita - has been subject to a higher casualty rate than other coalition forces, including the US, because of its troop postings in the dangerous southern province of Oruzgan.

This is the most lethal incident in which civilians were killed by US-led forces since last September, when a German-ordered air strike on fuel tankers hijacked by the Taliban killed 140 people, the majority of whom were civilians. The strike at the weekend came despite the implementation of stricter rules of engagement regarding strikes ordered by McChrystal last summer when he took command of NATO/ISAF. ISAF officials insisted on Monday that the attack is being investigated to determine whether it violated those rules of engagement.

Mainland is Taiwan's biggest trade partner

Taiwan leader Ma Ying-jeou said Monday that the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) with the mainland is aimed to help Taiwanese people to do business and boost the island's competitiveness.

Ma made the remarks in Taoyuan, a northwestern county of the island, at a gathering to mark the Chinese Spring Festival, or Lunar New Year.

The ECFA is a wide-ranging economic pact for further normalizing trade and investment ties across the Taiwan Strait, which Ma hopes to sign with the mainland this year to help fuel Taiwan's economic revival.

Tariff reduction would promote the sales of goods from Taiwan to the mainland, which will benefit both the Taiwanese businesses and the foreign-funded businesses in Taiwan, Ma said.

This will help Taiwan to introduce more foreign investment and grant the island an opportunity to become a hub of economy and trade in the Asia-Pacific region, he said.

As the mainland is Taiwan's biggest trade partner, the pact will certainly do more good than harm, Ma said.

Ma also attended an ancestor worship ceremony in Majiazhuang, Miaoli County on Monday and said that the ancestors of him and local residents moved from Fufengqiang, northwest China's Shaanxi Province, to the island some 2,000 years ago.

He also spoke optimistically of the economy situation and expected an economic growth of 4 percent in Taiwan this year.

(Xinhua)

China's rural road length hits 3.3 million kilometers

The total length of China's rural roads had reached 3.3 million kilometers by the end of 2009, connecting 99.4 percent of towns and villages, a transportation official said here Sunday.

Some 381,000 kilometers of roads were built in China in the past year, far exceeding the annual target of 300,000 kilometers, China's Vice Minister for Transport, Feng Zhenglin, said at a conference.

By the end of 2009, residents at 35,000 towns and 553,000 villages in China's rural areas were able to take buses to travel, representing 98 percent and 87.8 percent of China's towns and villages, respectively, according to Feng.

Li Shenglin, Minister of Transport, vowed at the conference to boost rural passenger transportation.

Feng also vowed to improve the highway network that connects towns and villages this year and in the country's 12th Five Year Plan which starts in 2011.

(Xinhua)

Along A Hidden Trail Bandipur



Bandipur, situated at an altitude of 1030 meters in the Western hills of Tanahu district, is an ancient Newari town that used to be the main trading center from the late 18th century to recent times before being replaced by Damauli which later became the district headquarters. Bandipur is a mere three and a half hours drive from Kathmandu along the

returning back into time and witnessing the serenity and mellowness of a bygone era. Bandipur's rich cultural past still remains intact, and along with it, offers a magnificent natural vista as well. The region is also well known for its many mystical caves. Doubtless, Bandipur is a beautiful destination with an otherworldly exoticism capable of mesmerizing all, from historical researchers to cultural

right opportunity, he took out his weapon and captured the king eventually taking command of the district. From this story we can surmise that Tanahu and Bandipur used to be powerful kingdoms during historical times.

Bandipur originally was a Magar settlement during the 1800's. The third largest ethnic group in Nepal, the Magars still reside in villages like Ramkot and are scattered around the surrounding hills of Bandipur. It was only during late 18th century that Newars from the Kathmandu valley, especially Bhaktapur, started migrating to Bandipur. They brought along with them their cultural heritage and architecture, which basically has remained unchanged to this day. Historians point out various reasons for Bandipur becoming a popular destination for the Newar migrants back then. Firstly, it is surmised that after the invasion of Kathmandu valley by King Prithivi Narayan Shah, many Newar inhabitants migrated to other places, one of which was Bandipur. Since Bandipur had similar altitude and similar climatic conditions with that of the valley and was safe from the dangers of malarial epidemic, many migrating Newars might have found it appropriate to settle in Bandipur. Secondly, Newars, also well known for their business skills, probably wanted to cash in on the trading route along the Marsyangadi valley to Tibet and downwards towards India. With the influx of new inhabitants, Bandipur became a busy trading center in no time. During the 9th century, Bandipur was popular among merchants from Tibet and the northern plains.

Later, the town started losing its value as malaria was eradicated from the Terai and many settlers moved back to the lower plains. The district headquarters was also moved from Bandipur to Damauli. The construction of the Kathmandu-Pokhara Highway bypassed the town, which became another reason for the place falling into a state of seclusion.

According to historians, King Mukunda Sen of Palpa unified much of western Nepal and his kingdom was divided among his four sons after his death. Tanahu was then ruled over by Bhringgu Sen and his descendants until King Prithivi Narayan Shah conquered the place in the process of unification of modern Nepal. The alleged stories passed through generations claim that Prithivi Narayan Shah took control of Tanahu by conspiring against their king. He challenged the King of Tanahu for a duel without weapons while hiding his own weapon under the sand. Later, seeing the

culture in Bandipur that still remains in its purest form today. One can also see many examples of Newari art and architecture in the temples and buildings of the town. Besides this, Bandipur also has numerous natural attractions including various caves, beautiful forests, hilltops, landscapes and a panoramic view that captivates the hearts and souls of all visitors.



cave and has yet to be fully explored.

Bandipur being a hilltop settlement is well suited for mountain-viewing too. On a clear winter day the mountains sparkle bright with a white and yellowish hue against the blue backdrop of the sky. Tudhikhel,

Himal and Kanjiroba Himal to the west. Make sure of being there at the right time of the year and you'll be treated to a breathtaking view of the Himalayan range that is simply awesome.

The other enticing thing about Bandipur is its numerous small hiking trails leading to beautiful landscapes, forests and villages. A four-hour walk to the Magar village, Ramkot, gives you a typical overview of life of the Magar community. You can continue this hike up to Chapdi Barahi and to the popular Narayan Temple with its fishponds; the distance, about an hour from Ramkot. Another popular hiking route is a two hour hike to Mukundeshawori, a place dedicated to the goddess who is believed to have given King Mukunda Sen immense power and strength. The locals, and especially the Magars, believe the temple to be full of occult power. Another short hike from Bandipur also takes you to Bahun Bhanjyang past Raniban.

Bandipur has recently been recognized as a potential tourism spot. The place is the perfect blend of awe-inspiring nature and untainted culture. As it is



Kathmandu-Pokhara highway, eight kilometers of which is graveled from Dumre onwards. You can also follow a popular two hours foot trail from Dumre bazaar to get there. The town is 143 kilometers from Kathmandu

enthusiasts, nature lovers to adventurous explorers.

The Place That Was

Bandipur was the headquarter of Tanahu district for much of its history.



and 73 kilometers from Pokhara.

Home to the Largest Caves

If you are a traveler in a hurry, you'd be tempted to pack your bags and head towards Pokhara for the ultimate vacation. And, even if you are not, chances are that you might still choose Pokhara for a quiet retreat. Either way, you'll be missing the hidden trail that leads to the small and serene paradise of Bandipur. With cobbled, moderately steep paved streets and traditional Newari styled houses, Bandipur is an interesting destination, one that gives you the feel of

returning back into time and witnessing the serenity and mellowness of a bygone era. Bandipur's rich cultural past still remains intact, and along with it, offers a magnificent natural vista as well. The region is also well known for its many mystical caves. Doubtless, Bandipur is a beautiful destination with an otherworldly exoticism capable of mesmerizing all, from historical researchers to cultural

The Place That Is...

Today, the town still carries the glory of yesteryears as its relative isolation has contributed in keeping the originality of the place intact. You can experience the essence of traditional Newari



The houses are structured in traditional Newari design. The maintenance of the old houses is done with such meticulous detail and exactitude that their authenticity is not lost. The various shrines like Khadga Devi temple, Bindebasini temple and the Maha Laxmi temple, located in and around the town, also reflect and match the architecture of the Malla era. Despite being small, Bandipur projects the beauty of emblematical Newari art and architecture. The people still follow traditional norms of Nepali culture like "Atithiti Devo Bhava" ("Guests are Gods") and are extremely hospitable to guests. You can stay in numerous guesthouses in the town and be assured of receiving traditional Newari hospitality.

Bandipur is blessed by nature and the two most notable caves found there are Swargadwari and Siddha Caves. Swargadwari Cave, also known as Paatali Dwar, is a two-hour hike from the main town. The cave is considered to be the gateway to heaven hence it is named as Swargadwari (doorway to heaven). Similarly, Siddha Cave, which is the largest cave in Nepal and has even been presumed to be the largest cave in Asia, is a newly discovered

a flat field on the northern end of the town, the historical fort of Mukundeshawori and the Gurunche Hill are places famed for a panoramic view that encompasses nearly 900 Km of the delightful Himalayan range.



The mountains that can be viewed from Bandipur extend from Jugal Himal in the east to Langtang Himal, Ganesh Himal, Gorkha Himal, Manaslu Himal, Himchuli Himal, Buddha Himal, Annapurna Himal, Dhaulagiri

opening up rapidly to embrace the outer world, it would be good idea for travel enthusiasts to get their gears ready to experience the natural aura and traditional mysticism of this ancient city before it is too late.

