

New Delhi prompting PM to stick to power



flexibility towards the Maoists to fix the things.

However, India, which has long been dictating the political pattern of Nepal, is bent to prolong the tenure of the government to continue to capitalize upon the status quo.

It should not come as a surprise since it is the Indian establishment which had largely designed the fundamentals of the current wobbly dispensation. And, the very move was a clear attempt of New Delhi to tighten its noose on their bete noires, the Maoists.

PM Nepal exhibited an unnaturally high spirit to cling onto power after meeting with his Indian counterpart Manmohan Singh on the sideline of the SAARC Summit, held recently in Thimpu.

This attests to the fact that Singh successfully injected required dose of vigor into the psyche of the embattled Nepal to downplay the demand of his resignation.

In fact, Foreign Minister Sujata Koirala herself highlighted the strong blessings of India on the present government by saying the southern neighbour simply does not want the change of guard in Nepal.

PM Nepal seems to have frantically hardened his stubbornness to stick to power with India reasserting its support to the current government.

He ventured into abusing the business community for financially assisting the Maoists when it asked the PM to pave the way for consensus after the withdrawal of the general strike.

Nevertheless, the pressure exerted on the PM for his resignation is getting more intense.

Ten parties representing in the constituent assembly have also lately demanded the resignation of the Prime Minister to pave the way for a new national consensus government.

Even UML chairman Jhala Nath Khanal along with a huge number of the party leaders are not in favour of the continuation of the present government.

The Maoists have said that they are willing to discuss about viable alternative for the leadership of the new consensus government.

This was in response to the Prime Minister's remarks that he was ready to quit for any candidate except the Maoist chairman Puspa Kamal Dahal.

But, Prime Minister Nepal is not genuinely willing to comply with the proposition of a new consensus government.

It is crystal clear that India is the external factor that has prompted the PM not to stop himself from reveling in the power and privileges.

So, what is the internal reason that continues to motivate the Prime Minister to cling to the post despite his gross failure to take the peace process forward?

The UML central committee in

which the K.P. Oli faction enjoys majority is against the Prime Minister's resignation.

This faction, who loathes at the Maoists, is also engaging itself in swaying the Nepali Congress (NC) party, a prime component of the current coalition.

But, some observers believe that the India factor is playing far more crucial role to buoy up the shaky coalition.

India was behind the split of the Madhesi Janadhikar Forum (MJF) when the party initially opposed to join the Nepal-led government.

Later, a divided faction of the MJF led by Bijaya Kumar Gachchhedhar joined the government under the aegis of New Delhi.

This fact clearly explains that the hawks of New Delhi are egging Nepal on to discard the growing pressure to step down to resolve the worsening political crisis.

WM Correspondent

Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal is facing both domestic and international pressure to resign after the main opposition UCPN (Maoist) nullified its indefinite nationwide

general strikes, which was launched to replace the current government with a new one of consensus.

As far as international community goes, The United States and the European Union told the PM to exhibit

Maoists more concerned on constitution, peace process

WM Correspondent

Main opposition UCPN (Maoist) has said that the party is more seriously focused on the cardinal issues of constitution writing and peace process rather than the leadership of a national unity government.

This came at a time when the party has been claiming that the new government must be formed under its

leadership to propel the country towards the path of a sustainable peace.

Maoist chairman Puspa Kamal Dahal, while speaking at an interaction program with intellectuals and professionals held in the capital on Wednesday, said, "Our party is ready to complete the integration and rehabilitation of [Cont. on page 6]

Consensus: Only option to rescue nation

WM Correspondent

Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal has initiated consultations for the extension of constituent assembly (CA) tenure as the possibility of the promulgation of the new constitution by the set deadline of May 28 has completely smashed.

During the meeting with president Dr Ram Baran Yadav, the Prime Minister admitted that the extension of CA term is the only remaining option. The president is said to have told Nepal to begin proceedings for the amendment of the Interim Constitution for the extension of CA tenure by forging consensus.

In case the CA tenure is not extended, the likelihood of the onset of the presidential rule, which may invite more serious confrontation, cannot be overlooked.

Nepali Congress (NC) and CPN (UML), two major components of the current coalition, have already



proposed for the extension of CA but the UCPN (Maoist) wants the resignation of the Prime Minister as a precondition to move ahead with any further political process.

It is anticipated that the Maoists will be ready to succumb to the proposition of the two parties as they command the largest number of seats in the CA.

It would also be gullibility to expect the Maoists to comply with the term extension without them becoming a part of power equation.

The former rebels have of late displayed flexibility and this indicates at the space for dialogue and consensus.

Maoist chairman Puspa Kamal

Dahal had said in a recent interaction organised by the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) that the time frame fixed for the constitution writing might have been shorter than required.

This seemingly accommodative opinion aired by Dahal infers that the Maoists are not totally averse to the idea of extending the tenure of the CA.

The politics of consensus, that started to go downhill right after the elections to CA [Cont. on page 6]

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Miscalculation aborts Maoist's movement

WM correspondent

Main opposition UCPN (Maoist) has assessed that their venture into indefinite nationwide strike a wrong

to numerically swell the agitation proved meaningless.

The former rebels had calculated that the mobilization of some 600,000



move as it could not bring about desired results.

The basic tenet of the stir, which crippled the entire country for six consecutive days, was to topple the incumbent coalition. However, the Maoist leadership discontinued its agitation prematurely amid intense national and international pressure.

This left the committed party cadres disheartened and the exodus of a large number of the rural folk into the capital

people would be sufficient to terminate the Madhav Kumar Nepal-led government.

But, the size of the mass could not be as big as they had estimated although there was a presence of over 500,000 people in the May Day mass meet.

The party also failed to propel the local people of the Kathmandu valley especially the Newar community to reinforce its [Cont. on page 6]

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Editor : Prem Kumar Pant

Sub-Editor : Nirjal Dhungana

Prithvi Man Shrestha

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weeklymirror@gmail.com

Editorial

Ward off looming catastrophe

It would be sheer gullibility to construe the political confrontation that the country is reeling under as just a desire of the main opposition as well as the largest party, UCPN (Maoist), to topple the current coalition.

In fact, it is, to some extent, a result of the 22 political parties in government ganging up against the largest party in parliament and sidelining it.

The major factors that have decisively further exacerbated the political crisis include pathetic handling of post conflict politics, lust for power, abortion of political consensus and the blatant disrespect of legitimate needs and aspirations of a majority of Nepali people.

The wobbly ruling coalition is not even scantily bothered about creating an atmosphere to politically engage the largest single party in the Constituent Assembly (CA).

Their continuous grumbling against the opposition party's move to cling onto power at any cost cannot be anticipated to produce desirable results.

The Madhav-Kumar-Nepal led government is not unaware of the fact that the logical accomplishment of both writing a new constitution and the peace process demands active involvement of the UCPN (Maoist) which commands the largest 40 percent seats in the CA.

However, it is making ludicrous and foolhardy attempts to prolong its tenure in government by seeking support from external elements at the expense of urgent national agendas. From every stand point, the incumbent dispensation, largely designed by the mandarins of New Delhi to harass their bete noires in Nepal, the Maoists, is not the desire of Nepali people. So, not surprisingly, it has failed to make any concrete steps towards meeting the cardinal need and expectation of

Nepali people which is the restoration of peace. The demand of the agitating parliamentary opposition party to replace the government with a new consensus government to facilitate the peace process cannot be termed absolutely irrational.

Despite their certain wayward tendencies, the Maoists have given indications that they are not averse to adapting parliamentary practices.

The opposition leader's move to approach Supreme Court for settling dissent over the government's appointment of constitutional bodies' officials indicates democratic sense of honouring the Rule of Law like in all democratic dispensations.

Top of all, the decision on the part of UCPN (Maoist) to withdraw the indefinite nationwide general strike, albeit on any ground, also demonstrates its willingness to participate in democratic pursuits.

The non-Maoist parties must look upon these gestures as an avenue to again collaborate with the Maoists at least to prevent the country from plunging into the vortex of a political catastrophe.

It also behooves upon the Maoists to realize that the large number of long suffering people favoured them during the CA polls with the firm hope that they would genuinely work for the greater good of the country.

I/NGOs in Nepal: Agent of social change?

By Hari Prasad Shrestha

During 80s, after completion of my training, an Italian town club proposed me to run a social welfare project in Nepal. I was not much familiar with these activities and I showed my inability for the proposal. But my some colleagues of other developing countries accepted the scheme to initiate projects in their countries. By that time, there was handful of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Nepal. Their numbers were below two hundred and its importance was not known in substantial intensity. Later, after becoming familiar with the importance of NGOs and social service, I realized my mistake and applied for the United Nations Volunteers to serve in Sierra Leone, Africa.

By that time, one of the severe problems in Sierra Leone was the high prices of medicines, because of monopoly of certain politically protected drug importers. And the free medicines supplied by the UNDP/UNFPA were controlled and misused by some of the local influential authorities. General people were in position to give up their life due to unavailability of free and cheap medicines. United Nations sent me there to control and manage free distribution of medicines for the child and mother of Sierra Leone. I did well during my tenure there and it gave me great satisfaction. The United Nations and the local authorities in Sierra Leone wanted to extend my tenure, but the government of Nepal did not approve extension of my leave as I was government employee in Nepal.

The term "Non-Governmental Organization" was popularized by the United Nations Charter (Chapter 10, Article 71), which gives a consultative role to organizations that are not part of the structure of government. An International NGO was broadly defined by the UN Economic and Social Commission (ECOSOC) as "any international organization that is not founded by an international treaty."

NGOs have a widespread publicity over the last 15 years in Nepal. And these organizations could play a complimentary role in the support of better governance. A favorable policy pursued by the government of Nepal has increasingly been linked to simplification of the legal instruments for making NGOs responsible and committed to the canons of good governance. As a result of it, NGOs are mushrooming in Nepal. The current number of NGOs in Nepal is around 37,000 as compared to 220 in 1990. In addition, around 200 international NGOs (INGOs) are also working in Nepal. The role of these INGOs has been increasing both in number and volume of activities such as health and community development, child welfare activities, education, water and sanitation, agriculture development, women empowerment, disabled services, including eye care and dental services, etc.

The social welfare service in Nepal is very mature as the society itself. The century old social entities such as Guthi (trust), parma (labour exchange system), dhukur (saving/credit), etc. are still significant social institutions. The number is believed to be 200,000 in Nepal. Due to their mini nature and dispersed in an unorganized way their roles have been under-explored. The organization of civil society along modern lines began with the Arya Samaj in 1909 to awaken the Nepalese from blind faith, prejudice and conservative thinking as well as abolish child marriage, promote

widow marriage and initiate social reforms.

The governments' disappointment situation during the 1970s started a discussion on governance, stating the mutual task of various players such as public-sector organizations, private organizations, and the civil society organizations. Consequently, a faster rise of civil society organizations and an increased partnership between public, non-profit and the profit-oriented organizations were seen. This has led to materialization of a new concept in inclusive governance which has transformed the institutional scenery, more or less, everywhere in the world. NGOs have developed at the critical boundary of the market, the state, and the civil society, their role has become an area of importance among different stakeholders. They are considered to be an important institutional actor for mobilizing community assets, motivating people, and implementing social welfare programs efficiently.

The autonomy of civil society, such as trade unions, human right organizations, student unions, teacher's association, women's group, environmental advocates, professional organizations, etc., is crucial for breaking the domination of authority and wealth and enforcing a pluralist sense of justice, which received their formal recognition only after restoration of multi-party politics in 1990.

After 1990, there was demands from the NGO/INGO communities for the ratification of a new act particularly addressing the new role of the then Social Service National Coordination Council (SSNCC) for governing NGOs. The government also showed its firm commitment to bring a change in NGO enthusiasm by liberalizing the NGO led legal instruments. As a result, Social Welfare Council Act, 1992 was enacted, replacing the then SSNCC Act, 1977. According to this act, the Social Welfare Council (SWC) was constituted as a governmental agency to look after the NGO affairs.

On the basis of objectives and programs of social service, National Planning Commission (1993) categorizes Nepalese NGOs into ten broad areas such as community and rural development, empowerment of women, improvement of environment, delivery of public health, AIDS and drug abuse control, child welfare, educational development, handicapped and disabled service, youth activities, and development of moral values.

Most of NGOs in Nepal are foreign aided while some have been established and supported by the local community. The NGOs in Nepal are established with a set goal and they are actively working in various sectors.

Nepal's poor communities wish for greatly improved social service delivery systems, better targeting of the poor, more coordination between agencies, policies aimed at income generation and more involvement of the poor and of nongovernmental organizations. Social services are used relatively little by the poor, who are real target groups. The availability of the poor to housing, social security and social welfare services has been limited because these services were inadequate relative to needs and because services leak to the nonpoor.

Social services policies are not based on inclusion enough and the quality of services is low. Social service delivery systems are weak, ineffective and inflexible. The civil service is inadequate to reach the

poor. The available capacity and resources are inadequate, particularly for education and health.

The main purpose of the INGOs is to facilitate operations and provide technical assistance to partner NGOs. The money committed by donors is spent through the government channels. However, the donors allocate some money to run activities through INGOs and NGOs. INGOs normally raise funds from/through their home countries.

The government itself cannot go to all remote and deprived areas proportionally, therefore, the involvement and engagement of NGOs are necessary. With the growing of NGOs in Nepal, almost every Nepali seems to know about NGOs. Nepal being one of the poorest countries in the world, the development of NGOs reaching the grassroots level seems mandatory. NGOs could play a pivotal role in the socioeconomic structure of the country. NGOs do not only distribute food to hungry, clothes to naked people, and medicine to sick, but also advocate for the rights of the deprived. They work with communities together, and initiate social movement whenever necessary in the process of empowering the people.

In order to end the pervasive exploitation and suppression in the society, social awareness and social mobilization should go hand in hand with volunteer attitude. Most of the I/NGOs are doing better job for the benefit of the poor and some of them still needs to be work in right track.

Some NGOs engaged in social development have been actively involved in relief package and development along with other activities like resource mobilization, social mobilization, awareness, skill development and rehabilitation in Nepal. Besides, the activities of social development have slowly been moving forward in different projects like drinking water in villages, small hydropower, forest conservation, human rights, education and economic development sectors.

Besides, the NGOs have been functioning to ease the disaster by collecting relief materials, their transportation and distribution. Other important area of social development is the organization of victims, meaning necessary relief, socialization and reform for children, women and men victimized by different exploitation, discrimination, disaster, punishment and criminal works.

Many NGOs in the country have joined hands with local communities by promoting micro-credit projects, rural bank, skilled education and employment programmes, fair trade, skill improvement of women, agriculture and livestock, and other economic activities. INGOs are engaged in construction and reconstruction works linked with education, health, agriculture, and social and economic issues as per the requirement of the poor and needy people.

The function of NGOs in fighting against autocracy and in driving the state towards democratic track was appreciated.

INGOs have provided employment to the people of Nepal. They provide attractive salary and facilities to their employees, which seems to be much higher than government employees. Some of government employees, social and political elites have big attraction in registering NGOs in the name of their family members and well wishers to get support from the INGOs. Some people in Nepal have a feeling that international

communities get easy access to the socio-political authorities to feel safe and comfortable by supporting and providing employment to the relatives of the elites as well as to their well wishers in I/NGOs. Besides, there is a tendency of suspicion if some one is engaged in NGOs that would be source of dollar getting? Some of the INGOs and donors are extending financial support to the organizations operated to fulfill the vested interests of elite families, without any problem. But, small NGOs working in villages are simply excluded, thereby raising the issue of their governance system and capability. There is a cartel on an access to resources. In the name of so-called organizing capability, the small NGOs working in the villages are debarred. INGOs are also equally responsible for bad-governance of Nepali NGOs.

Even as NGOs play an important role in social and economic movement in Nepal, the government and some societal behaviour is not positive towards them. Lots of criticisms, comments, discussion and arguments have been done on the governing system and behaviour of NGOs. Instead of creating their own expensive structures in districts, INGOs should help and encourage local NGOs to perform. Besides, the projects received in the name of bilateral assistance are too costly and bureaucratic. Such system should be simplified. The issue of good governance in NGO sector, same in the INGOs working in Nepal and donor community is necessary to be raised. It is found that INGOs and donor community sometimes issue directives of their respective country and organizations on how the NGOs should function, which appears to be difficult directives for the rural NGOs.

Mr. Chij Kumar Shrestha, Chairperson of the Association of International NGOs in Nepal (AIN) said in an interview that NGOs have been implementing programs; even in the areas where government mechanisms are virtually non-existent. The combined annual budget of INGOs is about Rs. 9 billion. INGOs are being criticized for their non transparency in Nepal. In this connection Mr. Shrestha says that one of the reasons may be that INGOs lack publicize the good practices they generate. Another reason may be their inability to disseminate the information widely. The responsibility also lies with Social Welfare Council to defend INGOs.

Many publications and World Hindu Federation in Nepal, time to time accuse some international non government organizations in Nepal have generated controversy by proselytizing. They claim that there were 5 person in 1951 converted to Christianity now the figure might cross a million.

In order to be accountable to the society, I/NGOs should take the questions raised by the society seriously, and do its own evaluation in a regular basis. Unless the issues of transparency and accountability are implemented sternly, the social prestige cannot be elevated.

It is universally true that I/NGOs are considered to be effective tool for the social upliftment of the oppressed rural communities, if properly used them. The policy and monitoring mechanism of the government could play leading role to manage them in result - oriented manner. How effective I/NGOs, it's not easy to forecast and in the lack of proper study and monitoring, only on the basis of report presented by I/NGOs, it's also not easy to evaluate their effectiveness in macro level.

Possibility of Democracy in Nepal

By Jeevan Baniya

In my informal talks with my friends, some of them often argue (especially at the times when political parties get trapped in the net of power sharing) that Nepal needs a strong dictator-like leader so as to maintain rule of law and lead the country to development and prosperity; this always frequently leads me to wonder whether democracy is possible and feasible in Nepal. Despite such increasing pessimism among people, I always remain optimistic and positive towards the feasibility and prospects of democracy in Nepal.

A few days ago, following 'The Decisive Debate on National Consensus for Peace and Constitution' organised by FNCCI, people of Nepal clearly might have traced a gloomy picture of Nepal's political environment and future prospect of successful constitution writing and peace process.

For me, it was however interesting to listen to how they define various concepts i.e. 'citizens', 'democracy', and 'peace', - their definitional differences give a clear indication about where root causes of current mistrust and political deadlock lie. The major problem of the present crisis has become more evident that every political party have major concerns on the form of governance to be established in the new constitution, which is fairly natural as they have different ideological orientation and practical obligation to some extents - this is what is closely related to how the definitions defer from one party to another.

To trace historically, there has been no universal consensus yet on what constitutes democracy: hence it has become the subject of wide contestation. Thus, the question of what form of democracy needs to be established in Nepal appears to be fundamental issue related to present political crisis in the country.

It is however necessary to acknowledge that even the constitutional guarantees of the system and people's rights may not be sufficient to define what relationship there should be between citizens and democracy. It will be relevant here to note what an Indian scholar, Partha Chatterjee in his book 'Politics of the Governed' notes, - 'even though everyone is a citizen with equal rights in terms of the constitution and laws and therefore to be regarded as a member of civil society, most

inhabitants are only tenuously and even then ambiguously and contextually 'rights bearing citizens' in the sense imagined by constitutions - they are not, therefore, 'proper members of civil society.' Enough remains to be done even after the finest constitution is written as the societies are always in the process of change.

This statement of the aforementioned scholar is very relevant to the problems of governing system of Nepal as well, where larger section of the people is left out from the services of the governance - our past experiences also vividly tells us that the constitutional guarantee is not sufficient - and this characteristic parallels with those of many third-world countries as well. It does not mean however that it should be as it is; we need to persistently work towards creating a better governing system.

We people in Nepal struggled many times in the past for democracy against feudal and authoritarian regimes but we unfortunately never got the opportunity to claim that we were fighting for democracy for the very last time. And with the reestablishment of democratic multiparty system in 1990, we have experienced both the sweet and bitter taste of the system - it is better if we can learn from our past experiences and thereby develop the political system that serves the people of Nepal better.

There are obviously some positive norms and values of democracy (mostly liberal one) practiced all around the world; yes, we should include them in our constitution. However at the same time, we also need to contextualise democracy in Nepal and direct it as the mean to address various problems facing the people of Nepal. Therefore, parties and scholars arguing for or against the need of adopting a particular form of democracy practiced in a particular country is not an appropriate idea as our context, culture, history and experiences are different, thus, does not necessarily ensure the success if applied.

We have noticed that, in many historical junctures of Nepal's political history, one question however has been consistently present, which is actually not an exception either - that is: whether democracy is possible in Nepal considering the fact that the country is diverse in many of its social,

economic, cultural, and political and its geo-political aspects. This has also become a growing concern among people, as my friends often articulate, in Nepal even today.

The pessimism among people of Nepal resonates to what, one of the most critiqued and widely read anti-democratic works of a scholar, Bryan D. Kaplan in his book with the title 'The Myth of the Rational Voter,' argued 'citizens are uneducated, ill-informed and irrational, thus, they should be discouraged to make decision.' To some extent this argument is true as the people of Nepal had elected our leaders by themselves, thus, one might claim that people are also responsible for the worsening situation in the country.

Is it then really the people who are to be blamed for disfunctioning of democracy in Nepal? Of course, not. We will then have to dig into the question of why people are left uneducated rather than blaming them for voting for a particular party or leaders in the election and making a wrong choice.

It is actually the leaders who have contributed to defaming democracy in Nepal. The growing pessimism among people have significantly high this time when the political parties have been rather party-centered and have not been able to develop consensus culture.

The statements in various media from premier leaders of major political parties indicates that they have differences on fundamental issues and there is a growing deficit of trust among themselves, thus more debate and discussions are necessary on the issue (which has not been as much as it requires).

Before deciding on any form of democratic system in Nepal, we will have to revisit our past experiences under democratic practices especially after 1990 and critically and honestly evaluate them.

The history tells us that we made some major achievements in some areas during last two decades. We focused on institution building and democratic governance promotion as most liberals advocated world widely after the fall of Soviet Union and some authoritarian regimes in many parts of the world. Obviously, some achievements made on human rights,

rule of law, freedom and institution building are appreciable.

But, what we more experienced in our country was that people in power misused or mobilised state resources for building their personal dominance, maintaining their power in their respective areas and serving their family and clients' interests. And the respective governments formed under democratic system largely failed to deliver services to the bulk of citizenry which created high cynicism among the people - as a result, the country had to experience war, killings, human atrocities, hunger and fears.

As well, the democracy got more resilient when corruption, lack of democratic accountability, exclusion, self-serving erratic leadership and elite domination marked the political culture of Nepal. These all left the people of Nepal highly disaffected from the political system and they had to experience a feckless democracy that led to defamation of democracy (it is still underway).

So, is it the same democratic system we have in our mind for our future? Or what better form of democratic system can we develop/introduce? If we want alternative forms of democracy, what possibilities do we have? The focus should be towards finding the answers to these questions before we decide on the form of the system in upcoming constitution - not much discourse have been done so far.

Despite the differences that have appeared among various political parties, the leaders however seem to be willing to work collectively to end the present deadlock and thereby writing the new constitution and bringing the peace process to a logical conclusion: we wish them all the best to that end.

Is democracy possible in Nepal? People of Nepal have chosen many times in the past to be democratic; thus we can be very much optimistic that there will be continuous possibility of democracy despite the fact that there are enduring challenges ahead. So let's realize that democracy is a continuously developing process. To answer this question, I borrow Bruce Gilley's words, 'Democracy is possible for the simple reason that it is the only form of government which evolves constantly to ensure that it is possible. It is self-correcting in a way that alternatives are not.'

Am I a Maoist?

By Gladson Dungdung

I appeared in public life through my human rights works, writings and speeches. However, I reached to a larger audience when I got a chance to appear in CNN-IBN and NDTV-24x7 debates on the issue of Naxalism last year. After these debates, I got immense positive and negative responses from across the country. I was upset for sometime precisely because of the most negative responses I got from youth who are running behind the market forces unknowingly. They ruthlessly questioned me about whether I get money from Pakistan, Nepal or China for speaking against the Indian State. I responded to a few of them with detailed explanations, but many believe P Chidambaram's theory of this side or that side; therefore they are not ready to accept my rational arguments.

Meanwhile, I continued my work of raising the genuine issues of the marginalized people of India. Amidst, the so-called operation green hunt (OGH) was also launched in the state of Jharkhand in the name of cleansing the Maoists. I passionately attempted to bring out the truth of the OGH, intention of the state behind the OGH and sufferings of the villagers caused by the OGH. As a result, so-called educated people intensified more personal attacks against me. There are also some e-groups where they attempted to coin me as a Maoist sympathizer and supporter. Finally, they have portrayed me as a Maoist ideologue. I just laugh, laugh and laugh. Precisely, because how can a person suddenly become a Maoist ideologue without having an in-depth study on Maoism? I have never read about Maoism.

I deliberately do not read about any ideology because I know that Maoists teach the Advaita about Maoism. Gandhians preach them about Gandhism and Marxists ask them to walk on Marxism; but no one bothers about Advaitism, which is the best 'ism' among these, which perhaps leads to a just and equitable society. I have been raising questions about how the Indian State has deliberately destroyed the Advaitism. The Advaita religion was not recognized by the Indian constitution, traditional self-governance was neglected, culture was destroyed, lands were grabbed and our resources were snatched in the name of development. But what do we get out of it? Should we still keep quiet? Are we not the citizens of this country who need to be treated equally? Do they care about our sufferings?

I'm one of those unfortunate persons, who have lost everything for the so-called development of the nation and am struggling for survival even today. When I was just one year old, my family was displaced. Our 20 acres of fertile land was taken away from us in the name of development. Our ancestral land was submerged in a Dam, which came up at Chinda River near Simdega town in 1980. We lost our house, agricultural land and garden but we were paid merely Rs. 11 thousand as compensation. When the whole village protested against it they were sent to Hazaribagh Jail. Can a family of 6 members ensure food, clothing, shelter, education and health facilities for whole life with Rs. 11 thousand?

After displacement, we had no choice but to proceed towards the dense forest for ensuring our livelihood. We settled down in the forest after buying a small patch of land. We used to collect flowers, fruits and firewood to sustain our family. We also had sufficient livestock, which supported our economy. Needless to say that the state suppression continued with us. When we were living in the forest, my father was booked under many cases filed by the forest department (the biggest landlord of the country) alleging him as an encroacher and woodcutter. There was no school building in our village - therefore we used to study under the trees, and when there was rain our school was closed. But my father taught us to always fight for justice. Though he was struggling to sustain our family, he never stopped his fight for the community.

Unfortunately, on 20 June 1990, my parents were brutally murdered while they were going to Simdega civil court to attend a case and 4 kids were orphaned. Can anyone imagine how we suffered afterwards? The worst thing is the culprits were not brought to justice. Can anyone tell us why the Indian State did not deliver justice to us, who snatched our resource in the name of development? Why there is no electricity in my village even today? Why my people do not get water for their field whose lands were taken for the irrigation projects? Why there is no electricity in those houses, who have given their land for the power project? And why people are still living in small mud houses whose lands were taken for the steel plants? It seems that the Advaitas are only born to suffer and other to enjoy over our graves.

After a long struggle, we all got back to life but my pain and sufferings did not end here. When I was working as a state programme officer in a project funded by the European Commission, a senior government officer and an editor of a newspaper (both from the upper caste) questioned my credentials saying that being an Advaita, how could I have gotten into such a prestigious position? Similarly, when my friend had taken me to meet a newly wedded couple of the upper caste in Ranchi, I was not allowed to meet them saying that being an Advaita if I meet the couple, they might become unauspicious and their whole life would be at stake. Was I a devil for them?

However, when I joined another firm, I was totally undetermined and not given the position which highly deserved. I was racially discriminated against, economically exploited and mentally disturbed. Can anyone tell me why I should not fight for justice? Can those so-called supporters of the unjust development process, who have not given even one inch of land for the so-called national interest, coin me as the Maoist ideologue, sympathizer and supporter respond to me: why should I shut up my mouth and stop writing against injustice, inequality and discrimination?

I have lost everything in the name of development and now I have nothing to lose therefore I'm determined to fight for my own people because I do not want them to be trapped in the name of development. I have taken the democratic path of struggle, which the Indian Constitution guarantees through Article 19. A pen, mouth and mind are my weapons. I'm neither a Maoist nor a Gandhian but I'm an Advaita who is determined to fight for his own people, whom the Indian State has alienated, displaced and dispossessed of their resources and is continually doing it in the name of development, national security and national interest even today.



Russian embassy celebrates Victory day in World War II



Kathmandu: Russian embassy in Nepal celebrated the 65th victory day of World War II on May 9, in which immediate Soviet Union had had final victory over Nazi Germany.

The war the Russians call the 'Great Patriotic War' that continued from 1939 to 1945, suffered a loss of 27 million lives, the largest loss life against other nations.

Numbers of programmes and events related to this occasion were organised, such as reception, seminars, talk programmes, film shows,

photo and book exhibitions, drawing and chess competitions and dramas in Kathmandu.

In Russia, the Government and people marked this day with special holiday, big parade were organized, many war veterans participated in this parade, paying homage to those killed during the war for motherland.

According to Russian embassy, the German blitzkrieg, known as Operation Barbarossa, nearly succeeded in breaking the Soviet Union in the months that followed the beginning of war

against Soviet Union.

Caught unprepared, the Soviet forces lost whole armies and vast quantities of equipment to the German onslaught in the first weeks of the war. By November the German army had seized the Ukrainian Republic, besieged Leningrad, the Soviet Union's second largest city, and threatened Moscow itself. The Great Patriotic War, as the Soviet Union and then Russia have called that phase of World War II, thus began inauspiciously for the Soviet Union.

By the end of 1941, however, the German forces had lost their momentum. German movements were increasingly restricted by harsh winter weather, attacks from bands of partisans, and difficulties in maintaining overextended supply lines. At the same time, the Red Army, after recovering from the initial blow, launched its first counterattacks against the German invaders in December.

After a lull in active hostilities during the winter of 1941-42, the German army renewed its offensive, scoring a number of victories in the Ukrainian Republic, Crimea, and southern Russia in the first half

1942. Then, in an effort to gain control of the lower Volga River region, the German forces attempted to capture the city of Stalingrad (present-day Volgograd) on the west bank of the river. Here, Soviet forces put up fierce resistance even after the Germans had reduced the city to rubble. Finally, Soviet forces surrounded the German attackers and forced their surrender in February 1943. The Soviet victory at Stalingrad proved decisive; after losing this battle, the Germans lacked the strength to sustain their offensive operations against the Soviet Union.

After Stalingrad, the Soviet Union held the initiative for the rest of the war. By the end of 1943, the Red Army had broken through the German siege of Leningrad and recaptured much of the Ukrainian Republic. By the end of 1944, the front had moved beyond the 1939 Soviet frontiers into Eastern Europe. With a decisive superiority in troops and weaponry, Soviet forces drove into eastern Germany, capturing Berlin in May 1945. The war with Germany thus ended triumphantly for the Soviet Union which the Russians consider the Great Victory of whole mankind.

Can democracy thrive in Nepal amidst the Maoists?

I was a sigh of relief when Maoists withdrew their indefinite general strike. To General public who participated in peace rallies nationwide it was worth their effort. But to the incumbent government and to the political parties in the coalition, it has given another form of political game.

It was a big mistake of the Maoists to call their general strike in the wrong place at the wrong time. It was not absolutely necessary nor propriety. Rather to general public it was a threat to peace and stability.

People have mandated through historic Constituent Assembly election the democratic means to achieve peace and stability through consensus politics and the Parliament proceeding. The day the Maoists led the government in coalition by keeping Nepali Congress party in opposition, the Maoists did kill the spirit of consensus politics.

The Maoist leaderships failed to form a unity government to begin with the new political situation, which is diverse in every aspect. Knowing that without the consensus among political parties Constituent Assembly cannot succeed to draft the new constitution. Therefore, to place NC in opposition without forming a unity government was the big mistake the Maoists made to overrule consensus politics.

GP Koirala, who played the most effective role to bring the Maoists to mainstream politics, had on several occasions warned the Maoist chairman "Prachand" not to overrule consensus among political parties. Frankly, Mr. Dahal did not respect the consensus politics from the bottom of his heart.

By Prakash Bom

In my opinion, Mr. Dahal made another gigantic mistake as a chairman of the Maoists party by not agreeing with NC's proposal to elect GP Koirala as the first president of Nepal. Mr. Dahal and the Maoist party had to pay the price for by arrogantly giving up the government leadership. The price again for not honoring GP Koirala, has not yet paid off politically. It might hound for a long period of time.

I believe that if GP Koirala had been elected the first president of Nepal, (which had put him above the politics with better health condition and chance for some longevity), the current political situation could have been completely different. NC perhaps could be playing different political role for the coalition and could have had avoided the role of opposition in the Maoist led coalition government.

At the moment, Nepal needs desperately the foundation for peace and the rule of law. Unless the Unified Maoist party becomes completely a citizen-party and comply to the peace accord to abandon its ties with combatant politics and mechanism, the foundation for peace and the rule of law will not be there soon in Nepal.

The Maoists have been making mistakes after mistakes, and how much mistake they will be making in near future is capricious. This is due to their lack reliance in consensus politics and the Parliamentary proceeding.

For example, if they had gone to the Parliament regarding the conflict with "NA-Chief" and the president

instead of resigning from the government, they could have learned not to repeat same mistake.

Again, if they had once tried "the motion of no confidence vote" against sitting PM MK Nepal in the Parliament before going to general strike, the Maoists' reliance in the Parliamentary proceeding could have been demonstrated.

It seems the Maoists at this point have been less serious about the nation and people but more ambitious about their own ideology and worship to their chairmanship. But, Democracy does not care leaders like demagogues, who do little for the rule of law and justice to protect freedom and liberty of people, but die hard for their ideology and self-centered leadership.

The Unified Maoist party has to make a new choice of a leader, if it wants to lead a fresh national unity government. The Maoist chairman Mr. Dahal has failed to lead a consensus politics for the nation. He did not care about drafting the new constitution on time and nor secured permanent peace process when he had the opportunity.

India supports Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, so the world community, just as for the United States the Maoist led national unity government is acceptable as long as the Unified Maoist party comply with the norms of citizen-party.

The Unified Maoist party must find the way out to meet these conditions as NC and UML have demanded - "Complete the integration and rehabilitation of

Maoist combatants"; "Return of properties seized during conflict"; "Disolution of the paramilitary structure of the Maoist with YCL"; "Drafting of new constitution on time"; and "Amendment of the interim constitution for extending the term of Constituent Assembly, if needed."

The PM has already consulted the president for the amendment of the interim constitution to extend the term of CA. This means that the incumbent government has realized the fact that it can not possibly draft the constitution in the stipulated timeframe.

However, the amendment to extend the term of CA cannot pass the House without the support of the Maoist legislators, because it needs two-third of majority. The Hindu royalist party leaders, on the other hand, are saying such an extension is unconstitutional and demanding fresh election of the Constituent Assembly. At this point, if the Maoists could act responsibly for the sake of people and the nation then they have the chance to gain credibility of a citizen-party.

Whether the national unity government is formed under the leadership of the Unified Maoist party or not the Maoist leaders must cooperate with CA first to complete the drafting of the new constitution or must support the amendment to extend the term of CA. If not the establishment of the secular federal democratic republic of Nepal will soon be too thorny to walk through. Unless the Maoist Chairman "Prachand" thinks he is the iron-man to put all who do not agree with him in "Gherau" - the YCL-Ring.

Afghanistan, Iraq and Next Pakistan?

By Gulam A. Mitha

Does it have to be that an entire country and it's innocent civilians have to be punished after the failed New York Times Square bomb attempt by one person? It seems to be that way. Maybe another false flag operation was planned to issue stern warnings to Pakistan that should there be a successful attack next, there might even be a 'boots-on-the-ground' US presence on Pakistan as reported by the New York Times, a Zionist mouthpiece, on Saturday May 9, 2010. After the unsuccessful bomb attack by US citizen Faisal Shehzad who was captured by US authorities on board a flight to Pakistan via Dubai, the US administration has started issuing threats to Pakistan.

The first threat came on May 5, 2010 from Fareed Zakaria, author and host of CNN's "Fareed Zakaria GPS" in which he reported that "Pakistan is the epicentre of Islamic terrorism" and that "...it's worth noting that even the terrorism that's often attributed to the war in Afghanistan tends to come out of Pakistan, to be planned by Pakistanis, to be funded from Pakistan or in some other way to be traced to Pakistan...". Zakaria was a favored student of Dr. Huntington the celebrated author of "The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order". Zakaria has also been noted to be involved with George Bush and Paul Wolfowitz in pushing for the war on Iraq.

Why would Zakaria use the words "Islamic Terrorism" rather than Muslim terrorism? In my article, The Winds of Change, published by CounterCurrents on May 4, 2010 I'd written that since the war cannot be waged on Islam, the next best is to wage it on its adherents to weaken them. The strategy is working. The affluent group of Muslims are being weakened as they pursue materialistic objectives whereas the poorer Muslims are being intimidated through wars waged on them. One group fears the loss of wealth and the other fears loss of lives, not their own maybe but their families.

On May 7, 2010, US military commander in Afghanistan General Stanley McChrystal met with Pakistan's military commander General Ashfaq Kiyani in Islamabad to clearly issue a stern warning that Pakistan must immediately begin a military offensive against the Taliban and al-Qaeda in North Waziristan. US ambassador to Pakistan Anne Patterson also met with Pakistani president Asif Zardari and used "forceful" language to convey the American point that the Pakistanis had to move more assertively against the militants threaded through the society. As if that is not enough, pressure mounted from Hillary Clinton on May 7, 2010 that it faced "very severe consequences" if a terror plot like Times Square bombing were traced to Pakistan. US officials have even admitted that if there is a successful attack, the US will have to act. Maybe there is a successful attack being planned by the US either on its soil or on some European, Indian or Israeli soils. If the unsuccessful bomb attack is so politically successful, one would wonder how successful will be a successful bomb attack.

The answers to the question why US has urged Pakistan to launch a military offensive in the northern areas is very clear. It is to create more fear and terrorism, more suicide bombings, ensure more terrorists are bred, continue and further increase drone attacks and demoralize and weaken the military through exhausting the hardware in its arsenal such that if a joint US-Indian-NATO attack is launched on Pakistan in the near future, it'll not be able to sustain the war. Nuclear deterrence against an enemy already on its soil is pointless.

The one thing that most Muslim leaders severely lack is diplomacy and negotiation skills, more so a nuclear state like Pakistan than any of the others who've no strong and viable defences. Pakistan could easily retaliate to threats from US or India but being an indebted nation whose leaders are corrupt to the nth degree and who have families overseas, they're unable to demonstrate diplomacy or use language that would remove threats so they submit to threats. Zardari is a known state criminal and the US has all the scoops on him to blackmail him should he not relent to US demands.

It is now obvious that the US has military intentions towards Pakistan. India and Israel but more so the latter would like to see Pakistan denuclearised. Pakistan is also of significant geo-political importance as it would serve as a corridor for land-locked Afghanistan and the former Soviet satellites. 9/11 led to the occupation of Afghanistan, WMDs led to the occupation of Iraq and its becoming obvious that the relentless pressure of terrorism might lead to Pakistan's occupation and subsequent denuclearisation. The Zionists have mastered the art of fabrication without being challenged. They've not only fabricated 9/11, WMDs and other false flag operations but they've also fabricated an economic culture leading to rewards for the obedient servants and slavery for the masses throughout the world.

Much as the US, France, Germany and UK would like to bomb Iran to the rubble because of its oil and gas, Russia and China have not been supportive of actions against Iran in the United Nations. The next best target is therefore Pakistan as the US needs not secure UN, Russian or Chinese support for actions against it. The excuse of containing the epicentre of "Islamic terrorism" is sufficient. Pakistan is in the pressure cooker with the lid on and the stove flame on high.

Naxalites: Oppressor or suppressed?

Maoists detained the New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Express near Jhargram in West Bengal's Paschim Medinipur district on Tuesday for five hours. Commenting on the incident Maoist Polit Bureau member Koteswar Rao alias Kishanji said, "We want to teach the upper classes a lesson and change their narrow class outlook through this incident". The incident came on the first day of a bandh (Strike) called by the Maoists in protest against atrocities by security forces on villagers. On Monday Security force personnel ransacked several homes and even molested women in various villages of West Bengal. This is not the first incident of this kind: Maoist rebels regularly attack goods trains and have in the past even hijacked a few local passenger trains in remote districts of India before fleeing.

The Maoist rebellion began four decades ago championing the cause of poor peasants in the east, but has now spread to about 20 of India's 29 states, with the rebels targeting police and government property in hit-and-run attacks. Even the Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh admitted that Naxalite activities are the single largest threat to India's security. Naxalities in India have repeatedly resorted to violence, and their armed campaigns have resulted in loss of life and property. Ever since 2005, India has been witness to an average of 1,500 incidents of Naxal violence, resulting in the death of over 750 people i.e. five incidents of Naxal violence every day and six killings every month. Naxal movement is gaining momentum with the passing time. It has spread to both urban and rural areas, ranging 160 districts of India, particularly affecting the entire eastern corridor: the states of Bihar, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh and

By Fatima Syed

parts of Orissa, Kerala and Madhya Pradesh.

All this raises the suspicions that whether Naxalites are irrational people causing so much damage to life and property without any reason. In reality, Naxalites are really working for the poor people and are active in the areas where the poorest of the poor live. Primary government facilities like schools and health care centers are practically absent in the Naxal infested areas. Infant mortality rates are among the highest in the world in the region, owing to malnutrition and hunger. Estimates suggest the infant mortality rate to be at 47 percent in the Naxalite affected regions of the country, a condition worse than Sub-Saharan Africa. According to ShankerAiyar, "Each of the 80 worst Naxal affected districts have no schools, poor health care, exploitative feudalism, no employment opportunities, pathetic social infrastructure". Over three lakh villages have no road connectivity. For example Dantewada district of Chhattisgarh is on the list of 100 worst districts list for the past two decades. So despite well aware of the reasons that are behind the rise of Naxalism Indian government is only depending upon force to end that problem. It is paying no heed to the problems that gave rise to Naxalism. In fact in the mind of Indian administration Naxalism is a war that has to be tackled through force. It most of the time forgot that Naxals are alienated Indian citizens and once their grievances will overcome Naxal movement will come to an end. India's Naxal problem is complex and tends to find its justification in the deep-rooted and centuries-old exploitation of the poor, particularly the tribal community, by local landlords and

corrupt politicians. There is a high incidence of crimes committed against the tribal community. These include bonded labour, rape of women and girls, and silencing any opposition or dissent by murder and other violence. The landlords who commit these evils escape prosecution and punishment due to the support of corrupt and failing state agencies like the police. The Indian government has made no attempt to reach out to these citizens and address their problems, or to prosecute those who have committed crimes. The poor are systematically denied official assistance to address issues including food security, unemployment and the depletion of natural resources. Neither the state nor the central government has attempted to identify whether official schemes such as public food distribution shops or government health services are available to people in the region.

In addition to the failure of public welfare schemes, the government is also responsible for sponsoring indiscriminate mining and the destruction of natural resources in the region all in the name of development. In Chhattisgarh for instance, several large-scale mining operations have been commissioned in the past six years with complete disregard to the life and security of community members living there. A government website highlights the state's 'red-carpet' policy to private entities extracting mineral resources, but makes no mention of policies regarding people's loss of livelihoods and displacement, or the operations' environmental impact. It is thus clear that state governments in Naxalite affected regions have failed to address deep-rooted issues plaguing the population living below the poverty

line. Haplessly, it is this deprived and oppressed population that falls prey to the Naxalite ideology.

Naxal problem is a result of ignoring 'basic realities' such as underdevelopment of their areas and their severe deprivation and backwardness. The Naxal movement gets sustenance because the government does not treat it as a politico-ideological and socio-economic problem and that the movement is symptomatic of a society which is anxious to usher in social change. Basically, it is the failure of the State machinery and the bankruptcy of official policy which explains the growing clout of the Naxalites. It is the rising consciousness of the deprived sections of society, who are today more determined than ever before to struggle for land, forest resources, minimum wages, social dignity and self-governance. But Indian administration always handles the issue through force by claiming that Naxals are involved in aimless violence.

Repression and violence against a population forms fertile ground for rebellious ideologies. The Naxalite movement is thus made up of individuals who believe in and justify defensive violence. It is unfortunate that the response by the Indian government has also been the use of force, often brutal. However it is an established rule that violence can neither resolve problems nor be a mode of communication. Any call for violence negates the premise of rule of law.

Violence presupposes guilt and perpetuates disagreement. Moreover, it affects and diminishes the space for dialogue, an essential component in any democracy. The only way the Naxalite problem can be resolved is by genuine negotiations and trying to provide answers to their age-old problems.

समानता, स्वतन्त्रता र न्यायको लागि आफ्नो अधिकारप्रति सजग र सचेत होऔं ।



नेपाल सरकार

सूचना तथा सञ्चार मन्त्रालय

सूचना विभाग

Region :

Vedanta, Chidambaram, Chattisgarh and Maoist

Vedanta is a mining company headquartered in London. Anil Aggarwal and Naveen Aggarwal are the owners of this company. They have huge mining interest in several states of the country including in the Chattisgarh state of India.

Chattisgarh is a mineral rich state that was carved out of Madhya Pradesh on November 1, 2000. The state has 75 million tones of bauxite mine at Lanjigarh. In the Dantewada and Bijapur districts of Chattisgarh there are iron and bauxite deposits worth several crores of rupees. The Vedanta Company wants to lay their hands on all these precious minerals.

When Chhattisgarh came into being, the Vedanta group owned company 'Sterlite' bought a 51 percent stake in state owned BALCO for about Rs 551 crores and took over the company's management. It was the first public sector undertaking to be disinvested under the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government at the Centre.

The Sterlite group excavates around five lakh tonnes of bauxite every year from a place called Mainpat in Chhattisgarh annually. Besides, it's also excavates 300,000 metric tonnes of bauxite in Kabirham every year. In spite of reaping such rich dividends, Sterlite never bothers to pass on even a few benefits to its workers.

In fact, the list of the irregularities committed by the Sterlite Company is endless. The company resorted to deep-hole blasting for excavating bauxite, and this has a violent impact on the whole area. It created cracks in the farm land, and farming cannot be done on cracked surfaces. The blasting has also caused an increase in health problems among the residents.

The farmers whose land was taken were promised huge compensation but were left at the mercy of private contractors. Not only did the farmers lose their land and their houses, but they were also forced to live in small camps or rented houses.

By Syed Ali Mujtaba

In 2003 Sterlite Company cheated the government crores of rupees in taxes and got caught. The person who took up their legal case was PC Chidambaram, who is currently the home Minister of India, and a lawyer by profession. Chidambaram was also a member on the board of directors of Vedanta Company for a while.

The forests of Chattisgarh which contain these mineral deposits are also home to lakhs of Adivasi or indigenous people who are variously called Koli, Munda, etc. Even though sixty three years have lapsed to our country's freedom, no government till this date has provided these Adivasis with even basic amenities like education, roads, ration cards, etc.

The condition in the areas where Adivasis reside is so miserable that hardly many of the people there cross the age of 40 years. In this short lifespan they have to survive on the forests whatever little the Mother Nature can offer them.

The Vedanta Company could not start mining for the precious deposits without driving the hapless Adivasis out of the forests. The government made some devious plans to force them out and in the beginning, the Adivasis refused to move out but later protested. Government sent in the armed forces and the Adivasis left their villages and ran into the forests.

The government created a people's army called 'Salwa Judum', which burnt down villages, beat up children and men and raped women. When harassment by the government continued, the Adivasis had no option left but to rally behind the Naxalites and take up an armed struggle.

Naturally, the government could not tolerate this and that is why it started sending thousands of CRPFs to wage a war against those Adivasis who are, incidentally, as much Indian as any Aryans and the Dravidians who are sitting in the mandarin of power in New Delhi.

The former lawyer of the Vedanta Company and now the honorable Home minister of this country has recently threatened: "I don't care how many men I lose, I will win this war." He is saying this perhaps because he wants to finish off the Adivasis so that Vedanta can start mining in those forests.

Just like they catch the Muslim boys on the suspicion of being Jehadis in any communally sensitive part of the country, the Chattisgarh government has imprisoned many tribal boys of young age because it thinks they are a threat to the security of this country.

This is the way the national security is being handled in this country. It is with this mindset the power wielders of this nation want to deal with the problem of social unrest, hunger, deprivation and marginalization.

Now, a few words about the Maoists who are revolutionaries mainly consisting of the extremely poor people including a large number of Dalits and Adivasis. They come mainly from the toiling masses and they are trying to organize the vast population of such masses against those who try to impinge on their right to life and liberty. They seek to arm and train them so that these masses can resist the onslaught of the rich and powerful who are intruding into their land.

In this effort the Maoist go beyond the idea that mass movements should focus on some specific issues like increase of wages, better health care, more honesty of public servants and so forth. The view of the rebels is that the poor and exploited people must first and foremost establish their own democratic political power and their own state power in various places.

This is because without controlling state power, the poor and the exploited can at most hope for only limited improvements in their living conditions. So, the Maoists mobilize the poor to fight against the existing state, even armed fight if possible, as they consider

the existing state to be a set of agents acting for the big multinational corporations, rich landlords and the wealthy in general.

The fight is an extremely challenging and unequal one. The rich are aided by the government bureaucrats, the police and even the military, the half clad hungry belly people are armed with revolutionary zest and some country made weapon.

Also, contrary to what the Government and the mainstream media are propagating, the Maoist rebels are actually completely opposed to individual killings; they openly denigrate such stray terrorism-like acts. Their fight is against the flawed state apparatus and they want to change this corrupt structure that's cloaked under democracy and being drummed up by the state sponsored mass media as the best system of governance.

What the Maoist has been attempting to build up is a mass movement, even armed, to take on the violence of the ruling classes and its representative state machinery. What the government is trying to do is to slap them into sanity. This ding-dong battle is going on for the past sixty three years or so in the country and if at all any one who has gained ground in this tussle are the Maoist.

The government policy granting mining rights to the bourgeoisies have created havoc on the minds of the indigenous people. Their resistance against such oppression is being construed as rebellion and they are being treated on par with the terrorists.

Its unfortunate, that one hand India is extolled for being the largest democracy, on the other hand no one no one is talking about the injustice that's committed by the democratically elected government of this land.

The government which is responsible for creating the Maoists problems is bent on using its strong arm tactics to tackle the problem as if unaware of the fact that one can lord over with the bayonet of the gun but can't sit on it.

~ International news ~

Country in historic new direction : Cameron

The Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government would take the country in an historic new direction, new British Prime Minister David Cameron said Wednesday afternoon.

Cameron and Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg, leader of the Liberal Democrats, held their first joint press conference in Downing Street. Cameron said their alliance represented a "historic and seismic shift" in the political landscape.

The new administration would be united behind three key principles: freedom, fairness and responsibility, he said. It would have one key purpose - "to give our country the strong, stable and determined leadership that we need for the long term." Both parties had given full backing to coalition, Cameron said.

He also said "no government in modern times has ever been left with such a terrible economic inheritance."

The new prime minister said the two parties had a shared agenda and a shared resolve to tackle the challenges Britain faced.

The Lib Dem members would be represented at every level of government, which was a sign of the strength and depth of the coalition, Cameron said.

Clegg said "this is a government that will last." There will be "bumps and scrapes," but it will last despite those differences.

He said both men had a common purpose to give power back to people and give people more opportunity and that would make the coalition work, adding that "this is what new politics looks like." The two parties were proceeding with a very open mind, he said.

Cameron has begun appointing his first cabinet, with George Osborne as finance secretary and William Hague as foreign secretary.

Other appointments confirmed so far are Vince Cable as business secretary, Liam Fox as defense secretary and Andrew Lansley as health secretary.

Britain's Queen on Tuesday night appointed Cameron new prime minister. It is the first time the Tories and Lib Dems have had a power-sharing deal at Westminster and the first coalition in Britain since World War II.

The first peacetime coalition in Britain in nearly 80 years haills an era of further realignment in British politics, which reflects the change in national and international priorities for the European nation since the ending of the Cold War.

The idea of a coalition between the right-of-center Conservatives and the left-of-center Liberal Democrats would have been unthinkable even five years ago.

British Prime Minister Gordon Brown announced he resigned as prime minister on Tuesday evening.

In a statement outside Downing Street No. 10, Brown said he is to resign and suggests that Conservative Party leader David Cameron should take over as the Labour party failed to reach a deal with Lib Dems.

Wen congratulates new British PM

Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao congratulated Conservative Party leader David Cameron on becoming Britain's 52nd prime minister in a telephone conversation late Wednesday.

Wen wished Cameron well on behalf of the Chinese government and people. "In recent years, with the deepening of the China-Britain strategic partnership, the relationship between the two countries, which is more than just bilateral, has increasingly embodied more strategic significance and global vision," Wen said.

He expected to establish a good working relationship with Cameron and jointly enhance political mutual trust, deepen cooperation and boost the China-Britain strategic partnership for additional achievements based on mutual respect, equality and mutual benefit.

"Climate change should be on G8, G20 agenda" says UN chief

The United Nations Secretary-General pressed here Wednesday for putting climate change on the agenda of the G8 and G20 summits which Canada hosts in Toronto in June.

Ban Ki-moon, who arrived here for a one-day working visit, also pressed Ottawa to live up to the greenhouse-gas reduction targets it negotiated under the Kyoto Protocol.

"Canada has a special role and special responsibility to play," Ban told an audience of hundreds of academics, diplomats and civil society groups organized by the United Nations Association in Canada.

Ban also called on Canada to press fellow G8 leaders to live up to their previous aid commitments to help developing countries improve their living and environments.

The UN chief praised Canada for making child and maternal health in the developing countries a major issue at the G8 in the Muskoka region of Ontario during June 25-26, followed by the G20 summit in Toronto on June 26-27.

Asserting that economic recovery, impoverished country development and climate change are all interwoven, Ban said he will look to the G20 "to push for a green recovery to the global economic crisis."

Supporting the Copenhagen Accord, he also has pledged that Canada would contribute a fair share to a global fund to help developing countries to reduce their emissions.

Russia mulls over unveiling nuclear stockpiles

Russia will consider disclosing its nuclear arsenals after the new treaty on strategic arms reduction signed between Moscow and Washington takes effect, said the Russian Foreign Ministry on Wednesday.

The announcement follows the revival of a stalled U.S. agreement with Russia on cooperation on civilian nuclear energy on Monday, which was seen as the latest effort to reset relations with the Kremlin.

The Pentagon unveiled last Monday the size of U.S. nuclear arsenal for the first time, saying it has a total of 5,113 nuclear warheads in its stockpile.

Commenting on the U.S. disclosure of its nuclear arsenals, Nesterenko said: "We believe this step by Washington will improve transparency and help improve confidence between nuclear and non-nuclear states."

The United States and Russia are the world's two largest nuclear-weapon states, possessing more than 90 percent of the world's nuclear warheads in combination. (Xinhua)

Military operation against Maoists is no solution

Never in the history of India, New Delhi linked the left wing Maoist movement with Pakistan. But in a recent conspiracy of Indian Intelligence agencies various resistance groups to Indian rule are being linked with Pakistan. The sole aim of this strategically acrobatic move is to malign Pakistan internationally. In this context, in a recent statement, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh while admitting that his government failed to achieve much success against Maoists maintained that infiltration through various routes was going up. Where Indian Prime Minister described the Maoist movements as the gravest internal security threat, the Indian Home Minister P Chidambaram admitted presence of Maoists in 17 states and disclosed that they are responsible for 90 percent of the violence in the country. In fact Indian Prime Minister has for the first time openly admitted that despite efforts, the level of violence in the affected states is continuously rising. Recently, while addressing state Police chiefs at a three days conference at New Delhi, Chidambaram disclosed that last year alone there were 1,591 incidents of Maoist violence resulting in 721 killings while this year until August there had been 1,405

By Afshain Afzal

incidents, resulting in 580 deaths spread over 11 states. In fact, as the time is passing, it is becoming more and more difficult to control Naxals but no one is ready to accept the responsibility of bringing the situation to such a critical stage.

The Indian Government sources at New Delhi, quoting Indian Home Secretary GK Pillai, claim that India is all set to launch joint Army, Air Force and Para Military Forces operations against Naxals in November 2009. The Indian Cabinet Committee of Security (CCS) had recently approved the Government's plan to counter Maoists in the six affected states. Initially the operation would be carried out in four states namely Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Orissa and Maharashtra, where according to Indian Intelligence reports most of the Maoist infrastructure, training camps and strongholds are located. On the basis of results of operations in said four states, joint Indian forces will be moved into remaining two states as well as other effected areas. In all, joint operations will be carried out in phases in 20 Naxals affected states. Troops from Indian Army, Indian Air Force and personnel of CoBRA

(Commando Battalion for Resolute Action), a Central force, with State police in frontal role have already been earmarked for the next month's operations. Although, Indian Union Home Minister P Chidambaram during his recent visit to Maoist-affected states of Chattisgarh and Jharkhand ruled out that there is any move to involve the Army in the fight against Naxals but this is what India is hiding. The government at New Delhi has already allowed Indian Air Force to retaliate if it is attacked by Maoists. Similarly, unusual movement of Indian troops have taken place in Maoist affected areas.

The Intelligence summaries submitted in the month of October 2009 by Indian Military Intelligence (MI), Intelligence Bureau (IB) and Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) highlighted that Naxal menace can be wiped out from across the country only through joint operations of Indian Air Force, Indian Army and Para Military Forces. The operations against Naxals, according to a rough estimate, would last for more than two years in which Israeli and US commandos would assist India with arms and expertise. The government of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh

is confident that they can wipeout Naxals in a period between 12 to 30 months. Before Prime Minister Singh orders 'go' to its joint forces against Naxals, there is a need to make an independent assessment about India's brutal action against Sikhs in the past. Even today any security plan is not complete without mentioning the names of a number of Sikh organizations in possible terrorist attacks. Where the action against Sikhs was generally confined to only one state, what repercussions India has calculated after joint operations against Naxals in 20 affected states. India still has time to rephrase the plan against Naxals before it is too late. Even if talks with Communist Party of India or other groups repeatedly fails, still there should be room for another round of talks, aiming at removing their grievances and carrying out massive development work in Naxals affected areas. One wonders, why Indian politicians and members of civil society are reflecting ignorance on the issue. It is right time to lobby against all those who are interested in misadventure against Naxals as it would lead to popular movements for separatism, allowing foreign conspirators to interfere directly in the internal affairs of the country.

The century of famine

By Peter Goodchild

Humanity has struggled to survive through the millennia in terms of balancing population size with food supply. The same is true now, but population numbers have been soaring for over a century. The limiting factor has been hidden, but this factor — oil and natural gas, or petroleum — is close to or beyond its peak extraction. Without ample, free-flowing petroleum, it will not be possible to support a population of several billion for long.

Famine caused by petroleum supply failure alone will result in about 2.5 billion above-normal deaths before the year 2050: lost and averted births will amount to roughly an equal number.

In terms of its effects on daily human life, the most significant aspect of fossil-fuel depletion will be the lack of food. "Peak oil" is basically "peak food." Modern agriculture is highly dependent on fossil fuels for fertilizers (the Haber Bosch process combines natural gas with atmospheric nitrogen to produce nitrogen fertilizer), pesticides, and the operation of machines for irrigation, harvesting, processing, and transportation.

Without fossil fuels, modern methods of food production will disappear, and crop yields will be far less than at present. Crop yields are far lower in societies that do not have fossil fuels or modern machinery. We should therefore have no illusions that several billion humans can be fed by "organic gardening" or anything else of that nature.

The Green Revolution involved, among other things, the development of higher-yielding crops. These new varieties, however, could be grown only with large inputs of fertilizer and pesticides, all of which required fossil fuels. In essence, the Green Revolution was little more than the invention of a way to turn petroleum into food.

Over the next few decades, therefore, there will be famine on a scale many times larger than ever before in human history. It is possible, of course, that warfare and plague will take their toll to a large extent before famine claims its victims. The distinctions, in any case, can never be absolute: often "war + drought = famine", especially in sub-Saharan Africa, but there are several other combinations of factors.

Although, when discussing theories of famine, economists generally use the term "neo-malthusian" in a derogatory manner, the coming famine will be very much a case of an imbalance between population and resources. The overwhelming cause of the imbalance and famine will be fossil-fuel depletion, not government policy, warfare, ethnic discrimination, bad weather, poor methods of distribution, inadequate transportation, livestock diseases, or any of the other variables that have often turned mere hunger into genuine starvation.

The increase in the world's population has followed a simple curve: from about 1.7 billion in 1900 to about 6.1 billion in 2000. A quick glance at a chart of world population growth, on a broader time scale, shows a line that runs almost horizontally for thousands of years, and then makes an almost vertical ascent as it approaches the present. That is not just an amusing curiosity. It is a shocking fact that should have awakened humanity to the realization that something is dreadfully wrong.

The unequal distribution of resources plays a part, of course. The average inhabitant of the United States consumes far more than the average inhabitant of India or China. Nevertheless, if all the world's resources were evenly distributed, the result would only be universal poverty. It is the totals and the averages of resources that we must deal with in order to determine the totals and averages of results. For example, if all of the world's arable land were distributed evenly, in the absence of mechanized agriculture each person on the planet would have an inadequate amount of farmland for survival: distribution would have accomplished very little.

We were always scraping the edges of the earth, but we are now entering a far more dangerous era. The main point to keep in mind, however, is that throughout the twentieth century, oil production and human population were so closely integrated that every barrel of oil had an effect on human numbers. While population has been going up, so has oil production.

In round numbers, global oil production in the year 2008 was 30 billion barrels, and the population was 7 billion. The consensus is that in the year 2050 oil production will be about 2 billion barrels. The same amount of oil production occurred in the year 1930, when the population was 2 billion. The population in 2050 will therefore be about the same as in 1930: 2 billion. The difference between 7 billion people and 2 billion is 5 billion, which will therefore be the total number of famine deaths and lost or averted births for that period.

Nevertheless, it will often be hard to separate "famine deaths" from a rather broad category of "other excess deaths." War, disease, global warming, topsoil deterioration, and other factors will have unforeseeable effects of their own. Considering the unusual duration of the coming famine, and with Leningrad as one of many precursors, cannibalism may be significant: to what extent should this be included in a calculation of "famine deaths"? It is probably safe to say, however, that an unusually large decline in the population of a country will be the most significant indicator that this predicted famine has in fact arrived.

These figures obliterate all previous estimates of future population growth. Instead of a steady rise over the course of this century, as generally predicted, there will be a clash of the two giant forces of overpopulation and oil depletion, followed by a precipitous ride into the unknown future.

If the above figures are fairly accurate, we are ill-prepared for the next few years. The problem of oil depletion turns out to be something other than a bit of macabre speculation for people of the distant future to deal with, but rather a sudden catastrophe that will only be studied dispassionately long after the event itself has occurred. Doomsday will be upon us before we have time to look at it carefully.

The news of the coming famine might not be announced with sufficient clarity. Famines tend to be back-page news nowadays, perhaps for the very reason that they are too common to be worth mentioning. Although Ó Gráda speaks of "making famine history", the

reality is that between 70 and 80 million people died of famine in the twentieth century, far more than in any previous century.

The above predictions can be nothing more than approximate, of course, but even the most elaborate mathematics will not entirely help us to deal with the great number of interacting factors. We need to swing toward a more pessimistic figure for humanity's future if we include the effects of war, disease, and so on. The most serious negative factor will be largely sociological: To what extent can the oil industry maintain the advanced technology required for drilling ever-deeper wells in ever-more-remote places, when that industry will be struggling to survive in a milieu of social chaos? Intricate division of labor, large-scale government, and high-level education will no longer exist.

On the other hand, there are elements of optimism that may need to be plugged in. For one thing, there is what might be called the "inertia factor": the planet Earth is so big that even the most catastrophic events take time for their ripples to finish spreading. An asteroid fragment 10 kilometers wide hit eastern Mexico 65 million years ago, but enough of our distant ancestors survived that we ourselves are alive today to tell the story.

Specifically, we must consider the fact that neither geography nor population is homogeneous. All over the world, there are forgotten pockets of habitable land, much of it abandoned in the modern transition to urbanization, for the ironic reason that city dwellers regarded rural life as too difficult, as they traded their peasant smocks for factory overalls. There are still areas of the planet's surface that are sparsely occupied although they are habitable or could be made so, to the extent that many rural areas have had a decline in population that is absolute, i.e. not merely relative to another place or time. By careful calculation, therefore, there will be survivors. Over the next few years, human ingenuity must be devoted to an understanding of these geographic and demographic matters, so that at least a few can escape the tribulation. Neither the present nor future generations should have to say, "We were never warned."

Consensus...

some two years back, has heavily cost the country both politically and financially.

The state coffers have been emptied by millions of rupees for the facilities of the CA members of colossal size as well as for the entire process of constitution making.

The amount of money pumped by various non-government organizations in the name of making new constitution is also not less exorbitant.

The expenditure made for the CA elections and the CA so far stands at Rs. 3.48 billion.

A whopping Rs 670 million has already been invested into the CA members numbering 601 as salary and allowance.

Additionally the government has spent Rs. 181.9 million for the leasing of the International Convention Center, which houses the CA, and for rented houses of CA members.

There is no account of the

expenditures made by the non-government organizations in the name of assisting the constitution making process.

If the parties continue to fail to reach consensus for the sake of the entangled peace process, the poorest country will no longer be in position to afford the gross augmentation of both political and economic burdens.

Maoists ...

Maoist combatants within the four months, before the expiry of the sixth extension of UNMIN's mandate on Sept 15,

Dahal also expressed readiness to disassociate Maoist combatants from the party's chain of command and bring them under the Special Committee for the Supervision, Integration and Rehabilitation.

Similarly, the Maoist chieftain stressed on the need to form a commission on missing persons and a truth and reconciliation commission to make public the whereabouts of those who went missing during the

insurgency.

He also claimed that his party had been sincere towards keeping confrontation in the country at bay in the past one year.

"Our decision to step down from the government as well as to withdraw the general strike was aimed at preventing the country from plunging down in confrontation," he stated.

Miscalculation...

largely urban centric "crusade" against the government.

Instead, the Maoist cadres faced several counterattacks in the valley and other parts of the country.

The Maoists failed to tap the middle class into its fold. The corporate media houses displayed cold attitude towards the stir. Apart from India, the USA and the European Union, the domestic units like civil society, business community and various professional organizations also exerted pressure on the Maoists to retreat. This all emboldened the obstinate

~ National news ~

Pak fair in Kathmandu

Pakistani single country fair will be held from May 19-23 at United World Trade Center, Tripureshwar, Kathmandu.

The fair entitled Made in Pakistan Products Exhibition 2010 will feature a variety of Pakistani items such as leather garments, ladies dresses, textile, handicrafts (marble, wooden, brass), crockery, cutlery utensils, artificial jewellery, cosmetics and gemstones. "A food court will also offer variety of Pakistani dishes," a press release of Pakistani embassy said.

The exhibition was earlier scheduled for May 12-16 was postponed due to 'unavoidable circumstances.'

Pak World Trade & Expo Center in collaboration with Embassy of Pakistan are organising the event.

Dasdhunga to be developed into a tourist site

Dasdhunga, the place where CPN-UML leaders Madan Bhandari and Jeevraj Ashrit died in a road accident is to be developed as a tourist site.

A decision to this end was taken by the Madan-Ashrit Memorial Foundation after a budget of Rs. One million was received for the same from the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation.

It may be noted that a statue of both the leaders have already been installed at the site. An additional 12 *kathas* of land has been purchased to construct a park in the area.

A budget of Rs. 150,000 has also been received from the Ministry of Physical Planning for carrying out maintenance work on the statues, and the area, member of the Foundation, Ghanashyam Bhattarai said.

Israeli film festival begins

A film festival organized by the Israeli Embassy to mark the 50th year of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Nepal and Israel began at the Russian Culture Centre here of 10th of May.

Seven films depicting the socio-economic and cultural aspects of Israel are to be screened at the three-day festival.

Initiating the festival, Minister for Culture, Minendra Rijal said that the festival would help the Nepalis know more and better about Israel.

Israeli Ambassador to Nepal, Dan Stav said the festival has been organized to shed light on various aspects of Israel.

Unity among professionals stressed

Professionals affiliated to various fields have emphasized on the need to unite in order to solve current political problems.

Experts from various sectors expressed such views while speaking at a discussion programme organized by the Professional Alliance for Peace and Democracy (PAPAD) here on 10th May.

Unless democracy and peace are institutionalized, the professionals' rights are not guaranteed; they said, stressing that the professionals should be gutsy enough to point out the right and wrong deeds of the political parties.

Moreover, they commented on the opinion of Chairman of UCPN-Maoist Pushpa Kamal Dahal indicating journalists and intellectuals from the open-air-theatre saying they were biased. The Maoist-imposed strike had afflicted people nationwide, they added.

Chairman of the Federation of Nepalese Journalists (FNJ) Dharmendra Jha expressed worries that the recent political developments have put press freedom in jeopardy.

Chairman of Nepal Medical Association, Kedar Narsingh KC said if all professionals get united rising above their professions, their rights would be ensured.

Chairman of Nepal Bar Association Prem Bahadur Khadka expressed his view that democracy could not be institutionalized without the rule of law. Everyone should raise voice against those acting against the rule of law, he added.

Professor Khagendra Bhattarai said PAPAD should work as a facilitator to bring government and the Maoists for a peace dialogue.

Chairman of Teachers' Union Krishna Prasad Dhakal urged the political parties to seek solution from the constituent assembly.

Similarly, journalist Taranath Dahal lauded PAPAD for contributing to the establishment of peace and democracy.

PAPAD Chairman Rameshwor Upadhyay pointed out the need of peace dialogue among political parties for a political outlet.

Joint front of ten parties

A meeting of the 10 political parties organized by the UCPN (Maoist) has decided that the present government should step down in order to forge national consensus.

The Prime Minister should resign immediately in order to build a basis for formation of a national joint government to accomplish the common goal of inclusive democracy, national sovereignty, federalism, republic, peace and constitution.

Talking to media persons following the meeting, UCPN (Maoist) Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' said an agreement had been reached among the ten political parties in order to make the peace process a success, and expressed the view that a dialogue could be held with the political parties, but not with the Government.

Likewise, President of Madhesi Janadikar Forum, Upendra Yadav said this agreement has been reached in order to oust the present Government, and realize the new Constitution and peace.



San Miguel BEER

Places to Visit in Pokhara



Pokhara is a remarkable place of natural beauty. Situated at an altitude of 827m from the sea level and 200km west of Kathmandu valley, the city is known as a center of adventure. The enchanting city with a population of around 95,000 has several beautiful lakes and offers stunning panoramic views of Himalayan peaks. The serenity of lakes and the magnificence of the Himalayas rising behind them create an ambience of peace and magic. So today the city has not only become the starting point for most popular trekking and rafting destinations but also a place to relax and enjoy the beauty of nature.

Pokhara is part of a once vibrant trade route extending between India and Tibet. To this day, mule trains can be seen camped on the outskirts of the town, bringing goods to trade from remote regions of the Himalaya. This is the land of Magars and Gurungs, hardworking farmers and valorous warriors who have earned worldwide fame as Gurkha soldiers. The Thakalis, another important ethnic group here, are known for their

known as Damside and Lakeside (or Pardi and Baidam, in Nepali, respectively). These two areas, with their strips of hotels and restaurants,

endless strip of lodges, restaurants, bookshops and souvenir shops. One of the fascinating parts of lakeside is the splendid view of the mountains,

beyond imagination - over 20 meters! Mahendra Pul, a small bridge near the old Mission Hospital, provides a perfect view of the river's dreadful rush and the

Mahendra Gupha

Mahendra Gufa, locally called Chameri Odhaar ('House of Bats'), is the large limestone cave. Shepherd boys are said to have discovered it around 1950. A two hour walk to the north of Pokhara, it is best to bring your own torch to see the stalactites and stalagmites, although most of them have been carted out by souvenir hunters.

Mahendra Pul, reflects the ethnic mosaic of western Nepal. The lifestyles and history of ethnic groups such as the Gurung, Thakali and the Tharu are attractively displayed.

Annapurna Museum

Also known as the Natural History Museum, is located at Prithvi Narayan Campus east of the old bazaar. Managed by the Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP), the museum has an exceptional collection of butterflies, insects, birds, and models of wildlife as well as samples of various precious and semi-precious stones and volcanic rocks.

The Old Bazaar

Pokhara's traditional bazaar is colorful and so are its ethnically diverse traders. In its temples and monuments can be seen ties to the Newar architecture of the Kathmandu Valley. Located about 4 km from Lakeside, the market's original charm is alive and well.

Himalayan Vista

The magnificent Annapurna panorama that's visible on the northern skyline of Pokhara is quite incredible. The main peaks are Annapurna I to IV and the beautiful Machhapuchhare (or Fishtail Mountain, so named after its twin peaks). Besides these, you can also see the Himchuli, Varahashikhar, Gangapurna and other peaks. The mountains will probably be hidden in the clouds between April and



are a few kilometers south-west of the main Pokhara bazaar.

especially when the still water reflects the peaks, creating a double image.

deep gorge made by its powerful flow.



entrepreneurship.

The climate of Pokhara is slightly warmer than Kathmandu with daytime temperature hovering around 15 degrees Celsius in winter and 35 degrees in summer. The monsoon



season which lasts from mid-June to mid-September is very wet; in fact Pokhara records the highest rainfall in the country. Best time to visit is between October and April.

The activities of foreign visitors to Pokhara focus around two districts

Begnas lake and Rupa lake

The lakes are located about 15km from Pokhara at the end of a road that turns north from the highway to Kathmandu. Divided by the forested hillock called Panchabhaiya Danda, the lakes offer the perfect nature retreat because of their relative seclusion. Splendid boating and fishing can be done here.

Phewa Tal (Lake)

Phewa lake, the second largest lake in the kingdom, roughly measuring 1.5 km by 4 km, is the center of all attractions in Pokhara. The enchanting lake is an idyllic playground. Brightly painted wooden boats and sailboats can be rented on reasonable cost around lakeside.

The lake is neither deep (roughly 47 meters at most) nor particularly clean, but the water is warm and swimming is pleasant if you don't think about the probable pollution.

The eastern shoreline of the lake, popularly known as Lakeside or Baidam, consists of seemingly

Barahi Temple

This is the most important religious monument in Pokhara. Built almost in the middle of Phewa lake, the two storied pagoda is dedicated to the boar manifestation of Ajima, the protectress deity representing the female force Shakti. Devotees can be seen, especially on Saturdays, carrying male animals and fowl across the lake to be sacrificed to the deity.

World Peace Pagoda

The pagoda is a massive Buddhist stupa and is situated on top of a hill on the southern shore of Phewa lake. Besides being an impressive sight in itself, the shrine is a great vantage point which offers spectacular views of the Annapurna range and Pokhara city. You can get there by crossing the lake by boat and then hiking up the hill.

Seti Gandaki

Flowing right through the city, the boisterous river runs completely underground at places. Amazingly, at certain points the river appears hardly two meters wide. But its depth is quite

Devi's Fall

Locally known as Patale Chhangro (Hell's Fall), Devi's fall (also known as Devin's or David's) is an awesome waterfall lying about 2 km south-west of Pokhara airport on the highway to Tansen. An interesting modern legend says that a foreigner named David was skinnydipping in the Pardi Khola (river) when the floodgates of the dam were opened, sweeping him into an underground passage beneath the fall, never to be seen again.

Gupteswar Gupha

Gupteswar Gupha, a sacred cave, lies 2 km from Pokhara airport on the Siddhartha Highway leading southwest from the city. The entrance is right across from Devi's Fall and the cave is almost 3 km long. It has some big hall-size rooms and some passages where you have to crawl on all fours. This cave holds special value for Hindus since a phallic symbol of Lord Shiva is preserved here in the condition it was discovered. An entrance fee of Rs. 5 is charged and taking pictures inside the cave is prohibited.

on a festive fair.

Pokhara Museum

located between the airport and

September. A nice evening on the banks of Fewa Lake with the mountain range as the backdrop is what Pokhara is really about!

