

At what cost?



WM Correspondent

Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal gave a thumbs down to the proposition offered by the European Union (EU) to form a new coalition of national unity with the main opposition UCPN (Maoist).

Nepal ruefully termed the proposal as a precursor to the renewed conflict in the country.

After the Maoists withdrew their indefinite general strike, the European countries and even the United States are positioning themselves in favour of a new national consensus government.

However, the incumbent coalition appears to be so much obsessed with its continuation that it is loathing at every segment that speaks in support of the formation of a new dispensation

comprising the Maoists.

Talking to a British newspaper The Financial Times, the Prime Minister said, "If [parts of the international community] want to teach us, or to some extent instruct us, this is not acceptable to us."

"They should mind their own business. No one is overlord here. We don't want any new colonisers here. We will not tolerate any high-handedness. Instruction, interference and undiplomatic words are not acceptable to us," he added.

Ironically, the instruction, interference and undiplomatic words of the foreigners especially the Indian establishment have never been reported to have irked PM Nepal.

Time and again, he has joyfully boasted that his government is endowed with the strong support of New Delhi.

Before jetting off to Thimphu to take part in the SAARC summit some time back, the PM had expressed his desire to step down in the standing committee meeting of his party CPN (UML).

However, after returning back to Nepal, he exhibited more passion for power.

In fact, his meet with Indian PM Manmohan Singh in Thimphu was vital to inject a required dose of vigour into

him to downplay the voices for the replacement of the current government.

Surely, the PM is abrasively criticizing the international community for demanding his exit not for interfering in the internal matters of the country as has been cited.

Otherwise, he would not have longed for the continued generosity of India to further galvanize him into undermining the concerns in favour of a new national unity government.

All sections of the society are demanding the Prime Minister's resignation to give an early outlet to the festering political crisis.

The Maoists have also lately adopted a remarkable amount of flexibility to adjust themselves with the new scenario.

But, the government is absurdly looking upon the Maoists' willingness to be pliable as their weakness.

It is not for nothing that Maoist chairman Purna Kamal Dahal complained during his meeting with foreign diplomats that the government was humiliating his party and asked them to support the formation of a new national consensus government.

Quite interestingly, during a meeting called recently by the Maoists, all the invited ambassadors of various



countries took part but the Indian embassy chose to send its 2nd man as its representative.

It speaks volume about the Indian unwillingness to work in tandem with the international community to assist the country's ongoing peace process, which is now in a perilous state.

Indian ambassador Rakesh Sood has reportedly convened the severe objection of his country to the readiness expressed by other countries in solving

the political crisis of Nepal.

When the Asian ambassadors met foreign minister Sujata Koirala to discuss on Nepal's political situation, Sood was quick to venture into abhorring the meeting.

Sood has brazenly mocked the minimum level of diplomatic etiquettes on many occasions and the power hungry Nepali leaders have continued to endorse the same at the cost of the country's sovereignty.

Magnifying political myopia

WM Correspondent

The government has tabled the constitution amendment bill in the parliament for extension of the term of the constituent assembly (CA) by one more year by confessing the inability of the people's representative body to produce a new constitution within the set deadline of May 28.

The ruling parties however didn't bother to consult with the main opposition UCPN (Maoist) while tabling the amendment bill.

The Maoists, who are also the largest party of the CA, have however put conditions for the term extension—dissolution of the incumbent government and the adoption of consensus system instead of the existing majority system.

The other 10 parties in the parliament like the Maoists and Madhesi Janadkhar Forum are also clamouring for a new national

consensus government to help script a new constitution.

The ruling parties however seems to have developed allergy to the proposition of forming a new government by replacing the current one.

Their latest display of somersault in the political stage suggests they simply do want to see the Maoists being a part of power equation.

The ruling UML has put forth various demands before the Maoists related to the disbanding of the paramilitary structure of the Maoists' youth wing Young Communist League (YCL) and return of the seized property and others.

Among other things, the Nepali Congress (NC), major ruling ally, is stating that the determination of the number of Maoist combatants to be integrated with the security forces should precede the formation of a new government

The NC has expressed its eagerness to lead the new government, which somehow signals the possibility of the resignation of the current government.

The Maoists have already announced that it is not averse to hold discussions with other parties to chalk out the nature of the leadership of a new consensus government.

The Maoist party is displaying flexibility on all areas but it is opposing the idea of fixing the number of the combatants to be integrated immediately before asking them about their wishes.

With all these political squabbling and haggling, the notion of the extension of the CA term is hanging in balance.

The safest way to prevent the current political stalemate from blowing out of proportion is the term extension of the CA.

However, the term extension sans the guarantee of new constitution

amounts to giving the excessive leeway to the current government to prolong its futile existence.

It will also only further empty the already depleting state coffers to tame the CA of colossal size and demands without a scintilla of achievement.

The country is bound to face a dangerous constitutional vacuum if the CA term is not extended.

The onset of the presidential rule with the backing of army is the most likely scenario.

In all probabilities, this will push the country into the vortex of a renewed confrontation.

The Maoists have warned they could even declare the new constitution from the streets if the consensus continued to elude the country.

Although another option is going for new elections for a new C, it sounds highly implausible given the worsening crisis of confidence amongst the political honchos.

Nepal-China ink landmark deal



WM correspondent

In what could be termed as a landmark achievement, Nepal and

China recently signed an accord that will allow zero-tariff entry facility to 4,721 Nepali [Cont. on page 6]

A year of financial crimes

WM Correspondent

The environment of impunity prevailing in the country has not only given rise to criminal activities such as murder and abduction but also the financial crimes.

About a half dozen of financial crimes have surfaced over the last one year in which a humongous amount of money of general public is also jeopardized.

The latest example of organized financial crime pertains to Unity Life International, which collected billions of rupees from the ordinary people in the name of a pyramid model of network marketing.

The company neither got approval from the central bank to collect deposits nor it was permitted by Insurance Board to run assurance schemes resembling the insurance ones.

According to initial investigations, it

has 364,000 members throughout the country. The ULI itself has claimed that it has collected more than Rs. 6 billion so far. It has also tented in huge amount of money from those going for foreign employment.

But, all the money that went into its coffers is not deposited in the name of the institution.

In a linear fashion, it was not found to have issued receipts to those from whom it collected deposits.

As such, the likelihood of many people not receiving their money back is simply high.

It is suspected that most of the funds it collected might have siphoned out of the country

Despite operating illicitly, how could the ULI spread its tentacles throughout the country and outside so vigorously?

It has now been crystal clear that the backing of powerful politicians,



bureaucrats and other high-ranking people was behind its illegally impressive growth.

The promoters of the ULI were even propelled and facilitated by as big national figures as president Ram

Baran Yadav, Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal and Maoist chairman Purna Kamal Dahal.

It is said that there is a growing pressure from the political and bureaucratic circles to make the unscrupulous players of the ULI immune from legal actions.

That's why, the possibility of its promoters getting shackled is huge.

The government had failed to take action against the promoters of Nepal Development Bank (NDB) including its patron Uttam Pun, who pushed the first development bank of the country into the vortex of debacle.

Officials of NRB say it could pin point the locations where those behind the collapse of the NDB are staying but the police only pretends they are trying to arrest Pun and company.

No doubt, it is the blessings of powerful persons that have shielded

the culprits from facing due legal actions.

A few months ago, a case of big capital flights surfaced in the name of importing wool and other goods.

The investigating agencies have failed to find out the real culprits behind the capital flight who siphoned a whopping Rs. 8 billion out of the country by using fake customs clearance documents in the name of importing goods.

A recent study of 10 big cooperatives having the deposit base above Rs. 1 billion showed that that all of them were being run as family business with a majority of board members representing a single family.

One of the prime financially risky behaviours they were found to have displayed is the acceptance of collateral in the name of their respective chairmen to sanction loans.

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Editorial

Shielding Nepal from falling into catastrophe

The country continues to falter in the political morass. The gulf between the Maoist and the non-Maoist parties is getting cavernous.

Even though the political honchos are indulging in parroting that is no alternative to consensus, their persistent inability to rise above the petty partisan and parochial interests is pushing the country towards the edge of a renewed confrontation.

The promulgation of the new constitution by the set deadline of May 28 has just become a mirage and the peace process is reeling under the humungous yoke of political myopia.

At this critical juncture, the extension of the tenure of CA is the only viable to shield the already fragile peace process from facing a disastrous debacle.

The Maoists who are the largest party in the CA have said they would agree to it only after there is an amendment to the Interim Constitution replacing the majoritarian system with consensual one. The party also wants on the PM's resignation before the CA can be extended.

However, the other parties including the major ruling ones-UML and NC- are downplaying the fact that they have a humungous responsibility and that they have to work in tandem with the Maoists.

Both the Maoist and the non-Maoist parties must realize that if they continue to indulge in political one-upmanship, and in the process cannot agree to extend the CA's tenure, then the entire country will fall down into an abysmally catastrophic whirlpool.

So, the parties should first of all agree to extend the CA's term and then continue their discussions to resolve their differences.

However, the way the government has performed is not conducive and favorable to the creation of the atmosphere of reconciliation. The Madhav-Kumar-Nepal led coalition is undermining the urgency of working tandem with the Maoists to ward off looming crisis which indicates that the government again wants to push Maoists into jungle.

In fact, the government is trying to ostracize the Maoists as it has shown no signs of change or improvement from the very start.

However, the Maoists ascent to power can somehow be anticipated to save the country from again falling into the trap of civil war.

Of course, the chances of the nation getting a new constitution any time soon, even after the CA's term is extended by a few months, are still remain very slim.

Nevertheless, if the major parties overcome their differences and lack of a sense of responsibility to arrive at a political consensus, it could help stop the ceaseless downturn in the political uncertainty.

The Ghosts of Gandamak

By William Dalrymple

The name Gandamak means little in the West today. Yet this small Afghan village was once famous for the catastrophe that took place there during the First Anglo-Afghan War in January 1842, arguably the greatest humiliation ever suffered by a Western army in the East.

The course of that distant Victorian war followed a trajectory that is beginning to seem distinctly familiar. In 1839, the British invaded Afghanistan on the basis of dubious intelligence about a nonexistent threat: information about a single Russian envoy to Kabul, the Afghan capital, was manipulated by a group of ambitious hawks to create a scare about a phantom Russian invasion, thus bringing about an unnecessary, expensive and wholly avoidable conflict.

Initially, the British conquest proved remarkably easy and bloodless: Kabul was captured within a few months and a pliable monarch, Shah Shuja, placed on the throne. Then an insurgency began which unraveled that first heady success, first among the Pashtuns of Kandahar and Helmand, then slowly moving northward until it reached the capital.

What happened next is a warning of how bad things could yet become: a full-scale rebellion against the British broke out in Kabul, and the two most senior British envoys were murdered, making the British occupation impossible to sustain. On the disastrous retreat that followed, as many as 18,000 East India Company troops and maybe half again as many Indian camp followers (estimates vary), were slaughtered by Afghan marksmen waiting in ambush amid the snow drifts and high passes, shot down as they trudged through the icy depths of the Afghan winter.

The last 50 or so survivors made their final stand at Gandamak. As late as the 1970s, fragments of Victorian weaponry could be found lying in the screes above the village: even today, the hill is covered with bleached British bones. Only one man, Thomas Souter, lived to tell the tale. It is a measure of the increasingly pertinent parallels between the events of 1842 and today's that one of the main NATO bases in Afghanistan is named Camp Souter.

For the Victorian British, Gandamak became a symbol of the country's greatest ever imperial defeat, as well as a symbol of gallantry: William Barnes Wollen's celebrated painting of the Last Stand of the 44th Foot — a group of ragged but determined British soldiers standing in a circle behind their bayonets as the Pashtun tribesmen close in — was one of the era's most famous

images.

For the Afghans themselves, Gandamak became a symbol of freedom, and their determination to refuse to be controlled by any foreign power. It is again no accident that the diplomatic quarter of Kabul is named after the Afghan resistance leader who oversaw the British defeat at Gandamak, Wazir Akbar Khan.

A week or so ago, while doing research for a book on the disaster of 1842, I only narrowly avoided the fate of my Victorian compatriots.

Gandamak backs onto the mountain range that leads to Tora Bora and the Pakistan border, an area that has always been a Taliban center. I was trying to follow the route of the British retreat, but had been advised not to attempt to visit the Gandamak area without local protection. So I set off in the company of a local tribal leader who is also a sports minister in the Karzai government, Anwar Khan Jigdalek. A mountain of a man, Anwar Khan is a former wrestling champion who made his name as the mujaheddin commander against the Soviet Union in the 1980s.

We left Kabul — past the blast walls of the NATO barracks that were built on the very site of the British cantonment of 170 years ago — and headed into the line of bleak mountain passes that link Kabul with the Khyber Pass. At Sarobi we left the main road, and moved into Taliban territory: five trucks full of Anwar Khan's old mujaheddin comrades, all brandishing rocket-propelled grenades, appeared to escort us.

At Jigdalek, on the 12th of January, 1842, 200 frostbitten British soldiers found themselves surrounded by several thousand Pashtun tribesmen. The two highest-ranking British soldiers were taken hostage. It was 50 of those infantrymen who later managed to break out under cover of darkness to make the final passage to Gandamak. Our own welcome to the village was, thankfully, somewhat warmer.

It was Anwar Khan's first visit to his home since he had become a minister, and the villagers treated us to a feast, Mughal style, in an apricot orchard. We sat on carpets next to bubbling irrigation runnels, under a trellis of vine and pomegranate blossoms, as course after course of kebabs and mulberry-scented rice were laid in front of us.

It was nearly 5 p.m. before the final pieces of naan bread were cleared away, and our hosts decided it was too late to head on to Gandamak. Instead, we went that evening to the nearest big city,

Jalalabad, where we discovered that we'd had a narrow escape: there had been a huge battle at Gandamak that day between government forces and a group of villagers and Taliban fighters. Our gluttony had saved us from driving straight into an ambush.

The battle had taken place on exactly the site of the British last stand. In Afghanistan, imperial history seems to be repeating itself with almost uncanny precision.

The following morning I attended a jirga, or assembly of tribal elders, to which the graybeards of Gandamak had come, under a flag of truce, to discuss what had happened the day before. The story was typical of all I had heard about the current government, and revealed how a mixture of corruption and incompetence had helped give an opening for the return of the once-hated Taliban.

The elders related how the previous year, government troops had turned up to destroy the opium harvest. The troops promised the villagers full compensation, and were allowed to burn the crops; but the money never came. Before the planting season, the villagers again went to Jalalabad and asked the government if they could be provided with assistance to grow other crops. Promises were made; again nothing was delivered.

So, desperate, the villagers planted poppies, informing the local authorities that if anyone tried to burn the crop, they would have no option but to resist: they had children to feed. When the troops turned up, about the same time as we were arriving at Jigdalek, the villagers were waiting for them, and had called in the local Taliban to assist. In the fighting that followed, we were told, nine policemen were killed, six vehicles were destroyed and 10 police hostages taken.

Ever since, I've been thinking about the close parallels between the fix that NATO now faces in Afghanistan, and that faced by the British more than 150 years ago. Then as now, the problem is not hatred of the West, per se, so much as a dislike of foreign troops ordering people around in their own country.

There has always been an absolute refusal by the Afghans to be ruled by foreigners, or to accept any government perceived as being imposed on them. Then as now, the puppet ruler installed by the West has proved inadequate for the job: simultaneously corrupt and weak, and forced to turn on his puppeteers in order to retain a fragment of legitimacy in the eyes of his people.

Then as now, there have been few

tangible signs of improvement under the Western-backed regime: despite the billions of dollars sent to Afghanistan, Kabul's streets are still more rutted than those in the smallest provincial towns of Pakistan. There is little health care: for any serious medical problem, patients have to fly to India.

Then as now, the presence of large numbers of well-paid foreign troops has caused the cost of food and provisions to rise, and living standards to fall: Afghans feel they are getting poorer, not richer. Then as now, there has been an attempt at a last show of force in order to save face before withdrawal. As in 1842, this year's surge has achieved little except civilian casualties, further alienating the Afghans.

It is not, however, too late to learn some lessons from the mistakes of the British in 1842. Then, the British officials in Kabul continued to send out dispatches of delusional optimism as the insurgents moved ever closer to Kabul. Those officials believed there was a straightforward military solution to the problem, and that if only they could recruit enough Afghans to their army, they could eventually march home and leave the pliable regime in place. By the time they realized they had to negotiate and reach a compromise with their enemy, their power had ebbed too far, and the only thing the insurgents were willing to talk about was an unconditional surrender.

Today, too, there is no easy military solution to Afghanistan: even if we proceed with the current plan to spend billions equipping an Afghan Army of half a million troops, that force will never be able to guarantee security or shore up such a discredited regime. Every day, despite the military muscle of the United States, the security gets worse, and the area under government control contracts.

The only answer is to negotiate a political solution while we still have enough power to do so — which in some form or other means talking with the Taliban. Otherwise, we may yet be faced with a replay of 1842. George Lawrence, a veteran of that war, issued a prescient warning in *The Times* of London just before Britain blundered into the Second Anglo-Afghan War in the 1870s. "A new generation has arisen which, instead of profiting from the solemn lessons of the past, is willing and eager to embroil us in the affairs of that turbulent and unhappy country," he wrote. "Although military disasters may be avoided, an advance now, however successful in a military point of view, would not fail to turn out to be as politically useless."

Unhappy and discontent younger generation

Social observer

The people who are now leading and guiding the society have failed miserably to understand the trend which is influencing this class and even without this they are trying to impose their own will and decision on them. To be further clear and specific on this point we must admit that the culture, psychological make-up of this generation are totally different from those of the people whose concept and values find place of pride and respect in the society. Today we need new concepts and values in keeping with the aspiration of the younger generation. The younger generation is living in a different age when old values are dwindling giving place to the new and it is not proper that all those who happen to govern and lead the society must try to analyze these changes since without having a clear cut grasp of this development it will not possible to guide the younger generation.

The younger generation, it seems, is getting further away from the crosscurrent of the socio-political mainstream, which in fact influences the course of the onward march of the society and the country.

But the question being raised very clamorously in our society these days, particularly in view of the challenges posed by the present political situation of the country, is: Have the Nepalese youths really been able to enjoy, as what it is called, the fruits of democracy? There are many more questions which can be asked in this connection. In fact, experiences have proved that during the past 19 years almost all the political

leaders wasted their time and energy only in mutual incrimination and in strengthening the strategies in the direction of capturing power for their own personal aggrandizement in the name of democracy. Was it all for which the younger generation should remain indebted to the older generation? The old guard has lost that vision and stamina which the nation direly needs today to guard itself against myriad threats and dangers emanating from the social, economic and political ailments. Their senescent vision and senile posture are no longer fit to address the present challenges.

But, the widespread discontent and dissatisfaction, which we notice these days among the younger generation, are indeed a matter of deep concern and distress. The nature of this discontent too very strange and peculiar in that it is prevalent in all sections of this generation whether it be the student class or other common young people. Young generation is feeling unhappy because it does not find anything moving in accordance with its desires and aspirations.

The younger generation is facing the problem of unemployment and the absence of necessary healthy atmosphere. Our younger generation is unhappy at home and in the society. The younger generation in fact does not feel secure about their present and future.

The young enthusiasm, energy and aspirations have got to be assimilated in the national mainstream. The national

mainstream's flow will get blocked and choked in case this fresh healthy and youthful blood is not mingled with it. The old ways, old concepts and values will not be able to meet the challenges of the transition and change through which we are passing.

Youths play a lead role in nation building. Youth's spirit, diligence, enthusiasm and creativeness are comparable to none. Youths of 15-29 years age groups occupy about 30 percent of the country's total population. This is the most important segment of the country's population. But due to lack of proper guidance, experience and self-confidence are not properly oriented to the national realities. But this huge portion of population is not being mobilized effectively, on the whole nation's socio-economic development of the country.

The existing challenges and problems of youth development are mostly related to education, culture, employment, health, sports, crimes and addiction to undesirable acts such as drug abuse. Majority of the Youth are still denied of educational opportunities, youths who are educated but whose education has not been of any utility to their life is feeling restless. The lack of education and unemployment, criminal attitude and drug abuse are on the rise among the youths.

The effects of external culture developed and expanded through mass media are also affecting the mind of the youths. They have fallen prey to the sense of confusion and directionless.

These days, the young generation is vulnerable to such problems as AIDS, venereal diseases, smoking, alcoholism and drug abuse.

A huge number of young Nepalese women are involved in prostitution and similar number of youths is going abroad each year for foreign employment. AIDS epidemic is ever increasing. It is certain that youths will occupy the greatest share of AIDS positive cases.

Considering the lead role of the youth in nation building, the objectives of the government should be to fully leverage the youth in the national mainstream by means of mobilizing them in the socio-economic development of the nation. Youth manpower should be utilized in the productive sector. Nation should give the responsibility to the youth to be as able citizens of the country. Youths are change agents for the coming 21st century and they should be made capable of confronting the existing challenges like poverty, illiteracy, backwardness and superstitions.

State should create programs for the personality development of the youths: Programs such as training, seminars, workshops, travel etc. conducting of exchange of practical knowledge and experience by providing opportunities for demonstrating one's own talent and encouraging such talents by providing opportunities for research study, youths should be mobilized as socio-economic change agents among indigenous tribes and marginalized sections of the population in the backward regions of the country.

Buddhism and Sino-Nepal Cultural Linkage

By Prem Kumari Pant

Mythical story

Buddhism has been taken as a glory of Nepal since the early phase of history. Deepankar Buddha and Swayambhu occupy great space in mythical story. According to Trikal Buddha, Dipankar is Aliti Buddha.

Bipashwi Buddha came from Bandhumati city and sowed the seed of lotus, from where the blaze of Swayambhu emanated. As such, Swayambhu is also called Adibuddha that is believed to ensure well-being of the world.

After that, Shikhi Buddha from Jambu Island, Bishwambhu Buddha from Anupamnagar, Krakuchchanda from Khamabati, Kanakmuni Buddha from Shovati nagar and Kashyap Buddha from Kashi came to Nepal.

The process of their arrival in Nepal matches with the pattern mentioned by Dignikaya about the same.

Pali literature has also mentioned about these Buddhas with due respect. The myth pertaining to the creation of the Kathmandu valley is also deeply interlinked with the aforementioned Buddhas.

Any account of the history of Buddhism must begin with the story of its founder, Siddhartha Gautam, the historical Buddha. Obviously Buddhism is considered as most scientific and popular religion of the world. The archaeological explorations and excavations carried out so far attest to the fact that Nepal is the birthplace of Shakyamuni. In the Third Century, Emperor Ashoka had visited the sites of Buddhist holy places. Additionally, he had paid homage to the holy sites and erected the pillars in commemoration of and dedication to the Buddha.

Shakyamuni Buddha is regarded as a historic Buddha by the Ashoka Pillar inscription. In fact, the history of Buddhism can be traced back to the 6th century B.C. on the basis of archaeological remains. But some scholars even believe that the history of Buddhism is more than five thousand years ago. These scholars have made it general that Nepal practiced Buddhism during the time of Buddhas prior to Gautam Buddha. The collection of information from myths and legends coupled with analytical and in depth study alludes that Buddha guided human beings on the path of peace, compassion, non-violence and disciplined life. Many research works deal with the history of Buddhism in Nepal from a historical perspective.

The starting point in Buddhism is mankind and the way in which they suffer not just physical pain but the general feeling of dissatisfaction with life—the craving to achieve or having something more, the fear of change and death.

Buddhism is not a dogmatic religion in the sense that it does not require a person to accept fixed belief and ideal. If one reserves the right to find the truth for oneself one must logically accord the same right to others and also respect them as they arrive at different conclusions. This basic tolerance is what the world today actually needs.

These were the words of Buddha to his disciples just on the eve of his death. "Deyat is inherent in all component things. Workout your salvation with diligence"

The founder of Buddhist religion and philosophy, Gautama Buddha, the apostle of peace, compassion, non-violence and universal brotherhood, was born in 623 BC in Lumbini, Nepal. His father Sudhodan was a king of Kapilvastu. His mother Maya Devi died soon after giving birth to him in Lumbini on her way to her parents' home, Devdaha. His stepmother, Prajāpati brought him up with loving care. At the age of 16 he was married to princess Yeshodhara.

Old age, disease and death made him realize the sheer hollowness of worldly pleasure. With the birth of his son Rahul he decided to leave home and family at once. For six years he lived as a homeless Sadhu getting instruction under two religious teachers and visiting many places. But it did not do any help to him in reaching his goal. At last he

sat under a Pipal tree at Bodhi Gaya and there he found supreme knowledge and enlightenment, and thus he became Buddha, the enlightened one. For forty five year, he roamed as a wandering teacher and preached Buddhism in north India and Nepal. Buddha is said to have died at the age of eighty in 483 BC in Kushinagar near Gorakhpur.

The result of religious revolution was the main cause of origin of Buddhism. This revolution was targeted to Hinduism's caste system and priesthood. At that time Hinduism's caste system and priesthood were in the climax.

Riga Veda's nature worship became more and more complicated with many difficult and costly religious rituals for the common people. Hindu priests tried to show their supremacy in the society. They insisted the people to perform many costly religious vedic yangyas. But for many common people it became impossible to bear the cost of performing yangya. Lower caste people or Dalits were extremely exploited by so-called upper caste people. So many common people gradually started getting attracted to Buddhism. Buddha challenged dogmatic caste system in Hindu religion. He gave message of equality to the helpless down-trodden lower caste people and opened the door for freedom.

Buddhism became a popular and dominating religion in Asia. Buddhism is easy to follow and understand. Buddha himself spent more than 45 years as a wandering teacher, preaching Buddhism. He explained Karma in a very simple and easy way. He gave more emphasis on morality and deed.

He had many fine human qualities such as kindness, affection, sympathy, and the ability to never get angry. He was ready to hear slander, never pleased by hearing praise from others. In his mind there was no place for hate and enmity. He possessed the quality to satisfy all sects of society. He had good organization qualities: he visualized the importance of organized monks and established monasteries. The well-organized body of monks (Sangha) was the most effective instrument in the hand of religion.

Lumbini, the birth-place of Gautam Buddha, is situated at the foothill of the Himalayas and the Churia range. Buddha, the apostle of peace, compassion, non violence and universal brotherhood was born in 623 B.C. on the full moon day of the first month of Lunar calendar: Baisakh Purnima which falls in April/May.

He was born in the human form to save humanity from sufferings.

Lumbini was in its grandeur for some centuries. But Lumbini remained neglected for centuries. The history as well as the ancient remains of the Sakyas period and the faded magnificence of Lumbini is a challenge to the archaeologists and historians. Its importance is added by the fact that the United Nations has taken interest in the development of the area under the U.N. Development Project. An international Committee has also been set up for the development of this sacred historical place. In 1967 UN Secretary General U. Thant made Lumbini Development Project an International Concern, when he visited the birth place of Lord Buddha. Late King Mahendra had also shown deep interest in the development of Lumbini and later founded Lumbini Development Committee. As a result funds for this Development Project have been pouring in from several countries.

Very recently, several beautiful shrines have been built by several Buddhist countries in Lumbini. The visit to Lumbini, the birth-place of Buddha and Kapilvastu, the realm of the Sakyas is not only for spiritual enlightenment but also for solace and satisfaction.

Chinese traveler Fa Xian (403 A.D.) and Xuan Zhang (636 A.D.) visited Lumbini and Kapilvastu. At that time, the whole region was in ruins with many dilapidated stupas, monasteries and palaces. Xuan Zhang also observed the Ashoka Pillar split into two when it was struck by lightning. In 1895 Fuhrer, a famous German archaeologist

discovered the great pillar while wandering about the foothills Shivalik range. The splendor of the holy seat of Buddhism is evident from various old monasteries, sculptures and archaeological objects.

Besides the Ashoka Pillar, another most famous monument is the temple of Maya Devi. On the south of the Maya Devi temple there is the famous sacred bath pool known as Puskarni. It is believed that Maya Devi took a bath in this pool before delivery.

Scholars mention that Nepal follows Theravada, Mahayan and Vajrayana

Theravada being directed towards Arhatood of a single individual is termed as unpopular school of Buddhism. It lays emphasis on four noble truths, eightfold noble path and twelve principles of causation. Tripitakas are the teaching of the Buddha which remains as the sutras.

Mahayana (greater vehicle) is gravitated towards altruistic motive and it is centered around the popularity of Buddhism. It endeavours to popularize Buddhism with an aim to attract the people and allure them about the prospect of attaining Akanishta Bhuvan (heaven). It urges people to renounce ego, possessive nature, pride, aggression, ambition, Tamashi feeling. And, at the same time, it inspires to get involved in benevolent activities for the welfare of all sentient beings, practicing Bodhisattvaarya.

It teaches people to practice amity, compassion, joyfulness and equanimity (Chaturbrahmaviharas i.e. Maitri, Karuna, Mudita, Upekshya). Six Paramitas (perfections) like charity, discipline, love for all or equality or equanimity, meditation and wisdom (i.e. Dana Shila, Kshyanti, Veerya, Dhyan, Prajna) are also the basic tenets of Mahayana. Mahayana also adopted Tantra and Mantras for perfection (Siddhi).

Vajrayana (the diamond way) or Samyeksambodhiyana is perceived as the latest phase of the development of Buddhism. It is based on Sutras of Theravada, Mantra and Tantra of Mahayana. It is the blend of Mahayana and Theravada.

Buddhism is found to have developed in Nepal in different periods of history: ancient, early medieval, medieval and modern period.

Many Buddhist Viharas were also made in various phases in the history of the country.

During the Licchavi period all forms of Buddhism developed in Nepal. During early medieval period many Viharas of Patan were made. It is regarded as the age of preachers and Siddhas. The period also saw the development of Tantrism, Mantrayana, Sahajayana and Kalachakayana, the various sub-sects of Buddhism.

Although the Malla rulers were Hindus, they were tolerant to Buddhism as the Licchavis. They also contributed towards the development of Buddhism in Nepal. The religious syncretism was the distinct feature of the period.

Perceval Landon writes in his book 'Nepal': "It is perhaps hardly worthwhile to make more than a passing reference to the ancient legends which associate with both Pashupati and Swayambunath the miraculous enthronement of two distinct religions in this remote Himalayan hill-locked plain. In them the Buddhas of more than one reincarnation are recorded. Though the reputation of this home of sanctity was greatly increased by every legend that oriental devotion could devise or remember, the plain fact is that Ashoka, by his journey to Patan and by the erection of five stupas there and one at Kiritipur, conferred for ever a permanent and localized distinction upon the centre of the valley of Nepal. From that time onwards it has been a place of pilgrimage, and though the past and present relations between Buddhism and Hinduism from one of the most interesting and most complicated problems that modern religions offer, there is no doubt that from the point of view of the countries which lie to the north of Nepal, she maintains to this day centers of merit giving which no incident

in her history has in any way diminished".

He further writes "The great shrines of Swayambunath and Buddhath, and the more recent stupas of Asoka were in themselves enough to attract the causal visit of pilgrims probably as much determined to tread in the footsteps of Asoka as in those of Buddha. But they have left no record, and it is only in the persistent upkeep of the two former shrines that we can trace a continuous line in religion which Nepal had taken as her own."

Buddhism is one of the earliest religions of the world. It might be called a transnational religious moment. The Buddha sent his followers off in all directions to preach his doctrine for the good of the world. The Emperor Asoka of Murya empire sent or encouraged missionaries to spread Buddhism well beyond his own kingdom. Buddhism became a popular and dominating religion in Asia.

Some holy places of Buddhism in Nepal

Nepal is not only the birthplace of the Gautam Buddha, the seventh Buddha, out of the other Six Adhi Buddhas- Vipasvi, Sikhi, Visvava, Krakuchanda, Kanakmuni and Kasyapa. It is related with various life activities of Gautam Buddha and Adhi Buddhas.

According to Old Field there are in all about 2000 Buddhist. Shrines in the Kathmandu Valley. A majority of them are Chaityas. Besides, there are a large number of Monasteries, Chaityas and Chortens in Northern part of Nepal. These divided into three classes Dedicatory, memorial and funeral. Dedicatory shrines are Swayambunath, Four stupas around Patan, Chilian Deo in Patan, Chilian Deo in Kirtipur, Kathesimbhu in Kathmandu, Buddha Mandal in Kathmandu and Dan Deo near Deopatan in Kathmandu.

Memorial shrines are Buddhath or Kasha Chaitya, Rato (Red) Machhendranath in Patan, Seto (White) Machhendranath in Kathmandu, Manjushri shrine near Swayambunath and Mahabouddha in Patan.

Funeral and relic shrines which are believed to have ashes or some relics of the dead are found all over the Valley. They are of less importance.

In most of dedicatory shrines there is a Monastery or Vihara attached to them. These are of historical importance and are dedicated with various legends and traditions.

Another important feature in the description of Buddhist holy places in Nepal is that they include some Hindu temples owing to the syncretism of Hinduism and Buddhism. Buddhists of Nepal also adopted several Hindu deities as objects of Buddhist worship.

The holy places of Buddhism in Nepal include not only purely Buddhist shrines and Monasteries, but also some Hindu shrines, trantric shrines and temples of Gorakhnath cult.

Recently owing to awakening among Theravadin Buddhists several new active Monasteries have been constructed. They are exerting great influence on Buddhists who were losing genuine faith in the religion.

Lumbini grove was the place in the territory of Kapilvastu on the way to Devadaha. Kapilvastu was identified to be located at Tilaurakot in 1901. The identification of Tilaurakot as Kapilvastu is based not only on its location but also on other travelogues of the Chinese travelers, Fa-Xian and Xuan Zhang. As written in the Buddhist Scriptures "The snow covered peak of the Himalaya look, down on Kapilvastu which is located on the banks of the river. The remains are surrounded by a moat and walls of the city are made of brick". The remains of the city of Kapilvastu are in a grand scale and it was a centre of great culture. The renewed excavations by the Nepal Government, Department of Archaeology and the Rishso University of Japan have further confirmed the authenticity of Tilaurakot as Kapilvastu.

Perceval Landon writes in his book 'Nepal': "It was by an accident perhaps by one of the most curious accidents in the history of archaeology, that in 1895 Dr. Fuhrer (German) chanced upon this missing pillar. It was set up by the emperor Asoka 2175 years ago upon the

spot where Gautam was born. In 1894 Dr. Fuhrer reported that he has found the Nirvana stupa of the previous and mythical Buddha, named Konagmana, on the banks of the Nigli Sagor near Nigilva. He had indeed found the Asoka column recording the Emperor visit in 250 B.C. The pillar was deeply imbedded in accumulated debris, and it was not until several feet of earth were cleared away that the inscription of the Emperor was discovered. Then it was at once clear that the pillar marked the position of the Lumbini garden, where according to the definite statement of the earliest Buddhist pilgrims and chroniclers, Prince Gautam was born. The inscriptions runs as follows: "King Piyadasi beloved of the Gods"—"this was the personal formula generally used by the Emperor Asoka in his inscriptions"—having been anointed twenty years, came in person and worshipped here, saying "Here Buddha the Sakya ascetic, was born" and he caused a stone capital in the shape of a horse to be constructed and a stone pillar to be erected, which declares, "Here the blessed one was born. King Piyadasi exempted the village community of Lumbini from taxes, and bestowed wealth upon it."

Perceval further writes "A few yards away to the south are the remains of the pool mentioned by the Buddhist authorities as that in which Maya, the mother of Buddha, bathed immediately before the child's birth. It will be remembered that in accordance with custom, Maya was on her way from her husband capital Kapilvastu in order to give birth to her first son in her father's house at Devadaha".

He added that the story of Asoka's visit is thus recorded in the Buddhist chronicle.

Eight hundred years later Xuan Zhang visited the place, and by a happy accident recorded that the pillar had been struck by lightning and split, and the horse and the capital thrown down. The crack caused by lightning descends about thirteen feet from the top and just touches the inscription.

The identity of Kapilvastu with Tilaurakot is a matter that will never perhaps be wholly settled. The question depends entirely upon the testimony of the two Chinese pilgrims, Fa-Xian and Xuan Zhang, are very valuable because they are informative. Fa-Xian visited Lumbini and Kapilvastu in 403 A.D. The first description of Kapilvastu is by Fa-Xian according to the historians. Fa-Xian writes as follows, "He reached Kapilvastu, where there was neither any king nor people. In site of the city was marked by desolate ruins and mounds.

Xuan Zhang visited Kapilvastu on 25th Dec. 636 A.D. His accounts of pilgrims are very helpful in finding the correct location and in getting some description of Kapilvastu. He has given a very informative account. The town of Kapilvastu was found to be completely deserted. Therefore, it was difficult to demarcate its boundary but the boundary walls of the city and places are quite strong at some places. Ten towns were there all in ruins. There was no population, no ruler. There were more than 1600 stupas all in a deserted condition.

Kapilvastu was destroyed even before Mahaparivirvana of Gautam Buddha. The descendants of Prasanjit named Vidudabha massacred the Shakyas Kingdom of Kapilvastu. Vidudabha attacked four times to Kapilvastu but he was intervened by Buddha for three times. In the fourth attack in entering the Kapilvastu he massacred the Shakyas. More than 10,000 Shakyas and even newly born babies were killed. Several Shakyas fled to the Kathmandu valley. Thus the famous place of Kapilvastu lost its significance during the life time of Gautam Buddha.

The Koliyas of Ramagrama was quite a famous state in the 6th century B.C., as mother of Buddha, Maya Devi hailed from this place. After the great demise of Lord Buddha, the corporal remains of his body were divided into eight portions. Out of these eight claimants one was the Koliyas of Ramagrama. Stupas were built in each place on the holy relics. As such a stupa was also constructed on the holy relics

in Ramagrama. Ashoka in the 3rd century thought of erecting 84,000 stupas after opening all the eight stupas and redistributing the relics. However, it is mentioned in the Buddha texts, that he could not get open the stupa of Ramagrama due to the obstruction by a Naga (serpent king) who guarded the stupa and lived by its side in a lake. Thus the stupa of Ramagrama remained undisturbed and its originality maintained.

Fa-Xian visited Ramagrama in 5th century. He described that at that time the stupa was covered by the vegetation. Xuan Zhang visited Ramagrama in the 7th century and described that the Kingdom of Ramagrama was desolate for many years.

During the passage of time the actual location of several Buddhist places was lost in obscurity and Ramagrama was also one of them. The stupa of Ramagrama was first discovered by Hoey in 1898 at the bank of the Jharai River in Parasi district of Nepal. Babu Krishna Rijal writes about the stupa on the Jharai river that cannot be anything but the Dhātu stupa of Lord Buddha raised by the Koliyas in Ramagrama.

It is said that Lord Buddha, after attaining enlightenment in Bodh Gaya visited sacred places with his disciples and on his way he was lecturing on religion. It is maintained in Swayambhu Purana that Lord Buddha came to Kathmandu Valley from Jetavana Monastery in Sravasti. He lived in Manjushri hill and paid homage to Swayambhu Dharma Chaitya.

Siphuchao at Shivapuri it is said Gautam Buddha had his hair shaven. He preached Buddhism to his disciples while sitting on Swayambhu hill between Swayambhu Chaitya and Manjushri Chaitya. Thus the prehistoric legends of Nepal valley are very rich and they also speak of the origin of holy places of the Kathmandu Valley according to the Buddhist traditions.

Swayambunath stupa is the one of the holiest places in Nepal. It is situated in the Kathmandu Valley.

Its religious significance is also described in 'Swayambhu Purana' which was written in the 15th century. Before the shrine was constructed about 2000 years ago, the hill was regarded to be a sacred place owing to the presence of a divine lotus, as the legend goes, beneath it in which the holy spirit of God was enshrined. Swayambunath stupa is one of the oldest Buddhist shrine in Nepal which was built in the fifth century after the death of Sakyamuni Buddha.

The place of Swayambunath is also a centre of cultural activities. The whole stupa is a complex of Chaityas, temples, images and numerous religious objects.

Boudhanath stupa which is called Kasha Stupa is situated in the north east of Kathmandu. Although it is built in Nepalese style, it is by and large, a Tibetan shrine. Date of its construction is not known. It is regarded as one of the oldest and largest Lamaist shrines in the world.

Regarding the origin of Boudhanath, there are various stories and legends. Dowmmar (1973) has given a good account of some of these legends of Tibetan Tradition, Perhaps most of useful, inspiring and popular. It is said that Padmasambhava himself, King Trisendestain (A.D. 742-797) and others were the main protagonists in the history of transmission and establishment of Buddhism in Tibet. They have played their parts in the construction of stupa of Boudhanath. Thus, this stupa is the original cause of transmission of Buddhist religion to Tibet.

Boudhanath is a famous place of pilgrimage. Buddhist people come to a moat place for blessings in life, especially for safe traveling of the Himalaya. The worship consists of circumambulation of the stupa in a clockwise direction turning the Mani or prayer wheels fixed in the surrounding wall. These wheels are common in Tibet. The wheels are to be turned round chanting "Om Mani Padme Hum" or (Hail to the Jewel (Mani) in the lotus (Padme)). This is the Mantra or prayer of the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara.

Boudhanath attracts more Lamaist votaries than Swayambunath stupa. This Boudhanath stupa has special

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Buddhism and Sino-Nepal Cultural Linkage

virtue for its power of granting all prayers for wealth, progeny and fulfillment of other wishes. This stupa also has intimate relation with the chief legendary and historic person of early Lamaism. This stupa enshrines the spirit of Buddhas of the directions and of the Buddhas of the three times. The present, past and future.

Patan is a centre of Buddhism in Nepal. About two-thirds of its inhabitants are Buddhists. Patan has a very large number of Buddhist monuments with beautiful carvings and with sculptures made of stone, clay, wood and metal.

Taha Bahal Avalokiteshvara (Matsyandranath) was probably constructed in 1408 or later which was constructed by Narendra Dev of the Surya Vansh dynasty. It is worshipped both by Buddhists and Hindus.

The image Matsyandranath is made of dark red wood. Once in a year during Matsyandranath Jatra the image is taken out in a big chariot. This procession is held in the month of April/May.

Minmath, Temple is situated almost opposite the Matsyandranath temple. It houses the image of a Buddhist deity, Bodhisattva Lokeshwara. It was built during the regime King Amshu Verma of the Lichhvi dynasty.

These are four ancient stupas: (E. Vahi Thura, Tele Thura, Lagan Thura, Phulcha Thura) on the four corner of the perimeter of the city of Patan, which are believed to be built by King Ashoka of India to commemorate his visit to the Valley of Kathmandu in B.C. 250. At that time Buddhism was gaining ground in the Valley.

Some scholars believe that setting up of the stupa in Patan was due to Ashoka's belief that Lord Buddha lived in this place 270 years before he came here.

In the heart of the town, Ashoka build a stupa which was later reconstructed and adorned. This stupa is called Chillandeo as that of Kirtipur.

Theravada Monasteries of Kathmandu Valley:

Theravada Buddhism almost disappeared from Nepal about 600 years ago. But Theravada Buddhism reintroduced in Nepal from Buddhist countries such as Thailand, Burma and Sri Lanka. The outstanding Bhikshu Maha Prayaga, Prayagananda, Shakyananda, Amritananda, Subhananda responsible for the reintroduction of Theravada in Nepal.

In several places, Theravadin monasteries began to be erected with the kind patronage of Nepalese kings. These monasteries have got beautiful images of Buddha, which are specially presented by Thailand and Burma. Bhikshu Amritananda has written more than 50 scholarly books on Buddhism. Buddhist monks are studying in Thailand, Sri Lanka and Burma.

There is a tradition of Buddhist Bhikshus living in the monasteries. There are several monasteries where Buddhists are busy with several religious activities.

In the northern region of Nepal the main religion is Buddhism which is influenced largely by Tibetan Buddhism. In the highlands of Nepal - Humla, Mustang, Sindhupalchowk and Solu Khumbu there are Buddhist sacred places which are important from the point of view of Buddhist history and their relationship.

Nepal-China Buddhist relations

One can also find the account of Yuchi-chi monk of Tsin dynasty (265-420 A.D.) named Seng Tsai who visited Nepal and also wrote "Wu-Kuo-Shih" (maps concerning the foreign kingdoms). Some fragments of his work are included in the Shu-ching-chu (commentary on Water classics).

Historian appreciates Bhrikuti's contribution for the propagation of Buddhism in Tibet. The two princesses-wife of Srong-tpsan sgam-po had faith in Buddhism. They influenced the Emperor by high ideas of Buddhism and its philosophy. They played the vital roles in laying the foundation of Buddhism in Tibet. For that reason-both queens are worshipped as the incarnation of Goddess Tara - *White Tara and Harit Tara*

One of the most significant events

in the history of Nepal-Chinese cultural relations was the introduction of Buddhism to China in the second century of present era.

According to Hiranya Lal Shrestha's paper presented in First conference on Changan Buddhism in Xian on October 29, 2009. "In the 1st millennium, Lord Buddha's birthplace Lumbini, and Changan, the international centre for Buddhist religion, culture and also the then capital of China, had not only established spiritual and cultural linkages with the Buddhist monks, scholars and artists of central, south and eastern Asia, but also their positive impacts had spread far and wide."

"The arrival of Buddhism in China was followed by the contacts between Lumbini and Changan informing the Chinese people about Lumbini as the birthplace of Lord Buddha. This helped the Chinese and the Nepalese people to establish spiritual and emotional relationship. Two years before the Christian era, Yi-Chen, an envoy of the king of Indochina, an ancient kingdom of central Asia, arrived in Changan. He taught orally, a Buddhist scripture to Ching Lu, scholar of the Imperial Academy. This is the earliest record of the Chinese history concerning the introduction of Buddhism in China. The Hou Hanshu describes the enquiry about Buddhism made around 70 Christian Era by Emperor Ming (58-75 CE)."

"In the fifth century, famous Chinese pilgrim Fa Xian visited Lumbini, Ram Gram and Kapilvastu informing the Chinese people about the birthplace of Lord Buddha through his travelogue. He also translated Buddhist scriptures collecting them from Nepal and other places."

Shrestha further writes- "Buddhabhadra Shakya (Jue Xian Fa Shi), a descendant of Amritodan Shakya, uncle of Lord Buddha travelled from Kapilvastu to Kashmir and finally to China and propagated Buddhism here. He also translated Buddhist scriptures written in Sanskrit language, an ancient language of South Asia into Chinese. He contributed through his wisdom and intellectuality to enrich Changan Buddhism. Masters Fa Xian and Buddhahadra (Jue Xian Fa Shi) have also jointly undertaken the translation of rare Buddhist scriptures."

"Similarly, in the Seventh Century famous Chinese scholar Xuan Zhang, a famous Chinese traveler made a pilgrimage to Lumbini, Ramgram and Kapilvastu and not only collected a vast quantity of Buddhist scriptures but also informed the Chinese people about Nepal by writing a book titled 'Records of the Western World'."

"Big Wild Goose (Dayan) Pagoda in Changan, where the House of Xuan Zhang Collection is also preserved and where many valuable items of bearing familiarity with Nepal also exist, stands proudly as an important monument of friendship between the Nepalese and the Chinese people even today. After the Chinese people were informed about Lumbini, innumerable Buddhist teams have visited the holy Buddhist site."

"At that time the tooth relics of Lord Buddha were taken to Changan for safeguarding them as sacred objects of worship. Wherever these relics might have been brought from the inner premises of the temple containing Nepalese style Chaitiyas and holy hymns in Ranjana script of Nepal, these relics are the flames of faith to sustain the Buddhist lifeline between Lumbini and Changan."

"In the 7th century, Song Zang Gong Bo, the king of Tibet married Nepalese Princess Bhrikuti and Chinese Princess Wen Chen. Both the princess, being Buddhist, propagated Buddhism in Tibet of China. The Changan-Lhasa route used by Wen Chen and Kathmandu - Lhasa route used by marriage procession of Princess Bhrikuti are the oldest direct routes linking Changan and Kathmandu giving momentum to Buddhist cultural exchanges. Since then, a number of Chinese missions, Diplomats, Trademen, Buddhist monks and Artists such as Liyi Biao, Wang Xuechuan, Xuan Zhao, Daoxi Matizhan travelled through this route to Nepal and India. Nepalese artist Araniko (Ani

Ge) and his colleagues followed the same route to come to Beijing where they constructed famous Pagodas in Tibet, Beijing and Wu - Tai Shan, contributing towards consolidation of Nepal - China cultural relation. Incidentally, the artistic creations of Araniko in China, have now been listed in the world heritage sites."

"The affinity between Changan and Lumbini in the first millennium symbolizes the relationship between a seed and a sapling. Lord Buddha who was born in Nepal, attained enlightenment in India and became inspiration for propagation and qualitative enrichment of Buddhism in China. The Changan Buddhism, which bears a distinct Chinese characteristic, has an outstanding place in the world."

Min Bahadur Shakya writes in his book *"The life of Nepalese Buddhist Master Buddhahadra"* (Published by China Study Centre, Kathmandu, Nepal). "Centuries later, in the fifth century, CE., a noted Buddhist monk and scholar from China, Fa-Xian, visited Kapilvastu and Lumbini. A prominent Nepalese Buddhist scholar, Buddhahadra, visited China shortly after Fa-xian's visit to Nepal and became a torchbearer of Nepalese civilization in China."

"Infact, Buddhahadra was not only the first recorded Nepalese to visit China and devote his whole life in enlightening the Chinese people, but was also one of the greatest Buddhist scholars of Nepal who worked for the promotion of Buddhism in China. He became the father of two important Buddhist schools of thought in China namely Chan and Pureland Buddhist tradition and first translator of great *Avatamsaka sutra* of 60 fascicules thus facilitating greatly the formation of Hua-yen thought."

"In the seventh century Tibetan King Srong-tpsan sgampo married the Nepalese princess Bhrikuti in 633 CE. and the Chinese princess Wengchen Kongjo in 641 CE. Due to the sweet relations between these two princesses, King Srong-tpsan sgam-po helped to put the Lichhavi King Narendradeva on the throne after vanquishing of Jisnugupta on 643 CE. Later King Narendradeva initiated a formal king of invitation to the emperor of China."

"The Tang emperor sent his envoy Wang Xuance on an ambassadorial mission to Nepal in the year 647 CE. for the first time, bearing all kinds of gifts. Ambassador Wang was captivated by King Arunava after the death of King Harsavardhana in Kanaju (now in India) and when he asked help from Nepal, King Narendradeva dispatched 12,000 armies from Nepal and 700 soldiers from Tibet to rescue Wang Xuance. Nepalese forces were successful in rescuing Ambassador Wang from the clutches of King Arunava. These were the historical events during the T'ang dynastic period."

"According to Sir Aurel Stein, a group of Nepalese artists visited Dunhuang and painted a series of fresco paintings in the Mogao grottoes in the year 775-815 CE."

"The renewed 13th century emperor of China, Kublai Khan, wanted to build a big Stupa in Beijing, commemorating the establishment of Yuan dynasty in 1260 CE. Lama Phags-pa, the abbot of the Sa-skya Monastery in Tibet as well as spiritual teacher of Chinese emperor, sent an invitation to the Nepalese King to send a group of artists. In response to the request, a group of Nepalese artisans, eighty in number, under the leadership of Araniko, (1245 CE. - 1306 CE) were sent to Lhasa."

"First they built the Great Golden Pagoda in Sa-skya monastery in Tibet. On seeing the beauty of the magnificent Pagoda, he sent them to Beijing and the White Pagoda was built, which took eight years (1271-1278 CE). The White Pagoda in Beijing stands as a monument of World Heritage site - a legacy of Araniko's contribution - and has been a reminder of cultural exchange between Nepal and China over many centuries."

"Araniko not only built a White Pagoda in Beijing but also at Wutai Shan in Shangsi province on 1301 CE. as a majestic monument amidst peaceful and beautiful cool mountains.

He built nine beautiful monasteries along with a number of beautiful Buddhist images and paintings."

"Nepal shares a border with China a little more than fourteen hundred kilometers long. Despite the steep Himalayas forming almost the entire border, the degree of interaction and the multifaceted exchanges between the two sides have been extensive. This has contributed enormously to the rich cultural and artistic heritage of Nepal, and also to the inter-religious harmony prevailing there, thus enabling the Nepalese to occupy a unique place in the Asian heartland. In other words, Nepal encompasses in its ethos a blend of two civilizations on both sides of the mighty Himalayas, which thrived across the whole expanse of Asia and is still sustaining the richness and diversity of the Asian continent."

"In this process, Nepal has been both a giver and taker. Fa-xian, Buddhahadra, Bhrikuti, Wengchen, Xuanzang and Araniko are a few of the household names that have left a permanent imprint in Nepal-China relations."

"Lumbini, the birthplace of Lord Buddha, has historically created an abiding interest for not only the Asian countries but the entire global community as a fountain of peace, compassion and tolerance."

"The high point and greatest age of Buddhism in China was during the Tang Dynasty when emperors spent their wealth to establish monasteries and sculptures at various Buddhist sites."

"The cultural exchange between Nepal and China formally began in 406 CE. when a Chinese learned monk, Fa-xian (c. 337-c. 422 CE), visited Lumbini. However according to the Chinese scholars, the cultural relation between Nepal and China existed over two thousand years. The importance of Fa-xian (also spelled fa-hsien) in the history of Nepal-China relations lies in the fact that he was not only the most prominent Chinese citizen to enter Nepalese territory, but he also helped make the journey of Buddhahadra, the first Nepalese Buddhist monk ever to visit China, a success. Thus, Fa-xian can be given credit for laying the solid foundation for Nepal-China relations."

"The discovery of four monuments called Black Dragon Spring in Yanchow near Nanjing in the Kiangsu province of China has revealed that a Nepalese Buddhist teacher, Buddhahadra Sakya, visited China in the 5th century CE."

"In fact, although Buddhahadra Sakya devoted his whole life in enlightening the Chinese people, he is not well recognized in China, to appreciate his contribution, talents and wisdom. He translated a bulk of important Buddhist Sutras in Chinese and taught Buddhist meditation among the mass and disseminated Buddhist system of morality according to tradition of Sarvastivada system thus laying the foundation of Buddhist culture among the Chinese people. In brief, he was successful in becoming the father of Pure Land, Chan tradition and a great translator of Hua-yen Sutra of Chinese Buddhism."

Buddhism in Early Medieval Period

The history of Buddhism in the early medieval period is marked by the development of Vajrayana, Sahajayana and Kalachakrayana. The period continued as the age of Siddhacharya (750-1175 A.D.).

The period also witnessed the flow of the Buddhist scholars from India which brought about many Buddhist manuscripts and enriched the Viharas of the Kathmandu valley.

In the early medieval period, Chinese Mission had visited Kathmandu. The most probable truth is that they were in touch with the Vardhanas of Banepa and they were motivated by religious sentiment rather than political motive.

Buddhism in Later Medieval Nepal

The history of Buddhism during the medieval period is related to the Mallas of Nepal Mandala. During the period, the vaishyas of Nepal being hard pressed both from the north and the south

followed Buddhism. Similarly, the period witnessed the construction of many Viharas of Patan excluding a few ones. In the Viharas, the Vandyas explained the philosophy of Buddhism and enlightened the people.

Buddhism in Modern Nepal

The history of Buddhism in modern period is marked by the spirit of toleration, although the rulers are Hindus. The sense of spirituality appealed to the people of this region. The history of Buddhism in the eighteen century is marked by the ethos of the people of Nepal.

Buddhist rituals like Sameyk and Naran are popular during the period.

The exploration and research of European scholars on the Buddhist manuscripts of Nepal were very contributive in making exposure on Buddhism in the last quarter of nineteenth century inspite of suppression of Theravada by the Rana rulers.

Leaders of Theravada Revival

When Svayambhu Mahachaitya was being conserved between 1918-1921 A.D, Nepal was in touch with Tibetan Lamas. In 1926 A.D. Tsering Norbu of Tibet came to Nepal. He mediated at the Mahasiddha groto of Nagarjuna. He preached Saddharma and Bodhijnana.

The Vajracharyas of Nepal were renowned for their scholarship. Like Amritananda of Patan and Siddhi Harsa Vajracharya of Kathmandu, Ratna Bahadur Vajracharya of Yeasodhar Mahavihara, was the great scholar of those days.

He is credited for establishing Punnyashram Vidyalaya at Hiranyavarna Mahavihara.

Buddhi Raj Shakya spread Buddhism as early as 1920 A.D. He preached Svayambhu Purana, Lalitvistra, Vichitra Kanikavadan and thirty two Jalakas.

Buddhist Goodwill Mission to Nepal and Development of Theravada

In April 1946 A.D., on the request of Bhikshu Amritananda a goodwill mission from Sri Lanka visited Nepal. The mission met Padma Shansher (1945-1948 A.D.), who had just become Prime Minister. The mission included Bhikshu Amritananda, Bhikshu Priyadashi, Dr Ratna Surya and prof Aryapal. The mission was successful in securing permission for one monk among the exiled monks to return to Nepal. In 1943 A.D., he founded Anandakuti Vihara, the first Theravada monastery at Svayambhu hill. It was consecrated by Narada Maha Thera of Sri Lanka in 1948 A.D. Besides this, Ven. Mahathera, leader of the mission got permission to build a Caiyia at Anandakuti in Sri Lanka style.

In 1946 A.D., Amritananda came only after declaration of amnesty by Nepal government. Later in 1951, he founded the Akhil-Nepal Bhikshu Maha Sangha (All Nepal Council of Monks) and he was elected its president.

Lumbini developed as sacred Buddhist shrine

After the rediscovery of Lumbini pillar of Askoka on the 1st December 1896 A.D, the importance of Lumbini was realized even during the Rana regime. Kaishar Shansher cleaned the site and built a temple of Mayadevi on the nativity site on the remains of several temples built in Maurya, Sunga, Kushana and Gupta periods dating back to the third century B.C.

King Tribhuvan and the then Prime Minister Matrika Prasad Koirala handed over the archeological site to a committee for its development in 1952 A.D.

Dharmodaya Sabha had three nominees in the committee. The Sabha had the immediate programme of developing Lumbini with the provision of a residence of Bhikshus, construction of roads for the visitors and lodging for the pilgrims.

The fourth conference of the World Fellowship of Buddhists

In November 1956 A.D., the fourth conference of the World Fellowship of Buddhists (WFB) was organized in Nepal on the occasion of 2500th anniversary of the Mahaparinirvana of

Lord Buddha. It was considered most appropriate to hold the conference in the Land of Lord Buddha's birthplace. It was organized under the auspices of Dharmodaya Sabha.

World Fellowship of the Buddhist (WBF), an international organization was founded with the pious wish of Dr G.P Malalasekara of Sri Lanka in 1950 A.D. Its first general conference was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka in the same year.

That Gautam Buddha was born in Nepal (the land situated between two giant Asian countries India and China) in 623 B.S was evident after 200 years of the enlightenment of Buddha. Indeed, the discovery of e Ashokstamba and inscription in 1896, established by Emperor Ashoka in Lumbini during the 20th year of his rule, attests to this historic fact.

Since the ancient time, Nepal has been a land inspired by the grace of Buddhism and other vibrant cultures.

During the era when Buddhism was at its peak, there were Kapilvastu, Sarnath, Kushinagar, Pataliputra, Magadh Empire, Malla, kohal Himant province Nepal. India was also divided into many small states including 16 Mahajanapad states.

Primarily, the dissemination of information pertaining to the three branches of Buddhism- Mahayan, Bajrayan and Therad took place in Nepal in different phases of time.

Efforts were also made to assess and analyze the dawn of Buddhism on the basis of historical evidences in various stages of time in Nepal.

Scholars and historians have been saying that the foundation of Buddhism in Nepal has been erected since time immemorial. There is a mythical story of birupakshya described in the light of the tradition of decorating Shuphati Mahadev with the mask sporting five-buddha. This has been mentioned by Historian Baburam acharya in his work.

Later, other historians have termed this tradition as a perfect example of religious harmony existing between Hindu and Buddhist religions.

In fact, the Buddha and Buddhist culture have different premises. The historical description portrayed by Triptitika Therabad about human Buddha is understood by the world as Buddhism in a true sense. Mahayani community has occupied special space in north Himalayan region, Karnal region, Kathmandu valley apart from mainland China and its autonomous region Tibet, Bhutan, Sikkim, Arunachal, Himachal, among others. In Nepal, Buddhist religion is based on Mahayani-Bajrayani community. Large number of Buddhists reside in Himalayan region across Nepal. Shakyas, bajracharya, Manandhar, Tuladhar, Maharjan are some major castes belonging to the Newar community in the Kathmandu valley who are followers of Buddhism. In Himali region, Sherpa, Gurung, Magar, Tamang are the indigenous Buddhist communities. Similarly, Tharu-chaudhary community of Terai also follows Buddhism.

Without getting insight into as to how the aforementioned indigenous communities became Buddhist, it will be impossible to get acquainted with Buddhism in Nepal as a whole.

Conclusion

The cultural relation between Nepal and China existed well over two thousand years.

The degree of interaction and the multifaceted exchanges between the two sides have been extensive.

This has contributed enormously to the rich cultural and artistic heritage of Nepal, and also to the inter-religious harmony prevailing here.

Similarly, Buddhism, which has long been a distinct feature of the religious history of the country, has contributed enormously to continue to add new cultural dimensions to the bilateral ties between the countries.

(Paper presented by Prem Kamari Pant on the seminar "Buddhism and Sino-Nepal cultural linkage" organized by Institute for Chindian Studies & Department of Social Sciences, Jnan University, Guangzhou, China in partnership with Liuzhou (Huineg) Temple at Zhenshan, Sihui City. Date: 26-28 December 2009.)

Region:

What the Red Shirts achieved

By Giles Ji Ungpakorn

According to press reports, leaders of the pro-democracy demonstrations in Thailand's capital of Bangkok were close to a compromise with the government that would lead to elections being held several months earlier. But whether the deal would hold was in doubt on Tuesday, with reports of demonstrators—known as Red Shirts

prison sentence of 15 years, he fled the country a year ago. Here, he analyzes the terms of the agreement made between the Red Shirts and the government.

THE RED Shirt protests in Bangkok, which started in mid-March, are about to be wound up. The leaders have

unclear whether any real charges will be filed against them.

Nothing has been said about the political prisoners, both those in jail for lese majesty and those in jail for blocking roads during the recent protest.

What have the Red Shirts achieved?

myths and mind fetters about the monarchy. As a result, the monarchy appears to be in terminal crisis. If this is really so, it will seriously weaken the power of the army.

4. They have stood up to the army and shown that it is not a simple matter of just shooting down pro-democracy demonstrators. In the process, they have caused splits in the police force and lower ranks of the army.

5. They have forced the government to speed up elections.

But this is a compromise. It is not the end of the shady dictatorship of the army and the elites that stand behind the present government. The Red Shirt leaders' decision will disappoint many. However, it is difficult to see how the Red Shirts could have fought on at this present stage without new strategies.

The important question is how they will organize and fight in the future. If the Red Shirts are to strengthen themselves, they have to organize among the trade unions in order to win strike action. They have to make serious efforts to build networks among army recruits, and they have to develop a clear political platform for the People's Power Party in order to win the hearts and minds of ordinary workers and farmers.

They should advocate a welfare state, improved benefits for workers, a real peace process for the South, genuine reform of the media and the justice system. They must stand against censorship and repressive laws.

No one can just leave these matters in the hands of the leadership. Red Shirt local groups need to elect representatives who can be part of a progressive grassroots leadership to lead the struggle forward. Women should make up a significant proportion of this leadership.

Only these things would make a difference between a shoddy compromise and a real step forward to freedom, democracy and social justice.



because of their clothing—refusing to leave their encampment in the center of Bangkok.

The latest stage of the protests began two months ago, with the Red Shirts mobilizing against the right-wing government of Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva, which came to power with the backing of the military. On April 10, soldiers opened fire on the demonstrators, sparking clashes that left close to two dozen people dead and hundreds injured. But the regime failed to drive the Red Shirts out of Bangkok.

Giles Ji Ungpakorn is a Thai academic and dissident who was accused by Abhisit of the supposed crime of "lese majesty"—basically, not being loyal to Thailand's head of state, King Bhumibol. Facing a possible

accepted a compromise with the military-backed Abhisit government. Elections will not be held immediately, but on November 14. Earlier, Abhisit had indicated that an election in February 2011 was the earliest.

It is unclear whether the blanket censorship will be lifted. One clear demand that the Red Shirt leaders are expecting is that the Red Shirt TV channel (People Channel TV) will be allowed back on the air. It is unclear whether Websites like Prachatai.com will be unblocked.

Another demand is that the law be applied equally to all. The government claims that the prime minister and deputy prime minister will "surrender" to police and face charges of murdering citizens back on April 10. But it is

1. The Red Shirts have shown that they are a genuine mass movement for democracy, made up of ordinary working people in rural and urban areas. They have shown that the crisis is about class. They have shown that the Red Shirts are a grassroots movement, which will not disappear easily.

2. The Red Shirts have exposed the real and bloody nature of the military-backed government, which can only stay in power through repression and blanket censorship.

3. The struggle of the Red Shirts has turned ordinary people into leaders, and into Internet and media experts who can get around censorship in order to spread their message. In the process of struggle, they have thrown off the

Save our souls from 'AFSPA'

By Ali Sukhanver

Human rights violation is one of the most grievous problems of today's modern and so-called civilized society. Every year so many innocent people have to be a victim of human rights violations throughout the world. The system of the law enforcing agencies tries to shelter and safeguard these rights to the maximum extent but sometimes the situation becomes very painful when these agencies themselves prove a fatal weapon against these rights. Recently the Asian Human Rights Commission has released a report with the title, 'Law Enforcement Agencies of India involved in Human Rights violations.' According to the details discussed in the report, from April 2001 to March 2009, the National Human Rights Commission of India NHRC has recorded 1184 deaths in police custody. These deaths must be called as the murders committed by the police because they all were without any sanction or approval of a court of law.

According to the details most of these murders have taken place in relatively calm and problem-free states of India including the most peaceful Maharashtra state with 192 murders. The other afflicted states are Uttar Pradesh with 128 killings, Gujarat with 113, Andhra Pradesh 85 and West Bengal 83. The most interesting fact is that all these states are considered very peaceful and prosperous parts of the country with no insurgent activities. This report compels us to think of the parts where insurgencies and separatist movements are simply a routine matter. The situation must be worse in the seven states forming the Northeastern territory and in the valleys

of Jammu-Kashmir.

A few weeks back, the International People's Tribunal for Human Rights and Justice in Kashmir claimed in a heart rendering report that there are 2,700 "unknown, unmarked and mass graves" in three districts of the region. In this 108-page report, it has been claimed that the graves are spread across 55 burial grounds across north Kashmir. Regarding the authenticity of the report, the compilers say: "We used conversations, observations, research and formal interview methods in individual, private and collective settings, we also took photographs and on certain occasions video documentation, so that there might not be a single grain of exaggeration in it." The report has been submitted to the Chief Minister Omar Abdullah. According to "Kashmir live.com", the Speaker of the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly, Mohammad Akbar Lone has said, "If the report is submitted to me or a complaint is registered with me, I will ask the government to investigate the report." The tribunal of legislators from North Kashmir comprising of Prof Angana Chatterji, professor of anthropology in California Institute of Integral Studies, Mihir Desai, Supreme Court lawyer; Parvez Imroz, head, Coalition of Civil Society; and rights activist Khurram Parvez, said criticizing the report, "The credibility of the government is at stake. It should seriously investigate the case."

Extra-judicial killings have become a cultural and traditional trait of the Indian society. The Indian media is often found condemning the terrorist

activities of non-state actors but the 'wonderful doings' of the law enforcement agencies are never given due coverage. A few days back a western web-page referred to the amazingly truthful statement of the Director General of Police in the Manipur state, Mr. Y. Jay Kumar Singh, "In the last eleven months my officers have 'murdered' more than 260 persons". The statement shows that these 260 persons were killed at individual level without bringing anything to the notice of the courts.

Another hidden reality is that the facts and figures sorted out by the Human Rights Commission may not match with the actual statistics because only a very few cases of human rights violations succeed in reaching the Commission or judiciary. The basic reason for this reality is that very often the victims belong to the most deprived and unprivileged social strata. They neither have the means nor the courage to approach the courts. Another hurdle is the absence of any eye-witness. People are so much frightened of the security forces that they find no courage to stand upright against them in the courts as eye-witnesses. Furthermore, if they succeed in building up any moral courage, they are reminded of the Armed Forces Special Power Act of 1958. This draconian law allows even a junior non-commissioned officer to 'shoot to kill' on mere suspicion in order to maintain 'Public Order'. This license to murder, known as AFSPA, is widely misused by the security forces in India. Some of the moderate politicians of India call this

license 'a trigger-happy culture of governance'. The states like Manipur are the worst victim of this cruel license to kill.

The people of the Manipur state could never forget the ruthless killings of two innocent citizens on the 23rd of July 2009: one of them was Mayanglambam Thokhom Rabina, a seven-month pregnant woman. She was shot dead in front of her young son. The police officers claimed that the pregnant Rabina was killed when another man was trying to run away while being frisked by police. During the chase, police opened fire and accidentally shot Rabina. The other man murdered on the same day was Chongthan Sanjeet Meitei. According to the details he was taken inside a shop to be searched, and was killed inside it. These 'manly' actions were taken by a team of Manipur Police Commandos (MPC). Five other civilians were seriously injured by the gunfire. Although the police official claimed that these two incidents were mere accidents but eyewitnesses and photos released by media contradicted this claim.

The role of the security forces must be that of the custodians of human rights but the situation in India is altogether different. Under the shield of AFSPA, the security forces are butchering and slaughtering the innocent people. It is the dire need of time that the Indian government should safeguard the lives of its helpless citizens from the cruel clutches of the security forces; but for this purpose the Indian government will have to disengage itself from the interference in the neighbouring countries.

Massacre in Thailand: Obama's bloody hands

By Shamus Cooke

When the White House is quiet as protestors are butchered in the streets of Bangkok Thailand, suspicions are raised. Silence often equals complicity. One can only imagine what the U.S. response would be to a Venezuelan government slaughter: the U.S. media and Obama would loudly condemn such an act, in contrast to the muted response to Thailand's blood bath.

The history of U.S.-Thailand relations explains why. During the Vietnam War, the U.S. used Thailand as one of the main "anti-communist" bulwarks in an area that included China, Vietnam, Burma, and other countries that were challenging capitalism.

Thailand was thus transformed into a U.S. client state and given money, guns, and U.S. government intelligence to battle Thailand's "communists." This relationship has equaled numerous Thai dictatorships that have a very bloody history, including the shooting of untold numbers of protestors that the Thai government named "communists," or their modern equivalent, "terrorists."

The U.S.-Thailand relationship began to sour when the recently deposed President Thaksin Shinawatra formed a closer relationship with China that included economic and military deals. The Asian Times summarizes the consequences:

"Thaksin's willingness to promote defense ties with China came at the US's direct strategic expense and many observers believe that's one reason Washington's reaction to the September 2006 military coup that ousted a democratically elected government was so muted." (November 7, 2008).

The U.S. government often overthrew "unfriendly governments" by bribing sections of their military, a fact discussed at length in Tim Weiner's history of the CIA, *Legacy of Ashes*. When a U.S.-backed coup happens, the U.S. government and corporate media give tacit approval: whereas a howl of fury erupts when a coup happens against a U.S. puppet government.

Many of the [2006] coup-makers were known U.S. allies, including alleged masterminds and former CIA-trained spy chief Prasong Soonsri and Privy Council president Prem Tinsulanonda. Prasong has openly acknowledged his role in the coup.

The U.S. coup against Thai Premier Thaksin is at the root of the current crisis in Thailand. Large sections of the Thai working class and peasantry still identify Thaksin as their Premier and are demanding his return. They have resorted to extremely militant tactics to achieve their demands, which, if won, would amount to the restoration of democracy in Thailand. The New York Times adds:

"Thailand is convulsed by a bitter struggle between the nation's elite and its disenfranchised poor, played out in protests that have paralyzed Bangkok for weeks and now threaten to expand." (May 15, 2010).

President Obama has not said one word of support for Thailand's poor, while his silence enables Thailand's elite to murder protestors in the streets free of foreign pressure. The U.S. is the main purchaser of Thailand's exports, while providing important economic and military assistance. One strong statement from Obama would deter Thailand's elites from further killing. But he will remain silent.

So far, dozens of protestors have been murdered. But for Thailand's U.S.-backed elite to successfully maintain their political dominance, hundreds if not thousands more will have to be slaughtered.

By working to maintain the Bush-era coup government in Thailand, President Obama bears criminal responsibility for the current atrocities. If the Thai working class is unable to overthrow their murderous government, Obama will bear further blame for propping up a coup-government that must resort to prolonged, massive brutality to maintain its rule.

Another bloodbath on the way

By Gladson Dungdung

It is utterly painful for us to inform you that another bloodbath is ready to take place in the name of Development in Jharkhand. A corporate house 'Bhushan Steel and Power Limited' is going to conduct 'Bhumi Pujan' (formal inauguration) of its project on May 16, 2010. The company has signed an MOU with the Jharkhand government on 7 September, 2006 for establishing an integrated steel plant of 3 Mt and 900 MW power plant with the estimated investment of 10,500 crore. Since, a strong People's Movement against the land acquisition for steel and power plants of the Bhushan Steel and Power Limited has been going on at Potka of East Singhbhum district in Jharkhand since 2006. Consequently, the company was unable to materialize its project.

However, a team of Jharkhand Indigenous People's Forum, SBSS and Jharkhand Initiative visited to 15 villages of Potka from 11 to 13 of May, 2010 found that after facing a mass protest, the company adopted the strategy of divide and rule. It identified 10 strong middlemen and deployed them in the villages on monthly salary. Finally, it was able to purchase 135 private land. As a result, there is a division basis on families, villagers and caste. The Adivasis have not given their lands to Bhushan Company but the other business communities sold their land to the company. The company has played several tricks of trade.

The company has started to plain the land and already established 3 automatic ITI centres (moving house) at Potka village. It has announced a formal Bhumi Pujan (inauguration) programme, which will be conducted on May 16. Consequently, the situation is completely tense. There are series of meetings going on in the villages under the banner of 'Bishphan Virodhi Ekta Manchi' a pioneer organization of the displacement movement supported by many people's organizations and movements. The organization has decided to impose an indefinite 'Janta Curfew' (People Curfew) at Potka, which will begin at 6 PM on 15th of May 2010.

It has been decided that no outsiders including the representatives of Bhushan Company, police and government officials would be allowed to enter into the project area during the Curfew. The curfew will be totally peaceful but the Adivasis will be with their traditional weapons as symbol of protest. The political leaders are also asked to support the movement otherwise they would be also not allowed to enter into the villages during the next election. Since, the government is determined to establish the Bhushan Company at Potka therefore it has planned to deploy the paramilitary forces at Potka during the Bhumi Pujan. Consequently, there is a high chance of Police firing on the people.

Therefore, we request all the activists, supporters and well-wishers (of the Adivasis and local landowners) to be part of the People's Curfew from 15th May onwards. Precisely, because this protest will play a key role in the future of Jharkhand whether the land will be with the people or the corporate. It is very clear that the government has changed its slogan from 'land to the tiller' to 'land to the corporate'. Therefore, if we lose this time that means everything will go. All the corporate houses who have signed the MoUs will adopt the strategies of Bhushan Steel. We have to protest the unconstitutional acts of the state therefore your participation is highly required.

Naxalites drill away at India's wealth

By Robert M Cutler

The murder by Naxalite insurgents of 35 civilians and police in a landmine attack on a bus in the eastern Indian state of Chhattisgarh on Monday, a month after another attack killed at least 75 policemen, barely registered among investors seeking to tap into the country's burgeoning economy.

That is a luxury that may not last. Such attacks by the rebellious Maoists have already prompted delays in multi-billion dollar industrial projects, and with Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee seeking to deliver annual economic growth of up to 10% over the next decade, the importance of the backward but resource-rich area that is home to Naxalite insurgencies will grow in harness with economic expansion.

"I am quite confident that we'll come back to our trend growth rate of 9% to 10%," Mukherjee said last week, according to a Bloomberg report. "My worry is that I must sustain it over a period of next 10 years." India's US\$1.2 trillion economy may expand 8.5% in the current fiscal year, the report said.

The so-called Naxalite "Red Belt", in parts of the insurgents have set up a parallel government, has expanded since the last generally available map dating from 2007 was published. It is now reported to run from Nepal through Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, Chhattisgarh, and Madhya Pradesh, to parts of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Karnataka.

Up to 40% of India's land area, with

one-third of the population, is subject to some sort of Naxalite activity. This is especially so in the poor, eastern part of the country, where post-independence elites in the west, to whom such rural regions have been economically unimportant, have historically paid little attention.

Much of the recent upsurge of violence can be traced to state government attempts to industrialize agricultural land that was originally the subject of land reform legislation and had been earmarked to be given over to the rural poor. Violent repression of the movement has also done nothing to decrease its popularity.

The Naxalite movement has been compared with the Sendero Luminoso ("Shining Path") movement of Peru, in that it appeared first in a poor, largely indigenous city (Naxalbari, rather than Ayacucho) and spread across an economically underdeveloped region, targeting landowners, commercial interests, and security forces.

After various transformations since its first appearance in 1967 in Naxalbari, the insurgency was given new life when, in 2004, two Maoist groupings united to form the Communist Party of India (Maoist) - not to be confused with the Communist Party of India (Marxist) which is often abbreviated as "CPI(M)".

In 2006, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh called it India's "single biggest internal security challenge". By law,

security is still in the purview of the Indian states themselves and is not a national responsibility; yet six months ago New Delhi was compelled to announce a national anti-insurgent strategy.

In a pre-globalization era, such an insurgency could remain relatively neglected without affecting national economic growth. However, Chhattisgarh, where the most recent attack occurred and which is considered the center of the insurgency, is a mineral-rich state; indeed, most of the Naxalite strongholds are rich in iron ore and coal. The insurgents attack railroads and mining operations, impeding transportation of natural resources to processing centers for production of electricity and capital goods.

Their strength lies now also in regions where some of the biggest domestic and foreign investments are planned. In West Bengal, security concerns have compelled India's JSW Steel Ltd to delay work on a projected US\$7 billion steel plant, for example, and Tata Group has abandoned plans for a Nano car factory at Singur.

It will, instead, grind away at the economy like a dentist's drill. Investment decisions will be delayed or reversed, resources may have to be sourced at greater expense from other regions or overseas, and rising security costs will add to the government's already mounting spending bills.

Home Minister P Chidambaram believes that air power is essential to defeat the Naxalites and the chief ministers of all of the worst-affected states also want air support against the rebels, according to a report in London-based The Times on Tuesday. A campaign launched last year with about 58,000 federal paramilitary troops was doomed to fail without such air support, the report said, citing "unnamed officials and experts".

India's public debt rose to more than 50% of GDP through 2009, and combined central and state debt amounts to some 80% of GDP, which should be raising red flags for the Indian government, according to Anthony Harrington, writing on the QFinance web site. The fiscal deficit is at 6.8% of GDP, which Harrington points out is a lot higher than the European Union has mandated for its member countries.

India's annual Economic Survey has recommended that the government should look to cap state and federal debt at no more than 68% of GDP by 2014/2015, Harrington writes.

Meanwhile living costs are rising steeply, higher food costs in particular hitting the poor. Implementation of planned reforms of the taxation system, especially the privatization of state-owned companies, will only increase popular unrest, as rates inevitably increase and user fees are imposed upon consumers. The Naxalite's appeal can readily grow in such circumstances, and their influence is well placed to spread.

~ National news ~

Seventh China Education Exhibition concludes

The Seventh China Education Exhibition, which took place at Hotel Annapurna in the capital, has concluded on May 17.

The two-day exhibition was jointly organized by China Scholarship Council, Embassy of People's Republic of China and Aranko Society, Nepal.

Some 36 big and renowned universities of China specialized in medicine, engineering, aeronautical, astronautics, agriculture, science and technology, Chinese traditional medicine, post and telecommunication, polytechnic, maritime, chemical technology, arts, pharmaceuticals etc took part in the expo.

During the inauguration ceremony of the event, Minister for education Sarbendra Nath Shukla lauded the role being played by the government of China in supporting the educational system of the country by providing scholarship to Nepalese students.

He also expressed hope that the age-old relationships between the countries would get more positive dimensions through such programs.

Chinese Ambassador Qui Guohong presented a brief statistics about how China had been providing scholarships to foreign students.

The northern neighbour has emerged as a hub for quality, affordable and productive education for many foreign students including Nepalese.

Current some 2500 Nepali students are studying in various universities of China.

There are more than 2,50,000 foreign students studying in China.

Expo of Pakistani goods

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Sujata Koirala inaugurated an exhibition of Pakistani goods and trade fair organised at the Tripureshwar-based United World Trade Center.

Several Pakistani products including leather products have been kept in the expo to be run for the next three days.

On the occasion, stating that Nepal and Pakistan have cordial relations, DPM Koirala said the recent two-day visit to Nepal by Pakistani Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani has strengthened the relations existing between the two countries.

She urged entrepreneurs of both the countries to increase investment in tourism and infra-structure building and seek the new possibilities for investment.

Pakistani Ambassador to Nepal Syed Abrar Hussein said the event was among the several programmes organised this year to mark the golden jubilee of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and Nepal.

Nepal-Pakistan Friendship Association Chairman Himalaya Shumsher JBR, President of the Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FNCCI) Kush Kumar Joshi, Chairman of Nepal Chamber of Commerce (NCC) Surendra Bir Malakar and SAARC Secretary General Sheel Kanta Sharma among others said that the Expo would help advance trade relations between the two countries.

The Expo was organized jointly by the Pakistani Embassy in Nepal, Nepal Pakistan Chamber of Commerce, Pakistan-Nepal Chamber of Commerce, Pakistan Airlines and other organisations.

Nepal and Pakistan have been celebrating 2010 as the golden jubilee year as they had established diplomatic relations on March 20, 1960.

A five-day exhibition of Pakistani goods is to be held at the United World Trade Centre, Tripureswar from May 19.

Furniture, textiles, leather goods, handicrafts and others made in Pakistan will be on display and sale at the exhibition.

According to latest statistics, goods worth 4.5 million US dollars were imported to Nepal while exports to Pakistan from Nepal amounted to 1.5 million US dollars.

UML faltering in ideological confusion

WM Correspondent

Ruling CPN (UML) has directed its vice-chairman Bam Dev Gautam to



come up with self-criticism for asking Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal to step down for the ongoing peace and a national consensus government.

As Gautam's initial clarifications could not satiate the party's disciplinary committee, it directed him to apologize for venturing into the move against the party policy.

Gautam has been refusing to be

pliable with the party's dictate for self-criticism.

Nonetheless, Gautam has said he might have appealed for the Prime Minister resignation not in a proper manner.

Recently, Gautam along with other 59 central leaders of the party had forwarded letter to Prime Minister Nepal cautioning that his continuation could be ill to the country.

He had even claimed the reactionary forces were engaged in shooting the Maoists by putting gun on the UML's shoulders.

But, the UML leadership has chosen to flatly nullify the possible adverse political consequences in case the Prime Minister does not step down.

The rightist segment, which is tightly holding sway over the party with majority, is clamouring hard for actions against Gautam.

Even PM Nepal had blamed his own party leader Gautam for "facilitating the

ploy of the UCPN (Maoist)" to topple the current coalition right from its formation.

The UML has however failed to implement the protocol of taking action against the leaders that go against the party policy.

Senior leader K.P. Oli himself roamed around the country inaugurating the parallel district committees of the party in various parts of the country.

Defense Minister as well as senior party leader Bidya Bhandari accused her own chairman Jhala Nath Khanal of engaging himself in the conspiracy against the incumbent government because of his unfulfilled lust for the post of prime minister.

She has also issued challenge to the Prime Minister on a number of issues and, mocked the Prime Minister's instruction by not showing her presence in the cabinet.

Both the party and the Prime

Minister have so far not taken an iota of action against her.

Gautam is now in minority and, has faced the charge of totally succumbing himself to the vested interests of the Maoists.

Penalizing Gautam will not solve the UML's problem because the party is now reeling under the ideological disorder.

In essence, the third largest party is heading towards embracing rightist agendas, which has created a wide rift in the party.

But, the gulf in the UML is more about whether it should adopt hard or soft position against the Maoists.

Gautam and his supporters are in favour of reconciliation with the Maoists. But the group led by another senior UML leader K.P. Oli, who is leading the rightist force within the party, wants to ostracize the former rebels by continuously loathing at them.

Nepal-China...

exportable items in the Chinese market.

China provided this facility as per its policy to provide zero customs to 4,721 goods for all the least developed countries in the world.

Purusottam Ojha, secretary of Ministry of Commerce and Supplies (MoCS) and Qui Guohong, Chinese Ambassador to Nepal signed the agreement on Letter of Exchange (LoE) regarding zero-tariff on 4,721 Nepali products to Chinese market.

The list of commodities enjoying the facility covers some 60 percent of total products that Nepal exports to China. The majority of them are agricultural products like mushroom, orange, cherry, coffee, apple, ginger, tomato,

onion, strawberry, honey, cauliflower, broccoli and grapes.

Manufacturing products like beer, readymade garment, carpet, biscuits, soaps, shampoo, textiles, cotton clothes, brass, fruits juice, leather items, marble, paints, ceramics items, silverwares, jewelries, copper wire and cables too are included in the list.

Nepal's trade with China has continued to grow and presently stands at over Rs 36 billion. But as high tariff barriers continued to erode competitiveness of Nepali commodities, Nepal suffers a trade deficit of about Rs 32 billion.

In this light, the new agreement is expected to help Nepal boost its exports to China and balance the trade deficit.

Nepal has been seeking the facility

at the bilateral level with China since 2003. In this context, it has been holding negotiations for the facility for some 490 tariff lines (of six digit harmonized code of customs)

A year of ...

A director took an advance of Rs. 10 million from his own cooperative and later deposited it in the same cooperative with higher interest rate.

Some cooperatives were found keeping a formal record of their annual general meeting without actually holding the same. The main concept of a cooperative is that the transactions are made among members.

Another financial crime recorded this year is that directors of Birgunj-based Public Development Bank (PDB) and chief of Banepa-based

Infrastructure Development (ID) bank got involved in banking fraud.

PDB's managing director Kunja Bihari Kayal and ID's chief executive Indra Humagain worked in cohort to provide loans to Kayal for keeping his cheque bearing no money as collateral. Other individuals of drew money of Rs. 280 million from the PDB by depositing their cheques of fake bank accounts in the PDB with the direct involvement of PDB.

Earlier, the Nepal Rastra bank took control of Nepal Bangladesh Bank as its promoters took loans of billion of rupees from their own bank, thus leading to its debacle.

Nepal Bank Limited and Rastriya Banijya Bank have not recovered fully yet due to mismanagement and a huge amount of bad loans.



वैदेशिक रोजगारीमा जाँदा स्वीकृत
निकाय मार्फत नेपाल सरकारबाट
सूचिकृत मुलुकहरुमा मात्र जाओँ ।



नेपाल सरकार

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International :

The specter of catastrophe returns

In certain critical respects, the world of 2010 resembles the conditions that existed on the eve of World War I and World War II. Economic crisis, geopolitical tensions and social instability are greater today than at any time since 1945

- Report on "Perspectives and Tasks of the Socialist Equality Party," January 2010

[I]t is clear that since September 2008 we have been facing the most difficult situation since the Second World War—perhaps even since the First World War. We have experienced—and are experiencing—truly dramatic times

- Jean-Claude Trichet, president of European Central Bank

An extraordinary scene unfolded in Brussels at a meeting of the leaders of the 16 eurozone member countries. A deadlock had developed between France and Germany over the feasibility and terms of a financial bailout of Greece. With the backing of the Obama administration, French President Nicolas Sarkozy insisted that the EU fund a +750 billion safety net for the single currency. German Chancellor Angela Merkel continued to resist this demand.

Suddenly, sometime between 11:30 p.m. and midnight, the meeting exploded. President Sarkozy, according to observers, began "shouting and bawling," banged his fists on the table, and demanded that Germany withdraw its opposition. If Merkel refused, Sarkozy warned, France would abandon the euro. He added, for good measure, that lasting damage would be done to Franco-German relations. Faced with this threat, which had been issued with the backing of the Obama administration, Merkel assented to the establishment of the safety net.

This confrontation took place on the very eve of the 65th anniversary of the end of the Second World War in Europe.

In the immediate aftermath of the agreement, the markets celebrated the latest "solution" of the expanding global economic crisis. The financial community was heartened by the pledges from the governments in Greece, Spain, Romania, Portugal and several other European countries that they would implement unprecedented

By David North.

and draconian austerity measures demanded by the European Central Bank (ECB). The agreement in Great Britain between the Tories and the Liberal Democrats to form a coalition government and tackle the country's massive budget deficits contributed to the market's rebound. However, as the week drew to a close, the euphoria dissipated and markets again suffered substantial losses as the realization spread that the shotgun agreement between Sarkozy and Merkel had settled none of the underlying problems—and, indeed, will make the situation worse.

First, the austerity policies demanded by the European Central Bank in return for financial support will force a slashing of consumption in the targeted countries and drive them into recession. This, in turn, will lead to an erosion of important markets for EU-based manufacturers, particularly in Germany. Thus, the most likely outcome of the austerity measures demanded by US and European financiers is a continuation and deepening of the recession that began in 2008.

Second, the battle over the +750 billion safety net has shattered confidence in the viability of the single-currency project, little more than a decade after its inauguration. Merkel gave in to Franco-American pressure on the evening of May 7, but rumors are sweeping financial markets, according to a report in the British Guardian, "that Merkel is printing Deutschmarks in preparation for a split" within the eurozone.

The break-up of the euro does not mean merely the end of a currency. It threatens a devastating and potentially bloody breakdown of political relations between European states. The Süddeutsche Zeitung offered this scenario in its May 15 edition: "The European Union collapses, as its most important political clamp, the common currency, disintegrates. Twenty-seven nation states fight again for markets. Germany, as the largest country with a healthy industrial structure, acquires enemies, and is possibly boycotted: the specter of the 'Hegemonic Power' is revived."

This is the context within which ECB

President Trichet warned that the current world political and economic situation is the "most difficult" since 1939-1945, and, perhaps, even since 1914-1918.

One can be certain that a person who occupies so critical a position in international finance as Mr. Trichet chooses his words carefully. Speaking to a correspondent of one of the most widely read and influential news magazines in Europe, Trichet places the present crisis at a level comparable to the two major global catastrophes of the 20th century.

Mr. Trichet is not exaggerating. He is familiar with European history. The outbreak of World War I in August 1914 was the outcome of irrespressible political and economic conflicts between the major European capitalist states that had accumulated during the previous four decades of relative peace. The conclusion of the war in 1918, which cost the lives of 50 million people, resolved none of the contradictions that had caused the war. Rather, these unresolved contradictions festered and grew malignant, leading to the economic calamity of the Great Depression, the emergence of fascist dictatorships, and, finally, in 1939, the outbreak of World War II. During the six years of barbarism that followed, approximately 80 million human beings lost their lives.

In the decades that followed the war, the European ruling class—under the leadership of the United States—attempted to establish economic and political institutions that would make another catastrophic breakdown impossible. In particular, "peace" between Germany and France—which had fought three wars between 1870 and 1945—would be secured by welding the two countries together in a complex integrating network of cooperative economic relationships. The establishment of the European Union and, above all, the common currency, was the high point of this post-war effort to secure European stability.

Paradoxically, by the time the common currency was actually launched in 1999, the objective conditions that had sustained European economic growth and

political stability were fast eroding. A major factor in this deterioration was the intensifying crisis of American capitalism, expressed most dramatically in the transformation of the United States into the world's largest debtor nation and, consequently, in the protracted decline in the value of the dollar. Far from promoting European stability, the accumulating contradictions of American capitalism—which finally exploded in 2008—dealt a deathblow to Europe's already fragile economic and political equilibrium.

Mr. Trichet recognizes the historical character of the crisis that confronts Europe. But neither he, nor the leaders of the governments in Europe, nor, for that matter, the Obama administration in the United States have any idea how to resolve the spreading crisis—other than to prepare for war, first against the working class and, inevitably, against each other.

In the aftermath of the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991—the outcome of the betrayal of socialism by the reactionary Stalinist regimes—the propagandists of global capitalism proclaimed the historic triumph of the market. The revolutionary struggles of the 20th century against capitalism had been futile and misguided efforts, aberrations from the "normal" process of history, doomed to failure. The Marxist materialist conception of history, and its analysis of the contradictions of the capitalist mode of production, had been refuted.

Now, the refutations of Marxism have been refuted by the objective development of the crisis of world capitalism. This crisis has reached such an advanced level that the system's leading representatives invoke the specter of catastrophes that, in the last century, cost the lives of tens of millions.

The events of the past two weeks are a warning and a challenge to the working class. The unfolding crisis that is sweeping the globe threatens mankind with a cataclysm of unimaginable dimensions. No solution can be found within the framework of capitalism. The survival of mankind depends upon the development of a politically conscious international revolutionary movement of the working class, for the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of socialism.

~ News ~

NATO "Must Be Ready to Intervene Anywhere"

NATO must be ready to intervene externally, experts said Monday, proposing a new doctrine for the alliance, as well as ensure the security of its 28 member states internally, as it has done since 1949.

"In the coming decade, NATO will have four central inter-related military missions," the experts' group said in its 'New Strategic Concept' for the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.

Among these is to "deter, prevent and defend" against aggression so as to ensure the political independence and territorial integrity of all 28 NATO member states, conforming to the alliance's original 60-year-old mission.

The experts also call for cooperation with partners to protect the treaty area against unconventional security challenges.

But the report also insists on the need to send out military missions beyond the treaty area "when required to prevent an attack on the treaty area or to protect the legal rights and other vital interests of Alliance members" — the sort of expedition already seen in Afghanistan, a mission provoked by the extraordinary September 11 attacks in the United States in 2001.

This point was addressed in the previous strategic plan in 1999, noted former US secretary of state Madeleine Albright, who chaired the latest expert group.

Finally, a more global goal is to "help to shape a more stable and peaceful international security environment" by providing military and police training, coordinating military assistance, and cooperating with the governments of key countries.

The text was submitted to ambassadors of the NATO nations for consideration.

The new concept will then be examined and amended before being submitted for adoption by allied leaders at a November summit in Lisbon.

Afghan war costs 'higher' than Iraq

A recently released Pentagon spending report indicates that the monthly cost of the US war in Afghanistan has topped the costs in Iraq for the first time since 2003.

According to the report, the cost of war in Afghanistan for February stood at 6.7 billion dollars. The figure is almost 20 percent higher compared against the 5.5 billion dollars spent in Iraq.

It is estimated that the Afghan war will cost nearly 105-billion dollars in the 2010 fiscal year. The figure is expected to rise in 2011 as costs per service member in Afghanistan are almost twice as expensive as they are in Iraq.

The US has about 87,000 troops involved in the Afghan war. With more deployments on the way, the number is expected to reach over 100,000 by next year. The combined costs for the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have surpassed one-trillion dollars.

The 130,000-strong foreign presence in the country has so far failed to stabilize Afghanistan. The 2001 US-led invasion of Afghanistan, involving forces mostly from NATO countries, has so far failed to bring security to the country.

This is while anti-US sentiments are on the rise in the country with Afghans and regional countries condemning US-led operations which claim the lives of civilians on a daily basis.

Pak MPs call for a ban on oil supplies to US-led NATO forces

A number of Pakistani lawmakers have introduced a motion that calls for a ban on oil supplies to US-led NATO forces stationed in neighboring Afghanistan.

The lawmakers, from the Jamaat-e-Islami party, submitted the motion to the upper house of the Parliament (Senate) on Thursday.

Khurshid Ahmad, Muhammad Ibrahim Khan and Aafia Zia, who co-authored the motion, demanded the immediate halt of oil supply to NATO forces and called for a debate on the issue in the Pakistani Parliament.

The motion states that tax-free supply of oil to NATO troops in Afghanistan has been ongoing since the presidency of former General Pervez Musharraf.

The lawmakers expressed their "extreme displeasure" over the fact that the Pakistani public pays a 30-rupee per liter tax on gasoline while NATO troops receive oil supplies tax free.

"The NATO troops who are engaged in genocide and brutalities on unarmed and innocent civilians of Afghanistan and continue to conduct drone attacks inside Pakistani territories are being charged an outrageously low 42-rupee per liter, compared to 73-rupee per liter for masses at home," they said.

Pakistan is the main supply route for US and NATO forces in Afghanistan who receive up to 80 percent of their supplies via routes that pass through Khyber region in northwestern Pakistan and the southwestern Chaman border crossing in Balochistan.

Suspected militants, however, frequently attack oil tankers and trucks transferring oil and goods to NATO bases in Afghanistan.

Russia plans to open naval bases in Ukraine

Russia plans to open naval bases in Ukraine in response to NATO's eastward expansion, military sources have said.

Ukraine may agree to the re-opening of a Soviet-era submarine base in the Crimea and the establishment of three naval bases on Black Sea coast, said the Nezavisimaya Gazeta quoting Russian military sources.

"The planned expansion of the Black Sea Fleet is Russia's response to the NATO expansion to the East," said Admiral Vladimir Komoyedov, former Black Sea Fleet Commander, referring to the establishment of NATO bases in Romania and Bulgaria, both Black Sea coastal states.

Following the extension last month of the Russian lease of the Black Sea naval base at Sevastopol in Ukraine's Crimea till the year 2042, Moscow is drawing up plans for the modernisation of the Sevastopol base and the opening of new military facilities in the Crimea, said the Nezavisimaya Gazeta. Russian President Dmitry Medvedev is expected to sign a package of agreements on upgrading the Sevastopol base when he pays an official visit to Ukraine next week.

According to the paper, Russia's Prime Minister Vladimir Putin discussed with his Ukrainian counterpart Nikolai Azarov last week the return of Russian submarines to the former Soviet secret base dug deep into a cliff at Balaklava near Sevastopol.

Russian-Ukrainian relations have dramatically improved after pro-Western President Viktor Yushchenko, who had led the 2004 "orange revolution" was ousted in presidential elections earlier this year.

Russia-Ukraine: Towards a new strategic partnership?

Leaders of East Europe's two largest countries — Russian President D. Medvedev and Ukrainian President V. Yanukovich — meet in Kyiv on May 17-18. In its initial form, the agenda included the signing of five agreements:

- on the demarcation of the overlaid section of the border between Russia and Ukraine;
- on Ukraine's joining the Russian GLOPASS satellite navigation system;
- on the cooperation between the two countries in the financial sector, education, and culture.

Chief of the Russian President's Administration S. Naryshkin said the Russian and Ukrainian Presidents would also issue a joint declaration on European security and the resolution of the conflict in Transdnistria.

Ukraine's switching to GLOPASS, the only alternative to the US-maintained GPS at the moment, is a noteworthy development. Work on GLOPASS commenced in the Soviet era as a project to be implemented by tightly integrated Russian and Ukrainian enterprises, but its realization was delayed by the collapse of the USSR. Currently both Moscow and Kyiv regard Ukraine's reverting to GLOPASS as a logical and long-awaited step.

From the standpoint of the Russian-Ukrainian relations, Kyiv's decision to adopt GLOPASS is a clear indication that

By Viktor Pirozhenko

the new Ukrainian President V. Yanukovich intends to rebuild the country's relations with Russia that would not only be warmer than under previous administrations but would, moreover, be based on much greater openness. GLOPASS is an intellectual telematic satellite system providing real-time position and velocity determination. Available to civilian users, it can also serve military needs, which evidently means that Russia and Ukraine are going to synchronize a number of military technology standards and generally broaden their defense cooperation.

The pursuit of economic modernization in Russia and Ukraine and the strengthening of their ties in knowledge-intensive sectors of the economy prompt deeper scientific collaboration between the two countries. The adaptation of the existing research and development potentials to the current needs of the economy is seen as the key task in the context.

The long-term Russian-Ukrainian agenda features serious joint nuclear energy projects. It is planned that Russia will construct new nuclear generating capacities in Ukraine and that Ukraine will get involved with Russia's Angarsk international uranium enrichment center supplying fuel to

nuclear power plants worldwide. Such economic interaction between the two countries — within the nuclear energy sector at the initial phase — should become the starting point for wider industry-level integration.

The future cooperation between the Russian and Ukrainian aerospace industries should also transcend ordinary business relations. The plan currently on the table is a merger of Russia's United Aircraft Corporation and Ukraine's Antonov aircraft manufacturer renown all over the world for its large liners.

Generally, the Ukrainian government realizes that a reconstruction of formerly integrated technological chains, which, in the majority of cases, Ukraine used to share with Russia, is the only strategy that can open to Ukraine opportunities to sustain and to modernize its industry, as well as to shift from consuming to generating innovations.

The Medvedev-Yanukovich summit is expected to produce a breakthrough in the relations between Russia and Ukraine in the humanitarian sphere. Great importance is attached to the studies of the XVII-XX centuries common history of the two countries, the epoch when the present-day Russia and Ukraine used to coexist in the framework of unified statehood — that of the

Russian Empire and the Soviet Union. Ukrainian Science and Education Minister Dmytro Tabachnyuk expressed a view that new history education programs and textbooks should be written in cooperation with Russia and that the Russian literature should not be bracketed with foreign literature in school and college curricula.

Joint statements by the Russian and Ukrainian leaders on international politics are sure to become the highlight of the summit. Reportedly Kyiv is going to back Russian President Medvedev's proposal for the European Security Treaty, an initiative which ranks high on the Kremlin's agenda. The two leaders will likely present coordinated positions on a number of other international politics issues.

On May 15, the Ukrainian media broke the news that at least three additional documents would be inked during Russian President D. Medvedev's visit to Kyiv. Moreover, there is information that some 10-12 documents are being prepared in Moscow for the coming summit.

The ambitious agenda and the impressive package of agreements to be signed reflect the fact that — for the first time over the past two decades — Russia and Ukraine are on track for a real strategic partnership and for the trusting relations natural for the two Slavic countries.

Nepal village tour



Nepal Village Tour is the best way to explore villages of Nepal walking through the villages surrounding of Nepal, interaction with the warm and hospitable local people,

also helps to interact and know the people of its best. **Ghale Gaun** Tour passes by famous *Ghale Gaun* situated at the foot of Lamjung Himal in north central Nepal, is an exotic

majestic western Himalayas including Machhapuchhare (6693m) Annapurna (8091m), Annapurna II (7939m) Annapurna IV (7525m), Lamjung Himal, Bouddha Himal (6974m), Himalchuli (6747m) and many more smaller peaks.

The approach to *Ghalegaun-Ghanpokhara* is a wonderful experience in itself as it goes crossing over the Marsyandi, Khudi and Midim rivers; passing through rhododendrons blossoming along the way amidst the chirping of birds and wild insects. The trekking route passes through dense jungle and villages and impressive waterfalls. Nearby Talyngo Lake and Lami Lake add new dimension to these attractions. Activities around this village including bird watching at Talangyo lake, and visitors to the Utter Kanya temple, Pempro fall, Batase cave and

with the dancers in traditional dress.

Visitors to *Ghalegaun-Ghanpokhara* are welcomed with offering of garlands and tika while music and dances are performed and traditional farewell songs are sung when guests depart. Nepali New Year and Buddha Jayanti are

Balthali Village Tour starts in a small village namely Balthali Village which is a small sleepy settlement which rests at the junction of Roshi and Ladku khola river. *Balthali Village* stands on a plateau which is just beyond Khopasi, 40km away from Kathmandu. The area surrounding the Balthali Retreat is thickly forested with luxuriant florals, colorful rhododendron, mangolia and sal trees cover the hill that undulates and opens out to terrace fields. The trek in the pure village like this have a pleasant feeling and worth for knowing the village culture and also we can promote Village Tourism of Nepal.

After dusk a myriad of flickering lights below the valley of Balthali Village comes alive. Nature lovers and bird watchers can spend days exploring and discovering some exceptional species of wildlife, tradition and culture untouched by modernity. This 'off the beaten location' has endless trails leading to some ethnic tribes thus, offering excellent short hikes and mountain biking on the easy trails. Many of the sacred and ancient temples and monasteries such as Namobuddha, Indreshwar mahadev, Brahmayani Temples are located in this region and still needs to be discovered and

an atmosphere of holiness. *Dolpa*, also called "Ba Yul", has fascinating villages and is still a land of mystery, scenery and peace. Isolated and secluded from the outside world by spiraling high mountain passes and restricted entry, mysterious *Dolpo* had long fascinated and frustrated travelers.

The newly promoted *Dolpa Circuit* links the Phoksundo Lake to experience the natural beauty and cultural experience in *Dolpa*.

Tamang Heritage Trail (THT) is the new trekking routes in Nepal. It offers a view of Himalayan life-style and culture. THT trail leads you to green midlands, beautiful landscapes of alpine terrain, flat meadows and rhododendron forest experiencing the beauty of the mountain region and culture of the Tamang people. Through out the trails, we pass through the traditional Tamang Villages where life, culture and crafts are same since the beginning of the settlement. Warm traditional welcome hosted by the locals with their local music and their elaborated costumes and rich architecture of the mountain houses will let you feel so warm and feeling of being at home. In addition to the cultural experience, the



buying their authentic handicraft products and observing their traditional rituals will bring one closer to understanding the diversity of cultures in Nepal. *Tour* in

pristine village endowed with an unparallel scenic grandeur and a home to world famous Gurkha soldiers- the Gurungs. Repository of a unique ethnic culture, *Ghalegaun* is a true



villages also gives opportunity to observe landscapes and vegetation found in the outskirts of the settlements. The people in these traditional villages offer a peep at their agro-based rural lifestyle, colorful costume, festivals which they celebrate with much joy and enthusiasm, and gracious hospitality.

Home stay during the walk is the most exciting of all; it gives the opportunity to observe the interior decoration and gives the chance to learn the living style of the villagers of Nepal. It

microcosm of stunning natural beauty mixed with an unspoiled ethnic lifestyle. *Ghanpokhara* is a beautiful village heading towards development with a concept of eco-tourism. It lies at north of Lamjung district in the close proximity of *Ghalegaun* at an altitude of 2100 meters. *Ghalegaun* and *Ghanpokhara* are mainly Gurung settlements; they nestle amidst mountains, rivers, streams, waterfalls and green forests. These places command a superb breathtaking view of

the Khudi hydroelectric dam site.

Ghalegaun Ghanpokhara are model villages for experiencing the typical culture and lifestyle of the Gurung people. Traditional customs are still followed during births, deaths, marriages and at other important times in a person's life. Age-old cultural dances like the *Jhyaure*, *Serka*, *Dohori*, *Ghantu*, *Ghyabring*, *Krishna Charitra* and *Jhakri* are performed on various occasions accompanied by different musical instruments



celebrated with traditional dance called *Ghatu*. The people of *Ghalegaun-Ghanpokhara* keep goats and sheep and use wool from these animals to make woolen products. They make clothes and bags from nettle fiber (allo cloth) and scarfs, towels and shawls from the wool of angora rabbits. Ironsmiths make different iron products. Craftsmen produce a whole range of different products from bamboo.

unveil its mysterious past. There are a number of excellent short and long hikes from a day to 5 days within *Balthali Village* Resort and its surrounding gives you ample opportunity and time to explore this quaint natural heaven.

Dolpo Circuit passes via the rugged natural landscape of *Dolpa*, experiencing its natural beauty and it's remoteness you can't help but feel that this is a region with

home stay at different places of the trek offers warm Tamang hospitality and also the different experiences from other treks.

A part from these things, *Tamang Heritage Trial* offer a chance to know the daily trades with the Tibetan cities and hot water spring in *Tatapani*. It also offers the kaleidoscopic view of the *Langtang* Mountains, *Sanjen* range, *Ganesh Himal*, *Kerung* and *Gosaikunda* range.

