

Road ahead is full of potholes!



Maoist chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal, Nepali Congress vice-president Ram Chandra Poudel and UML chairman Jhalanath Khanal filing candidacy for the post of Prime Minister at the parliament secretariat, New Baneshwor on Tuesday

WM Correspondent

The severe degeneration of Nepali political culture has once again been exposed with the failure of the parliament to elect a new prime minister in the first round of voting.

The parties proved unable to form a new alliance on Wednesday as the UCPN (Maoist) and NC candidates could not garner 300 votes and the UML withdrew its candidate before the voting.

With the parties still too divided over the formation of a new dispensation, there is a little chance that the second round of election set for today, July 23, will yield the desired result.

It was expected that the resignation of caretaker Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal would pave the way for a national consensus government.

But, unfortunately, the struggle amongst the parties even to form a majority government has corroborated the fact they are too deficient to think anything beyond their hedonistic desire.

Of course, the parties indulged in harping much on the formation of a consensus government to reenergize the anemic constitution writing and peace processes after Nepal decided to quit his wobbly coalition.

However, as no sincere efforts were made towards this direction, the political pendulum has again swung back to foxy arithmetic for a majority-based dispensation.

Apart from gross myopia and

impudence amongst the politicians, the sadistic intention of New Delhi to continue to dictate the political course of Nepal has much to do with the fiasco of the first attempts towards electing a new PM.

The implicit admission on the part of UCPN (Maoist) that the southern neighbour is plotting to engineer the new government as per its vested interests lends further credence to this fact.

The Maoists had said that they decided to support the candidacy of UML chairman Jhalanath Khanal for the post of PM to abort the intention of India to elect a new premier as per its interest.

With the inter and intra struggle amongst the political parties coupled with the brazen attempts of India to prevent the formation of a winning alliance, the process of electing a new PM is likely to be fraught with a lot of tensions.

Followings are the likely scenarios.

UCPN (Maoist)

The Maoists support to UML chairman Jhalanath Khanal as next premier was strictly a tactical one. They knew that it would be highly nagging job for Khanal to muster a two thirds majority in the parliament as another camp in the UML led by Madhav Kumar Nepal and K.P Sharma Oli, which holds a majority in the party's central committee, favours keeping the current alliance alive.

The Maoists thought their support to the unpromising Khanal would be politically beneficial for them.

They calculated that the UML would pull out of the race or at least would not support the NC to form the next government if Khanal failed to garner a required support.

It was also a move to split the existing ruling coalition, formed under the aegis of India, and the Maoists have been able to shake the roof of that coalition to some extent. They could support Khanal even for a majority government to prevent the re-emergence of the rightist coalition.

But, that could not happen due to UML's internal politics.

After the UML withdrew Khanal's name from the Prime Ministerial race, Khanal said that his party would not support any majority government. Without the Maoist support, the formation of a government with a two thirds majority is simply impossible. That's why: it is a big political advantage for the Maoists party.

The former rebels have not ruled out the majority government although they have been saying that a national consensus government under their leadership should be formed. In terms of a mathematical calculation, the Maoists can form a majority government if the United Madhesi Democratic Front (UMDF) decided to reinforce them.

But, the UMDF is unlikely to do so because New Delhi does not want the

Madhes based parties, which are remote controlled by it, to support the Maoists. Add to it, they have already said that they would not help the Maoists to grab the helm of the state affairs without first settling the issue of army integration and rehabilitation.

Of course, Maoist chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal can again become Prime Minister with the support of the UML. But, the UML is also highly unlikely to do so until and unless the issue of integration and rehabilitation of the ex-Maoist combatants is resolved.

The Maoists may form the national consensus government if they exhibited too much flexibility towards the integration issue.

Nepali Congress

Ram Chandra Poudel, the NC candidate for the post of PM, is also facing an uphill task to attain the magical number of 300.

The UML's support is simply sine qua non for the NC to form any sort of majority government. Even if all the parties except the Maoists and UML collaborate with him, he cannot garner a majority support.

However, a pertinent question is whether he would be able to garner UML support.

The K.P Oli and Madhav Kumar Nepal clique is ready to support Poudel for next Prime Minister. But, the Khanal faction is determined not to let that happen after the debacle of Khanal.

Poudel expects that UML will

ultimately decide in favour of him on the ground that there should not be absence of the government for a long period.

However, the chance of Poudel receiving support from Madhes based party is relatively high as they also represent the interests of upper class and the anti-Maoists tendency like the NC.

The Madhesi Janadhikar Forum (MJF) led by Upendra Yadav is undeniably somewhat soft to the Maoists. But, it may be divided on whether to support the Maoists or the NC.

In a recent article, senior MJF leader Jaya Prakash Gupta belonging to the Yadav coterie has said that the party should support the democratic alliance led by NC. No doubt, the Indian clout in the Madhes based parties will also work in this regard.

CPN (UML)

Now, the UML is not in the fray for premiership.

The Oli-Nepal faction, which favours electing Poudel, didn't let Khanal become Prime Minister despite him garnering the support close to a two thirds majority.

Khanal is said to be so enraged with the Oli-Nepal camp that he will try his best to obstruct any efforts to support Poudel.

As the UML's support is crucial to form any future government, the Khanal faction seems to be gravitated towards amending the existing regulation of the

parliament that allows only the remaining candidate to contest in the next round.

The Khanal faction is seeking to present another reliable candidate from their own party by amending the regulation as both the Maoists and the NC are unlikely to garner enough support. Khanal clearly told the media that the UML was in favour of amending the existing regulation to allow third person to contest for the coveted post.

The MJF had expressed support to Khanal earlier. However, it adopted neutral posture in the Wednesday's balloting.

Sources at Madhes parties said that the Indian influence was crucial behind their changed decision not to support Khanal.

India simply loathes at the proposition of any Maoist or other candidates soft to the Maoist party becoming the Prime Minister.

The southern neighbour can safely be anticipated to try to cunningly woo the UML leaders into creating an environment amenable to Poudel.

At this juncture, whether the 'progressive coalition' led by the Maoists or the rightist coalition commanded by the NC will win the race is indefinite.

If again the mandarins of New Delhi succeed in engineering the rightist coalition loyal to them, the prospects of logical conclusion of the already fragile constitution writing and peace processes will get further bleak.

Impunity at its worst

WM Correspondent

The country's law and order situation has long been going downhill with the culture of impunity getting more vicious.

The revelation that both the government (executive) and judiciary are involved in releasing the culprits of serious crimes without any sufficient ground of innocence lends credence to this fact.

The culprits of serious crimes whom the court set free were found to have been involved in abducting Dr. Bhakta Man Shrestha, executive director of B.P. Koirala Memorial Cancer Hospital, Bharatpur. Those involved in Shrestha's abduction including Sanjaya Shrestha, Bhimsen Pandit and Rohit Palivan Agrawal were exempted by Kathmandu District Court two years ago.

After they were arrested on the case of Shrestha's abduction case, they said they were compelled to abduct Shrestha to recover the expenses they made to be released from the jail.

Their revelations unmasked the unholy nexus between the judges and criminals.

In connection with that case, the

judicial council has suspended judge Tej Bahadur Karki during his stay in KDC. Now, he is in the Hetauda Appellate Court.

Police had rounded up Pandit and Agrawal in connection with a series of abductions, attempted murders and possession of arms and stolen vehicles.

However, Karki had decided to release them after nine months in jail despite ample of solid evidences against them.

They confessed that they spent Rs. 7 million to be released from the jail.

After being released, the District Administration Office, Kathmandu decided to again imprison them on the charge carrying arms and ammunitions.

They went to the Appellate Court, Patan from where immediate Judge Rana Bahadur Bam and another judge Hari Bahadur Basnet let them go scot-free with the bail of Rs. 100,000 each. Now, Bam is permanent judge in Supreme Court. They are also under criteria of judicial probe. Again, at the cost of appeal of government lawyer, two judges Ishwor Khatiwada and Thakur Prasad Sharma endorsed the Bam and Basnet's verdict. [Cont. on page 6]

Parties pushing economy into crisis

WM correspondent

Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) is likely to issue monetary policy this week, which is expected to address a string of economic problems facing the country. The policy will however be of ad hoc nature until the full budget for the current fiscal year is announced.

The monetary policy is generally introduced to serve the fiscal policies of the government. In the absence of a full budget, the question as to will the new monetary policy will be effective enough to enable the economy to tide over its prevalent anomalies is more than pertinent.

Only if the full budget and monetary policy complement each other, the economy can be expected to head towards a hygienic direction.

It is very much unfortunate to state that the country could not see a full budget owing to political wrangling that was expected to eradicate some of the burning problems that have sucked the vitality out of the economy.

The biggest problem is in external front but the internal problem is also not less frightening.

After the period of 17 years, the

country faced a alarming balance of payment (BoP) deficit despite huge inflow of remittance in the recently ended fiscal year.

Exports continued to dwindle in

The government has sought to take import substitute measure to reduce trade deficit through the new monetary policy. But, in the light of the dearth of new annual budget of this year, the very

to feel the heat.

But this phenomenon has now ceased to be reality as even the mitigation of inflation in India is also causing price hike in Nepal.

Constraints in supply with the increment in cost of production due to labour unrest, frequent strikes and power cuts are behind the double digit inflation.

Another area the monetary policy should be gravitated towards is to promote credits in the real sectors rather than the non-productive ones such as luxurious goods and real estate.

However, the new monetary policy per se, cannot solve all the economic ills because it is especially designed to assist the annual budget adopted by government.

The augmentation of government expenditure in development activities is sine qua non to speed up the socio-economic growth of the country. And, for this the introduction of a full-size budget is mandatory.

This has been the major problem for some years and the political parties' flippancy towards the urgency of bringing a full-fledged budget at the earliest has cost the country heavily.



contrast to surging imports over the year leading trade deficit to swell to a terrible Rs. 259.68 billion.

The imports decreased by 11.2 percent to Rs. 50.20 billion while exports expanded by 35.6 percent to Rs. 309.88 billion in the review period.

On the other hand, remittance inflow increased by a just 10.2 percent against the significant growth of 55.5 percent last year. This alone contributed to widen the balance of payment deficit by Rs. 17.36 billion.

attempt may turn into a fiasco.

The proposed policy will also have to tame the inflation that has been hovering around a whopping 10 percent during the last ten months of the last fiscal year against the target of 7.5 percent.

The central bank may be ineffectual to address the price rise given that non-economic factors are mainly responsible for the swelling rate of inflation.

A few years ago, when the inflation went up in India, Nepal market also used

R.No. BA. 39/027/028

Published by : Weekly Mirror Publication (P) Ltd.

Editor : Prem Kumari Pant

Sub-Editor : Nirjhar Dhungana

Prithvi Man Shrestha

New Plaza, Ram Shah Path, Kathmandu

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

Printed at : Dhimle Printing Press, Dillibazar

Email: weeklymirror@ntc.net.np

weeklymirror@gmail.com

Editorial

Disastrous decay

It won't be preposterous to say that the persistent inability of the country to get out of its tension-fraught transition has much to do with lust for power among the major political party leaders.

For them, it is strictly the pay and perks that need to keep flowing. In the current situation whereby the prospects of logical conclusion of constitution writing and peace processes are extremely remote, the need to deliver is simply not in anybody's priority.

If the political leadership was really sincere about institutionalizing democracy and fulfilling the people's aspirations, the issue of premiership would have been inconsequential.

The way the political pendulum is swinging suggests that the politics in Kathmandu are pathetically less concerned about the significance of acting together at least to rescue the country out of the current deepening crisis.

Undeniably, the current political fluidity demands the formation of national unity government rather than a majority one to serve the mandate of the People's Movement II- restoration of permanent peace though a new state.

Unfortunately, the imprudence and myopia amongst the leaders that has long been threatening the liquidation of the entire state has once again forced the country to see the onset of substandard political arithmetic aimed at the majority government.

It was the obsession of the major political party leaders with power and privileges that aborted the President's call to form a national consensus government. Not only the first deadline but the second one was also missed.

On the one hand, it perfectly corroborated the fact that the political stalwarts are inclined towards holding the nation hostage as long as they could not fulfill their respective parochial and partisan interests. On the other hand, it vividly shed light on their unwillingness to safeguard the democratic values and ultimately, the genuine national interests of the country.

Of course, for external forces that have political and security interests in Nepal, politicians can wrangle as much as they want to.

The level of insensitivity exhibited by the external players, politicians, and power brokers toward the degrading political and economic condition is having a disastrous impact on the way we live and enjoy political and personal freedom.

The degenerating political culture has also augmented the possibility of a humiliating debacle of Nepal as a nation state.

At the same, it is also jeopardizing the prospects of socioeconomic development. Recently, the Maoist Central Committee member and commander of the PLA Fifth Division in Rolpa, Kali Bahadur Kham, was found to have conducted suspicious transaction with Chinese traders, who eventually ended up getting robbed by the revolutionary.

This shows the criminalization in politics is simply vicious. More unfortunate is the fact that it is not only the politicians that are resorting to criminal activities to enrich themselves. Tej Bahadur Karki, a Hetauda Appellate Court Judge, was recently suspended for his involvement in an inappropriate release of abduction kingpins: Sanjaya Shrestha, Rohit Paliwal Agrawal and Bhimsen Pundit. The ongoing rapid decay of institutions is severely thinning our chances to emerge as a modern and prosperous society.

Nepal entangled with the United Nations

Dhurba Adhikary

The wrangling in Nepal over forming an interim coalition to replace the government that quit on June 30 has projected some of the country's politicians as small-minded, and seemingly unwilling to take the country out of its tension-fraught transition.

To make matters worse, some politicians have picked a quarrel with the United Nations, accusing its field mission of taking sides with former Maoist insurgents on the question of integration into the Nepal army.

The United Nations Mission In Nepal (UNMIN) was set up in early 2007 at the request of political parties, including the Maoists, to facilitate the implementation of a peace process that entered into a decisive phase at the end of king Gyanendra's direct rule in April 2006.

The mission helped with elections in April 2008: its remaining job is to provide assistance that might be required in work associated with monitoring the country's arms and armies, that is, the regular army and former Maoist guerrillas.

The UNMIN's present mandate, which was initially renewed every six months, expires in mid-September. While the latest United Nations Security Council resolution to this effect was adopted in May, some political leaders and media outlets perceive that the UNMIN is looking for a pretext to prolong its stay indefinitely. Leading the vocal group is none other than caretaker Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal, who resigned as premier in June.

The group cites UNMIN's

publication of a 60-week work plan on the integration and rehabilitation of former combatants as glaring evidence of the UN's real intentions. Two newspapers owned by one leading publisher printed the controversial work plan on July 9.

Sushil Koirala, head of the Nepal Congress, a party in the outgoing coalition, has publicly criticized the UN's seeming "interference" in the peace process. He also used harsh words about the UN mission remaining light-lipped over the "unabated violent activities" of the Maoists, even after their signing of a series of agreements aimed at ushering in an era of peaceful, competitive politics.

True, there have been a couple of incidents in which former rebels sneaked out of their holding camps and carried out violent attacks on civilians. While the UNMIN issued statements condemning such activities, officials at the mission have argued that they do not have the mandate or the logistical support to handle problems of this nature. There is a political mission, not a full-fledged peacekeeping operation, they claim.

Meanwhile, Peace and Reconstruction Minister Rakam Chempjong directed a senior official to send an urgent missive to Karin Landgren, UN secretary general Ban Ki-moon's representative in Nepal, telling her how "deeply concerned" the government was over the work plan for former combatants, who number 19,600.

Landgren swiftly sent her

response, with a clarification that her mission did not push through any action plan or roadmap for integration and rehabilitation; whatever was handed over to the leaders of three major parties was a "non-paper" that could be construed as reference material aimed at helping the parties make a decision.

A "non-paper", according to a dictionary definition, is an authoritative but unofficial document that is often used to test the reaction of concerned parties. The term is frequently used by such bodies as the UN and the European Union. The timeline mentioned in the document indicated that it was "hypothetical".

Subsequently, the dispute reached UN headquarters in New York, where associate spokesperson Farhan Haq told a media briefing on Monday that prior consultations with the main parties of Nepal about the non-paper with a timeline in it "had taken place with the full knowledge of the government of Nepal".

The completion of the UNMIN's arms-monitoring mandate, the spokesperson added, in large part was contingent on the parties agreeing on a plan to address the future of Maoist army personnel.

Back in Kathmandu, officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs appeared reluctant to talk about the issue as their ministry was not taken into the confidence of the political leaders.

Independent observers unhesitatingly ridicule the government for its ineptitude, but they also do not

have kind words for the UNMIN.

Wittingly or otherwise, the UNMIN circulated a non-paper with a timeline of 60 weeks just eight or nine weeks before its own current term expired. Such an initiative was bound to create an impression that the UNMIN was keen to delay its departure. It could also be interpreted as a move to be sympathetic to the Maoists, whose desire is to have most, if not all, of their ex-combatants integrated into the Nepal Army - a proposition fiercely resisted by the army thus far.

The UNMIN is also aware that the extended tenure of the Constituent Assembly requires it to issue a new constitution by May 28, 2011. The new statute cannot leave any space for a provision that would allow two armies in one country. At this point, the UNMIN would certainly have outlived its purpose.

Some political parties perceived as pro-Indian believe the UN mission has already lost its relevance in Nepal. However, others want the UNMIN to maintain its presence until the ongoing peace process reaches its logical conclusion, believing it prevents interference by India.

"By displaying intolerance and arrogance towards the UNMIN, the incumbent government as well as non-Maoist political parties are proving their diplomatic immaturity," said Kesharbahadur Bhandari, a retired army officer, in a comment printed in Kantipur newspaper on Thursday. It is an irony, he added, that these leaders tolerated the clear interference of diplomats from India but sought to humiliate UNMIN personnel.

Himalayan ice shrivels in global warming: exhibits

When British climbing legend George Mallory took his iconic 1921 photo of Mount Everest's north face, the mighty, river-shaped glacier snaking

extreme and is devastating," Breashears said Wednesday at New York's Asia Society, which is hosting the exhibition July 13 to August 15.

Amid bad-tempered political

Himalayan glaciers are the world's third largest reserve of ice after the north and south poles, and their seasonal melt water is a crucial source for Asia's great rivers, including the

data and that's proving hard to get, according to Syed Iqbal Hasnain, a top Indian glaciologist who attended the "Rivers of Ice" opening.

Hasnain knows first hand about the difficulty of informed debate.

He said he was misquoted by a magazine claiming that Himalayan glaciers could disappear by 2035, a terrifying but unfounded prospect which caused uproar after slipping into a UN climate change report earlier this year.

Hasnain particularly bemoans the complications of getting authorities and scientists from India, Pakistan, China and Tibet to collaborate in their often hostile border regions.

"We should know how much the glaciers are moving," Hasnain said, "but there is a problem of security. NASA wanted to put up some aerial surveys but the government of India said you cannot... India is so skeptical and they're not coming forward to share the data."

Breashears said his photo-climbing expedition was dangerous and exhausting as he searched for vantage points used more than half a century ago.

One glacier near K2 required three climbs of 6,000 feet before he found the same view enjoyed by Sella all those years earlier.

"We were totally in awe of the people that had been there before," Breashears said.

Future generations won't have the same problem because Breashears recorded each spot's GPS coordinates.

The question is what will be left to photograph.

"You really do have a sense of something we once felt was sort of triumphant in nature now being bested by man," Schell said. "They're kind of on the run, literally moving slowly up the valley."



under his feet seemed eternal.

Decades of pollution and global warming later, modern mountaineer David Breashears has reshot the picture at the same spot - and proved an alarming reality.

Instead of the powerful, white, S-shaped sweep of ice witnessed by Mallory before he died on his conquest of Everest, the Main Rongbuk Glacier today is shrunken and withered.

The frozen waves of ice pinnacles - many of them the size of office buildings - are still there. But they are far fewer, lower and confined to a narrow line.

Comparing precisely matched photographs, Breashears determined that the Rongbuk had dropped some 320 feet (97 meters) in depth.

"The melt rate in this region of central and eastern Himalaya is

debates over the causes and reality of global warming, Breashears speaks literally from the ground.

He went in the footsteps of three great early mountaineer-photographers: Mallory, Canadian-born mapping pioneer Edward Wheeler, and Italy's Vittorio Sella, whose work spanned the 19th and 20th centuries.

The result is then-and-now sets from Tibet, Nepal and near K2 in Pakistan showing seven glaciers in retreat - not only much diminished, but in one case having dissolved into a lake.

"If this isn't evidence of the glaciers in serious decline, I don't know what is," the soft-spoken Breashears said.

The melting glaciers pose more than a threat to the "ultimate harmony" Mallory once described finding in these beautiful peaks.

Ganges, Indus, Mekong and Yellow.

Asia Society's China expert Orville Schell described Nepal as "a kind of a headquarters for the hydrology of the whole of Asia."

As a result, rapid melting is triggering a "cascade of effects all downstream, whether it's animals, plants, rivers, agriculture, people," he said.

That interconnectedness also works the other way: fallout from vast smog clouds over Asian population centers is dirtying the seemingly remote glaciers, thereby hastening their destruction.

"This black carbon soot then turns the glaciers into kind of a solar collector. Rather than reflecting heat back out of the atmosphere into space, it's absorbing it," Schell said.

Addressing the problem requires

Time to fulfill Nepali people's peace aspirations

A wise ruler ought never to keep faith when by doing so it would be against his interests, according to Machiavelli. A lot of confusion currently precedes the formation of Nepal's next Federal Democratic Republic government. Nearly a month ago, the CPN-UML government led by Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal resigned creating a power vacuum in Nepali politics. PM Nepal reluctantly caved into various demands put forth by the Maoists, but related, inter-alia, to deteriorating public security, power bickering in his coalition, major disagreements in concluding the Nepali peace process to be precluded by the rehabilitation of nearly 19,000 Maoist ex-combatants, and lack of desired consensus in drafting a new Nepali constitution by May 28, for which President Dr. Ram Baran Yadav reluctantly gave the Constituent Assembly a one year extension to complete the constitution drafting process. PM Nepal cannot take blame for any of these setbacks, he gave his best shot at the PM's chair knowing the inherent international geo-strategic tussle that shapes the daily outcome of Nepali politics these days.

In turn, President Yadav must be commended for proving a true hero in consolidating Nepali democracy, siding with no one in accepting Prime Minister Nepal's resignation. Furthermore, he has already extended the deadline for the political parties to come up with a consensus candidate for PM, if not prove their majority in the Constituent Assembly. How the next Nepal government will be formed given heightened political polarization among the three major parties, CPN-Maoists, the Nepali Congress and the CPN-UML remains a mathematic mystery for the most avid party Jyotish (astrologer), the last predictor for Nepal's leaders, though now it is quite certain that Jhala Nath Khanal from the CPN-UML will stake claim to the Premiership with a loosely formed coalition with support from the Maoists and a stream of smaller Mades parties in true majority fashion.

Surya B. Prasai

Khanal's possible elevation to the PM's post is not the kheer (rice pudding) that NC wants to digest, in particular the sweet toothed Ram Chandra Poudel who has been chosen as the official Premier candidate by his party, with last minute endorsements of Sher Bahadur Deuba and K.B. Gurung. Poudel has tried valiantly to woo the Mades parties into the NC bandwagon but with past broken mistrust this is less likely to happen. His meetings with the UML, representing both Oil and Khanal camps have also fallen on deaf ears. The onus of the position would have ideally been placed on the shoulders of Prachanda, the Chairman of the CPN-M, which is also the largest political party in Nepal's Constituent Assembly followed by the Nepali Congress and the CPN-UML. But given Prachanda's past differences with President Yadav on the Katwal row, it is unlikely he will see himself elected, for which his party has also proposed alternate candidates, most likely Dr. Babu Ram Bhattarai, just in case, a last minute Terai plus fringe parties' alliance becomes evident. Neither UML nor NC would support a Maoist led coalition based on their leaders vehement inter-party criticism in the past few weeks.

The fact is, anyone can register their name for PM among the 601 CA members between 10 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on July 20. The list of candidates names will be available at the secretariat at 5:30 p.m. the same day. Theoretically, the highest possibility, despite various Nepali media reportage siding with NC, still belongs to the Maoists who have 237 CA members and need only 64 to cross the magical 301 seats, for which a Terai handicap could prove useful.

Some in the international community are already critical that amidst the battle of wits to become Nepal's next PM, Nepali political leaders who considered themselves duly elected from among the people have forgotten their basic minimum pledge to sustain Nepali democracy. Some big unanswered questions

still remain so: How will Nepal's peace process be influenced in the coming year, and who will hold the reign of power long enough to be able to bring it to a successful conclusion? How will the Maoist ex-combatants whose numbers are now presumed between 6000 to 19,000 be integrated and where, if Nepal Army is not the end ground? How will the writing of the new constitution take shape, even though CA members unanimously and hurriedly agreed to come up with a new deadline last week. Overall, how will UNMIN's role be viewed in regard to the peace process, and what will the future development impact be of a government, that finds it hard to even pass a budget in unanimity? Hopefully, the next Prime Minister will be a responsible one who believes in the peaceful aspirations of the Nepali people.

As for the UN, it recently clarified its position. According to Farhan Haq, an associate Spokesperson for Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, it would be advantageous for the political parties to avail of the UN Mission in Nepal's expertise and readiness to support the peace process in order to facilitate completion of its tasks. UNMIN recently presented its timeline, which raised the political ire of the NC and the UML-Led Nepal Government for what they consider failing to meet 'the national consensus' criteria. UNMIN is considered pro-Maoist in tilt by NC and UML. However, according to Haq, UNMIN is apolitical in its bearing. While responding to sharp reactions against the UN 'non-paper' prepared on the integration and rehabilitation of Maoist combatants, Haq categorically stated in the recent New York press briefing, that UNMIN's work was actually based on consultations with the main parties in Nepal and that those consultations took place with the full knowledge of the Government of Nepal. In any case, Nepal's two diplomatically agile neighbors, India and China, keep a close observation on UNMIN's role in the Nepali peace process, as much as

the US, G-8 lobby which see its much needed presence in the form of an overall referee or mediator to make sure all parties abide in true fairness to the UN's ideals. In the end, UNMIN cannot be blamed for Nepali politicians not consulting it with regard to the national peace process lest one forget the peace process includes the Maoists.

In the coming period, Nepali people aspire to see a permanent peace in the shortest duration possible. UNMIN has come up with a 60 week time frame, which might not be acceptable to all, but it is taking into consideration the past disagreements and technical delays due to inter-party rift. A Himalayan peace could evolve much faster if all political parties agreed to the basic discussion modalities since only a permanent one can guarantee the future of Nepali democracy. Agreeing to do so, would show the serious commitment of all sides to a national political process that can synchronize the feeling of oneness among all Nepalis, the indigenous and janjalyis included. It could result in the drafting of a constitution that truly represents the interests of all Nepalis from party loyalists to still a large number of pro-monarchists.

The Nepali peace mandate, besides being UN Security Council endorsed, is to a large extent contingent on the big three and the smaller 22 fringe Nepali political parties agreeing to a plan to address the permanent future of the Maoist ex-combatants many of them under 20. These kids certainly deserve a better and brighter future outside the camps. Most of all they deserve an education so that they can shape their own lives and contribute to Nepal's future prosperity. This is why it is imperative that the next PM serve as a catalyst to Nepali peace. The preservation of Nepal's democratic values is becoming crucial for anyone claiming leadership at Singha Darbar, aptly described as the nestling place for Nepali democracy by the late B.P. Koirala. Nepali peace deserves a more permanent berth in Nepali political thinking now.

Fidel appears in public three times in one week

Former Cuban leader Fidel Castro has met visiting foreign leaders occasionally since recovering from intestinal surgery in July 2006, but he did not appear in public for nearly four years. But in the last week he has made three public appearances.



On July 7, 2010 he visited the National Centre for Scientific Investigation (CNIC) in Havana. The news was released by two Cuban reporters on their blogs and quickly picked up by international news agencies. Finally the Cuban official media also published the news along with photos of the visit.

On July 12, Fidel was interviewed on the national TV program "Mesa Redonda (Round Table)." He expressed forthright views on the situation in the Middle East - in particular his fear that a US attack on Iran will lead to nuclear war.

On July 13, he made his third public appearance at the National Center for International Economic Research (CIEM), accompanied by his wife Dalia Soto del Valle and his two sons Alex and Antonio Castro. He again discussed the prospect of war in the Middle East and also brought up the plight of endangered species with CIEM President Osvaldo Martinez.

Castro's return to the spotlight coincided with Cuban government's decision to release 52 political prisoners in a deal brokered by the Roman Catholic Church and the Spanish Foreign Minister. The first group of seven prisoners arrived in Spain on July 13.

Their release was warmly applauded by western countries, including Spain and the U.S. But the Cuban concession did not produce any signal from the European Union that is willing to abandon the "common position" on Cuba it adopted in 1996 to encourage a "transition to democracy" on the island.

Castro's public appearance is certainly significant. Cuba will hold its postponed Communist Party congress at the end of this year, the Cuban ambassador in Beijing told the Chinese Academy of Social Science.

Fidel's younger brother Raul was elected president of Cuba by the country's National Assembly in February 2008. But Fidel remains to be the first secretary of the Communist Party.

Fidel's public appearance let Cubans and the world know that he has recovered from his illness and that his mind is still sound and clear.

No sign of change

The long suffered Nepali people have harboured expectations and aspirations that the new set of elected leaders will not hoodwink them both by improving their daily lives and steering the country towards a promising peace and sustainable progress. Unfortunately, their legitimate hopes and aspirations are being brutally crushed as they are being constantly compelled to get injured with dirty politics, poor delivery, corruption, criminality and culture of impunity. No considerable cease in political haggling and posturing, violence continuation of culture of impunity, upsurge in crime and corruption.

The ceaseless blame game between the parties, extortions perpetuated by youth groups, violent activities of fringe and disgruntled political outfits operating in tarai and the extreme leeway being enjoyed by guilty underscores the fact that the country has not moved far from where it was.

Among others, the continuous mockery of law and order and the culture of impunity are undermining the popular will of the people. It is indeed depressing to note that the people are finding it quite difficult even to believe that the things are being fixed: delivery of essential services is happening, corruption and

Political observer

crime are being checked and the law and order situation is improving.

Perhaps, it will not be fallacious to extrapolate that one of the prime reasons for the tardy and unimpressive pace of the government is the pressure from the powerful quarters, with certain embassies holding sway over the government at all time. The modus operandi of the government is stubbornly dictated and supervised by foreign envoys on day to day basis to ensure something that matches their vested interest at the expense of Nepal and her people. If the government continues to succumb to the influence of external forces and let the country continues to falter in mess, Nepali people will have to think of something permanent.

People have been proved wrong once again. Cynics who brushed off any talk of 'changed political leaders' have been proved right while entire population who took leaders' words for granted have been proved wrong. Political party leaders continue to monkey around!

Whereas the parties that were in the parliament before are repeating what they did in the past, the Maoists too have made it clear that they are 'not much different' from their counterparts. Because the uncertainty

at the moment is biting for any politically conscious citizen and well wishers of Nepal. The nation may head to any path of destruction. A poorly managed transitional phase is more dangerous than an external aggression.

The segment of the society having limited financial resources is suffering a pang of rocketing market prices. It is conspicuously clear that the people are bound to face a very dreadful economic crisis ahead.

Time is fleeting fast. Every moment comes with the promise of a new opportunity. But one has to develop the spirit of learning from trials and errors. The virtue of taking prudent and timely decisions cannot be developed unless the aforementioned quality is cultivated.

It is high time we should take stock of the situations prevailing in the country. This is all the more important because it appears as if we have not yet got rid of the obsolete tradition of endorsing every thing as it is and ignoring the new realities which are creating a whole new patterns of circumstances. Let us now examine the perilous predicament in which the vast majority of the countrymen have been compelled to live.

The economic condition of the people has hit the rock bottom. There

are wide spread discontent in almost every stratum of the society thanks to the deteriorating economic situation. Over and above all this, a stage of moral degeneration is being set in.

It is well over 52 years since we have been marching along the road of planned development. What is even more appalling is that the volume of the money, material and time involved in the development plan have vastly out proportioned the dividend. This has led to swelling inflationary rate and, depleted the purchasing capacity of the people. The lack of effective implementation of lavishly planned development project is another reason for the gloomy scenario of the country.

The bureaucracy has never shown any guts to take pragmatic and prudent approach to arrest misuse of funds and resources.

The administration indulges itself in designing various highfalutin plans for a country where the general economy of the majority of the people is still tied to Doko and Namlo and relies on remittance money.

We cannot see compatibility between the procedures adopted for the attainment of the objective of the democratic system and the behavior of those put in charge of the implementation. Public representatives, when they step up the ladder of state power, turn into element inaccessible by the people themselves.

Inform all citizens about constitution making

Constituent Assembly (CA) members here Tuesday stressed on the need to inform all the citizens across the country about the constitution making process.

Speaking at a discussion organized by the CA, Civic Relations Committee, they said all the information and notices related to constitution making should be reached to every citizen of the country.

The Committee Chairperson Meena Pandey said considering the experiences of the past a mechanism should now be formed after fixing a time through the business advisory committee to carry out publicity across the country.

CA member Jhaku Subedi stressed on the need to maintain coordination between the centre and the regions, and to reach to the districts the required information following discussions with the local citizen rights activists.

Likewise, CA member Ramji Prasad Sharma said the 43 points of disagreement among the parties should now be taken before the people.

CA member Keshav Mainali said if the mistrust and differences seen among the various political parties in relation to the Constitution making process is reached to the people in the form of information, then the ideological differences among the parties would become clear.

Garbage trucks donated by China stranded in Kolkata port

One hundred and eight vehicles provided by the Chinese government to Kathmandu Metropolitan City (KMC) for garbage management have been stranded at Kolkata Port in India for the last 10 days, according to state-owned news agency RSS.

Environment chief of the KMC Rabin Man Shrestha said the vehicles had arrived at the port on July 11.

The vehicles are worth US\$ 1,816,288. Even at 1 percent customs duty, the KMC needs to pay around Rs 1.8 million to bring the vehicles to Kathmandu. He said the local development ministry wrote to finance ministry to release the customs duty the KMC has to pay to bring the vehicles here.

Shrestha said China has provided 108 vehicles including five ambulances, 50 four-wheeler small vehicles, 36 garbage picking vehicles, five lorries, four vehicles for cleaning the road by using water, two suction trucks, two road sweepers and four sewage suction trucks.

Dialogue of civilizations: scientifically educational dimension

Shahrai Sergey Mihaylovich

The world, as global as it is, has faced global crises, as far as the consequences and accidents are concerned. It is enough to recollect the avalanches of world terrorism, evolving as fast as forest fire, in reply to violent democracy export or a row of crises of the world share market, the last of which has put on a recession nearly all world economy.

Under such conditions natural reaction of the national states to globalisation and its threats becomes regionalism and localisation.

This thesis is illustrated well by a recently published article on the Forum site "Dialogue of civilizations" by the British journalist, the former editor-in-chief of The Observer, Mr. Johnnatan Fenby, in which he ascertains that words of the European leaders about necessity of a joint overcoming the crisis become similar to ritual spells, because countries of Europe intend to get out of the global crises one by one.

Unlike Europe, Russia's and China's attitude to the crisis situations including those of the present global perturbations, is much more optimistic and, I even would say, pragmatic. The history of our countries over and over again shows that crisis situations in our cultural traditions play a role of a fresh wind, a cleaning rain, mobilising the best forces of the state and society and as a result - open new possibilities for development.

It is not without reason that in the Chinese language the very word "crisis" is described by two hieroglyphs:

- "way" that means "danger", "fear";
- and - "isi" that is deciphered as "possibility".

As a matter of fact, in modern conditions crisis becomes an incentive to revision and specification of the purposes and strategy of development of each state and the world community as a whole. The answer to last question is possible only within the framework of dialogue of civilizations.

In fact, events of recent times have sharply raised the question about necessity to sort out those things which seemed obvious earlier. What is "progress"? What is "development"? Whether really "progress" and "development" in their European understanding are values, equally important for all cultures and civilizations?

How the national states are supposed to act, so that, after reaching their own interests, they provide harmonious

development and coexistence of all cultures of the world?

It is obvious that each culture, each civilization has own, special idea about "the desirable future". And it is obvious, as well, that in the conditions of objective limitation of resources on a global scale there is a competition of these ideas. The world of a desirable future, as it is seen, for example by a European Christian, may differ from a picture with which representatives of other cultural traditions, other religions will agree.

That is why a question arises: whether it is possible to find a consensus at all on the basic lines of the future world set-up? And what is the basis, making the search for such consensus possible?

In any case, it is obvious, that today the score of the USA and Europe gradually diminishes in the international competition on a theme Whose future will be the best? The ideas, offered by the western civilization about progress, about the purposes and development problems, and also about ways to measure and estimate success of advancement of the countries on the way to a bright future, demands a serious audit.

Personally, I am firmly convinced that rapprochement of ideas of various cultures, both about the long-term future, and about the nearest configuration of the post-crisis world, is probably possible only on the basis of the Rational, that is on the basis of development of science, education and, accordingly, scientifically-educational dialogue of civilizations.

My confidence, that science and education development will allow to create effective mechanisms for "future managements" both at national and global level, is not so much tribute to traditions of the European critical philosophy, but rather a consequence of modern physical and mathematical ideas about laws of development of societies as open systems. After all, unlike a word, term or concept, it is absolutely not important, what sign - Greek, Arabian, Chinese - is attributed to a figure. The "one" or a set of those "ones" remain such in any description.

I think, in this audience it is not necessary to explain that any society, even the one called "closed", is, from the point of view of physics, an open system, where processes develop in a non-linear way and are situated by branching points, bifurcations. In crisis situations, in critical points there appear some versions of the further course

of events. As the scientists say, the system has a possibility of a casual "choice", and it means that uncertainty concerning the future sharply increases.

As it is an issue of a social system, it follows from this that a choice in a situation of uncertainty is made by concrete people or groups of people. This is the way the mechanism of influence of an individual on a history course is carried out.

And I am firmly convinced, that it is the quality of people, level of their knowledge, education, that finally determines the quality of the decisions, as well, as the choice to be made. Whether the states, cultures, civilizations will move along the path of harmonious development or they will get into a situation when the decisions favorable on a short time interval, will prove to be a trap because those decisions, in the long-term period, will lead to losses and defeat.

For this reason I have selected an angle for my report, connected with science and education. As this theme is inexhaustible, I would like to dwell only on two questions.

The first one is an issue of a choice of strategy of development in the context of transition to a knowledge society.

The second one concerns the role of contacts in science and education sphere in dialogue of Russia and China.

More often the problem of a choice of strategy of development is discussed with reference to the developing countries facing the challenges of the postindustrial world. But I would like to make it sure at once that when we name Russia, China, India or Brazil "developing countries", it does not mean that they rank lower, than so-called developed countries. On the contrary, "developing" means having prospects, "dynamical", "not at a stop". After all the most unsuccessful choice for culture and people is self-assurance in the greatness. If someone believes that he had achieved zenith of fame and there is nobody to compete with - this is the beginning of the end. We will recollect destiny of ancient Rome and destiny of those peoples whom civilized Romans considered as barbarians. After all in many respects just because Romans thought their superiority was guaranteed, that the Roman civilization reached development tops, they have lost in a historical perspective.

The similar situation has developed today in the world.

Throughout years the USA and Europe have dictated to the world the purpose and value of development. As achievement of high level of social and economic development is an attractive purpose for all countries, the psychology race after the leader has strongly seized the states on a global scale. But the present crisis has forced to stop and think: whether really to strive into the postindustrial world of the western sample is the unique choice? All the more: as any strategy constructed on ideology of a "Catching up Development", may allow to reduce the distance, but not to overcome it.

Expansion of volume of knowledge has considerably reduced requirements of the national economy of developed countries for real elements of manufacture, especially in raw materials, and thus has cardinally changed the relation of an individual to inhabitation, having made possible steady ecological equilibrium. As a result the West has received a potential possibility to lower intensity of economic interaction with other countries and nations.

Transformation of scientific knowledge into a direct industrial resource has caused strengthening of dependence of the developing states, requiring new technologies, on postindustrial ones, where the technologies are concentrated, and has simultaneously generated new models of reproduction when maximisation of consumption of the information and knowledge began to accelerate processes of strengthening and development of a postindustrial society. Actually, today there is a non-equivalent and unfair exchange between postindustrial and developing countries: new technologies are being exchanged against either non-reproducible resources, or the goods created by work of thousands of people. The postindustrial world, delivering technologies and knowledge-consuming products, does not reduce quantity of the resources remaining at its disposal. It is the exchange of products

of work for products of creativity, the industrial rewards for knowledge, that, finally, determines the split of the modern world which distinctly emerged on the brink of millennia.

Additional problems are created by the issue of equivalence of the exchange. In the same way, as once missionaries in exchange for beads and mirrors gold, spices and even territories, today also arises an issue of real quality and advantage of the knowledge exported by the postindustrial countries.

The Western world quite often offers developing countries not only the useful technologies capable really to facilitate life of people (for example to solve essential problems, such as lack of pure water, energy, food, medicines and so forth), but also fashionable, but useless (from the utilitarian point of view) intellectual products. It resembles a situation in the modern fashion industry where the bulk of profit to the companies selling "dream of a beautiful life" is brought not by VIP-clients and stars of show business who use expensive goods almost free of charge, but mass consumers with an average and low income level.

A vivid example of increased intellectual products sales to developing countries useless from the utilitarian point of view, is, for instance, market expansion of ring-tones (musical rings for mobile phones). By various estimations, world sales of that gadget make annually on the average about 3.5 billion US dollars, while the price for this "product" fluctuates approximately from 0.99 dollars to 2.50 US dollars. In the report published by Juniper Research company, it is predicted that by 2012 the income of the mobile musical industry will come up to about 17.5 billion US dollars, with China and Far East being the biggest markets for mobile musical services. The next five years their share will be of 43% of world sales of musical content.

But is the situation really so pessimistic, that a postindustrial society due to its internal features, can not be either "caught up" or "constructed", and the rest of nations, wishing to enter the doors leading into a society of knowledge, will just fall to pass through the threshold?

On the one hand, it is obvious, that the mobilisation methods tested in Russia time and again proved inefficient for a jerk into the marvellous new world as such approaches suppose extensive consumption of human resources whereas the economy based on knowledge requires development of freedom and maintenance of a guaranteed level of rights and material prosperity as a prerequisite for evolving creative potential of each individual. On the other hand, the thesis that a modern postindustrial society, possessing products of steady self-development, can arise only in a natural, evolutionary way, is correct only if that "naturalness" is understood as absence of shocks and revolutions. If it means absence of purposeful participation of the state in working out and realisation of strategy of social and economic development, it is absolutely incorrect.

In contemporary conditions the national state is ought to take active and effective part in creation of conditions for economy and society, to enable them to carry out transition to a new stage of development.

But it should be acknowledged that the economy based on knowledge, as well as a knowledge society, is not simply a next stage of an industrial epoch where well-being is still determined by production, and non-material activities only raise competitiveness. It is a qualitatively new condition of society and economy which arise, if such analogy is in place, as a result of stage transition.

Stage transition is a concept of thermodynamics which describes spasmodic transition of substance from one thermodynamic phase into another one at change of external conditions. For open systems, and, as I already said, the society belongs to such ones, spontaneous transition to a new, ordered condition is possible only within an intensive exchange with environment and achievement of some critical condition. Thus the new condition exists only at preservation of an unceasing stream of energy/substance into the system.

Source: Int'l Conference on the "Dialogue of Civilizations and a Harmonious World"

~ National news ~

President Yadav to visit China in October

President Dr Ram Baran Yadav is all set to go on a visit to China in October this year.

China has invited President Yadav to take part in the concluding session of the ongoing Shanghai Expo as a chief guest.

Following President Yadav's visit, senior Chinese leaders are also scheduled to make a whirlwind Nepal visit, it is learnt.

Reports quoting senior foreign ministry officials say that Chinese President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao both have shown keen interest to visit Nepal.

In 2001, the then Chinese Prime Minister Zhu Rongji had visited Nepal. And in 2008, Chinese foreign minister Yang Jeichi had come on a Nepal visit following large scale protest by Tibetans exiles living in Nepal against Chinese occupation of their homeland.

Nepal-China talks to dwell on security collaboration

Nepal-China bilateral security talks are being held in Kathmandu on July 26 to discuss border security, Tibetan refugee issues and security collaboration.

A Chinese delegation headed by Chen Zhimin, vice minister for Public Security is arriving in Kathmandu for the talks, reports quoted sources at the Foreign ministry as saying.

Home Secretary Govinda Kusum will lead the Nepali talks team.

Pushpalal and BP remembered

Various political leaders said communist leader the late Pushpa Lal Shrestha and Mahamanav BP Koirala were committed leaders.

The leaders expressed such views at an interaction on "Views of Pushpa Lal and BP's thoughts on Nationality, Democracy and Military", organized by the Nepal Prabaha national monthly on the occasion of Pushpa Lal and BP Memorial Day in the capital July 19.

UCPN-Maoist Secretary CP Gajurel said the thoughts of the late leaders Pushpa Lal and BP are still relevant.

Reminding that the Rana autocracy could not have been toppled in 2007 BS if BP Koirala had not spearheaded the armed struggle against them, he said "There is no point the NC calling itself fully non-violent."

Moreover, he said even BP had realized that he had done mistake by not bringing army under people's control. So, the leaders of the NC must learn from the historic ideal and thoughts of senior leader BP, he suggested.

Commenting on the late leader Pushpa Lal, he said the weakness of Pushpa Lal was his inability to rise through people's movement though he contributed significantly in the communist movement and new people's democracy.

He expressed concerns over the views of the NC and CPN-UML that are harping for the dissolution of the people's liberation army which sacrificed in the people's movement as well as the 19-day movement.

NC leader and chairman of BP Chintan Foundation Haribol Bhattarai said at present also the country is moving ahead with democratic and communist philosophies being represented by Koirala and Pushpa Lal.

He said BP was the first democratic leader to open the political eye of the general public and fill them with the light of consciousness. He added BP was a farsighted and patriot stating that BP never bowed down before anyone against nationality and democracy.

UML leader Lok Krishna Bhattarai claimed that the country would be prosperous if followers of BP and Pushpalal abide by their philosophies.

He opined that the country would not have to face any struggle, war or people's movement if the NC had properly managed food, clothing and housing for the people by following BP's principles.

National youth policy not incorporating

The Ministry of Youth and Sports has enforced the National Youth Policy-2066 BS since Magh 14, but it has not been able to incorporate the problems of the youth itself, the youth CA members have complained.

As per the National Youth Policy, the Ministry of Youth and Sports should be looking into every aspect concerning the youth, but it has limited itself only to the agenda of sports, CA member Lucky Sherpa says.

Even the sports sector has not been run effectively, and the future of athletes has not been secured, she adds.

Likewise, CA member Kamala Thapa accuses the Ministry of misappropriating funds by taking officials in greater number than the athletes in the 11th South Asian Games held in Dhaka of Bangladesh.

The tendency to send relatives rather than genuine athletes has stopped the sports sector from making achievements as much as expected, CA member Thapa said, while adding that the state does not have a clear policy on this.

Defending the accusations, however, Secretary at the Ministry, Sushil Jung Bahadur Rana says the agenda of the youths has fallen under shadow as a result of the lack of a clear policy of the State in this regard.

The National Youth Policy includes youth between 16 to 40 years of age, and this comprises 38.8 per cent of the total population of Nepal.

A total of Rs. 388.9 million had been allocated for the Ministry of Youth and Sports in the previous fiscal year.

Dialogue of civilizations and requirements of a just world order

By Dr. Hans Köchler

Upon the end of the Cold War, when a hegemonic, unipolar world order began to unfold, it was no coincidence that the notion of "clash of civilizations" suddenly became the basic paradigm for the interpretation of global power relations and, subsequently, for the legitimization (or justification) of neo-imperial policies. In a unipolar environment, enemy stereotypes such as those triggered by the clash of civilizations doctrine are an indispensable ideological tool to bolster the respective hegemon's claim to power (which is virtually directed at the entire world).

A just world order, however, requires a balance of power, which can best be achieved in a multipolar framework (and for which the multilateral mechanisms, including those of collective security of the United Nations Organization, were originally created). One of the basic principles on which a just and harmonious world order is to be based, is the notion of "dialogue of civilizations." An international system that is stable and ensures peaceful development of all the members of the international community, and not just the privileged few, must be founded on the norms of sovereign equality and mutual respect. This makes it imperative that no country impose its own civilization upon the others, a policy that - through all of history, until the most recent project of a unilateral "New World Order" - has been proven to increase tensions and even provoke armed confrontations.

Unlike in a hegemonic (unipolar) constellation - where the dominant power claims civilizational supremacy and aims to indoctrinate the rest of the world about democracy, human rights, good governance, the rule of law, etc. - a multipolar balance of power, in order to be stable, requires harmonious relations that are characterized by mutual respect, peaceful interaction, coordination and integration of policies among equal partners. Since, in such a constellation, no party will try to subjugate the others or to interfere into their sovereign domain, whether in the political, economic, social or cultural field, harmony among nations will not lead to uniformity.

Dialogue among civilizations and cultures is one of the basic elements, or preconditions, of harmony - at the domestic, as well as the transnational (or global) level. It promotes unity in diversity and directly contributes to durable peace among nations. As pro-active approach, dialogue goes one step further than mere (static) co-existence between different cultural communities and states: It involves co-operation and mutual engagement. This kind of positive interaction between cultures and civilizations allows each civilization to develop and prosper according to its own parameters, while benefiting from the others' experience. Such an orientation will eventually ensure the humane dimension of globalization, providing fair and balanced opportunities for all states and peoples in the development of their potential and in the use of the world's resources, in the material as well as the spiritual sense.

The maintenance of peace and the promotion of human rights, two of the fundamental purposes of the United Nations, require harmonious relations between states that cannot be achieved with a unilateral approach or with traditional power politics since they negate the sovereign equality of nations. A just world order, indeed a harmonious world, can only be built on dialogue, which incorporates the very essence of the principle of mutuality.



Region:

Rage in Kashmir

Muhammad Farooq Rehmani

Ever since the Autumn of 1947, when under the pretext of a controversial letter of accession by the last Dogra ruler of Jammu and Kashmir, to the last British Governor General of India Lord Mount Batten, followed by India's invasion on the former princely state, the history has been recording frequent

Indian army and police which enjoy immunity under some draconian laws since 1990. No doubt every state in the world has some internal trouble, but the turmoil in Kashmir can't be attributed to some economic or social problems; it is more than that. We must go back

encouraged by the lusty politicians and rulers of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. They still enjoy reveries and wishfully think that Kashmiris patience would exhaust, to finally give in before India. But the idiom "water off a duck's back" is not applicable here. Having

My second point and I would suggest humbly that the current agitation must not deviate from its national agenda of the right of self determination. We had no global agenda, never, ever. We have no extra-territorial political and strategic ambitions. Our right to self determination has been recognized by the United Nations and this is now our national slogan. It is the duty of the torchbearers of the current awakening to plead and protect these objectives of the nation, and try to win over the world opinion. The real leadership-vanguard of the present uprising must take all possible measures to project the voice of the people in a manner that would accord it world wide sympathy, and acceptance. It is the duty of this leading generation to protect the movement against all types of mischief by saboteurs, exploiters, and hypocrites-politically ambitious elements of the society. The goal of the freedom fighting Kashmiri must be unambiguously noble and humble-to promote the cause of the tortured humanity of Kashmir, and gain maximum support for it from the international community.

It is said that the issue of Kashmir-the right of self determination is in the eyes of many a foredoomed and forgotten question, and the glorious sacrifices of our people are being ignored by the world. Surprisingly our own Ummah is silent over the bloodshed of the Kashmiris. The slogans of freedom, wailing cries of suffering people; the army and police operations against civilians don't find any space in the newspapers. No television channel has the time to show the tragic episodes of Kashmir to their listeners. Yet they say that Kashmir is an international question; for Pakistan it is a national issue. As per the coverage of the national issue is concerned, we should ask our well wishers to watch the screen, judge the coverage of Kashmir and put the news stories under microscope. In this gloom how can we tell others to focus upon the current situation in Kashmir? We are in a deep slumber, not that we don't watch or read anything; but in the sense that we have developed vested interests here and there, in and out. The time calls on us to weed out the dead wood from the forest.

The write is Chairman Jammu and Kashmir People's Freedom League and Senior Executive member of APHCAJK



street skirmishes, and bloody episodes between India and the Kashmiris. Although every time India trumpeted her victory on the "separatists" in the name of fake and farce elections, but it could never think of pulling out her military and paramilitary forces from Jammu and Kashmir. Each post-1947 decade, has its own history of turbulence very different from the law and order problem of a country. The failure of the Indian leadership to respect the free will of the people disturbed and complicated the whole affair and led to a repressive and bloody state policy, resulting in the current quit Kashmir agitation against the armed forces of India by unarmed youth who are the product of post 1990 Indian policies, ordinances and laws in Jammu and Kashmir.

The rage of the Kashmiris is like flying sparks and fire-balls, which can't be measured in terms of simple local grievances, and hence this fire can't be easily extinguished or simmered down. It is after every innocent killing and atrocity that people find a genuine cause to come out on the streets in huge numbers; highlight their basic demand of the right of self determination and pour scorn on the

to the genesis of the Kashmir dispute and the history of Indian rule in Kashmir. India broke her promises with the people not once but many times during the last several decades. Therefore, there is hate against Indian occupation of Kashmir-rooted deep in their ethos and blood. India should not pretend to be ignorant, she should not say why. India must ask her military men in the field as to how humiliatingly they have been treating the Kashmiris, men, women and children; they have been plundering their green gold and meadows in the forests for the last two decades. India is reaping its harvest in Kashmir.

Again India's total refusal to grant the right of self determination to the Kashmiris fanned unrest and discontent in Kashmir. A young generation in every decade spearheads the movement of freedom and a retiring generation leaves space for the fresh blood. Nowadays our youth is the torch bearer of freedom. It has been experienced in every decade -before and after the death of Sheikh Abdullah. Unfortunately India always maligned Kashmiris, and spread malice against them across the country. In her malicious propaganda, India has

said all this, I would caution the people on two vital points. First is the peaceful and popular character of the current political struggle. It must be maintained at all costs and further strengthened by isolating the elements of duplicity, destruction and sabotage. This will ensure support of an overwhelming majority to it. Peaceful public struggle is more lasting than any mode of armed disturbance, which cripples a poor nation and ruins its socio-economic fabric more easily. Moreover, in the present scenario an armed struggle for a just and noble cause has to face the opposition of a global nature. Here India is the sole benefactor. Pakistan is our moral and diplomatic supporter. It is also an active member of the war on terror." Yet the country is dubbed as "the current Al Qaeda epicenter." Kashmiris must understand well that the Muslim rulers in spite of their land, population and energy potentials tremble by one statement of the US or West. In a high level meeting with the leadership of the AJK, I had suggested only one day shutter down call before the base camp Govt. to show solidarity with the people of Kashmir. But they didn't go beyond condolence messages.

Naxalite Movement - Indian Brand of Talibanization

Ibn-e-Rehmat

It is not only Pakistan which has become a hot-bed of militancy as India too is facing tough music due to the rising tide of Naxalite movement.

In the latest rounds of violence, Naxalites have killed at least 35 people - 24 civilians and 11 Special Police Officers (SPOs) and injured several others on May 17, in Dantewada district of Chhattisgarh, when a powerful landmine blast blew up a private bus. According to Indian sources, it is first time that Naxalites have targeted a passenger bus in which civilians were also traveling as rebels have been warning bus operators and private jeep owners not to allow security forces to board their vehicles. In the past, they had been forcing the civilians before setting ablaze the vehicles after forcing the civilian to get off.

The Naxalite violence is on the rise since many years. Indian Prime Minister has been sounding his warning to the political and bureaucratic circles that Maoist would pose biggest threat to the Indian security in future. According to Indian Express, Police sources claim that Maoists have been trying to mount pressure on security forces, particularly after April 6 massacre to try and demoralize the paramilitary forces and stall anti Naxalite operations.

"Naxalite" violence in central India

South Asia has a long history of human suffering in the world, the worst, hereditary, perennial and perhaps never ending. The social system resting on four or five tier and the discriminatory treatment being met by the Other Backward classes who form about 80% of the population is unique in the world. With the growing awareness, the divide between Have and Have-not is become more and more a heart burn as the poor junta thinks that capitalism is the mother of all evils. Like Russia and China, the slogan of socialism is like a magic wand for the poor/down trodden and oppressed people of India. These people have suffered at the hands of the landlords, high caste Hindus, Government high-handedness, capitalists and others find it as the only way to end their days of misery not knowing who all are their masters, what are their motives, what all they want to achieve. It may not be wrong to say that the activities of the Communist and Maoist Groups are bridled by the high caste Brahmins who in the garb of their well-wishers may act otherwise.

In central India, leftist extremist groups, known as Maoists or Naxalites, have significantly increased insurgent activities in the states of Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Bihar, Chattisgarh, Jharkhand, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. The "movement", which had initially started with poor peasants and tribal spread quickly to the disadvantaged classes, college students, intellectuals and landless people.

The activities of various Maoist groups have undergone some changes in the due course of time. Now they also resort to flexing their muscle to scare the local transporters to deny traveling facilities to the security forces as part of their revulsion against them. In the past it was generally extortion for ransom from farmers, teachers, contractors and businessman as part of their earning their livelihood. The presence of Naxalites in the tribal areas has created problems for the District administration in the implementation of various development projects. It has been reported that the Naxalites do not allow contractors and engineers to construct roads and bridges to avoid police access to the regions.

The government reportedly played

active role in their mobilization against the insurgent groups to save their skin from the Naxalite violence. In Chhattisgarh, approximately 15,000 people from 420 villages have fled to temporary camps. People have left behind their cattle and most of their household goods. Displacement is reportedly continuing while more police and paramilitary stations are being set up.

There was yet another report saying "7,000-10,000 people fled to camps protected by the police to avoid Naxalite retaliation because they had joined the Salva Jodum movement". Similarly in Orissa, local tribes were forcibly displaced by the state authorities because they were suspected of sympathizers of Naxalite Groups, who were gaining foothold in the area.

With the passage of time, these Naxalite have changed their tactics and strategies to bring more and more people under their influence. But what is more important this time is de-linking the missing link what used to be there in past, when all such linking were invariably linked to Pakistan. This is perhaps more pragmatic approach to look inside rather than finding faults in the neighbor as people on both sides of the borders have grown weary of war of pointing fingers upon one another since decades.

CIA offered me \$50m to lie about nuclear secrets: Amiri

Patrick Cockburn

An Iranian scientist who says he was abducted and taken to the United States by the CIA returned to Tehran yesterday to a hero's welcome and claimed that he had been pressured into lying about his country's nuclear programme.

Shahram Amiri said that he was on the hajj pilgrimage when he was seized at gunpoint in the city of Medina, drugged and taken to the US, where he says Israel was involved in his interrogation. In the US, officials were reported



to have admitted that Mr Amiri was paid more than \$5m (£3.2m) by the CIA for information about Iran's nuclear ambitions.

The US claims to have received useful information from him in return for the money, but is clearly embarrassed by his very public return to Iran. The offer of a large bribe is reportedly part of a special US programme to get Iranian nuclear scientists to defect.

Flashing a victory sign, Mr Amiri returned to Tehran International Airport to be greeted by senior officials and by his tearful wife and seven-year-old son, whom he had not seen since he disappeared in Saudi Arabia during a visit 14 months ago. Iran said it was demanding information about what had happened to him.

The US says that he entered the US of his own free will and had relocated to Tucson, Arizona. The US is claiming that Mr Amiri, who had worked for Iran's Atomic Energy Organisation, re-defected because pressure was placed on his family back in Iran, something he denied yesterday. Officials suggested that Iran had used his family to get him to leave the US.

"Americans wanted me to say that I defected to America of my own will, to use me for revealing some false information about Iran's nuclear work," Mr Amiri said at Tehran airport.

"I was under intensive psychological pressure by [the] CIA... the main aim of this abduction was to stage a new political and psychological game against Iran."

Iran and the US have been engaged in a semi-covert war involving defections, seizures and kidnappings in recent years, of which the case of Mr Amiri is only the latest example.

It reached its peak in Iraq in 2007 when the US abducted Iranian consular officials from the northern city of Arbil and Iran seized a British navy patrol boat in the Gulf. Last year, Iran seized three Americans hiking in the mountains of Iraqi Kurdistan, claiming they had strayed over the Iranian border, while other accounts said they had been forced into Iran at gunpoint.

Mr Amiri had appeared in three contradictory videos; in the first he claimed to have been kidnapped and tortured and in the second, he said he had come to the US to work on his PhD.

In a third video he denounces the second one. On Monday he arrived unannounced at the Iranian interest section of the Pakistani embassy in Washington and asked for an air ticket to return to Iran.

At his press conference at Tehran airport, Mr Amiri stressed that he had acted under compulsion. "Israeli agents were present at some of my interrogation sessions and I was threatened to be handed over to Israel if I refused to cooperate with Americans," he said. "I have some documents proving that I've not been free in the United States and have always been under the control of armed agents of US intelligence services."

He says he was offered \$50m to stay in the US. Mr Amiri denied that he had ever had any information about the Iranian nuclear programme. "I am an ordinary researcher... I have never made nuclear-related researches. I'm not involved in any confidential jobs. I had no classified information."

Mr Amiri had worked at Iran's Malek Ashraf University, an institution closely connected to the country's elite Revolutionary Guards.

US officials said that Mr Amiri may not be able to access his \$5m, because of sanctions on Iran. The Washington Post said yesterday that the Iranian scientist had been working with the CIA for a year and officials were "stunned" by his request to go home this week. The officials added that he had provided useful information, though not directly on whether Iran was trying to make a nuclear device.

जाति, धर्म, वर्ण र लिङ्गका
आधारमा विवाद नगरौं, एकले
अर्काको मिलेर अघि बढौं ।



नेपाल सरकार

सूचना तथा सञ्चार मन्त्रालय

सूचना विभाग

ICT Intervention and Development in remote Nepal

Devinder Thapa and Øystein Sæbo

The remote communities in the mountains regions in developing countries are among the poorest, most-remote and most-excluded in the world. They are socially, politically, and economically excluded. This has widened educational, healthcare, information and communication gap. Studies show that availability of information and communication technology (ICT) in a remote community is significant to facilitate the flow of information and knowledge that can provide an opportunity to connect them with the main streamline of development. To explore the role of ICT in socio-economic development of the Mountain regions, we conducted a case study in two villages of Myagdi District. In this study, we have explored how Nepal Wireless Networking Project (NWNP) may help to overcome these shortages. There is a great deal of optimism,

exemplified by one villager from Tikot who stated:

The Internet cannot help us with plowing, sowing, and harvesting. But by using the Internet, we can engage in a lot of other educational and financial development, I believe.

We argue that the NWNP provides a promising opportunity to create social, human, physical, financial, and political capital. People may access data resources and they are offered training to improve their competence. Social networking may also be facilitated. Now they no longer have to travel long hours to make a phone call to their relatives. Due to the NWNP, people living in the villages have better access to medical competence. Transaction costs are reduced and there are some promising opportunities to empower marginalized

groups, especially women, through training programs.

The NWNP has provided several opportunities to the Nangi and Tikot communities. However, in order to realize the macro level socio-economic impact, the community people should not only be able to access and assess the information; they should also be able to convert it into relevant knowledge, and to make decisions. At the same time, they should be able to generate local content that can be used for revenue generation activities. In the content development and revenue generation program, this project is still in its infancy. They need to work on local content generation. Although they started local bulletin and eCommerce services, this information is still not exported to the outside community. Access to local data and information

by external market is important in order to generate revenue and long-term sustainability.

Overall, the NWNP has created a positive wave in the Nangi and Tikot villages. The extension from what were initially two villages to currently more than seventy indicates its importance. Despite some challenges, the NWNP is an important example of an ICT for development (ICT4D) project in remote areas in a country which is rarely discussed in the ICT4D literature.

Conducive government policies, infrastructure development, and public-private partnerships may support the replication of the NWNP across other mountain villages in Nepal. Further development of business models to attract eco-tourism, and to sell cultural and agricultural products through the Internet may generate revenues and further add to the socio-economic development in the long run.

Child sexual abuse "alarming"

Social observer

There is no precise data available on the number of sexual abuse and rape cases but activists believe the situation is alarming.

A research study report entitled *No More Suffering - Child Sexual Abuse in Nepal - Children's Perspectives* published in April 2006 by the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and Child Workers in Nepal (CWIN), found that nearly 18 percent of the 4,000 students interviewed had experienced severe sexual abuse, including molesting and rape.

Another research report on child sexual abuse entitled *Silent Suffering - Child Sexual Abuse in the Kathmandu Valley* issued in June 2003 by Save the Children Norway in Nepal and CWIN, said a large number of schoolchildren

in Kathmandu had been subjected to sexual abuse. Nearly 13.7 percent of the 5,000 interviewed students had suffered from severe sexual abuse.

CWIN is a national non-governmental organisation (NGO) helping to rescue and protect children at risk of sexual violence, abuse and exploitation.

"The situation of child sexual abuse is alarming and strong measures have to be taken to protect the children at risk of being sexually abused," said Madhav Pradhan from CWIN.

CWIN's 24-hour emergency service called Child Helpline, which helps vulnerable children, has been receiving more calls from victims to help rescue

them from being abused and raped on a regular basis.

"We immediately respond to calls from children to ensure that we report their cases immediately to the police so that they can start investigations promptly," said Bharat Adhikari, programme officer of Child Helpline.

Strong laws needed

Adhikari said a lot could have been done to protect the children and punish their abusers if there was a stable government and strong laws were in place. So far, the penalty against the accused rapist is a prison term of 11 years if the crime is proven within 35 days. But in cases of child victims, most of them report quite late due to

fear and their state of trauma, according to Adhikari.

"It takes them months to finally reveal the incident of rape and it is often too late to punish the alleged rapists," explained Adhikari. He said the law was even weaker when it comes to sexual abuse cases. The abuser, if found guilty of attempting rape, would get barely a year of imprisonment.

Child rights activists expressed their concern that sexual abuse incidents could increase as the government had failed to give priority to non-political social issues, including the protection of children.

Government officials authorised to speak on the issue and laws related to sexual crimes were not immediately available for comment.

Their names have been implicated in the murder of Ram Prakash Yadav, Kanhaiya Yadav, Dara Yadav and Ambika Mahalo on January 6, 2010.

The bench also asked the Prime Minister Office (PMO), Ministry of Law, Ministry of Home Affairs, Office of Attorney General and Bara District Court to furnish written clarifications within 15 days on why they took such a controversial decision.

In a similar case, the SC had ordered the government some two and half years ago to take prior consent from the court concerned if it wanted to withdraw any criminal case. But the current government brazenly ridiculed the order.

Following intense pressure especially from Tarai-based parties, the last cabinet meeting had decided to withdraw the cases on June 30 citing political reasons.

It is not the first time the government withdrew the cases on as gruesome crime as murder. More than 1500 cases have already been nullified after the restoration of democracy.

The political parties are indulged in giving excessive leeway to organized criminals to pocket petty political benefits.

For instance, the name of UCPN (Maoist) central committee member Kaji Bahadur Khan was recently implicated in the case related to robbing of some Chinese traders and he was also the mastermind behind the torturous murder of businessmen Ram Hari Shrestha in a Maoist camp in Chitwan.

But, the Maoist leadership is trying to sanctify Khan in a manner that strikingly mocks at the rule of law.

The continued criminalization in politics is sure to have devastating impacts on the right of every people to live freely.

Declining law and order and moral degeneration

Have the laws and rules become redundant in our country? Don't we need them for regulating the society and developing it into a morally integrated and responsible one? We use the term redundant not because they have become superfluous, but because despite their full utility they have been left ineffective. Certain legislation relating to the basic problems of the common men are not being executed and followed sincerely and in a manner which can really safeguard and promote the general well being of the people.

There are laws to check beggary, adulteration in food stuff, profiteering, black, marketing, immoral trafficking in women, sale and distribution of wine in open public places etc. There are reports that trafficking in women is assuming a dangerous dimension; that traditionally honored moral and social values are losing their force, and indiscipline and recklessness have started corroding the very vitality of the nation's youth life and social structure is facing a serious threat from the growing problem of many social maladies. What do these reports hit at? Are we really heading towards a decline in our social and moral fields? Can a society contribute anything worthwhile for its own well being under a continued state of moral degeneration? These are questions which are agitating the minds of all those who are really and sincerely devoted to the cause of social and national uplift. It is time therefore when a vigilant analysis of the causes responsible for this situation should be made.

A dispassionate study of the situation presents a very painful picture of the whole show. If we really examine the maladies one by one we reach the conclusion that the hands of the law have become weak. In case even the existing laws were implemented sincerely and strictly many of the present maladies would not have arisen.

Favoritism and connivance are evils which are helping the anti-social elements to raise their ugly heads. Social disturbances, immoral activities and growing economic crisis are, to a great extent, results of the defective and faulty execution of the existing laws. It is therefore essential that special care should be taken to ensure correct and sincere implementation of legal provisions.

Impunity at...

Even the government lawyers have come into probe criteria for their possible involvement in helping to release the notorious criminals two years ago. The Office of Attorney General will launch probe into the possible involvement of them in preparing weak documents against the culprits and not appealing against the KDC decision in the Appellate Court.

In case of serious crime, the culprits should not be freed even on bail or other guarantee as per the international judicial protocol.

Of course, the government is also equally active in criminalization of politics. The Supreme Court had to stay the cabinet decision of withdrawing 20 murder cases pending in Bara District Court last week.

A single bench of Chief Justice Ram Prasad Shrestha said the cabinet decision to withdraw murder cases is a blatant violation of Article 24 of interim constitution and previous court orders.

The government had decided to withdraw cases against Rajkishor Prasad Sah, Ganesh Kulwar, Sunil Prasad Jaiswal, Dinesh Prasad Yadav, Shiva Shankar Sah Teli, Manoj Prasad Sah Teli, Krishna Prasad Sah Teli, Chaturgun Pandit Kumhar, Jokhu Pandit Kumhar and Ramchandra Prasad Yadav.

Likewise, the government had also tried to annul murder cases charged against Dara Prasad Yadav, Abdul Sattar Ansari, Amjad Ali Ansari, Anisul Rahman Ansari, Manoj Prasad Yadav, Dharendra Prasad Kushwaha, Nalhuini Thakur Lohar, Nanda Kishor Sah Kan, Suresh Prasad Sah, Rajkishor Prasad Sah.

~ News ~

Inauguration of Photo Exhibition on "Civil and Navy Fleet in Russia"

The Russian Centre of Science and Culture recently organized a photo exhibition on "Civil and Navy Fleet in Russia" to mark the day of Military Maritime Fleet of Russia. In the exhibition various photos depicting Russian civilian and military fleet were displayed.

Delivering the welcome address during the exhibition, the Director of the RCSC Mr. Stanislav Simakov said that though the origins of the Russian navy could go back to the period between the 4th and the 6th century, when Early East Slavs were engaged in a struggle against the Byzantine Empire, the regular Russian Navy was established by Peter the Great (Peter I) in October of 1696.

The exhibition was inaugurated lighting the lamp by the Chief Guest of the function General (Ret) Shreedhar Shamsheer Rana, Chairman of the Celebration Committee for 65th Victory Day in the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945), Patron of the Nepal National Ex-Army Servicemen Association as well as Honorary Vice President of World Veterans Federation.

Rana appreciated the role of the RCSC for its initiative in promotion of cultural relations between Nepal and Russia, and said such exhibition would give valuable information on history and development activities of the country.

The programme was followed by the Russian feature film show "The Destiny of a Man".

The programme was attended by the Former Minister of Environment, Science and Technology Ganesh Shah, Prof. Dr. Krishna Bahadur Thapa, President of History Association of Nepal, Brig. General Digambar S. Rana, President of Nepal National Ex-Army Servicemen Association, Prof. Dambir Bir Thapa, President of U. N. Association of Nepal, Mr. Hiranya Lal Shrestha, Former Nepalese Ambassador to Russia and other distinguished persons.

Number of audiences attending the programme stood at 70.

Tourist arrivals in rise

Tourist arrivals in Nepal increased by 1.9 percent in 2009, however, their average length of stay has declined, local media reported on Friday.

According to the Economic Survey 2009/10, the average length of stay has gone down from 11.8 days in 2008 to 11.6 days in 2009.

Tourists had started staying longer in the country in 2006 following the comprehensive peace accord ending the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) conflict. Since then, however, it has been decreasing constantly.

Tourism entrepreneurs say that tourist stay in Nepal has been affected by political uncertainty, strikes and bandhs. Hotels too suffered labor unrest in 2009 forcing visitors to cut short their Nepal tour.

"One of the reasons behind the drop in tourist stay could be the global recession which prompted vacationers to opt for shorter holidays," said Raju Bikram Shah, general manager of the Shangri-La Hotel.

"We didn't see a drastic change in tourist stay," said David Yonjan of Yeti Travels. "The length of stay depends on the tour package."

Tourist entrepreneurs are hopeful of the length of stay increasing with the number of tourists coming for recreation growing. As per the Economic Survey, 34 percent of the arrivals in 2009 came for recreation compared to 29.6 percent in 2008.

Tourism entrepreneurs say that if the political situation remains stable, the trend of taking longer holidays could increase.

According to the Economic Survey, there has been a marginal increase in the number of visitors coming for pilgrimage from 9 percent in 2008 to 10.4 percent in 2009. Tourists putting down trekking and mountaineering as their purpose of visit amounted to 20.9 percent in 2009.

Likewise, 4.7 percent came for trade, 7.6 percent for formal visit and 1.4 percent for meetings and seminars.

Revenue mobilisation surges to Rs 179.90 bn

The government collected Rs 179.90 billion in revenue in fiscal year (FY) 2009/10, exceeding the set target by well over Rs 3.40 billion.

In the budget, the government had targeted to collect Rs 176.5 billion revenue in the same FY.

The collection is 25.5 percent higher than in 2008-09. And, the collection can well cross Rs 180 billion as we are yet to receive data from one branch of Rastriya Banijya Bank (RBB) and four branches of Nepal Bank Ltd (NBL), said revenue secretary Krishnahari Baskota.

It was for the fourth consecutive year that the government has managed to beat the target comfortably.

Baskota ascribed the consistent growth in revenue collections to recent efforts of the government to motivate the revenue officials, introduction of reforms in revenue administration and new steps taken to plug the leakage.

The Value Added Tax (VAT) has contributed the highest in the total collection. "VAT contributed 32 percent at Rs 56.75 billion in the total collection," he said adding that the second largest contributor is customs as it contributed 19 percent at Rs 35 billion.

The income tax comes across as the third largest contributor as it contributed Rs 33.75 billion, followed by excise duty at Rs 24.25 billion.

According to the Ministry of Finance, registration fees too fetched additional Rs 5 billion in revenue along with Rs 2.25 billion from vehicles registration tax. Non-tax sources generated Rs 23 billion to the national coffers.

"Wider issuance of Permanent Account Number (PAN) and publication of tax directives largely made the government's program to mark 2009/10 as tax compliance year successful," claimed Baskota.

However, entrepreneurs have been saying that the government has concentrated on revenue mobilisation instead of strengthening the export competitiveness of the local industry.



San Miguel BEER

International :

More S.Korea, US drills likely

The US won't give up on using the Yellow Sea as a bargaining chip with China in its contention for interests in and dominance of Northeast Asia, even though the naval superpower has refrained from using the waters for a four-day joint military drill with South

waters, which undermine China's security interests."

"We will continue to follow closely the developments of the situation," the ministry said, urging the relevant

Chen Rui

its presence in Northeast Asia," he said.

The idea was echoed by Lu Chao, director of the Center of South Korea Studies of the Liaoning Academy of Social Sciences, who noted that the US



An E-2 Hawkeye Airborne Early Warning aircraft waits on the deck of the aircraft carrier USS George Washington at South Korea's port city of Busan Wednesday. The US aircraft carrier and three destroyers arrived in South Korea ahead of a naval exercise following the sinking of one of Seoul's warships.

Korea that starts Sunday, Chinese military experts warned.

The first of the much-discussed and delayed South Korea-US joint naval drills, dubbed "Invincible Spirit," will be held off South Korea's east coast from July 25 to 28, with around 8,000 soldiers from both countries mobilized, JoongAng Daily reported Wednesday, quoted the South Korean Defense Ministry.

"The two countries will continue to hold joint military exercises either off the east coast or the west coast (of South Korea) for months to come," the ministry said Tuesday after a meeting between South Korean Defense Minister Kim Tae-young and US Secretary of Defense Robert Gates.

In response to the announcement, China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement Wednesday, "We resolutely oppose any foreign military vessel and planes conducting activities in the Yellow Sea and China's coastal

parties to exercise calm and restraint and refrain from activities that would escalate tension in the region.

South Korea and the US agreed to stage joint naval drills in the Yellow Sea off South Korea's western coast. The maneuvers were scheduled to start from June 7 and postponed several times because "the US needed more time to prepare."

China has objected to the joint military exercises five times during the past fortnight. JoongAng Daily said the exercise was delayed after the protests. Su Hao, director of the Strategy and Conflict Management Research Center at China Foreign Affairs University, hailed it as great progress in China's diplomatic wrestling with the US when it was announced the joint drill would be held in the Sea of Japan, off South Korea's east coast.

However, he noted that it is only a tactical adjustment and not a strategic one. "The US will continue to strengthen

will continue to play "the Yellow Sea card" in order to maintain its dominance in Northeast Asia.

"The US will neither view the Yellow Sea as a forbidden area nor get away from it voluntarily," Lu said.

And the view is echoed by US military analysts. David M. Finkelstein, director of China studies at CNA, a non-profit research institute in the US, said, "My own guess is that while the US government takes the comments and concerns of China very seriously, the US and South Korea will in fact exercise the right to conduct operations in areas that are considered international waters."

"I do think that US interests in the Yellow Sea as a major geographic body of international water are the same as China's interests and the interests of other nations," Finkelstein told the Global Times in an e-mail.

Ralph Cossa, president of the Pacific Forum Center for Strategic and International Studies, was quoted by The

Wall Street Journal as saying on July 15 that deploying an aircraft carrier to the Sea of Japan instead of the Yellow Sea would present problems for the US.

"We are setting a bad precedent and allowing China to expand its definition of core interests, making it more difficult and controversial next time we go to the Yellow Sea," he said, suggesting that the US should assert its presence in the Yellow Sea by conducting a port call at Incheon, on South Korea's west coast.

Too close for comfort
According to Gates, the drill that starts Sunday will involve 10 US ships, including the 97,000-ton aircraft carrier USS George Washington and eight South Korean vessels.

More than 200 fighter planes from both sides will also participate, including US F-22 Raptor fighters, which could reportedly attack Pyongyang's Yongbyon nuclear facilities only half an hour after takeoff.

According to Chinese military analysts, the detection and attack range of the USS George Washington is about 1,000 kilometers. If it enters the Yellow Sea, the entire North China region and the majority of Liaodong Peninsula would be within its range.

The planned exercises are partly a show of military capabilities and partly a response to the deadly sinking of a South Korean warship, Cheonan, in March, blamed on an alleged torpedo attack by a North Korean vessel, according to the Xinhua News Agency. Pyongyang denies any involvement.

Separately, in a joint statement released Wednesday after a meeting between top-level South Korean and US officials in foreign affairs and defense, the two sides urged North Korea to take responsibility for the sinking of the Cheonan, warning that North Korea faces serious consequences if it commits another act of provocation.

The US Wednesday outlined a number of new sanctions against North Korea to further punish it over the Cheonan sinking and for failing to take "irreversible" steps toward denuclearization.

The announcement followed the latest UN Security Council presidential statement denouncing the attack on the Cheonan.

Globaltime

~ News ~

Achieving Kabul Conference objectives a challenging mission

Although the war-weary Afghans have welcomed holding the international conference on Afghanistan, the Kabul Conference, in their soil as a good omen for their future, they doubted about achieving its goals set out at the one-day forum.

Outlining his government's plans at the conference, President Hamid Karzai said that he wants the international community to channelize at least 50 percent of the funds contributed to Afghanistan through the Afghan government, support his reconciliation program and help to fight corruption as part of efforts for ensuring good governance.

However, achieving the ambitious goals above all the reconciliation with Taliban militants and bringing them into the mainstream of society seems the most challenging task.

Taliban insurgents who had regrouped in 2006 and staged a violent comeback after being driven out of power by a US-led military campaign in late 2001 have repeatedly rejected any offer for talks.

The adamant outfit has often linked any dialogue with the withdrawal of foreign troops from the post-Taliban nation, a condition unacceptable to the Afghan government and international community at this juncture.

President Karzai also assured the world community that Afghan national security forces would be able to assume security charges of the country within the next four years, a prediction welcomed by the participants.

Nevertheless, Afghans almost from all walks of life are skeptical about the ability of the government to achieve the goals set out at the conference held on Tuesday and the honesty of international partners to act upon their promises, although they feel proud of hosting the international conference on their soil.

"I am proud that Kabul is hosting such a big conference today. Holding such conference here speaks of the international community's strong support to us; but I am concerned over the possible misuse of support like the past as the funds contributed by the world community have been largely misused," a Kabul resident Ahmad Wali opined.

The Kabul Conference is the ever-biggest international conference on Afghanistan with the participation of more than 70 countries and international agencies held inside the post-Taliban and militancy-plagued country amid tight security.

Like the international community, the people of Afghanistan is concerned over the alleged administrative corruption and misuse of funds contributed to the war-ravaged Afghanistan.

The international community, particularly the US, which is the lead financial supporter of the Afghan government, has frequently asked the President Karzai administration to seriously tackle corruption.

Another Afghan Abdul Shah, simply said that the condition of battered streets in Kabul clearly interprets the misuse of funds contributed for the reconstruction of the country over the past nine years, refereeing to the alleged corruption and high rate of unemployment and poverty.

Observers are doubtful over government's efficiency to implement the ambitious plans outlined at the Kabul conference. "Holding an international conference on Afghanistan once again raised the ray of hopes among Afghans for better future but lack of capacity in the government to manage the assistance would gradually disappoint the people," a former diplomat and political analyst Ahmad Saeedi observed.

He also was of the view that Afghan national security forces at this juncture are not able to assume security charges unless the ground and air forces are properly equipped in terms of quality and quantity.

Canada will end its military mission in Afghanistan in 2011. President Barack Obama also announced to begin the pull out of US troops from Afghanistan next July.

"Announcing troop pullout would encourage the Taliban insurgents to enhance their activities and rebuff the peace talks offered by the government," another political observer and former Taliban official Waheed Mughda maintained.

However, he described the consent of international community to channelize 50 percent of the donor nations' contribution through the government budget as a big achievement for Afghanistan.

Meantime, he emphasized that no strategy would succeed unless it improves the living conditions of people, otherwise, the Kabul Conference will be forgotten like previous ones.

The inflexibility of Taliban outfit and insufficient capacity of government to tackle corruption in its earliest would serve as obstacle to move ahead.

Russian expert warns

A Russian expert with the Social Academy on Geopolitical Affairs, Stanislav Shuvanov, warns of the factors that could lead to a war unleashed by the US and its allies against Iran.

When analyzing a possible combat zone in the Persian Gulf, Shuvanov said he takes into consideration President Barack Obama's evident disagreement with Republican hawks, who could push the White House chief to an action of that kind.

Another factor Shuvanov referred to in his comment was Obama's change to US priorities for the National Security and Defense Strategy agreed this year, which put priority on the fight against new attempts to develop weapons of mass destruction.

The Russian academic also noted that if the cyclical process of the world capitalist crisis worsens, Washington could unleash an armed conflict as a safety valve.

Referring to the UN Security Council's resolution linked to the package of sanctions against Tehran, he stated it represents a victory for the United States and other First World countries to force Iran to abandon its nuclear program, which he regards as peaceful.

That measure, the Russian expert sustained, is the result of US pressure on the Council's permanent members, and was improved in the internal order to raise the prestige of Obama, whose popularity rating has plunged within the United States.

Why China opposes US-South Korean military exercises in the Yellow Sea

Major General Luo Yuan, deputy secretary general with the PLA Academy of Military Sciences, explained the reasons why China is opposed to the U.S.-South Korean military exercises in the Yellow Sea in a recent online discussion with netizens on People's Daily Online.

First, in terms of security, Chairman Mao Zedong once said, "We will never allow others to keep snoring beside our beds." If the United States were in China's shoes, would it allow China to stage military exercises near its western and eastern coasts? Just like an old Chinese saying goes, "Do not do unto others what you do not want others to do unto you," if the United States does not wish to be treated in a specific way, it should not forcefully sell the way to others.

Second, in terms of strategic thinking, China should take into account the worst possibility and strive to seek the best results. The bottom line of strategic thinking is to nip the evil in the bud. The ultimate level of strategic thinking is to subdue the enemy without fighting. Preventing crisis is the best way to resolve and overcome the crisis. China's current tough stance is part of preventive diplomacy.

Third, in terms of geopolitical strategy, the Yellow Sea is the gateway to China's capital region and a vital

passage to the heartland of Beijing and Tianjin. In history, foreign invaders repeatedly took the Yellow Sea as an entrance to enter the heartland of Beijing and Tianjin. The drill area selected by the United States and South Korea is only 500 kilometers away from Beijing. China will be aware of the security pressure from military exercises conducted by any country in an area that is so close to China's heartland.

The aircraft carrier U.S.S. George Washington dispatched to the Yellow Sea has a combat radius of 600 kilometers and its aircraft has a combat radius as long as 1,000 kilometers. Therefore, the military exercise in the area has posed a direct security threat to China's heartland and the Bohai Rim Economic Circle.

Fourth, in a bid to safeguard security on the Korean Peninsula, the U. N. Security Council has just issued a presidential statement, requiring all parties to remain calm and restrained to the so-called "Cheonan" naval ship incident, which had caused a major crisis on the Korean Peninsula.

On the other hand, the joint military exercise by the United States and South Korea on the Yellow Sea has created a new crisis. This is another reason why China strongly opposes the military exercise on the Yellow Sea. In order to safeguard security on the

Korea Peninsula, no country should create a new crisis instead they should control and deal with the existing one.

Fifth, in terms of maintaining China-U.S. relations, especially the two parties' military relations, China must declare its solemn stance. China has been working to promote the healthy development of China-U.S. military relations. Therefore, China has clearly declared that it is willing to promote the development of the two parties' relations. Deputy Director of the General Staff Gen. Ma Xiaotian has also expressed his welcome to U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates to visit China at a proper time.

Ma had made it clear at the meeting in Singapore that three key problems greatly impeded China-U.S. exchanges. First, the United States' arms sales to Taiwan. Second, the frequently detected American military aircraft and ships over and on the East and South China seas at close range. Third, the 2000 U.S. National Defense Authorization Act and the Delay Amendment restricted military exchanges with China in 12 fields.

The current barriers have not been eliminated, while the United States has created another obstacle. This time, they not only sent military ships, nuclear submarines and Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyers, but also aircraft carriers.

Explore the unexplored exotic trekking route in western Nepal Himalaya

Machhapuchhre Model Trek is a new trekking tourism product in Annapurna conservation area in western Nepal initiated with the aim of developing it as viable alternative route on the back drop of the declining popularity of conventional Annapurna Circuit trek (ACT). The construction of 29-km motorable road from two sides (Besisahar - Chame & Beni - Muktinath) has pushed this conventional trekking route in risk. Though the road construction in Annapurna region as an integral part of the natural process of development may benefit to larger local population in gross through urbanization and probably enhance the possibility of developing surrounding tourist destinations like Tilicho lake, Upper Mustang (restricted area) and Damodar Kund; its sure to decline the charming of this conventional route ACT among the potential trekking tourists who trek there in thousand of numbers for being close to nature and experience simplerural life.



16,000 ethnic groups.

This unexplored and exotic Machhapuchhre Model Trek route is a unique blending of

landscapes, natural hot water springs, eye catching tea garden, rhododendron forest, ancient caves, numerous

Trekkers may choose the length of trekking from 3 - 9 days as per their convenience and the availability of leisure time in a varied altitude from 1000 meter to 3682 meter. However, there is an alternative that could be lengthened the trekking up to 1 month here. Korchon is the highest point with 3682 meter from where both Pokhara valley and the virgin mount

route as a trekking tourism product is supported by Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North - South with small scale infrastructure elements buildings through a year long Partnership Action for Mitigating Syndrome (PAMS) Project in 2009. This innovative project was conceptualized and backstopped by a PhD and

area by the active involvement of Machhapuchhre Tourism Development Committee. The project, through the development of mountain tourism in a cordial environment, has the ultimate aim of contributing the upliftment of mountain economy of Nepal.

This unexplored and exotic new trekking route is developed on two fold models viz. camping trek as well as community based village tourism with home stay provisions in seven villages to provide direct and indirect benefits of tourism to local people with special focus to women. The camping trek is facilitated by PAMS project with the construction supports for five camp sites, five supporters'(porters') shelters, and a number of trail markings in five villages. Other collaborating stakeholders on the development of this trek route on sustainable and participatory approaches includes Machhapuchhre Tourism Development Committee consisting of seven VDCs (for institution building and conflict sensitive tourism Code of Conducts formulations), Annapurna Conservation Area Project (for conservation guidelines and inputs), and Nepal Tourism Board (for human resource development and achievability feedback).

The trekking map of this



Machhapuchhre Model Trek route, situated toward north from Pokhara on a distance of 12 km for its trekking starting point, covers the area of approximately 20 sq. km in the periphery of seven Village Development Committees (VDCs) namely Lahachowk, Ghachowk, Machhapuchhre, Rivan,

nature and culture. The mixture of varied ethnic groups like Gurung, Tamang, Damai, Kami, Chettri, and Brahmin in their age old collective traditional lifestyles and cultures in the set up of unspoiled nature that consist of snow-capped Himalayas (Mt. Mardi, Mt. Machhapuchhre,

waterfalls, various species of wildlife, birds and herbs, and organic agriculture products determine its tremendous feasibility to excel.

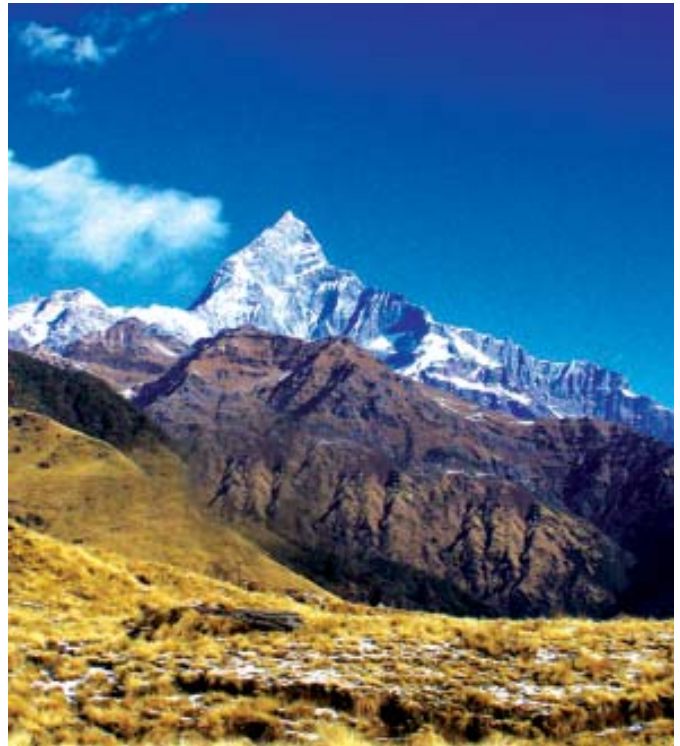
This route also encompasses additional potential adventure activities like Honey Hunting, Mountain biking, Horse riding, Fishing, cannoning,



Lwaghalel, Sardikhola, and Dhital inhabited by a mix of

Mt. Annapurna and its ranges), beautiful mountain

and Peak climbing (Mardi Himal), etc.



Fishtail are clearly visible

The Machhapuchhre Model Trek route was explored initially by Trekking Agencies' Association of Nepal (TAAN) Western Regional Chapter in support of Nepal Tourism Board in the year 2007. This development of this

senior level researchers, their findings, and recommendations at Kathmandu University held in collaboration with at NCCR North-South. It also aims to establish a conflict-sensitive tourism code of conduct in seven villages of this trekking

new trekking route was formally launched by Mr. Nagendra Prasad Ghimire, Secretary at Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation on the occasion of the 31st annual general meeting of TAAN held on August 28, 2009 in Kathmandu.