



Courage & Conviction

newsfront

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Maoist Fraternity on rampage : Maoists, mostly YCL cadres resorted to attack on Armed Police posts, Government offices and public property in Western Nepal last week. Photo shows a public vehicle on fire at Dhangadi.

Shyam Bhatta

Rule firmly

Reign in Maoists - District Congress chiefs tell PM.

■ nf correspondent

If Maoist leaders and cadres were, "atrocious and untrustworthy," Home Minister K P Sitaula was, "incapable and unfit to continue in the post." This was the conclusion based on the majority of views expressed by District Chiefs of the Congress party from across the country.

The three day meeting that ended on Monday was called by Prime Minister G P Koirala in his capacity as the Congress President. It delved into atrocities committed by the Maoists all over the country in total violation of the code of conduct. It even provoked prominent parliamentarian, Surendra Choudhary to ask, "Are they truthful and peaceful?"

As a result of the growing mistrust towards the Maoists and their declared commitment to the peace process, the meeting clearly asked its leadership not to be swayed by Maoist proposal to declare Nepal a 'republic state' before the country goes to the Constituent Assembly election. Although there was no support expressed in favour of the ceremonial monarchy, the Maoists were projected as much more untrustworthy and less dependable compared to the King.

Their anger was directed at the Home Minister Sitaula who spent most of the proceedings listening to his criticism, helplessly. "He has behaved as if he

is from the Maoists side," many participants said, giving graphic descriptions of how the police chiefs in the districts had been instructed by him not to do anything against the Maoists even if they were found indulging in major crime and violence.

The meeting was called by Koirala to give party's district level leaders a chance to vent their ire in the wake of the Government's failure to hold election to the Constituent Assembly by mid-June. Following that failure, the Maoists are now insisting that if the unity of the eight parties is to be kept alive, declaring Nepal a republic state 'Now!' is the only way out. "Do not be their blind followers", was the message of the meeting, collectively, with a warning that Maoists must be held accountable for obstruction of peace process and any crime they commit.

PM Koirala also used the meeting as a forum to own up responsibility for not being able to hold the election on schedule, perhaps a way to establish his sagging moral authority. But what probably surprised the PM was the maximum ovation that the two leaders - Vice President Sushil Koirala and K B Gurung, received after they chastised the Maoists with a clear message that being in the Government and being 'terrorists' were two different things. Thus a powerful message was sent to the Government that 'nobody was above law' in the country. ■

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a great flying experience

Inside YCL foils return of confiscated property on page 2

Pro-King Maoists

Mahara's call to 'eliminate monarchists' from Maoists and other parties.

In a candid admission of crisis within the Communist Party of Nepal, the Maoists, a very senior leader of the party has admitted that there are 'pro-monarchy' elements within the party.

The statement comes from Krishna Bahadur Mahara, the party's senior-most minister and a trusted aide of chief Prachanda. This takes place in the background of a ginger-group questioning the current official line of the CPN-M that 'Republic' agenda could be achieved through the parliament.

In a programme organised to release two books in the capital, Mahara predicted fast polarisation of political forces for and against the republic in the country, but warned that the goal of realising full-fledged democracy would be resisted by pro-king elements "present everywhere." "Pro-monarchy elements are present in all the parties including the CPN-M," he said. "I have no qualms in admitting that there are pro-king elements in my party as well and we need to launch a fierce battle to eliminate them." Refraining from identifying the 'elements', he did not elaborate further.

But Mahara's assertion, political analysts say, will trigger more intense debate within his party than outside it. The Prachanda - Baburam, Bhattarai - Mahara axis had come under sharp criticism in the recently held central committee meeting of the party where Kiran-Badal - C P Gajurel alliance openly questioned the current line of politics that the Maoist party was pursuing.

The Maoist leadership is under pressure to adopt a more radical line both on domestic as well as international issues which means taking a firm anti-India line; and discarding the politics of pro-democratic forces and the Maoist alliance brokered by the southern neighbour. The line currently held by Prachanda -



Mahara suggested that the country must move fast towards 'federal republic set-up' for its progressive transformation and stressed that cooperation between the pro-republic and democratic forces was necessary.

Bhattarai and Mahara means that withdrawal from the alliance would mean giving more space to pro-palace forces, which is basically a rejection of hard line being pursued by the other group led by Baidya.

While there are fears within the Maoist party that the current differences at the top level would not subside so easily, it would naturally force the current leadership to force the Government and the eight parties to adopt a resolution in favour of 'Republic Nepal' from the floor of the parliament instead of waiting for the Constituent Assembly to come into existence. The eight parties, which are part of the ruling alliance had earlier agreed that the first meeting of the CA will settle the issue of the monarchy or republicanism.

Mahara suggested that the country must move fast towards 'federal republic set-up' for its progressive transformation and stressed that cooperation between the pro-republic and democratic forces was necessary.

He also expressed that the fast polarisation would be resisted by the opposite forces which were, "present every where." He warned that the top leaders of the eight parties were becoming more and more ineffective encouraging the 'pro-king' forces to be more active. He asked, "Was it because there was a treacherous deal between the king and the top leaders of the parties?"

Meanwhile, the message contained in Mahara's speech that all was not too well in the party came out openly in Tulsipur area of Dang district. YLC cadre roughed up local Congress leader Lokmani Giri in presence of Maoist leader Baburam Bhattarai and Congress leader Sekhar Koirala who had gone there to start the process of returning confiscated property. Police helplessly watched as it happened on Sunday.

■ nf correspondent

Ananta under attack

Gaur massacre controversy has not only died down, it has come as a fresh dose of headache for the Maoist Chief Prachanda. He is under pressure from the influential leaders of the Madheshi Mukti Morcha (MMM), an affiliate body of the party, to take action against Ananta alias Barshaman Pun for having instructed the Youth Communist League (YCL) to confront the Madheshi Janadhikar Forum (MJF) in Gaur on March 21 over-ruling the MMM request. The clash between the two groups had resulted in the death of 27 Maoists, most of them YCL activists.

A delegation of the MMM led by its Deputy Leader Mahendra Paswan met Party Chief Prachanda last week to demand that the responsibility be fixed for the loss of twenty-seven 'comrades'.

Ananta, in his capacity as chief of the Communist Party of Nepal—Maoists (CPN-M) mid-command had instructed YCL cadres to go to Gaur and foil the MJF programme although MMM was much against violent confrontation. MMM delegation is believed to have told Prachanda that it also wants the Narayani regional Bureau Chief of the CPN-M be held responsible for the massacre.

The central level leadership of the party is likely to order an internal probe into the matter, but the MMM is not yet convinced that it would be effective. "It should be thoroughly investigated and responsibility fixed for the lapse," a party source quoted MMM.

■ Bishwa Mani Pokharel

NA limps back



The aircraft starved Nepal airlines began its partial operation almost after a week's gap as one of its two aircrafts is back in service. The aircraft was sent back on Saturday by Brunei based Boeing servicing center after replacing the main landing gear.

That partially rescues the top management of the Nepal Airlines which has been criticised, abused and chastised by the harassed passengers for abrupt cancellations of their flights as both the aircrafts got grounded last week.

"We hope to have another aircraft also in operation soon as it is being repaired in Dubai," a senior Nepal Airlines official told newsfront. The aircraft has "starter problem and needs wiring check-up. Equipment is being sent from here."

What is worrying the management the most is that the aircrafts would soon be overstressed and not be able to continue to be in effective service for long. The management hurried the servicing since irate passengers not only protested against the flight cancellations but also because unanimous callers had threatened to blow up the Nepal airlines building if they continued to face such harassment. ■

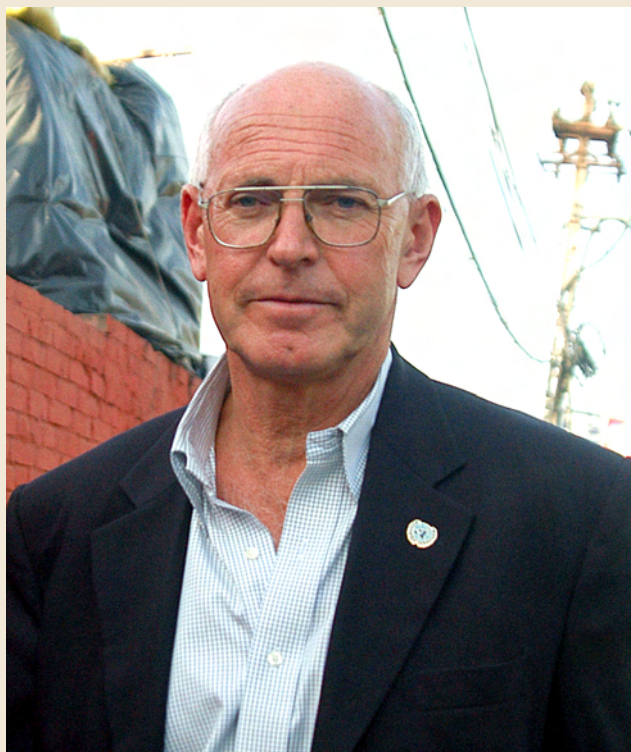
Maoists on U N litmus

Ian Martin left for New York a bit dejected after the Maoists successfully thwarted the process of the verification of Maoists arms and combatants.

The U N, of late, does not seem to be taking to the Maoists very kindly. Within a span of less than a week, two powerful U N bodies have said in no uncertain terms that they are going back on their promises both on the issue of rehabilitation of the internally displaced people (IDP) and that of verification of the arms and combatants in designated cantonments.

Ian Martin, Special Representative of the U N Secretary General Ban Ki Moon, left for New York a bit dejected after the Maoists successfully thwarted the process of the verification of Maoists arms and combatants.

Reacting to the Maoists' demand for salary at the rate of Rs.3,000 per month for the combatants, Martin stated that the process cannot be linked with any other condition.



But the far more serious charge against the Maoists was labeled by the UN Secretary General's Spokesman, Michele Montas on April 30, when Martin was still there briefing the

Security Council about Nepal Situation. Montas asked Maoist leadership to let the people who had been displaced as a result of the conflict, to return back to their places.

"Maoists local cadres are not complying with the party's formal commitments to allow the displaced persons to return to their homes in safety," Montas said reiterating what the Office of the High Commission of the Human Rights (OHCHR) on Nepal had stated.

The OHCHR had called on the Maoists to support the return of the IDPs and to ensure that they allow unconditional, dignified and safe return of all persons recognised as IDPs. "The mission also urges that local cadres return all land and property confiscated from the IDPs," Montas added, "activities in recent months indicate a failure to implement such central-level commitments."

■ nf correspondent

News Brief

Maoist minister's modesty



In contrast to the perceived image of the Maoist ministers, Minister of Agriculture Khadga Bahadur BK has displayed that he can indeed act like a minister.

In a rare display of modesty he expressed openly

his desire to learn and improve when he interacted with senior officials of his ministry on Friday. He admitted he wanted to hear their frank opinion regarding his performance.

The occasion took place on the completion of a month since he began his work in the office. "I have been holding this chair for a month now. Please tell me frankly what my shortcomings are, so that I can work on them."

All officials of the Joint Secretary rank and above had been invited to the meeting with the minister. At the end of it, everybody was charmed by his honesty, simplicity and modesty. "We never had any minister asking these types of questions before," an official told newsfront.

Ex-embassy on sale



With the new grand building complete, the U S Government has now put up its existing embassy building at Pani Pokhari in Kathmandu on sale.

Associated Press (AP) reported from Washington last

week that the existing embassy complex in Kathmandu was on sale for six million US dollars. The new embassy in the capital's Narayan Gopal Chowk is likely to be operational from July.

AP revealed that at least 29 properties of U S Government scattered over 21 countries were on sale and the Government hoped to fetch 205 million U S dollars from the sale.

In the wake of attack on some of the U S embassies and other properties in different parts of the world, the U S Government has moved its employees to more secure locations with upgraded facilities. In Nepal, some of the Government facilities which are scattered at the moment are likely to shift to the new embassy building. As a result, the USAID, as well as the Visa Consul office and the American Center located outside will also be functioning from the new embassy building.

Royal Canteen curtailed



Power and privileges used to be the main attractions for anyone serving in the Royal Palace Secretariat. For lesser employees, a canteen which used to function during office hours and offered subsidised food was a welcome place.

Clout of the secretariat now vanished, the palace secretariat seems all set to curtail the canteen hours so that the secretariat will have less burden of the subsidies. Under instructions from Sharada Prasad Pradhan, the canteen in the palace secretariat will now remain open only for two hours - 1.30 P M to 3.30 P M during work days.

Pradhan wrote to the Army Headquarter to slash the canteen hours citing, "employees of the palace secretariat spend more time in the canteen which affects their work."

The canteen run by the army, used to operate between to 10 A M to 5 P M.



SofTech 2007

Cater to consumer demand or perish

■ Nabin Joshi

The first ever software exhibition held on May 2-5 hosted by the Computer Association of Nepal was a big event with 44 companies participating in it. This was also a clear and collective determination of the software developers in Nepal that showed that the local companies without external impetus could do a lot in the industry.

The fact that four booths were occupied by High Level Commission for Information Technology, National Information Technology Center, Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology and Ministry of Finance, three companies from India, one from Sri Lanka and one from Korea was a reassuring sign of their recognition of not only the existence of software developers in Nepal, but the potentials they held.

There were a slew of products ranging from web based to stand alone application software in accounting, resource management, financial and other transaction based products, banking software, SMS

based software, geographical information based software, document management, solutions for e-management and so on. Businesses, institutions, governments are probably the biggest users of application software, but almost every field of human activity now uses some form of application software.

The event ended on a happy note and it was clear that the exhibitors were satisfied with the exposure they received for their products. They found the booth charge of Rs. 17,000 reasonable for the return in exposure. In total there were some 25,000 visitors in the event.

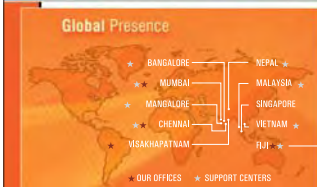
Mr. Amrit Bahadur Thapa, the coordinator of the event supported by a group of CAN members was on vigil to ensure that the exhibition went smoothly. Mr. Thapa said that the next event should take place in a larger venue with different levels and sizes of booths to address the level of visibility required for different categories of exhibitors.

The international exhibitors were impressed by the maturity of Nepali

products. If the innovation, integrity and professionalism of local software industry are kept on track, a day is sure to come where Nepalis will accept Nepali products as at par with, if not better than the imported ones.

Today much of the developed world is going through customer or consumer revolution. Businesses and organisations are driven by this revolution. They have to change as per customer demand or perish if they ignore it. Government is not an exception to this revolution. Much of the consumer driven revolution has been made possible by unimaginable access to information such as the internet and wireless phones. All of these media need software.

Will Nepal stand like a wide eyed deer caught in the strobe light of this revolution and continue in its usual path of accepting another form of colonisation? Or will it something about it? CAN SofTech 2007 stated emphatically that the Nepali software industry will not accept that. It has definitely sent a serious wake up call to the government. ■



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Point to Ponder

No sensible decision can be made any longer without taking into account not only the world as it is, but the world as it will be. . .
 - Isaac Asimov

Wake up or be extinct

Nepal Airlines, the only national flag carrier is sadly in shambles today. Established half a century ago, it started off with a promising future only to dwindle down to nothing. The sorry state of affairs is evident by the fact that two aircrafts, that is all that it has, are grounded today, stranding hundreds of passengers. This downfall can be attributed to its lackadaisical performance replete with instances of rampant corruption, inefficiency and politics inside the organisation.

Recent cosmetic resolution of changing its name from Royal Nepal Airlines to Nepal Airlines has not brought about any substantial change in the ailing government sector. The organisation that has been milked dry has always been a victim of political control.

Among its multiple challenges facing it today, a severe shortage of well maintained aircrafts is the first and foremost. Inability to maintain its only two aircrafts in top condition is the second. It needs to streamline its services and take effective cost-cutting measures if it wants to survive in this competitive business. Changes need to be made deep down to its roots which obviously are in a state of rot.

The passive state of its policy is evident from its decisions when it withdrew from lucrative destinations and handed it over to its private competitors. Thai Airlines, its contemporary is today one of the best operated and profit making airlines in the world. That should be lesson enough for it to draw from.

Privatising it is one option to save the dying airlines but resistance to it is obvious since privatising it would mean that there will no longer be any profit from it for the politicians and other bosses. It would also mean working hard to keep one's job and not take it for granted, which would need quite a bit of getting used to for all of its staff.

The airlines now faces a critical time that calls for crucial decisions. It either should withdraw completely and hand it over to a private company or do everything that an efficient airlines needs to do. Political control and interference need to cease completely in all its decisions; and it needs to give its reigns to committed, honest and efficient people and give them a free hand to revamp its image. The time has now come to act or to just lose face and lose out on all residual goodwill of the people for its survival. ■

Letters

Kind attention UNOHCHR

Thanks for repeatedly highlighting the hoax that was Rayamajhi Commission. Your latest column 'Devaluing Judiciary' with the warning that politics of vendetta would be counter productive was absolutely right. I am citing some examples of how the Rayamajhi Commission acted deliberately and indulged itself in the frame-up agenda.

Sarbendra Khanal, Ramesh Kharel and Rajendra Man Shrestha were the three Deputy SPs actively trusted by the previous regime and they were in the forefront in suppressing the movement, and using force against the pro-democracy agitators.

All three were promoted when the Rayamajhi Commission was 'investigating' the case.

The Commission however, has named other two dozen district heads of the Police (SPs) on the basis that pro-democracy protestors died in that area. But there are some notable exceptions:

- Ghanshyam Bhatta, S P of Dang has been exonerated from the case of death of Umesh Thapa, a UML worker; because he happens to be related through marriage to a former Chief of Police who de facto runs the organisation.

- Madhav Nepal who was S P in Bara when a pro-democracy protestor was killed was not touched for two reasons: one, he is known to be a favourite of the same retired Police Chief.

- S P of Jhapa who was shot and wounded apparently by an army personnel for his having refused to use force against the pro-democracy protestors was charged, 'guilty' for excessive use of force.

- Dhuru Basnet, an efficient and honest Dy. Sp of the same batch as Khanal, Kharel and Shrestha was unjustly denied promotion because he had arrested a senior congress leader under instruction from the Government during the movement. The leader who is now one of the powerful ministers had

warned Basnet in presence of many, "I will not spare you when we come to the power."

Rayamajhi exonerated some and he held some very fine and innocent officials guilty. He was definitely not being honest when he did all this deliberately.

Since I am a police official, I request you to withhold my name when you publish this letter. But if at any point of time, the OHCHR, which has been talking so loud about the need for end of impunity and fair trial takes interest in how the Rayamajhi Commission and the Home Minister has actually acted in tandem in the conspiracy; I and many of my friends will come out openly to give statements against them. If the OHCHR keeps mum, that will not only be the mockery of what Ian Martin previously and Lena Sundh now is saying, but will be an endorsement of the politics of vendetta.

■ A Police official

Girija no different

The last issue's editorial had serious concerns over the commitments made by PM Koirala. People expected many positive changes based on his words. But sadly, he is unable to prove himself any different than other politicians. It is high time the government took a bold step. Otherwise, he should be accountable for everything including the induction of Maoists into the government who are still involved in extortion and other unlawful activities.

■ Sanjeev Karmacharya
 Kathmandu

Readers, your reactions, criticisms, comments, suggestions are most welcome. Please address it to:

newsfront@bhrikuti.com

Spiritual Corner

Enquire : Who am I?

Born in 1896 in Kheora, a small village in Bengal, now Bangladesh, Nirmala Sundari possessed divine qualities and she was eventually named Sri Anandamayi Ma.

Extracts from her talks that have been compiled into books:

"Widen your shriveled heart, make the interests of others your own and serve them as much as you can by sympathy, kindness, presents and so forth. So long as one enjoys the things of this world and has needs and wants, it is necessary to minister to the needs of one's fellow men. Otherwise one cannot be called a human being. Whenever you have the opportunity, give to the poor, feed the hungry, nurse the sick - do service

as a religious duty and you will come to know by direct perception that the person served, the one who serves and the act of service are separate only in appearance."

"Enquire: 'Who am I?' and you will find the answer. Look at a tree: from one seed arises a huge tree; from it comes numerous seeds, each one of which in its turn grows into a tree. No two fruits are alike. Yet it is one life that throbs in every particle of the tree. So, it is the same Atman everywhere."

"Just as fire burns away all dross and rubbish, so the three fold suffering purges man's heart from all impurity and results in a growing single mindedness in his search after Truth. When he becomes deeply conscious of his weakness and tormented by the thoughts of his undesirable impulses and distressing characteristics, when afflictions like poverty,



bereavement or humiliation make him feel his life is futile, then and then only does he develop real faith and religious fervor, and becomes anxious to surrender himself at the feet of the Supreme Being. Suffering should therefore be welcomed. Never does the soft moonlight appear more soothing than after the scorching heat of a summer day."

"Joys and sorrows are time-born and cannot last.

Therefore, do not be perturbed by these.

The greater the difficulties and obstructions, the more intense will be your endeavour to cling to His feet and the more will your prayer increase from within.

And when the time is ripe, you will gain mastery over this power."



Rescue Marx from Marxists

■ Bhim Prasad Bhurtel

Marx believed that socialism would eventually overcome capitalism, making way for a classless society. He applied this idea in the context of contradiction between proletariats and bourgeoisies. This was articulated in the Communist Manifesto.

...No reason for them to remain prisoners of ideological dogmatism.

Millennial ideologue Karl Marx was the great philosopher, economist, sociologist and thinker; and a great humanist in the sense that the sole goal of Marxism was human emancipation from all form of the exploitation, suppression, oppression and distortions in the contemporary Europe. What Marx imagined and what has happened in his socialism is the great contradiction in theory and practice. Today, Marxism is akin to the poem, Blind and the Elephant. A popular saying goes that Marxism is the overly worn hat which has lost its original shape.

Marx believed that socialism would eventually overcome capitalism, making way for a classless society. He applied this idea in the context of contradiction between proletariats and bourgeoisies. This was articulated in the Communist Manifesto. It was a time of revolutionary fervor in Europe. King Louis Philippe of France abdicated the throne, the Belgian Monarch offered to resign, barricades against rioters went up in Berlin and a series of industrial strikes followed in Europe. This expression of despair among the proletariats, however, was without direction and the uprisings were ruthlessly put down.

Nonetheless, over time Britain, France and Germany did grudgingly concede the need for some great reforms. Child labor was gradually abolished, working hours were restricted, collective bargaining via trade union was accepted, a beginning was made towards progressive taxation and infrastructures such as railways, postal services, health, education and

central banking were brought under state control. Only the demands in the Communist Manifesto, the nationalisation of the means of production and the abolition of private property were ignored.

After an improvement in living standards, the proletariat lost the zest for revolution. The class struggle seems to peter out. Marx died in 1883 by which time only one of the four volumes of his magnum opus, *Das Kapital*, was published.

It took 70 years after the prediction for the capitalist system to be destroyed by its antithesis, socialism and that too not in Western Europe but in Czarist Russia. After the October Revolution of 1917 the Soviet Union took shape under Lenin and over time 40% of the world had adopted some form of socialism. Nepal was no exception.

Marx's dream of a classless society was never achieved, although Soviet socialism lasted for 70 years before it started to come apart, along with the socialist nations. Today, Cuba is perhaps the last communist bastion. Marx's thesis of dialectic materialism was proved correct twice in a span of 140 years; first, in the overthrow of capitalism and then of socialism. Marx's insights into the problem of the capitalist system and why it would eventually destroy itself are remarkable. Its roots lie in the inexorable march of technology. His prediction that the system would be prone to cyclical depressions has also held true.

Changing modes of production, as Marx called them, would alter the existing social structure, redistributing wealth and power. Consequently, the feudal order would fade into

the background and the capitalist would become a dominant part of the establishment.

Even so, capitalism based on the concept of private property, he opined, would be ill-suited to plan for the increasing complexity of technological change, thus subjecting the system to cyclical crises of increasing intensity. The weaker enterprises would succumb to takeover by the stronger whose viability would depend on a race for accumulating ever more labour-saving machinery.

Nevertheless, capitalism has survived, albeit in a different form, from what it was in the 19th century. The synthesis between capitalism and its antithesis, socialism, has emerged as a kind of neo-capitalism rather than communism.

Capitalism has achieved unprecedented prosperity through greater global integration and provided improved living standards of peoples though neo-liberalism seems to be the devil. It has enabled countries driven by democratic values to put into effect Marx's dictum 'from each according to his ability, to each according to his need' through measures like healthcare, unemployment insurance, pension schemes and subsidies.

The gap between the rich and the poor may not have narrowed but the poor are certainly better off than ever before. Yet there is a long way to go especially in third world countries. If today Maoists were to accept Marxian dialectics as exemplified by the new synthesis, there is no reason for them to remain prisoners of ideological dogmatism. ■

Wet wetter, dry drier

Changing Monsoon



Global climatic changes are likely to cause significant changes in the world's rainfall patterns. The places that are wet are going to get wetter, and the places that are dry are going to get drier. With increased temperature worldwide, evaporation will increase that puts more moisture into the atmosphere. With more water in the atmosphere, rainfall increases worldwide. Rainfall over land has increased by about two percent globally since 1900 but trends have varied regionally and over time.

Global warming is intensifying monsoon in Indian subcontinent, according to a study that warns of increasing risk from heavier rains during the monsoon season. The mean surface temperature in tropical Asia has increased 0.3-0.8°C over the past 100 years. However there has been no discernible alteration in the mean annual rainfall for the past thirty years in Indian subcontinent. Many studies have now proved that temperature in the Asian region will be



■ Madhav P Thakur

peaking in near future. Both IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) and WMO (World Meteorological Organisation) predict that there will be an increase in the magnitude and frequency of extreme rainfall events in tropical Asia. Instability in monsoon activities is bound to occur with the global temperature rising with already some evidences of multi-decade variations. According to the IPCC, the percentage increase in extreme rainfall is greater than the percentage increase in mean rainfall with the present trend of climate.

The return period of extreme precipitation

events is shortened almost everywhere. Extreme rainfall is the high amount of rainfall (measured in millimeter) in shorter period of time. Such events are escalating substantially all over the world especially in northern hemisphere. Precipitation increases over high latitude regions in both summer and winter and over the northern mid-latitudes, tropical Africa, and Antarctica during the winter and in southern and eastern Asia during the summer. Extreme rainfall occurs for shorter period of time and brings more damages and if its duration increases, it can be devastating.

Most of the devastations such as floods, landslides are caused by extreme rainfall. In year 2003, extreme rainfall of monsoon season over Narayangadh-Mugling Highway in Nepal caused hundreds of landslides creating severe problems. Nepal being mountain rich country, many highways run through the mountains connecting some major cities including the

capital that can easily be blocked by the landslides caused by extreme rainfall.

Monsoon rainfall occupies almost 80% of the total annual rainfall in Nepal. Agricultural activities which is the backbone of country's economy largely depends on the monsoon. Disturbances in monsoon can disturb the whole economy of the country. Climate change will not only increase the monsoon rainfall but will disturb monsoon periods as well. Monsoon period in Nepal generally starts from June and continues till September. The period is abuted by pre and post monsoon seasons which involve higher rainfall generally in the western regions of the country. Monsoon rainfall on the other hand occupies high percentage in the eastern region of Nepal which is one of the reasons of higher agricultural productivity here.

The alteration in climate is estimated to attain higher speed in the developing countries in the coming years. China and India attaining fast economic growth are predicted to be the highest emitters of greenhouse gases in the coming years. All these will certainly not help the monsoon trends in these regions. More than half the world's population depend on the annual Asian monsoon to bring much-needed water for agriculture and basic human needs.

But the rains can be perilous, causing landslides, flash floods and crop damage as well as social, economic and environmental damage. Surging floodwaters in the 2002 monsoon killed more than 1000 people in Bangladesh, India and Nepal, displacing millions of others. Cyclonic storms are also likely to rise in the oceanic regions with the increase in temperature.

The socio-economic impacts of intense monsoon can be fatal in south Asian region. Many water borne diseases will increase tremendously resulting to high mortality rates. Extreme rainfall can destroy several infrastructures such as bridges, dams, highways, buildings in no time. Increased intense rainfall will cause countless troubles in the developing world. Nepal in particular can suffer severe floods and massive landslides in many regions adding to chaos in economy and environment. Integrated hazard management will have to be practiced in order to reduce the calamities to come.

(Thakur is an environment science student.)

Undo anarchy

Law enforcement agency leaders made a mockery of the state system

■ Rajen Wasti

Even after the Prime Minister assured his party legislators of improvement in the law and order situation in the country, no progress has been seen so far. It now appears certain that the blame will rest on the PM if the leaders of the law enforcement bodies are not held accountable for the failing law and order situation in the country.

Law enforcement agency leaders made a mockery of the state system when the police and the local administration failed to prevent the Gaur incident, which had it been responsibly dealt with in good time would not have happened at all. The Armed Police Force and Nepal Police simply failed to act to prevent that very unfortunate incident.

It is downright failure of the two Inspector Generals of Armed Police and Civil Police, who were appointed by Home Minister Sitaula with utter disregard to the established personal administrative values of these organisations. Sitaula for fear of being charged of failing to discharge responsibility has protected these two lead actors shifting the blame to the local commanders.

Abrupt removal of Central District Officer (CDO) and District Police Office Superintendent from Gaur helped to keep the key actors on the safe side. Transferring them elsewhere is no punitive measure. The CDO and Police Superintendent have maintained that IGP of both the institutions ignored their repeated

requests of reinforcement of additional force.

This incident is the height of inefficiency and recklessness of Inspector General of Armed Police Force and Nepal Police. They are the ones to be held accountable for not fulfilling their responsibilities and not adequately responding to the local assessment that violence might erupt there.

A series of criminal activities are taking place in the capital, proving the complete failure of the law and order situation. On the night of 30th April, Maoists cadres attacked the Border Police Post Siya of Banke district and looted all weapons and kidnapped the Police Sub Inspector and ten constables. They were returned along with the confiscated weapons the following morning following intense pressure from the local people.

The police leadership failed to take any action on the Maoists branded criminals. How can anyone keep police morale from deteriorating when the police officers themselves are brutalised with total impunity? Police leadership has no guts to take action against these elements as per the law of the land but is reduced to watching helplessly a series of such incidents taking place frequently.

Young Communist League (YCL) cadres are going about their business of kidnapping, extorting and terrorising the capital city. They are using vehicles looted from local business people. Here again, the owners of the vehicles themselves had to go and snatch back their vehicles.

The much talked about police raid in the offices of YCL in the three districts of valley is not without fault. The local people revealed YCL transporting their goods in sacks and big bags from their offices in the morning of the raid. There is a serious question unanswered as to how YCL was informed of the raid in advance. Police sources claimed to have no information of the raid until half an hour before the raid that was instructed by the home minister. Fingers are thus pointing at the home minister who gave the order at 1330 hrs the same day to carryout the raid within half an hour.

No one seems to be accountable on the total failure and law and order situation in the country. In order to restore the faith of the public on these law enforcement agencies, a lot of reform is needed in and outside the agencies. The IGP of Armed Police and Nepal Police today are silent witnesses to the chaos and anarchy happening in the country.

If this confused and shifting accountability situation continues the PM himself will fail without a doubt. The country should not endure anarchy due to the inefficiency of some individuals. Relieving these key actors of their responsibilities can pave way for a new beginning in establishing law and order in the country, away from the shadow of Maoists tyranny.

(Rajen Wasti is a security expert.)



Prachanda

through long lens

How different from the kings?

Democracy cannot flourish under a monolith leadership. A step forward towards capitalism is fine, but not following the basic values of democracy, accountability, both moral and political is strange.



Special nf correspondent

He who was a mystery to begin with, surfaced after two decades and became public, so public that he has become an eye-sore literally. What else would you call it with thousands of his face staring out from walls in all conceivable corners of the city? Printing so many posters and indulging in this exaggeration is the first sign of self indulgence of this communist leader who was initially perceived by many as an alternative leader of the country. Little did he care about the impact of his faces on the aesthetic value of this quaint valley or the sentiments of its inhabitants. Is he trying to emulate kings of yesteryears?

The public who has been waiting and watching now sees him no different from any other political leader. His initial messiah like image has now been eroded by his bourgeois life style replete with his prosperous middle, chest pocked adorned with the gold pen with which he signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA); and the branded watch around his wrist that costs a hefty sum. Those who know from close, confirm he has a taste for

Scotch - the drink, and his retinue of cars makes him no different from any rich king in a poor country. Is that not strange for someone who leads the pack that espouses theories of anti-capitalism and anti-feudalism?

Originating from a farmer-class background in Chitwan, he was watched carefully by the public after the Maoist insurgency surfaced in 1996. Today, he appears to have transformed himself into a symbol of state power and poised beyond criticism. His tactics and strength based on the power of gun have disillusioned the hopes of those who thought he might be a harbinger of peace in the country.

Watching him from a distance, he appears to symbolise deception.. He pledged to seek people's endorsement, or politics of ballot when he joined the peace process by giving up politics of bullet which he led for a decade. But bullet continues to be his sole strength.

Has Prachanda's life style ever become an issue within his party which is supposed to represent proletariats and the have-nots? Perhaps not. Prachanda's other comrades also seem to be vying to follow the leader rather than

challenging him. Culture of consumerism seems all pervasive and the Youth Communist League's extortions continue. Some of the leaders have admitted having sent their wards abroad for better education when their cadres keep disrupting the schools here.

Prachanda's declaration on June 2 (the day he ended his years of underground life) from the Prime Minister's residence that Maoists would be the second biggest revolution in Nepal like the one led by Lord Buddha 2500 years ago, is therefore not being taken seriously. Invoking Lord Buddha's name after one becomes part of the peace based politics will be perceived differently. And there is a world of difference between the continuing politics of guns and deceit and the one that is founded on the truth, peace, non-violence, sacrifice, austerity and dignity of the human life.

In less than a year, Prachanda has almost given up what he promised, that democracy will be his way of politics in future. In fact, he is emerging as a brazen bully. Frightening exercises by his cadres give credence to the fear that the Maoists are systematically

destroying existing institutions so that the resultant vacuum will form an ideal base for the rise of a dictator sans resistance. Is it not recreating the very scenario that the Maoists in principle claimed to detest so - that of an autocracy in which one personality becomes supreme? And thereafter creating a situation in which all dissenting voices are silenced?

Democracy cannot flourish under a monolith leadership. A step forward towards capitalism is fine, but not following the basic values of democracy, accountability, both moral and political is strange.

Buddha always believed in the enormous capacity of any human being to grow and realise the optimum. Prachanda, by announcing that his party had renounced politics of violence is moved one step forward. But he has got a lot to do. Unless Prachanda takes sincere initiatives to consign the blood-tainted movement finally to the inglorious past, he will not be perceived differently, at least by those who have been watching him from a distance. And they constitute the majority. ■

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Only a scientist can test whether a new student has the knowledge he himself has, definitely not a non-scientist.



■ Acharya Mahayogi Sridhar Rana Rinpoche

Taking this metaphor (which should not be stretched too far like all other metaphors) we can say that the Buddha and only the Buddha could possibly validate whether or not another person he has taught has experienced the same Bodhi or not. I

am sure there can be no two thoughts about this matter. This is exactly what the Buddha did when he declared hundreds of his disciples as Arhats or Srotpannas or Sagridgami or Bodhisattvas who had attained Darsan Marga.

These new words bring us closer to what the Buddhists call enlightenment but we shall deal with them a

little later after having dealt with the "Unbroken – enlightened lineage" issue first. So the Buddha historically validated different levels of enlightenment amongst his disciples; and this is recorded in Theravad, Sarvstivad, and Mahayan literature. That means these first generation disciples were enlightened to various degrees according to the Buddha himself.

So, more than anybody else these disciples would be the authentic authorities on what was the Buddha's Bodhi. Now these disciples authenticated the degrees of enlightenment of their disciples who were the second generation. As these first generations had experienced themselves the Bodhi of the Buddha to various degrees, they would know better than anybody else which of their disciples had reached/attained/experienced various degrees of the Buddha's Bodhi. I do not think there can be two minds about it.

Only a scientist can test whether a new student has the knowledge he himself has, definitely not a non-scientist. Likewise only Masters of Buddha's unbroken lineage can gauge whether the practitioners of the next generation have attained the Buddha's Bodhi to some degree or not and not other non Buddhists. For this validation to remain authentic and pure, the lineage should be unbroken generation to generation from the time of the Buddha through the first generation, second genera-

tion, third generation etc. till the present time.

Even if in one generation, there was no one who was validated as enlightened, the lineage is broken as far as enlightenment is concerned, even if it continues. That then is an unbroken lineage but not an enlightened unbroken lineage. There are other kinds of lineages like the Pandit lineage of scholars, who have transmitted unbroken, the knowledge of the Buddha's teaching from generation to generation up to date.

But that is not an unbroken enlightened lineage but an unbroken Pandit lineage. The Pandit lineage cannot validate authentically the experience of someone as valid Buddhist enlightenment or not. It can only infer based on scriptures. In the Buddhism of today as a whole, both the lineages exist unbroken and alive. It is the Masters of these lineages who are the authentic disseminators of the Buddha's teachings and not others no matter how brilliant or profound their explanations of the Buddha's teachings are.

Actually since such lineage Masters of both types of lineage exist in abundance in both the Mahayana and Sravakayana tradition, many of them being holders of both lineages, there is no need for others who do not belong to such authentic lineages to explain or even teach Buddhism based on one's own personal ideas. The Buddha's teaching is still alive and dynamic. It is not a thing of the past history that can be explained according to one's preferences and conditionings.

So this is the meaning of unbroken enlightened lineage and unbroken Pandit lineage. Within Buddhism, there is also an unbroken Bhikchhu lineage from the time of the Buddha till today. Some Masters hold all the

three unbroken lineages. They are enlightened Masters authenticated by their Masters who themselves were authenticated by their Masters thus going backwards to the Buddha himself, but at the same time are also Pandits, taught by Pandits of an unbroken lineage who were themselves taught by such Pandits going back to Sakya Muni himself and they were also Bhikchhus, made Bhikchhus by older generations, who themselves were made Bhikchhus by older generations going back right to Sakya Muni himself.

These are not unrecorded fact but well recorded. In Mahayana, which consists of two major streams - Paramitayana and Vajrayana, the names of the unbroken lineage Masters from Masters of present day back to Nalanda, Bikramashila etc are well recorded and available even today. And everybody knows that these great Mahaviharas were like huge universities whose lineage goes back to the Buddha. People from as far away as China, Korea, Central Asia, Greece, Egypt came to study in these learning houses, which were virtually Mahaviharas (great monastic complexes). And those Mahayana lineages of those Mahaviharas were unbroken and continue to remain alive and vibrant up till this day.

The meaning of the Sutras and Sastras of Buddhism should be according to the Masters of such lineages and not otherwise. There have been many interpreters of the Buddha's teachings in the Indian subcontinent who never studied under any of the authentic lineage masters. Needless to say people are free to interpret as they deem fit the teachings of the Buddha but such interpretations should not be mistaken as authentic Buddhism.

(To be continued...)



■ Binod P Bista

Watch and learn

Nepalis need to awaken from their slumber caused by fear and inactivity.

Most leaders would love to claim that the world today is much better than what it was thirty years ago. Often cited reasons are based on two primary factors: the end of cold war and the economic rise of developing countries in Asia and Latin America.

The end of cold war opened up the economies of Central and Eastern Europe and their integration with Western Europe. It also assisted in expanding Western liberal democratic governance in most regions of the world. Loosening grip of colonial powers on many countries of Asia Pacific and Africa added the list of newly democratised countries.

In terms of statistics, the two most populous nations, China and India, have been able to achieve tremendous success in lifting a gigantic number of their people above the poverty line. By a similar token, the number of countries practicing democratic governance has also risen. However, the leaders as well as development experts have yet to convince the majority that there is a clear and successful direct linkage between democratic governance and economic progress in the developing world.

Despite the economic progress achieved by Asia in the past quarter of a century, there remain disparities of every conceiv-

able degree in the region: digital divide, income disparity, level of economic development, and lack of social progress among countries following similar systems of governance pose a serious challenge to the region and the world.

If mere introduction of democratic governance, especially elections on the basis of adult franchise leading to a national legislature, establishment of executive as well as an independent judiciary were the answer then most nations of the developing world would have been prosperous than what they are today. Notwithstanding the ongoing debate on

Nepalis, however, need to awaken from their slumber caused by fear and inactivity, and decide on the type of economic policies adhered to by her

the long term sustainability of economic and social progress under a liberal democratic set up as opposed to authoritarian rule under any given name, the world today provides three distinct examples of economic success.

Interestingly though, all three examples worthy of mention are in Asia. India, the largest democratic country in the world by population, got a boost ever since India followed liberal economic policies under the stewardship of her

finance minister who is the head of government today. India's current economic growth rate is judged to be highly sustainable by experts and institutions around the world. China on the other hand, following proletariat dictatorship under a communist system, has mesmerised the world with her economic miracle that has continued unabated for over a quarter of a century.

Although the Chinese authorities have proven everyone wrong on their critical apprehensions that the Chinese growth will not be sustainable in the absence of a more open and transparent society based on increased rights of the people, China's sustainability is still an open question for want of credible examples so far. For all that is known, China herself might provide the first example.

Pakistan, relatively a smaller country and economy of the region, is rapidly coming on the regional economic radar owing to her outstanding performance of the past seven years under a military regime. Pakistan today boasts of per capita income of US \$847 and is receiving foreign direct investment of almost 4 billion US Dollars. The Pakistani Prime minister Shaukat Aziz declared at a recent meeting that Pakistan's per capita will reach US \$1000 and the FDI to 6 billion US

\$ by 2008. Pakistan seems to have moved on to increased level of economic growth and development under Shaukat Aziz as her finance minister. There is no dearth of apprehensions pointing to the question of sustainability of Pakistan economy as well as the current system of governance.

Nepal is fortunate to have the benefit of such illustrious examples within her region. Current make up of her parliament and the strength of political parties give a clear picture that post CA elections Nepal would result in either a communist dominated government or a coalition government similar to that in India. At this moment the third option is clearly out in spite of an attractive model of economic reform and development.

Nepalis, however, need to awaken from their slumber caused by fear and inactivity, and decide on the type of economic policies adhered to by her closest neighbours. One thing seems to be quite clear that most developing countries are better off when economic policies are designed and managed by professional experts who go beyond their personal or partisan interests. Obviously, leadership (taken by professional finance ministers) plays a crucial role in developing economies where the necessary fundamentals are yet to find their footings. ■

Missing Kenyan plane still untraced

government regarding the return or reception of the party chief.

"We have come to the residence just to see our ailing general secretary who has returned from Singapore after treatment," senior presidium member Tofail Ahmed said.

Asked about the party's preparation to receive Sheikh Hasina at the airport, Abdul Jalil said the party would inform everything about Hasina's return in due time.-Agencies

(Gulf Times)

Nairobi : An air search in Cameroon has so far failed to locate the whereabouts of a Kenya Airways plane which is thought to have crashed in the south of the country with 114 people on board.

The Kenya Airways Boeing 737-800, on its way from Cameroon had crashed in a densely forest area just off the coast.

The flight, which originated in Ivory Coast, was reported missing on Saturday after it failed to arrive in Kenya. It was the announcement relatives gathered at Nairobi's Jomo Kenyatta International Airport had been dreading.

Twenty-three nationalities were among the 115 passengers on board, 15 of them are Indian.

A distress signal it seems, originating from the plane's black box, is the only thing rescuers have to go on.

"The latest information that a distress signal was picked up on the west coast of Africa and a search and rescue mission initiated by Cameroonian authorities was initiated at 1105 (0805GMT) this morning, that is Nairobi time. So far no report has been received from this mission," said Titus Naikuni, MD, Kenya Airways.

Search operations that were suspended during the night due to poor weather, have now resumed.

All Kenya Airways can say is that its plane from the Cameroon has gone missing and all its 114 passengers are to be traced.

At the airport in Nairobi, it is an anxious wait but few seem hopeful of survivors, especially after the grim assessment on the ground.

"A helicopter took off to comb area, the area has now been identified as an area between a place south east of Douala. I have brought in a senior captain here called Captain Paul, who is going to take you through a map showing the flight path of the aircraft itself. Now the area being searched is very dense Equatorial forest, and we've been told that there has been very heavy rainfall from yesterday and now heavy rainfall is still continuing, and it is affecting the site exercise.

We have a helicopter that is there right now, and one fixed wing aircraft. So far we have not spotted, or they have not spotted, the aircraft as yet. The dense Equatorial forest, the heavy rainfall, is not assisting in the search," said Titus Naikuni, CEO, Kenya Airways.

Tracing the route

There were people of 23 nationalities on board so the Kenya Transport Minister is leading a team of Kenya Airways and government officials to Douala, the plane's last stop.

That's where Flight KQ 507 last communicated with control towers.

"The American government is assisting in tracking the flight route, using some satellite information," said Ali Chirau Makwere, Minister for Transport, Kenya.

The Boeing 737-800 was said to be just six months old and part of a new fleet bought by the Kenya's national carrier.

Kenya's Transport Minister said it was too early to determine whether it was the weather, pilot error or a mechanical fault.

A crisis management centre is now working in Nairobi.

"You know it is a sad thing, it is very sad remembering that we lost a number of people in 2002, and you know it was the same route," said Janet Mwema, mother of crewmember on flight.

And that's the mystery. Kenya Airways has always had a good track record. The last crash was seven years ago when a plane crashed off the Ivory Coast killing 169 people.

Recent plane crashes in Africa:

May 5, 2007: A Kenya Airways Boeing 737-800 carrying 114 people crashed in southern Cameroon.

Oct 29, 2006: A Nigerian Boeing 737-2B7, crashed in bad weather, one minute after taking off from the capital, Abuja. Ninety-six of the 105 people aboard were killed.

April 10, 2006: A Kenyan military plane carrying politicians to a peace conference crashed while attempting to land in Marsabit, killing 14 people.

Dec 10, 2005: A Sosoliso Airlines DC-9 crashed while trying to land in stormy weather near Port Harcourt, Nigeria. The plane was carrying 110 people, 107 of whom died.

Oct 22, 2005: A Belleview Airlines Boeing 737-200 crashed in the Nigerian bush during a lightning storm, killing all 117 people aboard.

Sept 9, 2005: An Air Kasai Antonov-26 crashed 30 miles north of Brazzaville, capital of the Republic of Congo, killing 13 people.

May 25, 2005: A Russian-made Antonov-12 crashed shortly after take off near Bunyikiri, a village in eastern Congo, killing all 26 people aboard.

(NDTV.com)

Hasina returns to Dhaka today

DHAKA: Former Bangladesh prime minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed will return home tomorrow, more than a week after the military-backed government backtracked on plans to exile her, a party official said.

Hasina, leader of the opposition Awami League party, was slated to arrive in the capital Dhaka at 4pm (1100 GMT) tomorrow on an Etihad Airways flight from London, party general secretary Abdul Jalil said.

"The Awami League working committee members will be at the airport to receive her. We hope the government will not arrest her," he said yesterday.

Hasina, leader of the opposition alliance, served as prime minister between 1996-2001, and is facing charges of murder and extortion.

Police suspended a warrant for her arrest pending further investigation into murder charges laid against her in connection with the battering to death of four people in political unrest last year.

But they said she could still be arrested over an extortion case filed by the Bangladeshi head of a Malaysian company.

Last Wednesday, the government said it was lifting restrictions on her return amid local and international pressure.

The government barred Hasina's return on April 18, saying she was a national security threat. She was later refused permission to board a British Airways flight to Dhaka.

Hasina's lawyers served a legal notice against BA on Friday claiming £1mn in damages.

"BA did not give her a boarding pass, citing security reasons. It caused her immense mental stress and agony," Abdus Sobhan Golap said by telephone from London.

"We are seeking £1mn (\$2mn) in damages," he said, adding that BA has two weeks to reply to the notice.



There was no immediate comment available from British Airways.

Bangladesh has been ruled by a military-backed government since January when the country's president declared a state of emergency and cancelled elections slated for January 22.

The new government launched a nationwide crackdown on graft, arresting more than 50 top politicians of the two main parties led by Hasina and her rival, Khaleda Zia.

Authorities tried to force Zia and Sheikh Hasina into exile as part of a crackdown on political corruption, accusing both of years of misrule.

The government has vowed to clean up politics and carry out sweeping electoral reforms before setting a new date for elections. Last month, the head of the government pledged polls would be held before the end of 2008.

Ahead of Hasina's return, the security forces late Friday arrested one of her secretaries and a leading Awami League figure, Jalil said.

The president of youth wing of the party, Jahangir Kabir Nanak, said the arrests were aimed at seeking to thwart a huge gathering at the airport to receive Hasina.

In the last couple of days police have raided the residences of Awami League officials and already many have gone into hiding, fearing arrests, Nanak said.

"They want to stop officials from organising any gathering at the airport. In fact we are not doing anything. But still we think tens and thousands will be at airport to see a glimpse of their leader," he said.

The army-backed caretaker government has refused to allow the Awami League (AL) to organize mass reception to party chief Sheikh Hasina when she arrives at Zia International Airport.

The AL on Friday communicated with the interim government seeking permission to accord the reception, party sources said.

Senior leaders, who went to see party general secretary Abdul Jalil at his Gulshan residence, decided that only the members of the AL central working committee would be present at the airport to receive the party chief, insiders said.

They also said that the leaders had communicated with an adviser (minister) to the interim government and sought permission for a formal reception of the party chief assuring the government that emergency rules would not be violated anyway.

"We talked to a representative of the government about the planned reception to our leader and the government asked for a list of the leaders who want to be present at the airport to receive her," a central leader of the party said.

Senior leaders, however, refused to say anything about any discussion among themselves or communication with any adviser to the

After Dow, Reuters & Yahoo in Bid Bazaar

REUTERS • TARGET: PRIVATE

"TYPE=PICT;ALT=Click Here" : Reuters

• VALUE: \$16.3 bn (Market value as on Friday)

• SUITOR: Thomson publishing group of Canada
Both Reuters and Thomson don't confirm news, but Reuters shares leap 32% to a 5-year high on the London exchange

YAHOO! • TARGET: Yahoo

• VALUE: \$50 bn
• SUITOR: Microsoft

Microsoft and Yahoo reported to be in talks to strike a deal and fend off the common competitor Google. Yahoo shares jump 18% on Nasdaq in Friday trading, while Microsoft shares fall 1.25%

DOW • TARGET: Dow Jones

• VALUE: \$5 bn
• SUITOR: News Corp

Media baron Rupert Murdoch sets sights on The Wall Street Journal with a 67% premium on Dow Jones's share price. He'll have to win over Dow Jones' controlling shareholders, the Bancroft family, who have rejected the deal

(The Indian Express)



DREAMS versus REALITY

...The peace process has transcended into a multifaceted quagmire.

While supposedly brokering a deal to impact democratic changes and bringing about lasting peace, in reality, however, the power brokers in Kathmandu and New Delhi have come to a stark realisation that they are now embroiled in a political quandary with no easy exit strategy or panacea for Nepal. Worse, the peace process has transcended into a multifaceted quagmire.

Behind the back drop of all this is the parody of the establishment of Loktantra – the reluctance of the government to announce poll dates. The sole mandate of the Loktantric revolution was for the Maoist to renounce violence and for the new transitional government to conduct elections to Constituent Assembly. The worrying aspect that remains veiled from public observation is the murky politics in the name of Constituent Assembly election.

An important facet that cannot be ignored at this stage by the political leadership is the rapid deterioration of authority and legitimacy of the government in the absence of elections. By purposely deferring the



■ Siddhartha Thapa

poll dates the Prime Minister has indeed killed two birds with one stone. The Maoists find that their inscrutable image fast eroding once they joined mainstream politics. Instances of public agitations against them and the arrest of its cadres are symbolic.

Main stream parties barring the Maoist have been isolated from constituency politics, therefore suggesting that if the elections were to take place when law and order situation in the country is virtually non-existent and the parties isolated from their constituency due to Maoist fear, it is certain the Maoist can indeed sweep the polls. Koirala might have avoided an immediate political crisis by deferring the polls but what about the impending political crisis in the name of

elections?

The lethargy of the transitional period heralds two possible scenarios, both of them equally Machiavellian in nature. The first scenario is concerned with the poll dates. As new reports have emerged concerning the proposal of the merger of People's Liberation Army (PLA) into the national army, it won't be long before the Maoist leadership concurs that the announcement of poll dates will depend on the government's willingness to absorb a chunk of the PLA into the Nepal Army.

This ludicrous idea, floated by leftist tanks and partisan civil society leaders is the call for the integration of the rebels and the national army. Can an ideologically committed outfit such as the rebel army harmonise the balance in the state army or is it just a ploy to trigger a mutiny? In any event the possibility of the polls hinges on Koirala's readiness to give into the Maoist proposal of merging the two armies.

The second of course is the postponement of elections with no alternative dates in sight. The rebels are ideologically committed, politically astute and strategically wed to their cause. The parties on the other hand need to demonstrate more commitment for their own existence.

All major power brokers in the EPA are playing with time in a battle for dominance. As political parties fail to keep the rebels in check, the rebels' undemocratic tendencies sweep the floor of urban centers. While political parties are busy picking at each other, the rebels busy themselves concentrating on consolidating their reach within urban centers and state institutions. As the political parties are engaged in securing hefty business deals and naively remain silent on Maoist excesses, the policy of playing silent will backfire as the rebels continue to overwhelm the democratic institutions slowly but remarkably efficiently.

In their effort to mount pressure on the embattled Prime Minister, the Maoists have now floated the idea of a left alliance. Should the UML and Maoist come together in an alliance, it predictably heralds an explosive scenario. But it will ease the confusion perhaps; as once and for all - a clear line will be drawn separating the democratic and the non democratic forces in the country.

What is also inevitable is the demise of the UML; as the Maoist will emerge as the mother party in the left alliance. But this situation alone can peeve Koirala compelling him to indefinitely defer the announcement of poll dates. In either event, it is highly unlikely that elections will happen in the immediate future. The political party that can continue on top as the dominant force during the transitional phase without the need of elections to legitimise their authority will emerge victorious.

Has Koirala subverted a political crisis or does he find himself embroiled in a deeper political crisis in days to come? The vacuum has indeed radicalised the Maoists but again, all this maneuvering is with the aim of political dominance and out doing one another. Can Koirala swim past the nets cast by his own colleagues in the cabinet and his party, regrettably his own Home Minister?

Young Speak

Imaginary NEW NEPAL

The dead become a medium to get demands fulfilled..

■ Garima Bastola

New Nepal is an imaginary concept. However, everything is the same: crowded streets, dumps of garbage, street protests and growing insecurity among the public. Changes we cannot ignore are excessive traffic, pollution, rapid growth of automobiles and gadgets and our new government.

I was in the parliament the day history was in the making. Interim Parliament had been born. But the House began after inordinate and unexplained delay. Some of the Members of Parliament (MPs) dozed off; some were yawning in their seats while others talked. Many MPs squeezed themselves in the miniature seats. Some members rose to criticise the new constitution while others expressed optimism that the day symbolised a better and promising future.

Everyone seemed to be curious about the new members. That scenario changed after the new Maoist legislators entered the parliament. Few older looking men led the line of young teenage looking girls. The members of the seven parties especially the seniors looked shocked. However, some smiled and greeted the Maoist legislators, who sat on the extreme right row.

Many people were disappointed that the Maoist MPs were indeed very young and did not appear to understand what was happening. They came to parliament without ever contesting an election. The dress they wore was un-parliamentary, to say the least.

I stepped outside briefly looking for something to eat and I turned on my FM radio. The interviewer questioned the new MPs about their personal feelings at that moment of success. The MP's were eulogising, "Prachandpath" which to many means gunning down barracks, political rivals and confiscate others property. The visions of New Nepal were alarming.

Four months down the line, law and order is almost invisible in almost the entire length and breadth of the country. Citizen's security is at the highest risk. The eight parties in the ruling coalition are having problems with each other; there are major differences within the same party.

Entering parliament has not made Maoists more responsible. Torturing innocent people, conscription of children, violation of the code of conduct and their guerrillas leaving the designated cantonments make regular news.

Mps walking in parliament with arms! Where on earth do these kinds of things happen? There are doubts raised on the number of arms and combatants registered and Maoists are still obstructing the return of the internally displaced people.

This is real Nepal, where people die as though human life has no worth. The dead become a medium to get demands fulfilled, garbage becomes a medium, petty street fights becomes a medium. The public wants solutions and reconciliation on the streets.

The government does not seem to exist. It is unable to maintain law and order and give security to its people. The thematic New Nepal has opened the floodgates to discharge stored problems and no sign of solutions are visible.

People should understand the meaning and value of terms democracy and freedom. Hooliganism is not freedom or democracy. By disrupting peace and endangering the lives of those who do not want to be a part of violence is neither freedom nor democracy.

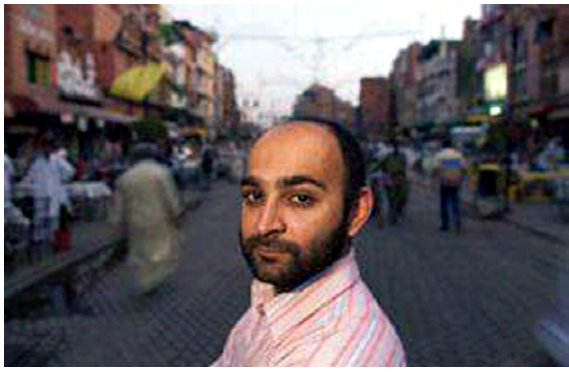
We, the people have to decide what we are looking for. In Madesh, we have an emerging conflict situation. There is no solution in sight. There could be violence in other areas in different forms.

Making a healthy society requires teamwork and collectivity. Only collective efforts would give us a sense of belonging. We should own responsibility for every failure collectively. How many of us break laws every day? How many of us have knowingly participated in damaging the society? New Nepal can only rest on the foundation of determination that we will behave differently and act responsibly.

Youths and students who have an opinion regarding the concept of New Nepal and/or their role in it are welcome to contribute their articles - restricting it to 600 words - with the writer's photo to: newsfront@bhrikuti.com

Seven-Year Novels

Mohsin Hamid talks about the innumerable and thorough drafts his books go through



elegantly constructed; it's a one-way conversation between a Pakistani and an American at a cafe in Lahore's Anarkali Bazaar. The only voice the reader hears is the Pakistani's. Some American critics have dismissed *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* as Oriental bunkum, but Hamid is quick to point out that readers in the US have been fascinated by a different point of view. "I went for a reading to Dallas, Texas, and I was nervous," says Hamid. That could be because the protagonist admits to feeling some pleasure at the 9/11 catastrophe. "Me being in Dallas is sort of like an American soldier in Iraq, but the reactions surprised me. Normal Americans are looking for answers," he explains.

Hamid says the years spent writing *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* were the toughest of his life. Initially written in third person, by his fourth draft, it shifted to an Americanised first person. "The second time round, you think it's going to be easier but it's not," he says. He describes the year following 9/11 as one of deep personal turmoil and the repercussions of the event on the Muslim world are carefully weaved into the narrative. Yet, Hamid insists, not one of his characters is him. "Of course, like most writers I'm influenced by my environment; my roommate was a heroin addict and I drew on that while writing *Moth Smoke*," he says.

Echoes of identity, nationalism and the clash of civilisations resonate through most of Hamid's writing, whether in his novels, or essays for magazines and newspapers. He describes himself as stubbornly Pakistani, but London-based Hamid has recently opted for dual citizenship; he also holds a British passport. "Let's face it, it's a lot more convenient," he says a trifle sheepishly. He currently works part time with a small consulting firm in London.

Meanwhile, he has sold the movie rights for his first book to Indian actor Rahul Bose. So do we have to wait seven years for Hamid's next book? He laughs, "I've given myself a time limit of two years, but don't hold your breath."

(*The Indian Express*)

It's past noon and the temperature hovers around 42 degree Celsius. Pakistani writer Mohsin Hamid has just spent his first three hours in Delhi — in India, in fact — registering at a police station. Here on a whirlwind five-day book tour for his bestseller *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, he relates the incident with a chuckle, clearly delighting in the absurdity of it all. "Can you believe it, tomorrow I head to Bombay and I have to register again!"

However, the perils of being a Pakistani in India haven't dimmed Hamid's spirits. Clean shaven and clad in a black T-shirt and jeans, he looks like a regular 35-year-old, a far cry from the dark, brooding photograph posted on his website. He is charmingly candid and forthright. "I'm just glad the book is done and over with," he sighs with relief.

By his own admission, writing is a constant struggle for Hamid, something that doesn't come very easily to him. His first book, *Moth Smoke*, a disturbing portrayal of life in contemporary Pakistan, has now acquired cult status there, but it took him seven years to write it. "I started it when I was 22 and finished it at 29. My entire perspective had changed and I've lost count of how many drafts I'd written by then." The same goes for *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* for which Hamid wrote seven drafts before his publisher was satisfied. "I don't think the final draft had a single sentence in common with the first one," he adds, wryly.

A 9/11 novel, its narrative style is uncommon and

Insight

Women positive politics

Do not ask why, just follow blindly, seems to be the popular credo.



■ Sushma Amatya

A woman, no matter how strong, capable or qualified would find it difficult to make her voice heard, to fight for her rights, to campaign to root out negative trends in the society, be it socio-cultural or political; and to bring about legal changes - the only thing that would really protect women's rights. Without strong, uncompromising laws that nobody can tamper with, women's rights remain mere lip-service, a lot of noise minus any substance.

To make sure each and every woman learns about their rights and uses it for her benefit to live a life free of ignorance, self demeaning values, exploitation, violence and suppression it calls for a strategy. Strategy, that would get women together, voice their issues from a common platform, lobby their issues and equally important, inform and educate the opposite gender. Only by doing this, in other words, by politicising their issues can women persuade policy makers to implement laws that are logical and consistent. Only by being equipped with such fair laws can they protect themselves and their future generations, be it from their family members or strangers.

The same applies to women —folk who are out there working. A recent programme held to bring together working women journalists in Kathmandu was a laudable effort on part of the women journalists to share their concerns, problems and sensitise both women and men regarding their issues; and to increase their numbers in decision-making levels. It was a good start that needs to be followed through.

The question raised by the women journalists how many of the 5000 member journalists enlisted in the Federation of Nepalese Journalists (FNJ) are actually working journalists and how many from that number are women, was a case in point. It has been seen that many people enter journalism not out of conviction and for the love of it but for the benefits one can draw from it, such as a press pass, invitation to foreign soirees, interaction with people at the 'top level', which otherwise they would not have access to. Such examples hold on to their journalist identity though their contribution to the field is nil.

Due to vested interests, journalism has gained a bad name in Nepal. Although today, there are a number of unbiased, committed journalists active in the field, their number is nowhere compared to the majority to whom it is a means of affiliation with politics and alliance with corporate interests. To shake off that negative image needs more cooperation between journalists who are willing to make a certain amount of sacrifice for their work. And that appeared to exist in the forum of the women journalists whose primary concern was increased representation of women at decision making levels.

Demands for representation needs to be backed up by individual capability, skill building, commitment to work and courage to stand one's ground. Only representation based on gender or any other category sans capability, commitment would be ludicrous and would just result in more conflict in work-place. Getting rid of age-old bias based on gender, caste etc., would also need extensive and intensive orientation at all work places. Of course, the education first needs to begin at every home and school, through practice.

And at the same time, increasing negative viewing of well educated, urban women - who are making it to the top through sheer dint of hard work and capability- by those who come from rural or unprivileged background should cease. A comment by one of the journalists who said, "The role of urban, privileged women should be minimised," spans of a bias, not suited to any journalist worth her salt.

Politics permeate every level of any society. It is a common saying that where more than two Nepalis gather, politics naturally begins, in a negative sense. Women journalists in Nepal need to be active in positive politics, steer clear of discriminatory politics and set an example of being able to work together by not giving into petty, shortsighted bickering based on greed and/or jealousy. Only by maintaining their integrity can their mission succeed and will they be taken seriously.

Right is not given or taken, it is inherently yours, it is a birthright. This fact needs to be internalised. All things that you believe in, you first need to practice it on yourself and others around you — both by women and men. If you believe in child rights, send your domestic worker's child to school; even if you have an orphan child worker, don't abuse him/her and provide him with basic education at least. If you espouse women's rights, don't beat your wife. If you believe in men's rights, don't beat your husbands.

For women to break the glass ceilings in Nepali context, every single woman has to empower herself by honing her skills and getting armed with good education. Combine that with sheer determination, confidence building, clear vision and hard work, any man-made barrier can be broken down. Many doors wait out there to welcome upright, intelligent, compassionate women who are brave, can question and value honesty. ■



Nothing is gained from drug use except destruction

Counseling by drug therapist, Ragina Shah

Does trying any drug just once make a person an addict? How do you spot addiction?

■ Ishwar Shrestha, Chapagaon Promoters/ sellers of drugs portray it as very colourful, the 'in' thing to do by 'cool dudes' or 'babes'; it is also advertised as something that gives you pleasure and as a fun thing to do. Dreams of experiencing 'heaven' are also sold to naive people who have no idea about the agenda behind such false claims.

Usually, when someone tries a drug out of sheer curiosity, as almost all addicts do in the first place; he/she ends up using it more than once. The temporary feeling of pleasure and escape from reality encourages such people to turn into frequent users and thereby get addicted. Having said that, if however, anybody tries a drug just once and no more, the person does not turn into an addict though the chances are very high.

When anybody takes to drugs seeking solution to their problems which could be unhappiness at home/school/college/work; shyness, loneliness or boredom, it means the person has become an addict. People who are compelled to use drugs for a certain period

of time due to medical conditions could also become addicts.

An addict finds solace in drugs instead of finding real solutions to their problems. When a person cannot stop using it, even though it is harming body and mind, it becomes a serious problem. But we have to remember that there always are problems whether you use drugs or not and solutions are there minus drugs. With drugs, you only add to your problems. The dependency, tolerance that one develops towards drugs makes one go back to drugs again and again. This is addiction. Another way to find out if you are addicted is when you stop using drugs, various mental and physical reactions arise - like restlessness, sweating, etc.

We cannot stop anybody from curiosity but we can stop that curiosity from turning into addiction through education and awareness. Simple and plain truth is that nothing is gained from drug use except destruction and more unhappiness.

What is drug overdose?

■ Sameer Lama, Pokhara Overdosing with drugs or chemicals can be either accidental or intentional. Drug overdose occurs when a person takes more than medically recommended dose. Illicit drugs, used to get

a 'high', when overdosed with, results in severe side-effects since the person's metabolism cannot detoxify the drug fast enough.

All drugs have a potential to be misused, whether legally prescribed by a doctor, purchased over-the-counter at local drug store or bought illegally. If taken in combination with other drugs or alcohol, even those drugs normally considered safe can cause death or serious long term consequences. People who suffer from depression and who have suicidal thoughts are at a high risk for drug overdose.

Accidental drug overdose may be the result of misuse of prescription medicines or commonly used medications like pain relievers and cold remedies. Symptoms differ depending on the drug taken. Some of the drugs like antidepressant drugs can cause irregular heart rate, vomiting, low blood pressure, confusion and seizures.

Overdose with opiate drugs cause sleepiness, low blood pressure, slowed heart rate and slowed breathing. Pinpoint pupils when the black centers of the eyes become smaller than normal, are common in opiate overdose. If drug overdose is



Close encounter with death

Only miracle could save him.

Obe'go, a Spanish, pediatrician by profession is excited that he could come back alive after being stranded in the freezing mountains for eight hours after he was swept away by a powerful avalanche while returning from the summit of Mt. Dhaulagiri.

On his way back from a successful ascent to the 8000-meter summit on April 26, the avalanche not only separated Obe'go from his friend Ihaki Ochoa, a famous climber but carried him some 800 metres away. "It was late in the afternoon. I was clueless about where I was, but imminent death was a stark reality to me," he told newsfront.

The avalanche struck around 6,700-meter point sweeping Obe'go away. "I was alone for eight hours. I lost my gloves. I did not know where I was. I wrapped my arms around my chest and huddled down in a desperate bid to keep warm," he recalled. The overnight exposure to the extreme cold estimated around minus 22 degree Celsius affected his vision.

Dawn injected some hope despite his vision that failed him. "But the real problem was not knowing where I was... I started moving cautiously towards the direction of the sun and inched forward making sense of some vague reference points along the way." He had no idea of how long he walked but finally the effort paid off.

He met an expedition group of Italians and Swiss at Tamwang. "They took me to their tent and administered first aid." His friend Ochoa could hardly believe his ears when Obe'go called on his satellite phone number to say he was very much alive and back to safety. "He had given me up for dead," Obe'go said.

Soon after he flew to Kathmandu on a chartered helicopter and decided to cut short his stay in Kathmandu; and fly back home to reassure his panic stricken family. During his treatment in Kathmandu, Dr Chakra Raj Pandey, a famous orthopedic surgeon who examined the climber said he was fine except for his fingers on left hand that had partially been frost-bitten.

Obe'go has been associated with many mountaineering and rescue groups, and he plans to continue with that. After this experience when he was miraculously saved, he said he sees things in a different perspective. He said he looks forward to many more trips Nepal, a country he loves and has frequented many times after 1989; and concluded that Nepal will always remain a part of his life.

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