

# Uneasiness in Nepal as King starts India visit today

■ NEPAL | Parties suspect Gyanendra may seek India okay for a more active political role at home

YUBARAJ GHIMIRE  
KATHMANDU, DECEMBER 22

KING Gyanendra's last two visits to India in as many years never brought him so much controversy at home as the one beginning tomorrow.

Major political parties, except the three in the Nepal government, fear that the King intends to seek India's endorsement for a larger and active role for himself, something the present constitution does not allow.

The visit, barely three months after the one by Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, will take him and Queen Komal to Delhi and four states bordering Nepal—Uttar Pradesh, Uttaranchal, Bihar and West



Maoists also on agenda

Bengal.

The visit would help him assess how much of a threat do insurgent Maoists on both sides pose to the two countries. But there are indications that New Delhi has said a polite No to the King's political ambition everytime it has been expressed.

But this time, in the week preceding the visit, the King resorted to an unprecedented PR exercise, granting interviews to Indian journalists—they were mostly from the four states—with clearly loaded political messages.

For India, the message is that he will try to understand the Indian mind on the Maoists problem. In short, implying that the Indian stance so far has not been adequate.

On the home front, the limitation of constitutional monarchy does not stop him from doing what he needs to for the 'well being of his subjects'. This has heightened anxiety here that the King still wants a larger role for

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himself, never mind what India or the international community may have advised him against.

Quietly responding to criticism from senior political leaders that he was charting out his visit agenda by keeping the Foreign Affairs Ministry in the dark, the King has spent the last two days in discussing the visit with former prime ministers and various party chiefs.

Home Minister Purna Bahadur Khadka and Foreign Secretary Madhuran Acharya will be among the 30 in the King's delegation.

The 11-day visit, on the invitation of President A P J Abdul Kalam, takes place at a time when India has told Nepal to get its army moving by taking a more strident line against the Maoists.

Nepal recently increased the strength of its army to 78,000 to combat the nine-year old insurgency which has resulted in more than 10,000 deaths (Maoists and civilians account for nearly 8,000 dead).

The King has also been at loggerheads with political parties who allege that he has 'appropriated' power at the cost of democracy. The country has been without an elected parliament for the last 30 months and there are no signs of early elections.

# Nepal king's trip to India: Focus on Maoist crisis

Keshav Pradhan  
Kathmandu, December 22

On the eve of his 11-day India visit, King Gyanendra has made it clear he would focus on the Maoist crisis in his talks with Indian leaders. The uppermost question in the minds of the Nepalese people is whether the monarch would be able to make use of Indian support without the cooperation of mainstream parties.

Aware of this, India has repeatedly asked the palace and mainline parties to work together to resolve the Maoist problem. Going by the mood of key politicians whom he met on his tour, the king might find it difficult to have rapprochement with mainline parties.

In such a situation, observers feel, New Delhi may find itself in danger of being "a self-seeking, interfering neighbour."

Nepali Congress chief G. P. Koirala, who met the king yesterday, said that only a



AFP  
Political activists burn an effigy of King Gyanendra during a demonstration in Kathmandu on Wednesday.

visit with the backing of the people could be fruitful. Nepali Mazdoor Kisan Party chairman Narayanman Bijukchhe asked the monarch not to allow India "to fish in troubled waters."

Earlier, ruling Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist Leninist) leaders wanted the king to disclose the agenda of his visit.

Considering all this, the-

re is a possibility of parties misinterpreting additional military assistance to Nepal, which is without a parliament since May 2002.

The Nepali Congress has looked at the Army, loyal to the king, as a threat to Nepal's fledgling democracy. India has been the largest provider of weapons and military training to Nepal in its fight against the Maoists.

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# Ulfa camps in Nepal with Maoist help

HF 5  
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## Siliguri crucial point in rebel plan

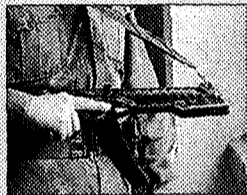
Digambar Patowary  
Guwahati, December 10

THE BANNED United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA), with the help of Nepalese Maoist rebels, has set up a few camps in the dense forests of southern Nepal bordering West Bengal. Intelligence sources say Ulfa has set up four camps inside Nepalese territory where the Maoist rebels were active.

After Operation All Clear, directed against the Ulfa, Bodo insurgents belonging to the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) and the Kamtapur Liberation Organisation (KLO) in south Bhutan last December, the banned outfits began making moves to set up bases in the forests inside Nepal near Siliguri.

Intelligence sources said that under the guidance of Ulfa's 2nd Lt Rana Barua, about two hundred newly recruited Ulfa cadres are getting training in four different camps in south Nepal.

Assam Police IGP (Special Branch) Khagen Sarma said that Ulfa leader Rana Barua, who is from Jeraigaon in Assam's Dibrugarh district, had spent most of



① Ulfa's ties with the Maoists developed in Bhutan

② Ulfa trained Maoist guerrillas in its camps there

③ About two hundred new Ulfa recruits are in Nepal

④ Ulfa militants are now being trained by the Maoists there

his days in Ulfa hideouts in Bangladesh. Incidentally, Ulfa C-in-C Paresh Barua is also from Jeraigaon.

After the death of Ulfa leader Rustom Choudhuri alias Karna Roi two years ago, Ulfa suffered a setback in maintaining relations with Nepal's Maoist rebels. Choudhuri was the key link between Ulfa and the Nepalese Maoists. Intelligence sources said that he was sent to Nepal on the special mission of firming

up coordinated activities between the two sides.

"We have reports that Ulfa has set up camps inside Nepal. The Siliguri point is a crucial point for Ulfa in maintaining their relation with other rebels. That is why they are trying to strengthen their network around Siliguri. They (Ulfa) are also trying to set up camps inside Bhutan again," said Khagen Sarma.

The Siliguri point is not far from the Indo-Bangla border and is also close to the Nepal border.

The Assam Police IGP (Special Branch) said that after the Bhutan crackdown on the various militant groups, the insurgents fled the Bhutan foothills and entered India and some even crossed over to Bangladesh.

The Ulfa's ties with the Maoist rebels first developed in their camps in the Samdrup Jhankhar district of south Bhutan, at a time when Ulfa enjoyed almost a free run in the forest-clad Bhutan foothills. Ulfa provided training to Nepalese Maoist rebels and was instrumental in the formation of a militant outfit of immigrant Nepalese in southern Bhutan.

# মাওবাদী রুখতে নেপাল-সীমান্তে সেনাবৃদ্ধি

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি, ৯ ডিসেম্বর: নেপাল সীমান্তে ভারতীয় সেনা মোতায়েন আরও জোরদার করা হয়েছে। নেপালের সেনাপ্রধান জেনারেল পেয়ার জং থাপা গত মাসের শেষ দিকে দিল্লি এসে ভারতীয় সেনাপ্রধান নির্মলচন্দ্র ভিজের সঙ্গে বৈঠক করেন। প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায়ের সঙ্গেও তাঁর একান্ত আলোচনা হয়।

দু'দেশের গোয়েন্দাবাহিনীর কাছে খবর, নেপালের নানা প্রান্তে মাওবাদী কার্যকলাপ মারাত্মক বেড়ে গিয়েছে। নেপাল-সীমান্ত দিয়ে শিলিগুড়ি করিডর ও বিহারের পূর্ণিয়া দিয়েও বহু মাওবাদী জঙ্গি ভারতে ঢুকছে। ভারতীয় গোয়েন্দাবাহিনী সীমান্তে আরও সেনা ও আধা-সামরিক বাহিনী মোতায়েন করে মাওবাদীদের ভারতে অনুপ্রবেশ সম্পূর্ণ বন্ধ করার চেষ্টা করেছে। অন্য দিকে, নেপাল ভূখণ্ডেও মাওবাদীদের দমনের কাজে রয়্যাল নেপাল আর্মিকে সবরকম সাহায্য করেছে ভারতীয় প্রতিরক্ষা মন্ত্রক।

নেপালেও সে দেশের সেনাবাহিনী বড় ধরনের অভিযান চালাচ্ছে। সম্প্রতি পশ্চিম নেপালে বরোদিয়া জেলার ভুরিগাঁওয়ের কাছে সইনবারে সেনা-জঙ্গি সংঘর্ষে নিহত হয়েছে অন্তত ১৫

জন মাওবাদী। এই সংঘর্ষে মৃত্যু ঘটেছে এক সেনা অফিসারেরও। পূর্ব-পশ্চিম হাইওয়েতে নেপাল সেনা এই অভিযান চালাচ্ছিল। কারণ এখানে গত দু'সপ্তাহ ধরে মাওবাদীরা গাছ কেটে রাস্তা আটকে রেখেছিল। যার ফলে জনজীবন বিপর্যস্ত হয়ে পড়ে। রেডিও নেপাল এ খবর জানায়।

এ ছাড়া অন্য একটি ঘটনায় মোরং জেলার বলবারি এলাকায় মোটরবাইক চালিয়ে দুই মাওবাদী জঙ্গি এসে এক পুলিশ কর্মীকে হত্যা করেছে। আজও

খোদ কাঠমান্ডুতে সরকারি একটি ভবনে বিস্ফোরণ ঘটায় জঙ্গিরা। নেপাল সেনা অভিযান বেড়ে যাওয়ায় সেখান থেকে তাড়া খেয়ে মাওবাদীরা আরও বেশি সংখ্যায় ভারতে ঢুকছে বলে গোয়েন্দাদের কাছে খবর।

দিন কয়েক আগে মুখ্যমন্ত্রী বুঙ্গদেব উট্টাচার্য নিজেও মাওবাদী কার্যকলাপ সম্পর্কে উদ্বেগ প্রকাশ করেন। তিনি এ ব্যাপারে যথাযথ ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণের জন্য দিল্লির উপর চাপ সৃষ্টি করেন। কেন্দ্রীয় স্বরাষ্ট্রমন্ত্রকও এই পরিস্থিতিতে

সেনাবাহিনীর পাশাপাশি বি এস এফ-কেও কড়া নির্দেশ দিয়েছে। ঠিক হয়েছে নেপাল সীমান্তে পাঁচ কিলোমিটার ব্যবধানেই একটি করে চৌকি থাকবে। সীমান্তে ১৫টি অতিরিক্ত চৌকি বি এস এফকে তৈরি করতে বলা হয়েছে। নেপালের সেনা ছাড়াও ১৫ হাজার সদস্যের এক শক্তিশালী জঙ্গি-দমন শাখা আছে। সেটি সশস্ত্র পুলিশ বাহিনীর অধীন। ভারতের কাছ থেকেও সম্প্রতি বেশ কিছু হেলিকপ্টার ও আধুনিক অস্ত্র পেয়েছে নেপাল।

নেপাল থেকে তাড়া খেয়ে অন্তত দু'জন মাওবাদী নেতা কাঠমান্ডু থেকে পালিয়ে ভারতে আশ্রয়গোপন করে আছেন বলে খবর। গত ছ'মাসের মধ্যে নেপালের সেনাপ্রধান তিনবার ভারতে এসেছেন। প্রধানমন্ত্রীর নির্দেশে প্রণববাবু পুরো বিষয়টি খতিয়ে দেখছেন। গত ৯ বছর ধরে নেপালের মাওবাদী কার্যকলাপে প্রায় ১০ হাজার মানুষ প্রাণ হারিয়েছেন। নেপাল থেকে অন্ধ্রপ্রদেশ এই সুদীর্ঘ এলাকায় মাওবাদীরা সুকৌশলে ছড়িয়ে পড়তে উদাত। সে জন্য ভারতের মাওবাদীদের সঙ্গে নিয়মিত যোগাযোগ রাখছে তারা। দু'দেশের মাওবাদীদের মধ্যে খুবই ঘনিষ্ঠ সম্পর্ক বলে শোনা যাচ্ছে।

## কাঠমান্ডুতে বোমায় বিধ্বস্ত অফিসবাড়ি

কাঠমান্ডু, ৯ ডিসেম্বর: নেপালের রাজধানীতে একটি রাষ্ট্রায়ত্ত্ব সংস্থার বাড়ি আজ সন্দেহভাজন মাওবাদী জঙ্গিদের ছোড়া বোমার আঘাতে বিধ্বস্ত হয়ে গিয়েছে। তবে সকালে অফিস খোলার আগেই বিস্ফোরণ হওয়ার ফলে এই ঘটনায় কেউ হতাহত হননি।

পুলিশ সূত্রে জানা গিয়েছে, সকালে অফিস খোলার আগে দুই যুবক চত্বরে ঢুকে বন্দুক দেখিয়ে নিরাপত্তাকর্মীকে বাগে আনে। তার পরে তারা বোমাটি যথাস্থানে রেখে তারা ওই নিরাপত্তা কর্মীকে পালাতে বলে। তার পরেই প্রচণ্ড বিস্ফোরণে গোটা এলাকা কেঁপে ওঠে। ওই সংস্থার প্রচুর সম্পত্তিহানি হয়েছে বলে জানা গিয়েছে।

মাওবাদীদের বারবার শাস্তি আলোচনায় বসার প্রস্তাব দেওয়া সত্ত্বেও তারা একের পর এক নাশকতামূলক কাজকর্ম চালিয়েই যাচ্ছে। তবে বিদ্রোহীরা যদি ১৩ জানুয়ারির মধ্যে শাস্তি আলোচনার ডাকে ইতিবাচক সাড়া না-দেয়, তা হলে আগামী এপ্রিলে পালারামেন্টের নির্বাচন করতে বন্ধপরিষদের প্রকাশন। —রয়টার্স

# মনমোহন বন্ধপরিষ্কার

## জঙ্গি দমনে

### প্রতিবেশীদের

#### নামাবেই দিল্লি

অগ্নি রায় • নয়াদিল্লি

২৬ অক্টোবর: বাংলাদেশ, মায়ানমারের মতো প্রতিবেশী দেশের অভ্যন্তরে জঙ্গি শিবিরগুলি ধ্বংসের লক্ষ্যে ভূটানের মতোই, সে সব দেশের প্রশাসনকেও সেনা অভিযানে সামিল করতে বন্ধপরিষ্কার ভারত। আজ সেনা কমান্ডার সম্মেলনে এ কথা স্পষ্ট জানালেন প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহ। কোনও জঙ্গিগোষ্ঠী যাতে অস্ত্র, রসদ বাইরে থেকে দেশে পাঠাতে না পারে সে জন্য সরবরাহ-পথ পুরো ধ্বংস করার বিষয়টি নিশ্চিত করতে সেনাবাহিনীকে আহ্বান জানিয়েছেন প্রধানমন্ত্রী।

মায়ানমারের সামরিক প্রধান এখন ভারতে। আর চার দিন বাদেই বাংলাদেশের বিদেশমন্ত্রী মোর্শেদ খান দিল্লি আসছেন। তার ঠিক আগে প্রধানমন্ত্রীর এই চড়া স্বরে আহ্বান যথেষ্ট তাৎপর্যপূর্ণ বলে মনে করা হচ্ছে। প্রধানমন্ত্রী সেনাবাহিনীর উদ্দেশ্যে বলেছেন, “সমস্ত প্রতিবেশী দেশগুলির সঙ্গে আমরা সহযোগিতা এবং কথাবার্তা চালানোর পক্ষপাতী। তার মধ্যে রয়েছে যৌথ অথবা সমন্বয়ের মাধ্যমে অভিযান। যাতে কোনও ভারতীয় জঙ্গি গোষ্ঠী বাইরে আশ্রয় বা সহায়তা না পেতে পারে। সরবরাহের পথও পুরোপুরি ভেঙে দিতে হবে।” তবে এ ব্যাপারে প্রতিবেশী দেশগুলির আবেগকে সম্মান দেখিয়েই ভারত সাবধানে এগোতে চায়।

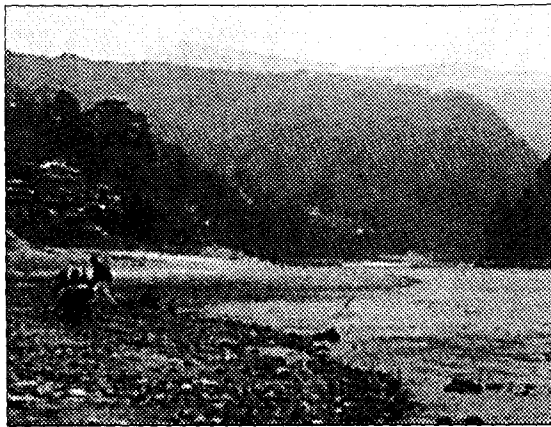
উত্তর-পূর্বাঞ্চলের জঙ্গি সমস্যা মোকাবেলায় ভূটানের আদলে বাংলাদেশ এবং মায়ানমারের জঙ্গি ঘাঁটি নির্মূল করার ব্যাপারে মনমোহন-সরকার এক মাস ধরে চাপ বাড়িয়েছে। এই মাসের গোড়ায় মায়ানমারের স্বরাষ্ট্রমন্ত্রকের প্রতিনিধিদের সঙ্গে একটি দীর্ঘ আলোচনায় বসেছিলেন ভারতের সরকারি প্রতিনিধিরা। সেই বৈঠকের পরে ভারত একটি বিবৃতি দিয়ে জানিয়েছিল, জঙ্গি, অস্ত্র ও মাদক পাচারকারীদের মোকাবেলা করতে দু'দেশের মধ্যে সমন্বয় জোরদার করা হবে। একই ভাবে বাংলাদেশের সঙ্গেও বিভিন্ন স্তরে দ্বিপাক্ষিক আলোচনায় ভারত জঙ্গিঘাঁটি নির্মূল করতে সমন্বয়ের মাধ্যমে সেনাভিযানে তাদের রাজি করাতে চেষ্টা করছে।

তবে ভারতের এতটা চড়া স্বরের বক্তব্য এই প্রথম শোনা গেল। স্বরাষ্ট্রমন্ত্রকও এত দিন জঙ্গিঘাঁটি নির্মূলের প্রক্ষে ভূটানের মতো অভিযানের প্রসঙ্গ এড়িয়ে গিয়েছে। স্বরাষ্ট্রমন্ত্রী শিবরাজ পাটিল বলেছেন, “বিভিন্ন স্তরে কথাবার্তা বলে প্রতিবেশী রাষ্ট্রগুলিকে বোঝাবার চেষ্টা করছি। জঙ্গি ঘাঁটির পূর্ণাঙ্গ তালিকাও তুলে দেওয়া হয়েছে।” আজ যৌথ অথবা সমন্বয়ের মাধ্যমে সেনা অভিযানের ডাক দেওয়ার পাশাপাশি মনমোহন বলেন, “প্রতিবেশী দেশগুলির আকাঙ্ক্ষা, ডুরাজনৈতিক প্ররোচনা, নীতিগত বিচ্যুতির বিষয়ে আমাদের সতর্ক থাকতে হবে। তা যেন আমাদের দেশের মূল স্বার্থ এবং নিরাপত্তার পরিপন্থী হয়ে না দাঁড়ায়।”

এই মন্তব্যে প্রকারান্তরে বাংলাদেশের উপর চাপ আরও বাড়ানো হল বলে মনে করছে কূটনৈতিক শিবির। ইতিমধ্যেই বাংলাদেশকে সে দেশের মাটিতে মদতপুষ্ট জঙ্গিদের তালিকা এবং তা উচ্ছেদের সম্ভাব্য উপায় হিসাবে একগুচ্ছ প্রস্তাব দেওয়া হয়েছে। জানুয়ারিতে সার্ক সম্মেলনের আগেই যাতে মায়ানমারের মতোই বাংলাদেশের কাছ থেকে প্রতিশ্রুতি আদায় করা যায় সে জন্য কূটনৈতিক স্তরে তৎপরতা বাড়ানো হচ্ছে। তবে বাংলাদেশও হাত গুটিয়ে বসে নেই। ক'দিন আগে বাংলাদেশের উত্তরাঞ্চলে এক বড়ো নেতা ধরা পড়েছে। আলফা নেতা অনুপ চেটিয়া বাংলাদেশে ধরা পড়ে। অনুপ বাংলাদেশের জেলে কয়েক বছর কাটালেও তাঁকে প্রত্যর্পণের জন্য দিল্লির দাবি ঢাকা এড়িয়ে গিয়েছিল।

ANADABAZAR PATRIKA

27 OCT 2004



A file picture of the Teesta river

## India & Bhutan form flood panel

Pramod Giri  
Siliguri, October 21

THE ROYAL Government of Bhutan and the Indian government have set up an expert committee to deal with the problem of flash floods in the North Bengal districts of Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar. The West Bengal government had been asking for the formation of such a committee between the two friendly neighbours for quite some time.

Floods in these two districts that share their border with the Dragon Kingdom have become an annual feature. Geologists, politicians and local people, all hold the dolomite mining in Bhutan as the main reason for this. Thousands of acres of crops and several lives are lost in the floods every year.

Most of the rivers in these districts come down from the mountains of Bhutan. Dolomite mining in Bhutan has led to sedimentation in the riverbeds. The depth of the rivers decreases and as

the rivers receive a prodigious amount of rainfall in their upper stretches during the monsoon, they flood their banks.

The state government has long been demanding the setting up of a mechanism to check the annual menace that destroys property worth crores. The UPA government finally agreed to set up the Joint Group of Experts on August 1.

Flash floods were the topic of discussion at the two-day border districts' coordination meeting between the West Bengal and Bhutan governments on October 18 and 19. The second meeting of the expert panel would be held between November 1 and 5.

Head of the state delegation, Jalpaiguri divisional commissioner Balbir Ram said West Bengal had long submitted terms of reference to the Union government about the need for the joint committee. He said the setting up of the panel is a major step towards the solution of the flood problem.

# India, Nepal technical group on flood control

By Our Special Correspondent

**NEW DELHI, OCT. 9.** The second meeting of the India-Nepal Joint Committee on Water Resources — held after a gap of four years — decided on Friday to appoint a technical group to prepare a joint strategy for flood management and mitigation in view of the severity of floods this year and the suffering it caused on both sides. The group will prepare a comprehensive long- and short-term strategy and report to the committee in three months.

India and Nepal share 243 rivers.

To give a push to long pend-

ing hydropower projects, the committee also agreed to form a joint team of experts on outstanding issues on the 5,600 MW Pancheshwar multi-purpose project and inter-related issues relating to the preparation of the Detailed Project Report, including the possibility of locating the re-regulating dam at Rupaligad. It was agreed to share power from the dam on a 50:50 basis. But the ticklish issue of sharing cost of power generation has been referred to a Power Exchange Committee.

## Master plan adopted

The second meeting of the committee, led by the Water Re-

sources Secretary, V.K. Duggal, and his Nepalese counterpart, Mahendra Nath Aryal, here was held in an atmosphere of "warmth and total understanding". Representatives from the flood-prone States of Bihar, Uttaranchal and Uttar Pradesh were part of the Indian delegation. Mr. Aryal described the meeting as "meaningful and useful".

The committee adopted the jointly prepared Comprehensive Master Plan on Flood Forecasting and Warning.

Speaking to the media after the two-day meeting, Mr. Duggal and Mr. Aryal drew attention to the decision of Prime Minis-

ter Manmohan Singh and Nepalese Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba during their September meeting in Delhi to give priority to deepening mutually beneficial cooperation in water resources. The political leadership mandated that a comprehensive strategy be prepared on flood control and management and agreed to constitute a joint task force. It was decided that the joint committee met at least once in six months.

## Technical options

The committee welcomed the recent opening of the India-assisted Joint Project Office in

Nepal for field investigations on the Sapt Kosi High Dam-Sun Kosi Storage-cum-Diversion projects. The two sides agreed that the implementation of the project would bring immense flood control benefits, besides enhancing power, irrigation and navigational potential in the region.

As part of long-term measure, the committee agreed to consider technical options, including reservoir schemes, which could mitigate flood problems in Kamala and Bagmati rivers.

The flooding of Kamala would be taken up as part of the feasibility study of Sun Kosi-Kamala Storage-cum-diversion scheme, and a preliminary study of the Bagmati problem would be conducted by the Sapt Kosi-Sun Kosi Joint Project Office.

An agency would be appointed by India for preparing a DPR for the 600 MW Burhi Gandaki project.

The Kamali Coordination Committee would be reactivated to examine the possibility of implementing the Kamali (Chisapani) multi-purpose project in Nepal. India would soon appoint a consultant for the implementation of the Tanakpur-Mahendranagar link road.

The next meeting of the panel would be in Nepal in April 2005.

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New Delhi must take sides in what is going on in Kathmandu

Aug 2002  
Newspaper  
1-18

# Remote control

## DIPLOMACY

K.P. NAYAR

**T**he United Progressive Alliance government will soon have to make some hard choices on Nepal. It can either emulate the late Rajiv Gandhi — decide in New Delhi what is best for the neighbouring kingdom and go about putting that prescription into practice. Or it can take a leaf out of the book of the V.P. Singh government, which succeeded Rajiv, and abdicate its responsibilities towards Nepal. The latter course of action may mean a collapse of the Nepalese state and the kingdom's descent into chaos with predictably catastrophic consequences for India's vast border areas adjoining Nepal.

Although his visit was never officially announced, King Gyanendra was to have been in New Delhi last week, soon after the return of the prime minister, Manmohan Singh, from New York. The king's visit has now been put off till the first week of November. The postponement does not in any way suggest that New Delhi has the luxury of waiting it out on Nepal. What it means is that the UPA government is unsure of how to deal with the kingdom's already dire crisis.

Regrettably, the present government inherited a legacy of neglect of the country's northern neighbour. The National Democratic Alliance government started off well in its dealings with Kathmandu, but soon got caught up in having to handle the larger international community on the nuclear issue. Then its priorities shifted to dealing with the big powers. The neighbourhood became a victim of neglect until the last two years of the NDA's rule. By that time, the task of restoring the *status quo ante* had become a monumental effort, an effort which was set in motion, but remains to be completed.

**L**argely because foreign policy in the neighbourhood has a huge intelligence input, India's dealings with Nepal have had a sense of continuity, notwithstanding the elections and a change in government in New Delhi. The UPA government has continued its predecessor's policy of providing military assistance to Kathmandu and empowering Nepal's army to fight the Maoist insurgency.

But there is little point in persisting with pious calls from New Delhi for a balance between the monarchy and Nepal's political parties as a way out of the kingdom's crisis. Without doubt, such calls have elements of political correctness about them and they may aid any Indian effort to win popularity contests in Nepal. But the state of the Maoist insurgency is now so critical that popularity contests are irrelevant, indeed dangerous.

In any case, the history of Indo-Nepal relations are replete with in-

stances of New Delhi having had to compromise in varying degrees on its vital interests in Kathmandu whenever it has attempted political correctness beyond the Terai. The time has come for New Delhi to once again decisively take sides in what goes on in Kathmandu, weigh its interests and work to restore stability in Nepal, just as Rajiv did in the second half of his prime ministership.

It is no great secret in Kathmandu that New Delhi forced the king's hand in June in getting him to appoint Sher Bahadur Deuba as prime

minister. But if, indeed, South Block follows its instincts and acts on them, support for the king would certainly find international favour. In the eyes of the world, the monarchy is the only institution that can prevent the emergence of an unpredictable Maoist government in south Asia at a time when the international community has enough on its plate as far as south Asia is concerned.

Will such a move to shore up Gyanendra make India unpopular in Nepal? Yes, but only in the short run as long as India insists that Gya-

equipped to fight the Maoists. The international community recognizes the 1950 Indo-Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship as the sheet anchor of Nepal's defence. It commits India, among things, to protecting Nepal's security. If India is seen as taking a stand on Nepal and not vacillating, New Delhi will be in a position to manage the growing military engagement of the rest of the world with Nepal in the context of the Maoist insurgency.

But India must not get involved in any way with what now increasingly threatens to be a civil war in Nepal. That, though, can only be avoided if other countries — in coordination with India — provide arms and equipment to the Nepali army, which is reeling under the insurgency.

South Block has lately been receiving some unsolicited political advice on the crisis in Nepal. There has been some advice that, anticipating a collapse of the Nepalese state, India should neutralize the Maoists by engaging them. It is not a workable proposition although South Block has repeatedly been telling Kathmandu that a military victory against the Maoists is now a pipe-dream.



The right choice

endra runs a tight ship in his new role as a real monarch and not merely a constitutional one. The mainstream political parties in Nepal are beholden to India. Without India's consistent — albeit often tactical — support for their objectives, Nepal would never have become a democracy in 1990. The dispute between the Nepali Congress and the communists on foreign policy has essentially been about who has India's ear, never on how to eliminate India's influence in Nepal or how to cut the kingdom's umbilical cord with India.

Therefore, India can afford to take Nepal's political parties for granted — as long as India does not burn its boats with any of them. If these political parties remain relevant after all the turmoil that the kingdom is now going through, they will still be beholden to India. After all, geography is the biggest guarantor of good Indo-Nepal relations.

If India is seen as standing solidly behind Gyanendra, it will encourage other countries to step up arms deliveries and military training for Nepal's army, which must be better

minister. But having thus secured a transfer of power from Narayanhiti Palace to the prime minister's office in Singha Darbar, India did not follow up on its action and see to it that Deuba exercised that power. Instead, Gyanendra was allowed to retain the "remote control" on the exercise of real power in the kingdom.

The foreign policy liberals in the Congress-led ruling alliance and their supporting parties must come to terms with the reality, howsoever unpalatable, that Nepal's political parties have failed their country and their people. The net result of Nepal's more-than-a-decade-long experiment with parliamentary democracy is a failed political establishment. India may well find that trying to resuscitate the kingdom's fractious political parties is like trying to beat a dead horse into entering the race.

Logic favours such a conclusion and if South Block follows up on that conclusion, it can only lead to Indian support to Gyanendra in his efforts to return Nepal to stability and a functioning political system.

**T**here are obvious limitations to what India can do in Nepal. Any kind of direct Indian intervention — military or otherwise — in Nepal must be avoided at all costs. Therefore, support for the king remains, for the time being, the best option for New Delhi. But there are built-in difficulties within the UPA in implementing this course of action. There are, for instance, some who believe that India should, at all costs, work towards restoring parliamentary democracy and ensuring a constitutional monarchy in Nepal.

Then there are those within the UPA who fail to see that the Maoist insurgency is threatening to undermine the very foundations of Nepal as a state. For these secularists, for now, the big issue is the recent attacks on mosques in Nepal as a sequel to the murder of the Nepalis recently taken hostage in Iran. They are clamouring in New Delhi that the attack on the mosques represents the "danger" of spreading Hindu militancy beyond India's borders.

Those who take such a myopic view of things are ignoring what should be a supreme consideration in India's dealings with two neighbours; the importance of the hydel power potential of Nepal and Bhutan. As India embarks on greater economic growth, the hydel potential of Nepal and Bhutan are as significant to the country as the oil resources of Iraq and Saudi Arabia are to America. Like it or not, India's policies towards Nepal must be considerably conditioned by this realization.



# TIES WITH NEPAL

51. 8 11/10  
Deuba's Visit Adds New Dimensions

By PARMANAND

At the end of his official visit to India, Nepal Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba stated that he was "satisfied" and stressed that he was "happy with the understanding, cooperation and commitment" he had received from the Indian government. He also said that Nepal needed to "work with India in alleviating poverty, generating employment and bringing about social transformation".

The backdrop against which Deuba visited India was significant. On 31 August, 12 innocent Nepali workers were killed in Iraq. They were kidnapped on 19-20 August. Nepalese had exhibited their anger against the government and at one point it had appeared that Nepal would become a new centre of communal tension, making the life of minorities, Muslims in particular, unsafe.

## Low key

Earlier, the week-long Maoist economic blockade of Kathmandu, between 18-24 August had also left the people helpless. People in Kathmandu had experienced such a phenomenon for the first time. The Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) had initiated violent activities in February 1996, when Deuba was prime minister. The Maobadis, as they are called in Nepal, have been, inter alia, demanding the establishment of a republican government in the monarchical Nepal and abrogation of all "unequal treaties with India".

The visit of the Nepal Prime Minister (who is now president of the Nepali Congress-Democratic, and heads a four-party coalition and his delegation), was sought to be kept at a low key both by the Indian authorities and by Nepali leaders themselves. There was no traditional Hyderabad House dinner, for instance. Both sides had probably tried to make it more purposeful.

A reception hosted by the Nepal Ambassador to India, Karna Dhawaj Adhikary on 10 September provided an opportunity for the entire delegation to interact with people from various segments of Indian society.

During the visit, the two South Asian states with a long open border signed a couple of bilateral agreements. They included

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an agreement for cooperation in weather forecasting, an agreement on culture and sports and an agreement on building pipeline to ensure smooth supply of petroleum products to the Himalayan kingdom.

Quite expectedly, the Maoist problem was seriously discussed. Nepal has provided to India with a list of arms and equipment it wants. The External Affairs Ministry sources said: "In the past also, we have supplied them light helicopters, mortars, mines rifles and machine guns at

minister, K Natwar Singh, has said that India would provide all possible help to Nepal in coming out of the present crisis. The Maoists, taking advantage of the long open border, have also posed a threat to Indian security. Besides, they have badly scared Indian investors in Nepal.

On their part, the Maobadis chose the occasion of the New Delhi sojourn of Deuba and his delegation to show that they were active and destructive — as in the past. Of course, this time they targeted the American In-



concessional rates". Joint patrolling along the border and improved intelligence sharing were other methods the two sides discussed to help curb the violence and prevent insurgents from crossing the 1,600-km-long porous Indo-Nepal border. In a 45-minute meeting with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Deuba briefed the Indian government on steps the Nepali government was taking to deal with the situation arising out of the Maoist violence.

## Foreign investors

Relevantly, Maoist insurgency and the Nepali state's response have seen about 10,000 Nepalis soldiers, policemen, politicians, party activists and workers, Maoist cadres and innocent people killed. As His Majesty's Government of Nepal is moving ahead with its programme of increasing the size of its army to over 100,000 in a couple of years, Kathmandu wants an increased supply of arms and other armaments.

The Indian external affairs

captains of industry that the liberal "investment environment will be protected at any cost". Besides, he urged the business community in India "to take advantage of the trade opportunities in Nepal".

At least 35 Indian companies had stopped functioning after the Maoists issued a threat to them. Hearteningly, the industry and commerce minister, Ishwor Pokhrel, who accompanied the Prime Minister, asserted that 12 companies had reopened following talks with the trade unions. Pokhrel emphasised that other companies also faced no threat. Of course, one has to wait and watch.

## Dams

Water resources of Nepal have been seen as a sphere of mutually beneficial economic cooperation. The example of Indo-Bhutan cooperation on this front is cited. But despite the signing of the Mahakali Treaty between India and Nepal in 1996, no visible progress has been made in power generation.

Indeed, even a detailed project report has not been prepared so far. During the Deuba visit this time, India and Nepal agreed to hold a series of meetings to finalise the DPR on the Pancheshwor dam on the Mahakali-Sharda river on the border of the two countries. N L Goyal, commissioner Eastern Rivers in the Ministry of Water Resources, said in New Delhi on 11 September that two meetings would be held in the last week of September in Kathmandu on the dam issues and flood management. These meetings would be following by the secretary-level meeting.

Significantly, the 5600MW Pancheshwar project will bring power and irrigation benefits to both Nepal and India. One hopes that various political parties in Nepal view the project as one that would contribute to the overall prosperity of Nepal.

Not less significantly, Nepal also took the sensitivity of India on the Dawood Ibrahim issue quite seriously. The underworld don is said to be running a media house in Kathmandu. Deuba said in an interview that he had told India that Nepal would investigate the matter and that his country would not allow any activity against India on its territory.

# Nepal Communists' charge against India

By Amit Baruah

**NEW DELHI, SEPT. 15.** As India and Nepal strengthen their cooperation against extremism and terrorism, the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) launched a scathing attack against India during a recent central committee meeting of the party.

In a press statement, posted on the party's website ([www.cpnm.org](http://www.cpnm.org)), the CPN(M) chairman, Prachanda, said "Indian expansionism," backed by U.S. imperialism, was directly impinging on the "people's war" launched by the Maoists in Nepal.

This, the statement claimed, had been displayed by the recent arrest of several party functionaries, including Kiran, a senior leader. The Indian approach, it said, was to try and "Bhutanise" or "Sikkimise" Nepal.

## 'Main barrier'

"The Indian monopoly capitalist rulers, who have always backed destabilisation and anarchy in Nepal, have now been openly threatening Nepal with their ill-intention, bringing Ne-

pal under their control through military intervention and conduct massacre [sic] against the patriotic and self-respected Nepalese people in the name of so-called support to the war against terrorism," the statement said.

Indian "expansionism," the CPN(M) claimed, was the main barrier in creating a congenial environment to find a forward-looking political solution through peaceful negotiations in Nepal.

"The chieftains of the old state of Nepal, in a daydream of

*India - Neigubem*  
lengthening the period of [the] reactionary state, have been committing a heinous crime of mocking over [sic] the independent existence and self-respect of the Nepalese people by kneeling down in front of Indian expansionism."

The statement called on all self-respecting and patriotic Nepalese people to stand united against the "national capitulationism" of the old state, Indian expansionist intervention and the danger of "near-ing" military attacks.

In what was described as a

new approach, the document stressed the need to guard against "national capitulation" and Indian "intervention" in the ideological, political and military fields.

"The document has also emphasised that the independence of Nepal and Nepalese people can be preserved by turning the whole country [in]to a war front, by militarising all people, and by raising the war strategy to a new height against military interventions of any imperialism and expansionism," it added.

## Common threat

Though the CPN (M) statement came several days before the recently concluded visit of the Nepalese Prime Minister, Sher Bahadur Deuba, to New Delhi, the Government of India has been repeatedly stressing that India and Nepal share a common Maoist threat.

Senior External Affairs Ministry officials have pointed to the need for joint action between the Nepalese and Indian Maoist groups, entities they believe are closely linked and cooperate extensively with each other.

## U.S. asks staff to leave Nepal

**WASHINGTON, SEPT. 15.** The U.S. State Department has authorised the departure of non-emergency personnel and family members of its Embassy in Nepal's capital and suspended Peace Corps aid work in the country.

It said in a travel warning yesterday the embassy had received information that Maoist rebels might attack or take actions specifically against U.S. ci-

tizens.

"The Department of State authorised the departure of non-emergency personnel and family members of the U.S. Embassy on a voluntary basis, and the Peace Corps temporarily suspended all operations in Nepal," it said.

The department also urged U.S. citizens to defer non-essential travel to the Himalayan kingdom. — AFP

THE HINDU

16 SEP 2004

# India, Nepal to meet again on Pancheshwar dam

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 11. India and Nepal will hold a series of meetings this and the next month to finalise the Detailed Project Report of the Pancheshwar dam on the Mahakali-Sharda river on the border of the two countries.

Giving this information, the Commissioner (Eastern Rivers) in the Ministry of Water Resources, M.L. Goyal, said two meetings would be held in the last week of this month in Kath-

mandu on the dam issues as well as on flood management.

## Multi-purpose project

Next month, there would be a meeting of the Secretary-level Joint Committee on Water Resources that would be preceded by a meeting at the level of the Central Water Commissioner. It is after four years that all aspects would be taken up for a detailed discussion.

The decision to do so was taken during the ongoing visit of the Prime Minister of Nepal,

Sher Bahadur Deuba. The 5600 MW Pancheshwar project is a multi-purpose project and will bring power and irrigation benefits to both the countries.

Mr. Goyal also briefed media-persons on the coming visit of the Secretary Water Resources, V.K. Duggal, to Bangladesh for the seventh meeting of the Joint Committee of Experts where the recommendations of the Joint Technical Group would be taken up on the sharing of Teesta waters between the two countries.

THE HINDU

12 SEP 2004

*Prison  
Prison*

**DEUBA'S PROMISE / 'WE WILL NOT ALLOW TERROR TO REIGN'**

# Nepal beckons businessmen

*110-11  
11/9*

**By Our Special Correspondent**

**NEW DELHI, SEPT. 10.** The Prime Minister of Nepal, Sher Bahadur Deuba, today sought to allay the fears of foreign investors in the wake of the recent Maoist violence in his country saying that his Government would provide protection and security to them and their investment.

Addressing India Inc. at an interactive session organised jointly by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the Confederation of Indian Industry, Mr. Deuba said his Government was fighting the Maoist insurgency problem resolutely and responsibly and would not allow terror to reign. "We are fighting the problem of insurgency resolutely and responsibly," Mr. Deuba said. "We will not allow terror to reign. The liberal investment environment will be protected at any cost."

Maoist insurgents have asked several companies to suspend their operations in Nepal. Some of them have downed their shutters fearing violent attacks. Insurgency has also affected tourist inflows, resulting in the shrinking of a major source of income.

Urging the captains of the Indian industry to invest in his country and take full advantage of the liberal environment and trading facilities, Mr. Deuba said he was aware of the security apprehensions "mainly due to some threats of extortion and some attacks on business interests."

"Though some unfortunate incidents have occurred in recent times, the Nepalese Government is fully committed to

providing security and protection to foreign investors and their investments," he said, telling them not to get carried away by media reports which had blown things out of proportion.

## Dialogue planned

His Government was determined to solve the Maoist problem through dialogue. An important initiative was the establishment of a high-level

peace committee under his chairmanship.

The Everything But Arms (EBA) initiative of the European Union, he said, was on such a facility.

Referring to India's initiative in introducing a fast-track approach for approval of Indian investment in Nepal, Mr. Deuba said his Government had put in place the legal, institution and policy framework to encourage trade and attract investments.

## India offers help to tackle Maoist violence

**By Sandeep Dikshit**

**NEW DELHI, SEPT. 10.** India has offered wide-ranging assistance to Nepal to quell the Maoist violence in that country as it feels there cannot be a "purely military solution" to the problem. At the same time, India has made it clear that it does not agree with the tactics of achieving political objectives through violence.

India will upgrade the Nepalese police force and despatch more armaments for use by the rapidly expanding Royal Nepal Army. It will also step up assist-

ance for health, education and community development. It will develop rail links and improve road connections with Nepal as well as help set up a state-of-the-art telecom network, the Foreign Secretary, Shyam Saran, told newsmen at the end of the Nepal Prime Minister, Sher Bhadaur Deuba's interaction with Union Ministers and officials here today.

## Common threat

Terming the Maoist insurgency in Nepal a "common threat to both countries," Mr. Saran said the two sides agreed to finalise

an extradition treaty and a mutual legal assistance treaty on criminal matters. The two sides also touched on the linkages between Nepal's Maoists and the Maoist Communist Centre of India and the People's War. "That is why we have stated that this is a shared common threat," Mr. Saran said.

He said the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, and Mr. Deuba noted the setting of a Joint Consultative Group on Security Issues that will give new impetus to security cooperation and deal more effectively with security challenges.

# মার্কিন তথ্যকেন্দ্রে বোমা, মাওবাদী মোকাবিলায় নেপালের পাশে ভারত

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি, ১০ সেপ্টেম্বর: ভারত ও নেপাল একই ধরনের 'মাওবাদী বিপদের' সম্মুখীন হওয়ায় ভারত আজ নেপালকে সব রকমের সাহায্যের আশ্বাস দিয়েছে। এ দিকে আজই কাঠমান্ডুতে মার্কিন তথ্যকেন্দ্রে বোমা ফাটিয়েছে মাওবাদী জঙ্গিরা। কারও হতাহত হওয়ার খবর নেই। তবে বিশ্লেষণে ভবনটির ক্ষতি হয়েছে। মাওবাদীদের বিরুদ্ধে নেপাল সরকারের নেওয়া ব্যবস্থাকে আমেরিকা সমর্থন জানিয়েছিল। এটা তারই বদলা বলে অনুমান। নেপালে মার্কিন কোনও লক্ষ্যবস্তুর উপর মাওবাদী জঙ্গিদের এটাই প্রথম হামলা। এ ছাড়া দক্ষিণ নেপালের ভিরাওয়ায় মাওবাদীদের বোমায় মারা গিয়েছেন ২ জন পুলিশ, জখম হয়েছেন ৮ জন।

মাওবাদীদের মোকাবিলায় ভারত নেপালের নিরাপত্তা বাহিনীকে প্রশিক্ষণ এবং হাফা হেলিকপ্টার, মর্টার, এ কে ৪৭ দিয়ে সাহায্য করবে বলে সফররত নেপালি প্রধানমন্ত্রী শের বাহাদুর দেউবাকে আশ্বস্ত করেছে। এর বিনিময়ে নেপালে যে সব ভারতীয় বাণিজ্যিক সংস্থার অফিস ও কর্মীদের পূর্ণ নিরাপত্তার আশ্বাস চেয়েছে ভারত। দেউবা এ বিষয়ে সব রকম ব্যবস্থা নেবেন বলেছেন। মাওবাদীরা

বাইরের সংস্থাগুলির উপর চাপ ক্রমশই বাড়তে থাকায় আরও ৩৫টি বেসরকারি বাণিজ্য সংস্থা নেপালে তাদের কাজকারবার অনির্দিষ্টকালের জন্য বন্ধ রাখার সিদ্ধান্ত নিয়েছে। নেপাল-ব্রিটেন বণিকসভার সভাপতি রাজেন্দ্র খেতান বলেছেন, বাধ্য হয়েই তাঁদের এটা করতে হচ্ছে। এ নিয়ে নেপালে মোট ৪৬টি বাণিজ্য প্রতিষ্ঠান কারবার বন্ধ রাখতে বাধ্য হল।

নেপাল অবশ্য ভারতের কাছে থেকে ট্যাক্সও চেয়েছিল। কিন্তু নয়াদিল্লি অতদূর এগোতে এখনও রাজি নয়। দুই পক্ষ প্রত্যর্পণ চুক্তি এবং আইনি সহযোগিতা চুক্তি স্বাক্ষরের সিদ্ধান্ত নিয়েছে। এর পাশাপাশি বন্যানিয়ন্ত্রণ ও বিদ্যুৎ উৎপাদন এবং রাস্তা ও রেল যোগাযোগ নিয়েও কথাবার্তা হয়েছে দু'দেশের।

নেপালি প্রধানমন্ত্রীর ভারত সফরে আর কী কী বিষয়ে কথাবার্তা হয়েছে তার খতিয়ান দিয়েছেন বিদেশ সচিব শ্যাম সারন। তিনি জানান, নেপালের মাওবাদীদের সঙ্গে ভারতের জনযুদ্ধ গোষ্ঠী এবং এম সি সি-র যোগাযোগ রয়েছে। এ বিষয়টি নিয়ে দেউবার সঙ্গে ভারত সরকারের আলোচনা হয়েছে। দু'দেশের নরুশালপহীদে মধ্য যোগাযোগ অবশ্য কোনও নতুন ঘটনা

নয়। তবে এখন দু'দেশ যৌথভাবে সীমান্ত পাহারা দেওয়ার একটা নির্দিষ্ট বন্দোবস্ত করতে চলেছে। দাউদ ইব্রাহিম প্রসঙ্গে কী কথাবার্তা হল জানতে চাইলে সারন বলেন, নেপালে দাউদের কার্যকলাপ নিয়ে ভারতের কাছে যা যা তথ্য ছিল, সবই দেওয়া হয়েছে। নেপাল তা তদন্ত করে দেখার আশ্বাস দিয়েছে।

তবে, একইসঙ্গে সারন জানিয়ে দিয়েছেন, ভারত মনে করে, মাওবাদী সমস্যার 'নেহাং সামরিক সমাধান' সম্ভব নয়। তিনি বলেন, নেপালকে শান্তিপূর্ণ পথেও বহুদলীয় গণতন্ত্র ও সাংবিধানিক রাজতন্ত্রের মধ্যেই সমস্যার সমাধান খুঁজতে হবে। নিরাপত্তার ক্ষেত্রে নেপালি পুলিশের আধুনিকীকরণের জন্য দিল্লি পুলিশ একটি পাইলট প্রকল্প শুরু করেছে।

আজ শের বাহাদুর দেউবা কেন্দ্রীয় জলসম্পদমন্ত্রী প্রিয়রঞ্জন দাশমুন্ডির সঙ্গে প্রায় চল্লিশ মিনিট বৈঠক করেছেন। বৈঠকে প্রিয় নেপালের প্রধানমন্ত্রীকে বলেছেন সে দেশের সানকোশী এবং সপ্তকোশী নদীতে বাঁধ না দিলে বিহার বন্যায় বিপর্যস্ত হচ্ছে। এই পূর্ণাঙ্গ প্রকল্পটির খরচ ভারত সরকার দেবে বলে তাঁকে আশ্বাস দিয়েছেন প্রিয়।

# Arsenal aid to Nepal

SUJAN DUTTA

## INDIAN HELP

New Delhi, Sept. 10: The Indian Army is delving into its own arsenal to feed Nepal's army where the Maoist rebels have thrown up a military challenge that the kingdom is ill-equipped to take on without substantial reinforcement.

(In the first attack on a US establishment in Nepal, suspected Maoist rebels today exploded a bomb at the American Information Center in Kathmandu.)

Nepal's Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba is currently in New Delhi with pleas for assistance.

To begin with, the Indian Army is sending 24 mine-protection vehicles from among its own fleet of troop carriers to the Royal Nepalese Army (RNA).

"We are helping Nepal counter the Maoist threat," the vice-chief of army staff, Lt General Shantonu Choudhury, said here today. The Indian Army's Counter Insurgency and Jungle Warfare School in

### Munitions being sent to Nepal

- 20,000 upgraded INSAS rifles
- 15,000 7.62mm guns
- 5,000 machine guns
- 1,000 mortars
- 800 troop carriers
- Bullet-proof jackets
- Patkas (bullet-proof headgear)
- Night-vision devices

Vairengte (Mizoram) has trained about seven companies from the RNA.

Indicating the level of commitment the Indian government is making to counter the Maoist threat, top army sources said: "We will supply equipment to Nepal even from our own stocks."

The Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), led by the elusive Prachanda, has fraternal ties with the People's War Group and the Maoist Communist Centre in India and is counted as a threat to India's own security.

A Maoist-led trade union has asked 35 businesses in

Nepal to shut down. These include Indian interests.

Nepal has asked for 40 mine-protection vehicles immediately. For the moment, the Indian Army has found 16 to send as supplies. Nepal's shopping list for military equipment is long. The Indian Army's directorate general of military training is involved in training RNA officers and troops and interacts closely with it. A military training team is also in Nepal.

The RNA, estimated to have a troop strength of about 75,000, is expanding itself. It is recruiting soldiers to have a strength of about a lakh in five years.

Last year, India exported two Dhruv advanced light helicopters to Nepal, marking a first export of the aircraft from the defence public sector Hindustan Aeronautics Limited. More despatches are likely.

Defence sources say the equipment is being supplied to Nepal with soft loans to enable the kingdom to meet the costs.

■ Nepal firms close, Page 3

# Delhi to Nepal's aid against rebels

Saurabh Shukla  
New Delhi, September 9

INDIA TODAY promised all help to Nepal in fighting Maoist insurgency, and agreed to upgrade its security assistance to Nepal. New Delhi will provide counter-insurgency training to Nepalese police to tackle the Maoist threat, said sources. India considers the Maoist threat as a shared security concern and hence will provide Nepal some more ALH helicopters and Defence hardware which Nepal has sought.

In view of the grave security situation in Nepal, the

first batch of the police personnel will begin training on counter-insurgency soon. About 400 to 500 Nepalese Police personnel are being sent to India for training.

Sources said India has also assured the visiting Nepalese Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba of upgraded defence assistance to combat the threat including a fresh consignment of military hardware and training to the Royal Nepalese Army.

Deuba called on President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam and met Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh. He

also met Minister of Defence and Home and was assured that India was committed to providing all help to Nepal.

Deuba's trip is aimed at providing a first hand assessment of Nepal's situation, and India is attempting to cement economic cooperation with Nepal, which it believes, is important to help Nepal fight insurgency.

On its part, Nepal also assured New Delhi that it will curb the activities of anti-India elements in its territory. India raised the issue of underworld don Dawood Ibrahim expanding its network in Nepal and also pointed to

the activities of the Pakistani intelligence agency ISI. A significant breakthrough in the talks was some progress on the extradition treaty and the mutual legal assistance treaty, which may be finalised soon.

If signed, the treaty will address a major law and order and security concern for India. The two countries also signed two agreements on meteorology and sports. While Maoist insurgency dominated the talks, issues related to water resources, border management and cooperation in petroleum sector also came up.

# দাউদের কার্যকলাপ রোধে আশ্বাস কাঠমন্ডু

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি, ৯ সেপ্টেম্বর: নেপালের মাটিতে দাউদ ইব্রাহিমের কার্যকলাপ রোধে ব্যবস্থা নেওয়া হবে বলে ভারতকে আশ্বস্ত করল শের বাহাদুর দেউবা সরকার। অন্য দিকে, ভারতও মাওবাদীদের মোকাবিলা করতে নেপালকে সব রকম সাহায্যের আশ্বাস দিয়েছে। নয়াদিল্লি জানিয়েছে, ভারতীয় গোয়েন্দাদের সংগ্রহ করা এই সংক্রান্ত তথ্য এখন থেকে আরও বেশি করে কাঠমন্ডুকে জানানো হবে। নেপালের প্রধানমন্ত্রী দেউবা আজ প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহ, স্বরাষ্ট্রমন্ত্রী শিবরাজ পাটিল, প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায় এবং বিদেশমন্ত্রী নটবর সিংহের সঙ্গে বৈঠক করেন। এই সব বৈঠকে নেপালে দাউদ এবং আই এস আইয়ের কার্যকলাপ নিয়ে কথা হয়েছে বলে কেন্দ্রীয় সরকার সূত্রে খবর। বৈঠক শেষে দেউবা বলেন, “সম্রাসের বিরুদ্ধে নেপালের লড়াইয়ে সাফল্য পেতে ভারতের সঙ্গে বোঝাপড়া রক্ষা করা এবং তাদের সাহায্য ও সহযোগিতা অত্যন্ত জরুরি।”

এ দিন নেপালি প্রতিনিধি দলের সামনে বিভিন্ন তথ্য তুলে ধরে নয়াদিল্লি দাউদ সম্পর্কে নিজেদের দৃষ্টিভঙ্গির কথা জানিয়েছে। দাউদের মাধ্যমে পাক গোয়েন্দা সংস্থা আই এস আই-ও নেপালে নিজেদের গতিবিধি বাড়াচ্ছে। পাকিস্তানের হাবিব ব্যাকের অসংখ্য শাখা গজিয়ে উঠেছে নেপালে। যার অনেকগুলিই ভারত-নেপাল সীমান্ত এলাকায়। ফলে এই সব আর্থিক প্রতিষ্ঠানের কার্যকলাপ ঠিক কী, তা নিয়েও যোর সন্দেহ রয়েছে দিল্লির। নেপালে আই এস আই ঘাঁটি নিয়ে

ভারত তার উদ্বেগের কথা কাঠমন্ডুকে আগেও জানিয়েছিল। বিশেষত ১৯৯৯ সালের ডিসেম্বরে কাঠমন্ডু থেকে দিল্লিগামী ইন্ডিয়ান এয়ারলাইন্সের আই সি-৮১৪ ছিনতাইয়ের ঘটনার পরে। ওই বিমান ছিনতাই হওয়ায় মুক্তিপণ হিসাবে মৌলানা মাসুদ আজহারের মতো কটর জঙ্গিকে ছেড়ে দিতে বাধ্য হয় নয়াদিল্লি। ভারত চাইছে নেপাল সরকার এখন আই এস আই, দাউদের কার্যকলাপ রোধে ব্যবস্থা নিক। কেন্দ্রীয় সরকার সূত্রে খবর, দেউবা এই ব্যাপারে দিল্লিকে আশ্বস্ত করেছেন। কাঠমন্ডুতে দাউদের নামে বা বেনামে যে সব সম্পত্তি রয়েছে, তার উপরে নিষেধাজ্ঞা আরোপ করা যায় কি না, তা খতিয়ে দেখবে নেপাল সরকার। বিদেশমন্ত্রক ইতিমধ্যেই নেপাল সরকারকে জানিয়েছে, কাঠমন্ডুতে দাউদের কেবল টিভির বিরাট ব্যবসা রয়েছে। আরও কয়েকটি ব্যবসার মাধ্যমে দাউদ নেপালের রাজধানীতে প্রভূত সম্পত্তি অর্জন করেছে।

মাওবাদী কার্যকলাপ কী ভাবে রোধ করা যেতে পারে, তা নিয়েও দুপক্ষের আলোচনা হয়েছে। এই বিষয়ে নেপালকে নিয়মিত গোয়েন্দা তথ্য জোগান দেবে ভারত। বিদেশমন্ত্রক সূত্রে বলা হচ্ছে, নেপালের মাটিতে হলেও মাওবাদী কার্যকলাপ ভারতের পক্ষেও বিরাট দৃষ্টিভঙ্গির বিষয়। অন্ধ্র, মহারাষ্ট্র, ছত্তীসগড় প্রভৃতি রাজ্যে ঘাঁটি গেড়ে বসা ভারতের নকশালপন্থী জঙ্গিদের নানা প্রকার সাহায্য করে মাওবাদীরা। সেই কারণে নেপালে মাওবাদী কার্যকলাপকে দুই দেশের নিরাপত্তার পক্ষেই চ্যালেঞ্জ হিসাবে মনে করছে বিদেশমন্ত্রক।



## জঙ্গি রোধে ভারত-নেপাল জোট

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি, ৮  
সেপ্টেম্বর: মাওবাদী কার্যকলাপ রোধে  
আগামিকাল কেন্দ্রীয় সরকারের শীর্ষ  
নেতৃত্বের সঙ্গে আলোচনায় বসছেন  
নেপালের প্রধানমন্ত্রী শের বাহাদুর  
দেউবা। কাল একই দিনে তিনি  
প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহ, স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রী  
শিবরাজ পাটিল এবং প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী  
প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায়ের সঙ্গে বৈঠক  
করবেন। বিদেশমন্ত্রীর সঙ্গেও দেউবার  
কালই কথা হয়েছে।

বিদেশমন্ত্রক সূত্রের খবর,  
নেপালের মাটিতে মাওবাদী কার্যকলাপ  
বৃদ্ধি ভারতের পক্ষেও দুশ্চিন্তার বিষয়।  
বিশেষত, মাওবাদীরা সম্প্রতি ভারতীয়  
বাণিজ্যিক সংস্থার বিরুদ্ধে জেহাদ  
ঘোষণায় দুশ্চিন্তা বেড়েছে কেন্দ্রের।  
মাওবাদীদের অবরোধের ফলে কিছু  
ভারতীয় সংস্থার ব্যবসা ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত  
হয়েছে। কয়েকটি ভারতীয় সংস্থা  
ইতিমধ্যেই নেপাল থেকে ব্যবসা  
গুটিয়ে ফিরে আসতে বাধ্য হয়েছে।

# India and Nepal's insurgency

By Nirupama Subramanian

10-10-09  
19/08

**W**HAT CAN India do to help Nepal deal with its Maoist insurgency? The question is sure to occupy centre-stage during the visit by the embattled Prime Minister of Nepal, Sher Bahadur Deuba, to New Delhi this week, days after Maoist insurgents carried out a successful blockade of the Kathmandu Valley. The answer is: very little beyond what New Delhi is already doing.

India, like the United States and the United Kingdom, provides weapons to the Royal Nepal Army in its battle against the insurgents. But Nepal sees this as an inadequate response. In Kathmandu, the perception is strong that the Maoists carry out their insurgency from safe havens in India where Prachanda, the chairman of the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoists, his deputy, Baburam Bhattarai, and other senior leaders of the party are believed to live in hiding. Several commentators believe that were India only to crack down on these hideouts, the insurgency would be all but over. That New Delhi has not done so yet is seen as evidence of India's hidden motives in Nepal.

Such suspicion is part of the larger hostility and resentment in the attitude of the Nepali establishment towards India. Certainly, some of this is a result of India big-footing its smaller neighbour. Memories of the infamous economic blockade of Nepal by India in the late 1980s are still fresh in people's minds. Fresher still the tongue-lashing that Nepal received from India after the 1999 Indi-

an Airlines hijacking for Inter-Services Intelligence activities in the kingdom and the absence of security measures at the Kathmandu airport that could have screened out the hijackers.

But the Maoist insurgency is a shared security threat for India and Nepal, and it is counter-productive for Nepal to attribute motives to what it sees as New Delhi's absence

Maoists, is a useful pointer to which way the wind blows on this question. Any move to go against this would only give added voice to the anti-India constituency in Nepal.

Tightening the border regime beyond the stepped up vigilance is also impractical. Screening the thousands of people who cross the open visa-less border everyday for Maoist infiltrators would only amount to sub-

jects to show up politicians as nothing but power-grabbing dinosaurs, effete and incapable of doing anything to better the lives of the people. Ditto, King Gyanendra, who does not like the limitations of the constitutional monarchy and harbours ambitions for an active role in running the country.

The Deuba Government is a four-party coalition that includes Nepal's second largest political party, the Communist Party of Nepal (Marxist-Leninist). Appointed by King Gyanendra in May after months of street agitations for restoring the multi-party democracy he suspended in November 2002, the new Government presents a good opportunity for achieving a political breakthrough with the Maoists.

True, it does not have the same legitimacy as an elected government but it broadly reflects the composition of the Parliament the King dissolved in June 2002. But it suffers from the handicap that the biggest party, the Nepali Congress led by Girija Prasad Koirala, has not joined it.

A national consensus on how to deal with the Maoists would not remain a remote prospect were Mr. Koirala to put aside his differences with Mr. Deuba. That would also help keep the political ambitions of King Gyanendra at bay.

The survival of democracy in Nepal is important to India. But only Nepal's democratic political leadership can ensure that. And for this, it must show statesmanship and a maturity of vision.

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***The survival of democracy in Nepal is important to India. But only that country's democratic political leadership can ensure it.***

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jecting poor Nepali villagers, many of them fleeing the insurgents, to greater hardship. Nepal surely does not want that.

India can only insist, as it has been doing, that Nepal gets its act together on resolving the insurgency as quickly as possible. The Maoist insurgency has real economic and social roots. It is not a problem that can be militarily settled. But in order to resolve it, Nepal's fractious political parties need to show more unity of purpose than they have so far done.

In the last eight years, the Maoists, on the one hand, and the King, on the other, have exploited to advantage the divisions that exist in the Nepali political class. The conduct of political parties since the time Nepal's multi-party democracy came into being in 1990 has provided enough ammunition to the insur-

the problem. The Maoists are as anti-India as they are anti-Nepal. The insurgency could easily spill over the 1,700 km-long shared border between the two countries, considering the links between the Maoists and groups in India such as the People's War in Andhra Pradesh and the Maoist Communist Centre of India in Bihar.

Despite the direct threat to India, a military intervention by New Delhi is not a real option. India would gain little by getting embroiled in prolonged anti-guerrilla operations in a neighbouring country. In any case, the Nepalis, fiercely proud of their own military traditions, would not want Indian troops on their soil. The manner in which the Palace, which controls the Army in Nepal, reacted to suggestions of Indian military help to break the recent blockade by

# Buddha wants central forces on border

## Communal riots in Nepal may trigger Muslim exodus to India, say intelligence agencies

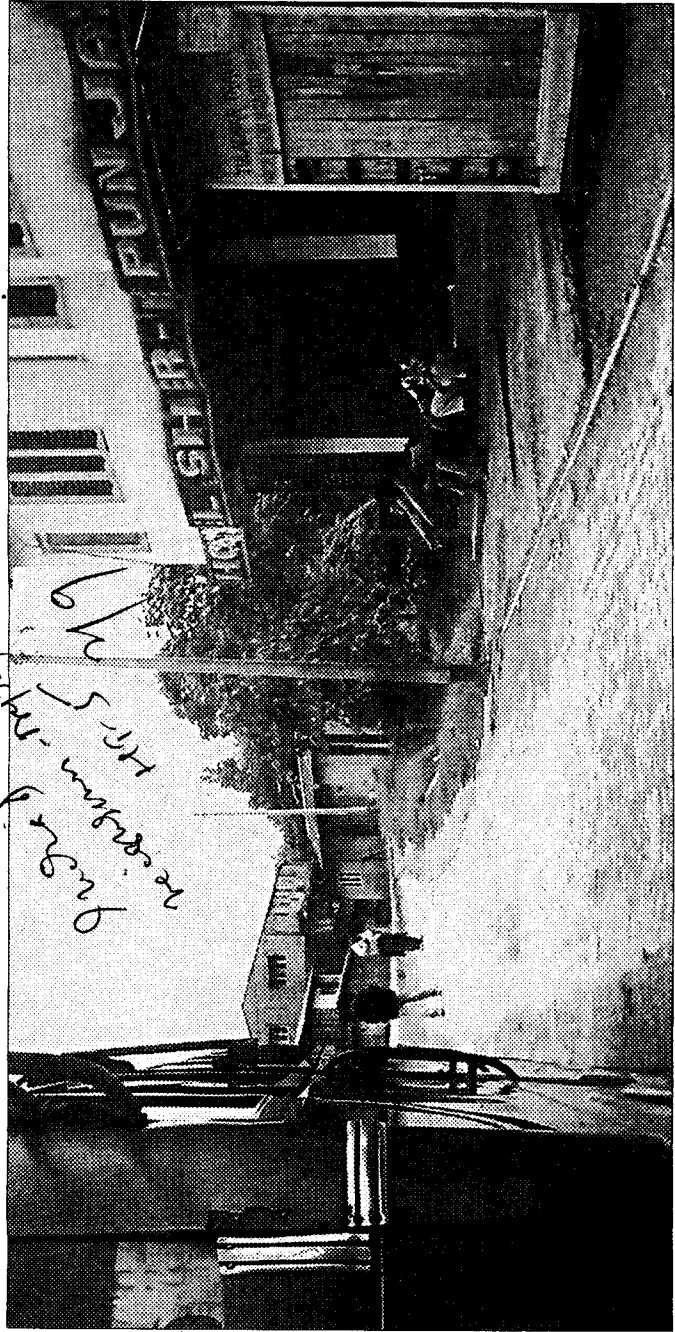
HT Correspondents  
Kolkata/Pashupatinagar, September 1

CHIEF MINISTER Buddhadeb Bhattarjee has asked Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee and Union Home Minister Shivraj Patil to deploy the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) along the troubled India-Nepal borders in the wake of the Maoist disturbances in Nepal.

Bhattarjee fears that the unrest in Nepal could spill across the border. Dubbing the situation as "alarming", he said he would be asking Mukherjee to take up the matter at the highest level. He is also planning to raise the issue with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh when he visits New Delhi on September 17 to attend the Chief Justices and Chief Ministers meeting.

Bhattarjee characterised the situation in Kathmandu as "terrible" and felt the posting of the Special Security Bureau (SSB) on the India-Nepal border would not help. The situation demanded specially trained for countering insurgencies, he stressed. The CM said that during his last visit to Delhi he had spoken to Patil about deploying the ITBP and had also sent a reminder after getting back but said the home ministry hadn't responded. The Chief Minister said that the ITBP director, K.J. Singh, was willing to send his men.

Bhattarjee said the ITC was forced to close its factory at Kathmandu following a letter threatening to blow up the unit, if a ransom of Rs 17 lakh was not paid. Before the Lok Sabha elections, about 600 Maoists, including women, had looted banks at gunpoint at



An otherwise bustling Pashupatinagar lies deserted on Wednesday following disturbances in Nepal.

Panitanki, he recalled. The Chief Minister said he was watching the situation in Andhra Pradesh also where the Congress was holding talks with the People's War, a Maoist extremist group operating in several Indian states including West Bengal. He did not rule out the holding of talks with the PW in the state. The double trouble in Nepal has put the security forces on the Indian side on high alert. The Maoist proclamation of

forming a People's Government in Illam and Panchthar Districts later this month along with a week-long economic blockade of the two districts, which began today, and the rioting in Kathmandu and Lalitpur, triggered by the killing of 12 Nepalese hostages in Iraq have created serious security concerns. Indian intelligence agencies feel that today's communal attacks could lead to Muslims fleeing Nepal in search of safety in India. "We are maintaining very

strict vigil in the border areas and monitoring all movements," said R. Mishra, SP, Darjeeling.

The State Armed Police (10 SAP) and the Rapid Action Force (RAF) have been deployed in the border areas of Darjeeling in view of the Maoist call to set up a People's Government in the adjoining Nepalese districts. The Indian forces have been especially concentrated in Maneybhaniyang, Simana, Chhabisey, Soureni and Mirik.

With the Maoist fear spreading, people, mainly businessmen along with their families, are crossing over from Nepal to the Indian side. They are being frisked and their particulars entered in a "Nepal Citizens Register" maintained by the Darjeeling Police.

Incidentally, the Charlie Company of the 24 Battalion is manning a 100-km stretch of the India-Nepal border starting from the high reaches of Phalut, having the Ilam district of Nepal on the other side, to Bhatgaon in the Terai, bordering Nepal's Jhapa district.

Pashupatinagar, about 30 km from Darjeeling, meanwhile, wore a deserted look today. Shops downed shutters and people were seen in groups with their ears glued to radio sets. Though the residents claimed that today's bandh was in keeping with the Nepalese government's decision to observe a national day of mourning in memory of the 12 Nepalese hostages killed in Iraq, they sounded unsure and insecure.

Neeraj Agrawal, a trader, said: "Businessmen are leaving Pashupati and Ilam town. I don't feel that shops are likely to open this week." Bus operators said that all goods vehicles would remain off the road but passenger vehicles would ply. There were hardly any passengers.

Major P. Gurung, in charge of the Army Garrison at Pashupati, however, said the Nepalese army was ready to meet the Maoist challenge. "We have assured the people that there is no reason to panic." But both the Nepalese police and Army sources said patrolling was proving to be difficult because of the mountainous terrain.

# Kathmandu 'bread bombing' on Delhi plate

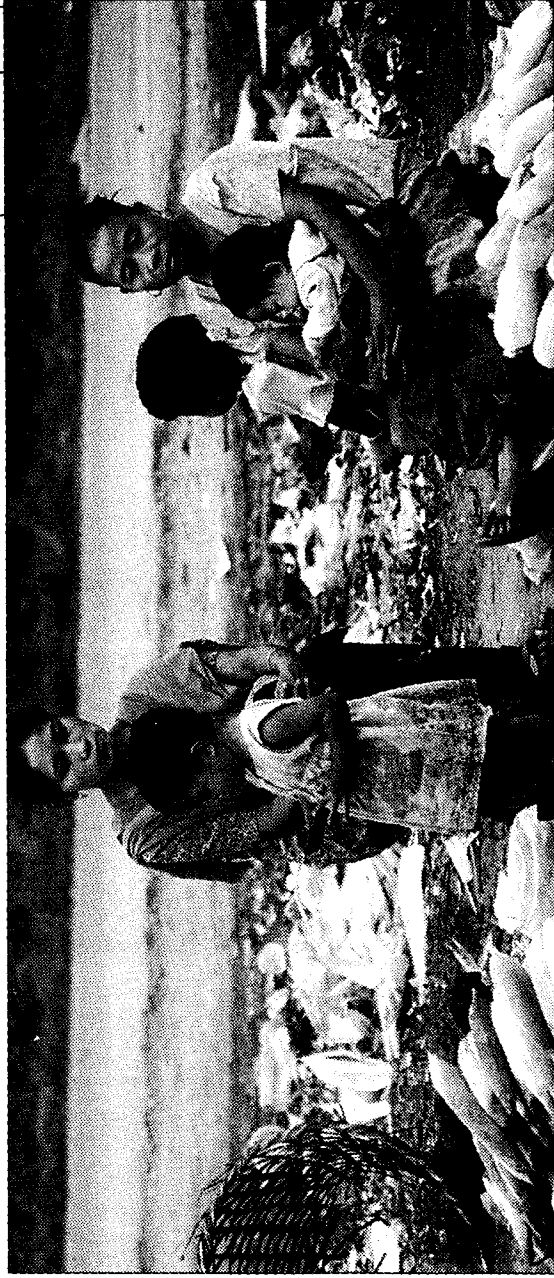
SUJAN DUTTA

New Delhi, Aug. 22: The Indian security establishment is looking at the option of "bread bombing" the besieged capital of Nepal, Kathmandu, where supplies have been choked in a blockade imposed by Maoist rebels.

New Delhi's security planners do not want the situation to reach such a pass and want the blockade to be lifted with a political initiative from Nepal's rulers.

New Delhi is an interested party in Nepal but an intervention is contingent upon a specific request from the kingdom even though India is concerned by the threat to its citizens and economic and strategic interests in that country. It has been estimated that Kathmandu has a month's stocks of essentials. An SOS is not imminent and, as one officer put it, "it is within the realm of possibility".

Panic buying in Kathmandu has been sending prices sk-



Street vendors wait with their produce in Kathmandu on Sunday. (Reuters)

yrocketing. The security establishment here is concerned not only by the blockade but also the fact that over the last two days it has been turning violent. They have noted with concern that the Maoists have

attacked army installations. A security review of the situation in Nepal has concluded that the Nepalese government's writ beyond Kathmandu Valley is severely restricted because it enjoys

scant political support across the landlocked nation. The Royal Nepal Army, the kingdom's principal security force of about 45,000 troops, is hard pressed to take on the Maoists who have practically encircled

Kathmandu. The current blockade in Nepal was called by a frontal outfit of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), the United Revolutionary Peoples' Council of Dhading, Ruwalkot and

Kasur Districts. The organisation has demanded that its arrested leaders be released. Nepal's Maoists, who have fraternal links with Naxalite outfits Maoist Communist Centre and CPI(M-L) (People's War Group) in India, want to overthrow the constitutional monarchy and establish a people's republic.

Nepal's Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, who yesterday offered confidential talks with the Maoist leadership, is scheduled to visit New Delhi from September 9.

India is chary of overt intervention in Nepal that can fuel the Maoist movement and create complexities that the government of the two countries will find difficult to unravel. New Delhi and Kathmandu enjoy a unique relationship. There are an estimated 10 million Nepali-speaking Indian citizens and the number of Gorkha soldiers serving in the Indian Army is almost twice the size of the Royal Nepal Army. Nepal's Maoist rebels car-

ry on an intensive campaign against alleged "Indian hegemony". Since 2001, India has extended indirect support to the RNA by sending substantial supplies of weapons and munitions.

In the last three years, the Indian Army's Counter Insurgency and Jungle Warfare School in Vairangte, Mizoram, has also been training RNA officers. Most officers of the RNA are alumni of the National Defence Academy (NDA) and Indian Military Academy.

The RNA's main weapon in the drive against the Maoists is the assault rifle 7.62 calibre INSAS (Indian Small Arms System) manufactured by the Ichhapur Rifle Factory near Calcutta and sold to Nepal at heavily subsidised rates. The RNA's only air complement — a brigade — flies Indian Chetak and Cheetah helicopters.

The chief of the RNA has the status of honorary chief of army staff in India. India's army chief is accorded the same status in Nepal.

## বিপর্যস্ত কাঠমান্ডাকে সব রকম সাহায্য করবে দিল্লি

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি, ২২  
অগস্ট: মাওবাদীদের ডাকা অর্থনৈতিক  
অবরোধের জেরে নাজেহাল  
কাঠমান্ডাতে পরিস্থিতি স্বাভাবিক  
করতে সব রকম সাহায্য করবে ভারত।  
দিল্লির কাছে এই ব্যাপারে নেপাল  
সরকারের কাছ থেকে সাহায্যের  
অনুরোধ আসার পরে কেন্দ্রীয়  
মন্ত্রিসভার নিরাপত্তা বিষয়ক কমিটি  
আজ এই সিদ্ধান্ত নিয়েছে। সেনাপ্রধান  
এন সি ভিজ গত কাল অন্য দুই  
বাহিনীর প্রধানদের সঙ্গে নেপালের  
পরিস্থিতি নিয়ে কথা বলেন। ভিজ  
প্যারিস চলে যাওয়ায় আজ নিরাপত্তা  
বিষয়ক কমিটির বৈঠকে ছিলেন অন্য  
দুই বাহিনীর প্রধানেরা। মাওবাদী-সঙ্ঘট  
মোকাবিলায় নেপালে সেনা অভিযান  
চালানো সম্ভব নয়। তাই স্থির হয়েছে,  
অস্ত্রশস্ত্র সরবরাহ থেকে শুরু করে  
মানবিক সাহায্য— সব সহায়তা করবে  
ভারত। আশির দশকে শ্রীলঙ্কায় রাজীব  
সরকার যে ভাবে সাহায্য পাঠিয়েছিল,  
প্রয়োজনে সেই কায়দায় বিমান থেকে  
নেপালে খাবারের প্যাকেট ফেলবে  
ভারতীয় সেনা।

কাঠমান্ডু থেকে সংবাদসংস্থার  
খবর, জোড়া বিস্ফোরণ ঘটানোর ২৪  
ঘণ্টার মধ্যেই নেপালের রাজধানী  
শহরে মাওবাদীরা এক পুলিশকে গুলি  
করে মেরেছে। মাওবাদীদের ডাকা  
অর্থনৈতিক অবরোধের চতুর্থ দিনে  
কাঠমান্ডুতে নিত্যপ্রয়োজনীয় পণ্য,  
বিশেষ করে খাবারের দাম ধরাছোঁয়ার  
বাইরে চলে গিয়েছে। নেপালি সেনা

জানিয়েছে, পরিস্থিতি সামাল দিতে  
খাদ্যবাহী যানবাহনকে তারা নিরাপত্তা  
দিতে রাজি। সঙ্ঘট নিরসনের আশায়  
নেপালের প্রধানমন্ত্রী শের বাহদুর  
দেউবা মাওবাদীদের সঙ্গে 'গোপন  
আলোচনা'য় বসার প্রস্তাব দিয়েছেন।  
বারবার প্রকাশ্য বৈঠক চালিয়ে কোনও  
লাভ হয়নি বলেই 'গোপন' আলোচনার  
কথা ভাবছে নেপাল সরকার।

পুলিশ সূত্রের খবর, কাঠমান্ডুর  
কেন্দ্রস্থলে চাবাহিল রিংরোডে আজ  
একটি সিনেমা হল চত্বরে ঢুকে দুই  
মাওবাদী জঙ্গি এক জন পুলিশের  
উপরে গুলি চালায়। কিছু ক্ষণের  
মধ্যেই আহত পুলিশের মৃত্যু হয়। ভূমি  
রাজস্ব দফতর-সহ শহরের দু'টি  
জায়গায় মাওবাদীদের ঘটানো  
বিস্ফোরণে গত কালই দু'জন আহত  
হয়েছিলেন। গোটা কাঠমান্ডু শহরকে  
নিরাপত্তার ঘেরাটোপে মুড়ে ফেলা  
হলেও বেছে বেছে বিশেষ কিছু বাড়ি বা  
এলাকায় বিস্ফোরণ ঘটানো এবং নির্দিষ্ট  
লক্ষ্যে গুলি চালানোয় মাওবাদী  
জঙ্গিদের 'দক্ষতা' আগেই প্রমাণিত  
হওয়ায় আতঙ্ক চেপে বসছে  
কাঠমান্ডুবাসীর মনে।

বহুদলীয় গণতন্ত্র এবং সাংবিধানিক  
রাজতন্ত্রের ব্যবস্থার সঙ্গে কোনও রকম  
সমঝোতা না-করেই মাওবাদীদের সঙ্গে  
'গোপন আলোচনা' চালাতে চাইছেন  
নেপালি প্রধানমন্ত্রী। আগামী এপ্রিলে  
নেপালে সাধারণ নির্বাচনের আগেই  
মাওবাদীদের সঙ্গে কথা সেরে নিতে  
চান দেউবা।

# নেপাল: চিন্তা ভারতেরও

নেপাল এক অভূতপূর্ব সংকটের গহ্বরে পতিত হইয়াছে। এত দিন সে দেশের মাওবাদী গেরিলারা সরকারের বিরুদ্ধে সামরিক অভিযানে আপন তৎপরতা সীমাবদ্ধ রাখিয়াছিল। তাহাতে কখনও নিরাপত্তা রক্ষীরা হতাহত হইতেছিল, কখনও গেরিলারা। কখনও এক পক্ষে বেশি ক্ষয়ক্ষতি হইতেছিল, কখনও অন্য পক্ষে। এ বার কিন্তু সম্পূর্ণ অন্য ধরনের লড়াই শুরু হইয়াছে। মাওবাদীরা এ বার অর্থনৈতিক অবরোধের পথে। বহুজাতিক বিভিন্ন বৃহৎ লগ্নি প্রতিষ্ঠানকে নেপাল হইতে তাহাদের ব্যবসাপত্র গুটাইবার নির্দেশ দিয়াছে মাওবাদীরা। তাহাদের অপরাধ— তাহারা নেপালের শ্রমজীবীদের 'শোষণ' করিতেছে, তাহাদের প্রতি 'বৈষম্য' করিতেছে। তাহাদের ছমকি যে বায়বীয় নয়, সেটা অন্য উপলক্ষে মাওবাদীরা অতীতে প্রমাণ করিয়াছে। এ বারও কাঠমান্ডুর একটি পাঁচতারা হোটেল প্রাঙ্গণে চার-চারটি বোমা ফাটাইয়া তাহারা নূতন করিয়া সে প্রমাণ দিয়াছে। পরিণাম তৎক্ষণাৎ। হোটেল, ব্যাংক, বিমা, তামাক, বৈদ্যুতিন বিনোদ উপকরণ, ঠাণ্ডা পানীয় সহ অন্যান্য ভোগ্যপণ্য নির্মাণ সংস্থা ইতিমধ্যেই হয় তাহাদের ঝাঁপ ফেলিয়া দিয়াছে, নতুবা তাহার তোড়জোড় করিতেছে। সংস্থা-মালিকরা কর্মীদের কাজে আসিতে নিষেধ করিয়া দিয়াছেন। রাজধানী শুনসান। অর্থনৈতিক কাজকর্ম স্তব্ধ। দুই লক্ষ কর্মী কাজ হারাইবার পথে। কেবল একটি ঠাণ্ডা পানীয় নির্মাণ সংস্থা বন্ধ হওয়াতেই দৈনিক পঞ্চাশ লক্ষ নেপালি টাকার উৎপাদন শুষ্ক লোকসান হইতেছে। অবরোধের সামুহিক আর্থিক ক্ষতির পরিমাণ সহজেই অনুমেয়।

নেপালের সংকুচিত অর্থনীতিতে এই ক্ষতি সামাল দিবার মতো রক্ষাকবচ নাই। তদুপরি মাওবাদীরা যে সব অঞ্চল আপন প্রভাবাধীন করিয়াছে, সেখানে পরিকাঠামো সম্পূর্ণ ধ্বংস করিয়া দিয়াছে। সর্বনাশের পথ অতএব মসৃণ। কেহ যদি নিজে নিজের সর্বনাশের আয়োজন সম্পূর্ণ করিতে চায়, আপাতদৃষ্টিতে তাহাকে বাধা দিবার চেষ্টা অর্থহীন। কিন্তু নেপালের মাওবাদীরা যে সব বৃহৎ লগ্নিকারীর বিরুদ্ধে চড়াও হইয়াছে, তাহারা সকলেই সরকারি ও বেসরকারি ভারতীয় সংস্থা। নেপালের অর্থনীতি একান্তভাবে ভারতের উপর নির্ভরশীল হওয়াতেই এই অবস্থা। মাওবাদীদের ভারত-বিরোধিতা এমনকী সড়কপথে কাঠমাণ্ডুর সহিত ভারতের পণ্য-সরবরাহও বন্ধ করিতে উদ্যত। এই অবস্থায় ইন্ডিয়ান এয়ারলাইন্স বিমান-সংযোগ চালু রাখাও নিরাপদ মনে করিতেছে না। নেপালকে এই প্রক্রিয়ায় বিচ্ছিন্ন করিয়া মাওবাদীরা হয়তো অতঃপর শাসকদের পূর্ণাঙ্গ মহড়া লইতে চায়। কিন্তু নেপালের ওই মাওবাদীদের সঙ্গে ভারতীয় মাওবাদীদেরও নিবিড় যোগাযোগ ও আদানপ্রদান রহিয়াছে। তাই সব মিলাইয়া ভারতের পক্ষে উদাসীন হইয়া থাকা বোধহয় আর সম্ভব নয়। ভারত যে উদ্বিগ্ন, সে কথাটা আনুষ্ঠানিক ভাবে ব্যক্তও করা হইয়াছে। পরিস্থিতি অতএব আগের তুলনায় কিছুটা ভিন্ন। মাওবাদীরা নেপালকে অবরুদ্ধ, অন্ধকারাচ্ছন্ন, বিনিয়োগরহিত, ঈশ্বরপরিত্যক্ত একটি অনাকর্ষণীয় উষ্ম ভূখণ্ডে পরিণত করিতে চায়। তেমন এক দেশে সশস্ত্র সন্ত্রাসের কর্মসূচির প্রতি জনসাধারণকে মোহাচ্ছন্ন করা অপেক্ষাকৃত সহজ।

কিন্তু ভারতের অর্থনীতি ও নিরাপত্তার স্বার্থ এমন ভাবে নেপালের সহিত জড়াইয়া আছে যে ভারতের উদ্বিগ্ন না হইয়া উপায় নাই। উপমহাদেশে তাহার ভৌগোলিক আয়তন ও অবস্থান, তাহার জনসংখ্যার বিপুলতা, অর্থনীতির শক্তি ও বৈচিত্র ভারতকে এমন কিছু ঐতিহাসিক বাধ্যবাধকতায় জড়াইয়া ফেলিয়াছে, যাহা সে ইচ্ছা করিলেও ঝাড়িয়া ফেলিতে পারে না। পাকিস্তান, বাংলাদেশ বা শ্রীলঙ্কার অভ্যন্তরীণ ব্যাপারেও ইতিপূর্বে একাধিক ক্ষেত্রে ভারতকে গুদাসীন্য পরিহার করিয়া মাথা ঘামাইতে হইয়াছে। সম্প্রতি ভোটানের মতো নিরুপদ্রব প্রতিবেশীর ভূখণ্ডেও ভারতীয় বিচ্ছিন্নতাবাদীদের ভারতবিরোধী তৎপরতা দমনে যৌথ সামরিক তৎপরতা চালাইতে হয়। মালদ্বীপে তো ভারতীয় নৌসেনাকে রাষ্ট্রদ্রোহ দমনে পাঠাইতেও হইয়াছিল। উপমহাদেশকে ভারতের প্রভাবাধীন অঞ্চল হিসাবে না দেখিয়া উপায়ও নাই। রাজনৈতিক সন্ত্রাস উপমহাদেশের বিভিন্ন রাষ্ট্রে সক্রিয় হওয়ার পর ও সেই সব সন্ত্রাসবাদ ভারতের রাষ্ট্রীয়তাকেও লক্ষ্যবস্তু করিয়া তোলার পর নয়াদিল্লির পক্ষে হাত গুটাইয়া থাকা মুতত। নেপালের মাওবাদীরাও কি তেমনই চাহিতেছে? ওই মাওবাদীরা যে আসলে সমাজ-বিপ্লবী নয়, প্রজাতন্ত্রী, রাজার সামরিক আধিপত্য ঘুচাইয়া সংসদীয় গণতন্ত্রকে আপন কুক্ষিগত করিতে চায়, তাহা স্পষ্ট। ভারতীয় ও বহুজাতিক বৃহৎ পুঁজিকে প্ররোচিত করিয়া তাহারা কি উপপ্লবের অনুকূল নৈরাজ্যকেই আবাহন করিতে ব্যগ্র নয়?

# BHUTAN AND CHINA

## Border Problem Remains Unresolved

By PARMANAND

*Himalayas  
Gr. Bhutan  
5-6  
19/8*

**B**hutan and the People's Republic of China completed the 17th round of bilateral boundary talks in Thimphu on 15 April. The talks between the most populated and highly militarily and economically strong state and a sparsely populated South Asian state began in 1984. But the problem remains far from resolved — no matter whatever is said rhetorically. Of course, the talks have increased interaction between the two states even without formal diplomatic ties.

Bhutan's foreign minister Lyompo Khandu Wangchuk told the 82nd session of the kingdom's unicameral legislature, Tshogdu (National Assembly) in July that the demarcation of boundaries involved hard work and was time-consuming. He added that all discussions with the Chinese government were being conducted in accordance with the directives of the Tshogdu. The foreign minister further said that just as disputes arose in villages, where boundaries were not properly demarcated, such issues often emerged between countries. He asserted that the problems faced by the Bhutanese yak herders would be resolved once the border was demarcated.

### Mutual respect

King Jigme Singye Wangchuck, who has been abdicating more and more of his powers and privileges to democratic institutions since 1998, has been observing the boundary talks very closely. Indeed, he is in the know of the minutest details. The talks began much after his ascending the throne in 1972.

King Jigme has been making his observations in the Tshogdu ever since the beginning of the talks. Speaking on 7 July, he said that the government had never taken part in the talks without the full knowledge of the Assembly, and had always adhered to the decisions of the representative body, including the boundary lines confirmed by it. The King chose the occasion to remind the Chimis (the designation of the Tshogdu members) that in 1989 the Assembly's special meeting was held in Lungtemphu to demarcate the entire northern border along with a detailed map.

The King also observed that most of the government's representatives and Chimis being new had not attended the 1989 discussions. As such, the King suggested that the secretary for International Boundaries, Dasho Pema Wangchuk, should brief the Assembly in detail on the background of the boundary issue and the state of the bila-

teral talks. His Majesty added that as the 18th round of talks is due in the near future it was essential that there is clarity among members.

The Druk Gyalpo (as the monarch is known locally) expressed confidence that the two states which shared a "close understanding and friendship, would finalise the boundary issue with mutual respect for each other's sovereignty and



territorial integrity". The Bhutanese monarch has been stressing from the outset that "good fences make good neighbours". This time, too, His Majesty emphasised that it was important that the boundary was clearly demarcated between Bhutan, a small kingdom, and China, a large state.

Significantly, Bhutan has to deal with China only because of the Tibet factor. It is only the Tibet Autonomous Region that happens to be Bhutan's neighbour in the north. In the south, east and west, Bhutan is bordered by India. Every assembly session provides its members — particularly those from Bhutan-Tibet border areas — an opportunity to narrate their experience of happenings there.

### Diplomatic ties

The Bumthang chimi, for instance, said that the people were worried for some time after hearing reports that "Bhutanese people were being threatened and moved out of the border areas". Of course, he also added that these "concerns" had been "cleared". The Haa chimi, on the other hand, explained that what he had placed before the Tshogdu were the problems that the people had reported to him. He added: "The people deeply appreciated the efforts of the government to finalise the bound-

ary with China." In addition, the Wangduephodrang chimi claimed that the issue had come to the Assembly because the people wanted to know the status of the talks which had been going on for quite a long time.

On his part, the secretary for International Boundaries, Dasho Pema Wangchuk presented the 1989 map to the members with a detailed explanation of the boundary line on 9 July. In

order to help members study the exact boundary, the map was left in the hall for the day to enable members to study the exact boundary line finalised by the 68th session of the Assembly in 1989.

Speaking in the Tshogdu, Dasho Pema Wangchuk stated that while there had always been some differences among the herders at the local level, "the rumours that Bhutan had lost pasture land was obviously untrue because the boundary itself had not even been finalised at this stage". Quite significantly, Dasho Pema assured the chimis that not only was the government "closely following the decisions of the National Assembly, but that His Majesty himself had commanded that the delegation must make every attempt to ensure that the boundary was demarcated to the best advantage of the government and people of Bhutan".

Whatever the worries and concerns of the Royal Government of Bhutan and the Bhutanese people, the Chinese do not seem to be bothered. Indeed, they seem to be enjoying the whole scene trying to achieve their diplomatic objectives. For quite some time China has been pressurising Bhutan to establish formal diplomatic ties. Incidentally, Bhutan is the only South Asian country without any formal diplomatic ties with China.

But then Bhutan is pursuing a principle and policy of not having formal diplomatic ties with the P-5 (United Nations' short-hand for the five permanent members of the Security Council — China, France, the UK, the USA and Russia) lest it witness their competition on its own territory. On the other hand, China has tried to overtake India in Bhutan. China succeeded in having an agreement with Bhutan signed on 8 December 1998 entitled "Agreement Between The Government of the Kingdom of Bhutan and the Government of the People's Republic of China on Maintenance of Peace and Tranquillity in Bhutan-China Border Areas".

### No interference

Under Article 1 of this agreement, the Chinese side, inter alia, "reiterates its position to fully respect the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bhutan." The provision assumes a great deal of significance inasmuch as the 1949 Friendship Treaty between Bhutan and India does not speak of Bhutan's sovereignty anywhere. It is a different matter that by facilitating Bhutan's membership of the UN in 1971, India has not left anyone in doubt about Bhutan's being a sovereign country. Probably something much more is needed now on this front. In any case Article 2 of the 1949 India-Bhutan Friendship Treaty does become a subject of controversy from time to time. The Article reads: "The Government of India undertakes to exercise no interference in the internal administration of Bhutan. On its part, the Government of Bhutan agrees to be guided by the advice of the Government of India in regard to its external relations".

China's concern for status quoism on the Bhutan-China border has been very well taken care of an Article 3 of the agreement, which states: "The two sides agree to maintain peace and tranquillity in their border areas pending a final settlement of the boundary question, and to maintain status quo on the boundary as before March 1959. They will also refrain from taking any unilateral action to change the status quo of the boundary".

Whenever Bhutan requests China to be magnanimous in demarcating the boundary in view of the latter's huge size, China responds by saying that it cannot afford to do so in view of such a large number of neighbours. Of course, politics — is pregnant with all possibilities. Bhutan has to continue to remain vigilant and show its diplomatic skill.

# Maoist heat on India Inc in Nepal

Our Political Bureau  
NEW DELHI 18 AUGUST

**T**HE government is concerned over the forced closure of Indian business interests in Nepal on account of heightened threat from Maoist rebels in the Himalayan kingdom. After ITC's joint venture, Surya Nepal, suspended operations following the Maoists' warning that a dozen companies would not be allowed to operate because of their "exploitation of workers and espionage activities," on Tuesday it was Dabur's turn to temporarily close down its greenhouse operations.

Maoists have been on a roll ever since a ceasefire between them and the Nepalese government collapsed in August last year. Said to comprise 5,500 combatants, 8,000 militia, 4,500 cadres, 33,000 hardcore follow-

ers and over two lakh sympathisers, the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) led by Pushpa Kamal Dahal alias Comrade Prachanda boasts of a presence in 68 or the 75 districts of Nepal. Of these, Rolpa, Rukum, Jagarkot, Salyan, Pyuthan and Kalikot in mid-western Nepal are most affected, although Maoists have been increasingly targeting Kathmandu of late.

The Indian government is not only concerned about the likely loss that its corporates would suffer due to suspension of their Nepal operations, but also about the possible rub-off effect of Maoists' resurgence on their Indian cousins, the MCC and the PWG. The latter two groups have cultivated active links with the Nepalese Maoists and are known to be sharing intelligence as well as weapons training facilities. In fact, the Nepalese Maoists have

thrown their weight behind the PWG and MCC's fight against the ban imposed on them by Indian government under Pota.

Not only are the Left-wing extremists of the two countries working in tandem to create a compact revolutionary zone (CRZ) starting from Nepal and running across Bihar, Chattisgarh, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh, but some of the senior-most Nepalese Maoist leaders, including political wing chief Baburam Bhattarai, are said to be hiding in Bihar.

The home secretaries of the two countries have been interacting on a regular basis to prepare a joint strategy to crack down upon the Maoists operating in border districts.

In fact, Nepal has time and again sought India's help to hand over Maoists who escape

through its porous border into Bihar and West Bengal after committing acts of violence in the Himalayan Kingdom.

The "active" linkages between the Nepalese and Indian Left-wing extremists are borne out by the fact that Nepalese Maoists had sent delegates for the PWG Congress in Bastar in March 2001. In September 2000, MCC leader Pramod Mishra is said to have visited Nepal for talks with Maoist leaders there.

Maoists belonging to the two nations are also said to have formed the Indo-Nepal border region committee for coordinated operations. So much so, it was reported that MCC and Nepalese Maoists were holding joint training camps in Hazaribagh and Aurangabad districts of Jharkhand and Bihar respectively. The Maoists' influence is said to run through eight districts of Bihar.

19 AUG 2004



## India watching situation

By Our Diplomatic Correspondent

**NEW DELHI, AUG. 14.** India said today that it was watching with concern the evolving situation in the Maldives, where a state of emergency was imposed by the President, Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, after pro-democracy protests on Friday.

"We are watching the situation carefully since we have close relations with the Maldives," the External Affairs Ministry spokesman said in response to the latest developments in the South Asian nation of islands. The Amnesty International has said that over a dozen peaceful demonstrators had been taken into custody by the Maldivian authorities.

It called on the Maldivian Government to ensure their safety and security, after emerging "reports" of security forces beating up those in detention.

"Dr. Mohamed Monawar, the former Attorney-General of the Maldives and an Opposition party leader, and Muad Mohamed Zaki, the son of the political prisoner, Mohamed Zaki, have both been beaten while in custody today," the group claimed.

"Amnesty International is deeply concerned at reports of large numbers of injured people needing hospital treatment after the police used sticks and batons to attack them during the demonstrations. The organisation is urging the Government to adhere to international human rights standards. The Government declared a state of emergency today [Friday] as mass demonstrations took place over the last week against the slow pace of reform and the continued detention of political prisoners," the statement added.

THE HINDU

15 AUG 2001

# Maoists target Indian firm

**PRANAY SHARMA**

**New Delhi, Aug. 11:** Maoists have threatened to indefinitely close down nearly two dozen big companies in Nepal, including an Indian one, for allegedly "exploiting" workers and for promoting the interests of King Gyanendra.

Of about 85 Indian joint ventures, only one tobacco manufacturing company — Surya Nepal — is on the hit list. The Nepal king has substantial stakes in this company.

The shutdown threat — from next Tuesday — came recently from a trade union affiliated to the Maoists and appears to be directed more against the king than India. Hotel Soaltee Crown Plaza, Bottlers Ne-

pal, Pashupati Spinning Mills and Sangai Plastic are among the targets.

India has urged Nepal to provide security to its companies. Officials said though only one was on the hit list now, several others could be threatened in coming days.

Agency reports from Kathmandu quoted Sanjay Verma, first secretary at the Indian embassy, as saying India has sought the help of the Nepalese foreign ministry to protect its companies.

"We have taken very serious note of the Maoist threats to Indian joint venture companies, including Surya Nepal, a tobacco manufacturing company," agencies quoted an Indian embassy official as saying.

The official said such incidents would discourage other Indian companies and might "adversely affect" the employment situation in Nepal. "We have asked the government to take appropriate measures to ensure greater security of the Indian companies here."

Sources said India has asked for cover to all its joint ventures to ensure Surya Nepal was not singled out and the impression created that it was trying to protect the king's interests.

Officials in the Indian embassy in Kathmandu said that four months ago, India had written a similar letter to the Nepalese authorities after its companies came under threat from the rebels. "Many of

these companies are working under considerable threat from the Maoists," an Indian diplomat said.

Early this year, 15 Indian oil tankers were burnt by Maoists at Bhairva in Nepal. The attack came after key Maoist leaders were arrested in India.

Although Delhi felt it was a direct consequence of the arrests, the Maoists argued that local unit members had attacked the tankers as they were angry with the drivers for violating a bandh.

Indian joint ventures in Nepal started in a big way when I.K. Gujral was Prime Minister.

He encouraged investment in Nepal to strengthen bilateral economic relations.

12 AUG 2001

THE TELEGRAPH

12 AUG 2001

# Maoists attack Indian school in Nepal

Press Trust of India

KATHMANDU, June 9. — As a countrywide education strike called by Nepal's Maoists entered the fourth day today, a bomb went off in an Indian school destroying computers and damaging buses.

The Modern Indian School, one of the four schools in Nepal affiliated to India's Central Board of Secondary Education, was the target of the attack.

At least 20 rebels stormed the Modern Indian School at 4.30 a.m. and after overpowering the guards, detonated a bomb in the computer room of the school at Chovar, about 10 kms south of Kathmandu, police said. Two rooms and 46 computers of the school were completely damaged by the explosion, they said, adding no one was injured in the blast.

The school is located at Chobhar in Kathmandu. The three other CBSE-affiliated schools are the Kendriya Vidyalaya, located on the grounds of the Indian embassy here, the DAV School and Rai School.

The blast is intended to enforce an indefinite strike called by the Maoist student wing — All Nepal National Independent Students' Union (Revolutionary).

The banned underground organisation wants the terrorist tag imposed on it removed, its detained leaders freed, and

school fees slashed. Some schools here have been defying the strike and holding classes.

An earlier student agitation last year had brought about the resignation of the then education and home ministers and triggered widespread unrest.

A delegation of school administrators yesterday met the Prime Minister, Mr Sher Bahadur Deuba, and urged him to take steps to allow schools to remain open.



A staff at the Modern Indian School inspects the damage following a bomb attack near Kathmandu on Wednesday. — AFP

It does not pay to take for granted one's hosts or neighbours, no matter how small, writes SANJOY HAZARIKA

# Bhutan: Strength sans showmanship

THE Taschicdzong in Thimpu, the centre of government, is the core of Bhutan, a Himalayan kingdom often described as the last Shangri-la. Its grand stone turrets, washed white and trimmed with a rich brown at the top, dominate the Wangdi chu valley. Built over 50 years ago, this masterpiece of Bhutanese architecture reflects superb technique and craftsmanship. It also asserts the uniqueness of the nation: its great wooden beams, halls, rooms and corridors have been constructed without a single iron nail; it is strength without showmanship. The Bhutanese, if anything, are gracious in their approach but no one should mistake their courtesy for weakness.

For years, the peace of this tiny land, wedged between India and China on a Himalayan ridge, was shattered by the activities of armed groups from the North-east, which took control of territory in southern and eastern Bhutan to establish camps for training, recruitment, rest and refuge as well as storage of weapons and explosives. These camps included the General Headquarters of the United Liberation Front of Assam as well as its Central Headquarters in eastern Bhutan, the headquarters of the National Democratic Front of Bodoland and that of the Kamatapur Liberation Organisation, which was active in North Bengal as well as the western wedge of Assam. Not less than 2,000 cadre, many of them armed, lived in these camps, located deep within Bhutanese territory.

This period of uncertainty and suspicion which began in 1991 after the flight of the first bands of rebels fleeing Army operations against Ulfa and other groups in Assam to Bhutan to establish camps at the border and then move deeper inland has devastated economic and people-to-people relations between Assam and Bhutan. It cut the border areas off from each other, despite a shared history and centuries of trade, border and living together, and introduced an overwhelming element of fear and potential violence into the relations. The calm enjoyed for nearly 40 years, or just about half the reign of the present line of the Wangchuk monarchy, lay shattered.

For years, Bhutan's leaders had requested, ven "begged" the insurgent leaders to quit their country and head out of their homelands. "Your problem is not with us, it is with India, so you should sort it out with India instead of creating difficulties for us," was the line. But their appeal fell on deaf ears.

What perhaps has not been understood enough is the strength of the local feeling against the groups. Anyone who has been reading the weekly *Kuensel*, a semi-independent e-wmagazine which publishes in English, *zongkha* (the main language of Bhutan) and Nepali, has over the past several years noted how in issue after issue, villagers and townsfolk as well as local representatives told King Jigme Singye Wangchuk and top officials of the government that they regarded the presence of the armed groups as the "biggest threat" to the kingdom and their own lives.

Perhaps there was some hype in the reporting and emotions boiled over in those interactions. But the core of worry, fear and anger cannot be underestimated. There were not less than three unanimous resolutions by the Bhutanese Parliament, the National Assembly, authorising talks with the militants to ask them to leave and underlining that the military option should be the last one. Few took those resolutions seriously, including this writer, and certainly not the armed groups.



King Jigme Singye Wangchuk with Atal Behari Vajpayee in New Delhi in September 2003. — AFP

## CYNICISM OVER BHUTAN CLAIMS

THERE is some rationale for this cynicism: there have been published reports of contacts between the Bhutanese and the insurgents in the early 1990s which were aimed at shoring up the Bhutanese border against the anti-monarchy, pro-democracy movement by Bhutanese of Nepalese stock. The Bhutanese dissidents attacked officials and villagers from across the border in India. Indian officials feel that there was an element of connivance at the middle and lower rungs of the Bhutan administration with regard to the establishment of the rebel camps. The first camps in Bhutan were of the Bodos, Ulfa and the KLO came later. Local residents were happy to supply food at the exorbitant rates that the militants were able to pay; the latter had no shortage of funds and a flourishing local economy grew. Thimpu maintained a studied silence on the issue for years, although the King had earlier permitted Indian Army operations against the militants in 1991.

But a connection was always there: a handful of Bhutanese officials at the lower level helped with smuggling funds through official channels. They have since been arrested and charged. The pressure from the public, New Delhi and their own security concerns led to a calibrated approach initiated by King Jigme as Bhutan started moving against the foreign militants.

First, they enacted a National Security Act which threatened any national helping the militants with supplies of food, etc. with summary arrest and prison terms. But supplies continued to come from the Assam districts,

especially Nalbari, Kokrajhar, Darrang and Kamrup on the border with Bhutan. Thimpu's position began to harden when it got reports of contacts between the dissidents in the refugee camps in Bhutan and the North-east militants and of initial training being given to a handful of the southern Bhutanese as this group is called. These were aggravating Indian security concerns especially with the possibility of connections between the Maoists of Nepal and the north-eastern groups next door.

## REPEATED REBUFFS

BUT what mattered most to the Bhutanese was the offence in the repeated rebuffs to personal efforts by the King, who visited the camps of the militants to request them to leave. The groups rejected similar appeals at official talks in Thimpu with top ministers of the government. "We did not stand on protocol. The talks from our side were led by me, the Prime Minister, and they did mention their appreciation of this," recalled Jigme Thinley, the courteous but firm head of government. The Bhutanese asked them to leave the country without conditions, saying they valued the traditional relations of trade, friendship and social interaction between their country and Assam, with which they share a long border.

"If they met patrols of the Royal Bhutan Army, they would refuse to give way... they were so arrogant," said Prime Minister Thinley. "It became unbearable." The anger and pressure built up to the last months when Ulfa and the NDFB were summoned for a

2003 at Thimpu. "Any other neighbour" in India's place "would have exerted far greater pressure" because the armed groups were posing a threat not just to Bhutan but also to India and the region.

Thinley recalled his near-despair as the talks fell apart and the situation headed for a bitter denouement: "They were tremendously confident vis-a-vis their military prowess as far as Bhutan and India were concerned. They did not take us seriously... I told them 'How will you explain to your people the loss of cadres in a land not inimical to you?' They brushed it aside... I said, 'This is the last round of talks... and if it does not succeed then there is no choice but to engage in fratricidal war.'"

All this time, the military preparations were on, down to the last detail, under the supervision of the king. Over the past years, a network of military camps had been set up along the border but the insurgents paid little heed to them, much to their cost.

## OPponents SURPRISED

ON 15 December 2003, when the tiny Bhutan army, unbloodied and untested in war since 1865, blasted their way into the jungle hide-outs of the Assam armed groups with mortars and machine gun fire, they overwhelmed their surprised opponents although some stood and fought — the 49 casualties (including 13 dead) on the RBA side testifies to that — scattered them and forced many to surrender either to them or to Indian troops waiting on the other side. About 1,000 have been killed or captured and neither New Delhi or Thimpu is saying how many in each category. But about another 1,000 have scattered to Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, the West Garo Hills of Meghalaya, to Bangladesh and a few to Myanmar through the long Arunachal route.

There are unconfirmed reports that the Bhutanese allowed a number of Ulfa cadres, including a senior member, to go in exchange for several of their soldiers who had been held captive. One has not been able to confirm this from either side. But there is one point which needs stressing: many pundits, scholars, media specialists and military analysts have forgotten that the Bhutanese needed not just weapons but a cause. And that they had: they were fighting for their country.

Bhutan continues to be concerned about security threats to its future. But as a result of its short military campaign, the northern borders of Assam are safer. Vigilance cannot be relaxed, yet trade and people-to-people relations must resume.

We should learn that it does not pay to take for granted one's hosts or neighbours, no matter how small. If we don't understand and respect this, the North-east will remain a backwater of underdevelopment, corruption and violence. Who will want to trade with us, to do business with us, to send their goods and people through the region if they are constantly worried about the safety of both?

The roads to South-east Asia will open up when we understand this basic lesson. We have to face the challenges within, the rot inside, the contradictions roaming the region and deal with the arrogance, insensitivity and short sightedness that leads to the multiple, avoidable tragedies to which we bear witness.

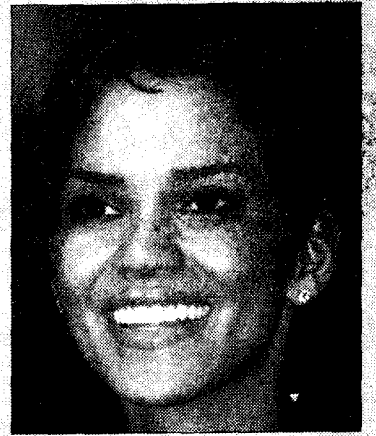
In the context of conflicts and struggles, the means are as important as the ends.

(The author is a Consulting Editor with The

## people&places

### Berry worry

LOS ANGELES — A judge has ordered a former US Navy special forces operative accused of stalking Oscar-winning movie star Halle Berry to stay at least 80 m away from her. Judge Linda Lefkowitz issued a preliminary injunction against Greg Broussard, ordering him not to make contact with Berry, her manager, Vincent Cirrincione, or publicist Karen Samfilippo. Broussard has allegedly made numerous attempts to contact Berry by telephone and fax and "incorrectly believes that Cirrincione is Berry's father," according to court papers. In her declaration to the court, Berry alleges that Broussard "has imagined a relationship with me wherein he and I are engaged to be married and that my manager and publicist are preventing him from being with me." — AFP



### Better late than never

WASHINGTON — A California woman can sue to retrieve \$150 million worth of family paintings stolen by the Nazis, the Supreme Court ruled in opening US courts to World War II-era disputes the Bush administration had wanted settled diplomatically. The ruling was celebrated by Jewish leaders, who hope for jury verdicts while some Holocaust survivors still are alive. The court ruled in a 6-3 vote that 88-year-old Maria Altmann could pursue a lawsuit in federal court in Los Angeles that seeks to force Austria to turn over six Gustav Klimt paintings that include portraits of her aunt. The paintings are among an estimated 6,000,000 art works the Nazis stole during Adolf Hitler's rule in Germany. — AP

### Not so cool

ORLANDO (FLORIDA) — Chugging more than one sugar-sweetened soft drink a day appears to significantly increase a woman's chances of developing diabetes, says a Harvard study that found the extra sugar does more than just add pounds. Women in the study who drank at least one sugar-sweetened soda a day were 85 per cent more likely to develop type 2 diabetes than those who drank less, said Matthias B Schulze, who presented the Harvard School of Public Health research at the American Diabetes Association's 64th scientific sessions. — AP

### Living life king-size

SILICON VALLEY — Indian immigrants have the highest life expectancy among California residents, exceeding the state average by almost six years, according to a study. The study, *The Demographics of Mortality in California*, conducted by the Public Policy Institute of California, revealed that immigrants in general outlive the US born residents. Life expectancy for immigrants in California was 81.5 years, compared to 77.4 years for US natives. Almost all of the Asian sub-groups, except Laotians and Cambodians, have life expectancies exceeding the state average, said the report. — PTI

### Sweet Henry!

LONDON — Henry VIII may have been no oil painting, but he has undergone a rejuvenating facelift in one of his portraits. An overpainted 18th-century depiction of the Tudor King, based on Holbein's iconic image, has been removed to reveal a 16th-century portrait of a younger, gentler monarch that had until now been concealed. The discovery has been made by a leading British dealer, Philip Mould. "The confrontational, belligerent post-Reformation image of Henry is replaced by a more human, sweeter pre-Reformation Henry," he said. — The Times

### In the name of the sun...

LONDON — A doctor who dared to champion the health benefits of sunshine has won few converts among cancer experts in Britain. Michael Holick, professor of dermatology at Boston University until his controversial views cost him his job, was in Britain to promote the book that provoked his sacking. The UV Advantage claims that only by exposure to adequate sunlight can the body generate enough vitamin D and vitamin K, the book claims, is a protection against many internal cancers, including cancers of the breast, colon and prostate. By denying people sufficient sunshine, the anti-sun lobby is doing more harm than good, in Dr Holick's view. Regular, unprotected sun exposure would prevent "thousands of cancer deaths a year", according to this theory. — The Times

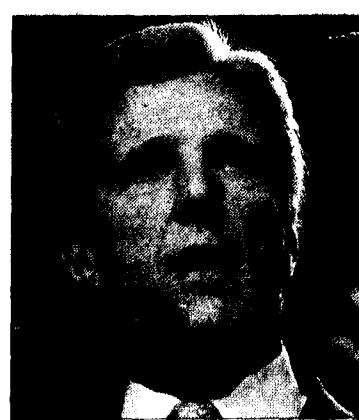
## Good rhetoric... but will it work?

JOHN KERRY, the presumptive Democratic presidential nominee, is saying all the right things about the USA's foreign policy and yet his credibility is not going up. He invoked Teddy Roosevelt, saying, "America should walk softly and carry a big stick... if a man continually blusters, if he lacks civility, a big stick will not save him from trouble." No sane person would say that this kind of approach, soft walk and big stick, would have worked with stateless terrorists like Osama bin Laden and Al-Qaida. But it did work with Pakistan and Libya. Seeking cooperation from Pakistan in the aftermath of 9/11 using more bluster than civility was a great success. No less spectacular has been the unraveling of the nuclear ambitions of Libya, which led to the unearthing and exposure of Pakistan's AQ Khan's clandestine international trade in nuclear know-how with North Korea and other countries. It is difficult to say whether the world is less dangerous today but we know how widespread had become the privatisation of nuclear weapon technology.

In hindsight, especially in regard to Iraq, Kerry's criticism sounds wise that the Bush administration "hoped for the best when they

should have prepared for the worst." The American people were not prepared for this kind of long and sustained hostility from Shias as well as Sunnis in Iraq, when all they were trying to do was to liberate them from the tyranny of Saddam Hussein. They also failed to understand the role Iran might play to safeguard its interest in the region. Probably the Bush administration should have asked how much freedom the Iraqis could tolerate and in what form, especially when they had a terrible past and are surrounded by countries where non-freedom is the political norm. But the whole point of invading Iraq was to establish a centre of working democracy; and then let the whole region change. Kerry is not averse to such a vision. His modus operandi would have been different, he says.

"They bullied when they should have persuaded. They've gone it alone when they should have assembled a team," Kerry said, adding that Bush has made America less safe in a dangerous world and has "undermined the legitimacy of generations of American leadership." In the light of the disclosure about the inhuman, barbaric and sadistic treatment of Abu Gharib prisoners, the whole country has been feeling



## cyber age ND BATRA

humiliated. Kerry promises to restore the world's faith in America's essential goodness. Let America be America, he says. But how?

According to the strategic vision he has laid before the American people during his recent campaign attack against Bush, he said the USA under his presidency would take urgent steps to rebuild the shattered trust in American leadership and eliminate the scourge of terrorism. Apart from building alliances in the post 9/11 era, modernising the

military to meet new threats, Kerry would use diplomacy, intelligence system, economic power, and "most importantly, the appeal, the extraordinary appeal that through centuries has made us who we are, the appeal of our values and our ideals." He would jettison the overtly-stated Bush doctrine of pre-emption — eliminate the perceived threat before it becomes unmanageable — though once a politician, Democrat or Republican, enters the White House, the temptation of pre-emption are too great to forgo.

The necessary checks and balances in foreign policy cannot come from within the USA because of the mindset that offence is the best form of defence. Only an outside power with a different vision of how the world should be governed, like the European Union, for example, could provide a corrective to the pre-emption proclivities of the sole super power.

Kerry says that as President his top priority will be to prevent terrorists from getting weapons of mass destruction. "We must ensure that lawless states and terrorists will not be armed with WMD. This is the single gravest threat to our security," he said. But that's what exactly Bush claims he has been trying to

do; and look, where it has led us — daily carnage and prison abuse in Iraq.

The most radical proposal Kerry makes refers to Saudi Arabia, who has failed "to do all that it can do to stop financing and providing ideological support of Al-Qaida and other terrorist groups. We cannot continue this administration's kid glove approach to the supply and laundering of terrorist money." There is no doubt that most Americans believe that Saudi Arabia, in spite of the recent terrorist attacks on its own soil, is the financial and ideological hub of Al-Qaida terrorism, but when they push the peddle on their gas guzzling sports utility vehicles, they don't understand whether anything could be done about the Saudis' complicity in terrorism. Will energy independence, freedom from dependency upon West Asian oil, eliminate terrorism? Not necessarily, but it will enable the USA to confront the Saudis more openly, what Kerry calls, in a campaign of "name and shame" against those that finance terror. The rhetoric sounds good but will it work?

(ND Batra is Professor of Communications, Norwich University, Vermont.)

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B <sub>2</sub>	D <sub>2</sub>	L <sub>1</sub>	D <sub>2</sub>	U <sub>1</sub>	Y <sub>1</sub>	C <sub>2</sub>		
C <sub>2</sub>	M <sub>3</sub>	H <sub>1</sub>	I <sub>1</sub>	L <sub>1</sub>	L <sub>1</sub>	I <sub>1</sub>		
A <sub>1</sub>	A <sub>1</sub>	E <sub>1</sub>	O <sub>1</sub>	C <sub>2</sub>	T <sub>1</sub>	P <sub>3</sub>	Triple Word Score	

PAR SCORE 105-115

by JUDD

FOUR RACK TOTAL TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

DIRECTIONS: Make a 2- to 7-letter word from the letters in each row. Add points of each word, using scoring directions at right. 7-letter words get 50-point bonus. "Blank" used as any letter have no point value. All Judd's words are in The Official Scrabble Players Dictionary (Merriam-Webster) and OSW Official Scrabble Words (Chambers). JUDD'S SOLUTION TOMORROW

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G	I	V	I	S	M	RACK 1 = 26	
G	Y	R	A	L	L	Y	RACK 2 = 72
S	C	A	N	T	Y	RACK 3 = 11	
S	P	R	O	U	T	S	RACK 4 = 59

PAR SCORE 105-115 JUDD'S TOTAL 168

19-99-09

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6 JUN 2005

# Success crowns Natwar's Nepal visit

BUDESHNA SARKAR  
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

KATHMANDU, June 5. — Foreign minister Mr K Natwar Singh flew back to Delhi this afternoon after a successful two-day visit to Nepal that ended in major diplomatic gains for India and could contribute to stability in the Himalayan kingdom. Nepal appreciated the honour and importance involved in being the first port of call by the newly appointed minister, and reciprocated by extending an invitation to the Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh, Congress leader Mrs Sonia Gandhi and President Dr APJ Abdul Kalam. During his meeting with Mr Singh yesterday, King Gyanendra lauded Mrs Gandhi's gesture in declining to become Prime Minister, calling it

Singh said New Delhi would extend further help if needed. His statement that India has an important stake in maintaining political stability and economic development in Nepal has been received by the local media without the earlier hostility it showed when such comments would have been regarded as interference in Nepal's internal affairs.

India would also help Nepal hold elections. While Mr Singh said both the king and he had agreed that "it is essential to have a national consensus on the political question so that a time frame could be worked out for holding elections," Nepalese Prime Minister Mr Sher Bahadur Deuba today said the poll process would be rolled out by April 2005. A Nepalese team is in Delhi to consult the Election

Commission. Kathmandu has also asked for Indian observers to monitor polls in Nepal. Mr Singh said he would place the request before Dr Manmohan Singh and his Cabinet.

Mr Singh said his Nepal visit would also strengthen regional cooperation. "Our objective is to strengthen Saar to make it a body where all regional issues can be resolved," he said in answer to a query about India's reaction to some adverse reactions in Nepal and Bangladesh over the river-linking project in India started by former Prime Minister Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee.

India has offered Nepal help in developing infrastructure, water resources, health facilities and education. Mr Singh's visit is also expected to contribute to political stability. Though the



unprecedented and bringing "very great credit to democracy".

Mr Singh's visit is expected to boost cooperation between the two countries in combating terrorism. In addition to an already ongoing defence cooperation, Mr

## Gas pipeline

NEW DELHI, June 5. — India is willing to consider the gas pipeline from Iran via Pakistan if Islamabad provided international security guarantees, the foreign minister has said. Setting up of an overland pipeline through Pakistan was mooted by Iran, but India had reservations fearing that Pakistan could disrupt supplies in the event of any major problem in Indo-Pak ties. — PTI

Opposition parties have been either undecided about whether to support Mr Deuba or been downright antagonistic, Mr Singh's meeting with Opposition leaders is expected to pressure them into some kind of reconciliation.

# 'Stable Nepal India's interest'

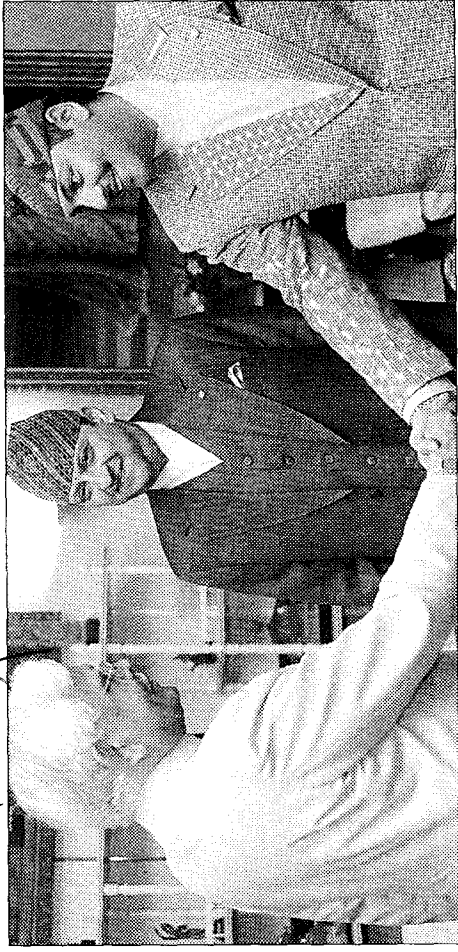
**Keshav Pradhan**  
Kathmandu, June 4

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS minister K. Natwar Singh on Friday said India would continue to help Nepal overcome its challenges.

He made the pledge on his arrival here on a 24-hour visit amid heightening political uncertainty arising out of a 20-month standoff between the palace and democratic parties and Maoist insurgency. At his meetings with King Gyanendra and Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, Singh said, "India has a stake in the restoration of peace and stability in Nepal with which it shares a very extensive relationship".

Setting aside protocol, the monarch received his guest at the main entrance of the royal palace (normally done for a head of state or government) and drove off to the meeting hall for a 70-minute one-to-one meeting.

Before this, Singh said In-



King Gyanendra introduces his son, crown prince Paras, to External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh in Kathmandu on Friday.

On Saturday, Singh will meet the heads of the Nepali Congress and the Rashtriya Prajatantra Party and ex-Prime Minister Surya Bahadur Thapa.

Describing the Maoist insurgency as a common threat to India and Nepal, Saran said, "The Maoists should eschew violence and join the mainstream".

India — which has been aiding Nepal to fight the Maoists — feared that the Communist insurgency could have an impact in the neighbouring Indian states because of the open border and heavy, unrestricted movement of people.

It also welcomed Deuba's appointment as a beginning of the process of the formation of a representational government in Nepal. This comes amid the new Prime Minister's desperate attempts to win the support of mainstream parties who are opposed to both him and the king.

Indian ambassador to Nepal Shyam Saran said, "We want close cooperation between the king and political parties because we regard constitutional monarchy and multi-party democracy as two pillars of political stability in Nepal".

destination "reflects the importance India attaches to Nepal". Singh also met mainstream Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) general secretary Madhav Nepal.

Briefing on Singh's meetings with the Nepalese side,

dia would "continue the tradition of exchanging high-level visits with Nepal and extend its full support to the Nepalese people in their endeavour to overcome the challenges confronting their country". He added that the choice of Nepal as his first

## নেপাল সফরে গেলেন নটবর

কাঠমান্ডু, ৪ জুন— বিদেশমন্ত্রী কে নটবর সিংহ আজ কাঠমান্ডুতে এসে পৌঁছেছেন। দায়িত্ব পাওয়ার পরে এটাই তাঁর প্রথম বিদেশসফর। কাঠমান্ডুতে নেমে তিনি জানিয়েছেন, প্রতিবেশী দেশগুলির সঙ্গে সম্পর্ক আরও ভাল করার উপর নতুন সরকার জোর দেবে। ত্রিভুবন আন্তর্জাতিক বিমানবন্দরে তাঁকে অভ্যর্থনা জানাতে উপস্থিত ছিলেন নেপালের বিদেশসচিব মধুরামন আচার্য এবং উচ্চপদস্থ কর্মচারীরা।

নটবর সিংহ বলেন, দায়িত্ব পাওয়ার পরে নেপালে তাঁর প্রথম সফর করতে আসা কোনও কাকতালীয় ঘটনা নয়। এর থেকে বোঝা যায় নেপালের সঙ্গে সম্পর্ক আরও উন্নত করতে ভারত সরকার কতটা আগ্রহী। ১৯৯৬ সাল থেকে মাওবাদী জঙ্গিদের বিচ্ছিন্নতামূলক কার্যকলাপে পর্যুদস্ত নেপাল। নটবর সিংহ বলেন, এ ব্যাপারে নেপালকে ভারত সরকার পূর্ণ সমর্থন জানাবে। — পি টি আই

AD-12  
S/B

# India has stake in Nepal's political stability, says Natwar

*India and Her neighbours*

By Amit Baruah

**KATHMANDU, JUNE 4.** India has an important stake in the restoration of political stability in Nepal, the visiting External Affairs Minister, Natwar Singh, told King Gyanendra during a 70-minute meeting at the Narayanhiti palace this evening.

Mr. Singh, who also met the newly-appointed Prime Minister, Sher Bahadur Deuba, and the CPN-UML leader, Madhav Kumar Nepal, held talks with the King without any officials being present. India's Ambassador to Nepal, Shyam Saran, told presspersons in Mr. Singh's presence, that New Delhi's support to strengthening Nepal's security capabilities would continue.

With the appointment of a new Prime Minister ending a period of "uncertainty", India hoped that this marked the beginning of a process through which a truly representative, multi-party government would emerge. India also hoped that the political parties represented in the dissolved Parliament would come together in a spirit of mutual understanding, Mr. Saran said.

"I've just had a meeting with His Majesty, the King. My visit indicates the very great importance that we attach to our relations with this wonderful country. Our ties are so multifaceted that I cannot even list them. I also met the Prime Minister and I'm hoping to meet other leaders and friends," the External Affairs Minister said.

Mr. Singh said that it was no coincidence that his first visit after taking office was to Nepal. He maintained that the policy of the Manmohan Singh-led Government would be to continue high-level visits between the two countries. He said India fully supported the Nepalese in their endeavour to overcome the challenges facing their country.

According to Mr. Saran, King Gyanendra welcomed Mr. Singh's visit to Nepal and hoped that under his stewardship, bilateral ties would improve. Both exchanged views on a wide range of bilateral and



The External Affairs Minister, Natwar Singh, being greeted on arrival at the Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu on Friday. — AFP

regional issues in a cordial manner.

Mr. Singh extended full support to Nepal's economic development in a spirit of mutual benefit.

"The Minister also conveyed to His Majesty, the Indian Government's determination to continue regional cooperation in SAARC and under the ambit of BIMST-EC [Bangladesh-India-Myanmar-Sri Lanka Economic Cooperation]."

Mr. Saran said the King wished success to the new Government in India to achieve its aims of political and economic reform and requested Mr. Singh to convey his greetings and best wishes to the Indian leadership. He also invited the President, A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, and the Congress president, Sonia Gandhi, to visit Nepal.

Mr. Singh told the Prime Minister that the Maoist insurgency in Nepal was a challenge to the security of both "our countries."

This problem required cooperative efforts on the part of India and Nepal, Mr. Saran said. The External Affairs Minister said India was willing not only to pursue, but also expand the "already considerable" economic cooperation between the two countries.

Asked to explain what India meant by saying it had an important stake in Nepal's political stability, Mr. Saran said that the two countries share a long and open border and there were no restrictions on the movement of citizens of either country. "Whatever happens in Nepal, it inevitably has an impact on India, similarly whatever happens in India has an impact on Nepal. So, it stands to reason that we have a stake in the political stability of this country and its economic well-being."

India, he said, had taken a consistent position that there were two pillars of political stability in Nepal, the constitutional monarchy and the

multi-party democracy and only if these two pillars work in concert political stability could be restored. And only then could the larger challenge posed by the Maoist insurgency be faced, Mr. Saran felt.

Admitting that there was some "confidence gap" between the institutions, he hoped that a new government would prepare the ground for the next election and a peace process with the Maoist insurgents. The Maoists must understand that violence was not the answer to Nepal's problems and that they must shun the bullet for the ballot.

Asked if India's interest in Nepal was because of China, Mr. Saran replied: "China and Nepal, as far as we know, have very good relations. India itself is improving its relations with China. India has also suggested to Nepal that we could have a transit route through Nepal for trade with China. So, I do not think that this is a zero sum game."



# Natwar begins Nepal visit today

By Amit Baruah

**NEW DELHI, JUNE 3.** The External Affairs Minister, Natwar Singh, leaves for Kathmandu tomorrow to discuss bilateral relations with Nepal and the political situation in the Himalayan Kingdom.

During his two-day visit, which ends on Saturday, the External Affairs Minister will call on King Gyanendra, meet the third-time Prime Minister, Sher Bahadur Deuba, who was sworn in today, and have discussions with the Nepali Congress leader, G.P. Koirala, and the CPN-UML chief, Madhav Kumar Ne-

pal, among others.

The "neighbourhood focus" of the Congress-led Government has been evident from the day Mr. Singh took office. The first Ambassador Mr. Singh called for discussions to Delhi was India's envoy to Nepal, Shyam Saran.

Addressing his first press conference on Tuesday, the External Affairs Minister, when asked about the agenda for his Nepal visit, said: "I will hold talks there. That is why I am going there. We give so much importance to our relations..."

Mr. Singh told the press conference that the situation in Ne-

pal was "frightening for them as well as for us".

Making it plain that India should play a role in maintaining political stability in Nepal, the External Affairs Minister said, "Otherwise, others will come and intervene. So, I will hold talks. I will meet the King and all parties. I will say that we are very concerned, that we want their well-being. But if the process of democracy that you had started comes to an end, more complex issues will come up, resolution of which will be very difficult."

Mr. Singh's visit comes a day after Mr. Deuba, who was

sacked by King Gyanendra in October 2002, became the royally-appointed Prime Minister for the third time. The Nepali Congress has rejected the appointment while the CPN-UML has taken a more cautious approach. Soon after assuming office, the new Prime Minister was quoted as saying: "I will try to establish peace in the country as soon as possible and hold general elections."

Mr. Koirala, who held a late-night meeting with Mr. Deuba, was quoted as telling Reuters that the new Prime Minister "must revive the dissolved Parliament to get our support".

THE HINDU 4 JUN 2002

# Natwar's plan to visit Kathmandu ill-timed

Sudeshna Sarkar  
in Kathmandu

June 1. — India's newly appointed foreign minister Mr Natwar Singh's proposed trip to Kathmandu is likely to add fuel to local sentiments about Indian interference in Nepal's internal matters.

After being sworn in last week, Mr Singh is considering making Nepal his first port of call abroad and is expected either to come on a two-day or one-day trip from or on 4 June. Though a spokesman in the Indian foreign ministry said the trip would be made to underscore the importance Delhi attaches to its smaller neighbour, it could trigger further anti-Indian sentiments in a country that is being governed by an unpopular caretaker government.

With Prime Minister Mr Surya Bahadur Thapa hav-

ing resigned last month and continuing till his successor is appointed, the political situation is highly volatile. Late last night, King Gyanendra met former Prime Minister Mr Sher Bahadur Deuba — whose sacking in October 2002 added to the instabil-

**The trip could trigger further anti-Indian sentiments in Nepal which is presently governed by an unpopular caretaker government**

ity — after the expiry of the deadline for submitting nominations for the top executive job.

A motley crowd of 35 applicants, including a former Premier, a former deputy Prime Minister, three ministers from the earlier Lokendra Bahadur Chand government, a

journalist, a maverick carrying a shovel, a man claiming to have divine powers and two college students, have applied for the coveted job.

Surprisingly, there have been no nominations from the opposition coalition of the five major parties of Nepal, whose continued agitation forced first Mr Chand and then Mr Thapa to quit.

When Mr Thapa was named Prime Minister by King Gyanendra last year, the presence of former Indian Prime Minister Mr Chandra Shekhar and a former Indian ambassador to Nepal, Mr KV Rajan, created a furore with the Nepalese media accusing them of having pulled strings. And the Indian foreign minister's presence in Kathmandu at such a critical time could give a fresh lease of life to such allegations.

*Handwritten notes:*  
In  
to  
the  
Nepal

# 'Bhutan is ready for democracy'

**I**N his first interview in six years, King Jigme Singye Wangchuk of Bhutan spoke to SANJOY HAZARIKA about his vision for his tiny land and its people, the need for multi-party democracy, his roll-back of near-absolute powers for himself and the monarchy and the efforts to negotiate the departure of militants from the North-east, which failed, and the military action which followed. The King's initiative to slash his own authority is little short of revolutionary. He retains control of the Royal Bhutan Army, which saw military action for the first time in December and which is bound to have a major role in Bhutan, given heightened threat perceptions. Over the past years, a Council of Ministers has evolved with new, young faces and who are elected by the National Assembly.

## **On democratic changes in Bhutan and the draft Constitution**

The reason that the Constitution is being drafted is because Bhutan and its people are ready to have a democratic political system. And it will be based on parliamentary democracy. After the Constitution is drafted, I am going to go to all 20 districts and consult local leaders, villagers and explain to them the Constitution, what it means since party politics is something that is alien to our people. Clause by clause, article by article, it will be discussed with scholars and villagers, with business and finance community, with all the people. For us in Bhutan, the most important thing is to have good governance. I want a democratic political system that will provide good governance. Can we succeed in this or not is difficult to say because it is a new experience for all of us. It depends on the Bhutanese people and how politically mature they will be and the responsibilities they will take. This is a process of referendum, it will take time, there will be opposition, some because people do not understand; also some because they see a new system. We know that party political systems which have come up in developing countries have often not done well.

## **On the role of the King**

The King will be a constitutional head. This is something that we want to do. There is no pressure on me at all, certainly not from within the country. But right from the 1970s, I realised that Bhutan cannot have a different political system than what prevails in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation. The only factor here is a democratic political system that works, that provides stability and good governance. To say that this process is "too early" is not an argument; it is an excuse for not doing it. I do not believe in these excuses.

## **On contacts with the NE militants**

The problem started in 1990/1991 with Operation Rhino and Bajrang (of the Indian Army against the militants). We did not know anything about the Ulfa; NDFB-KLO did not even exist at the time. They did not come deep inside but stayed on the Assam-



**King Jigme Singye Wangchuk of Bhutan**

Bhutan border. From 1991-94, many Indian Army operations were launched to remove these people after I gave permission. The result was that instead of leaving, they started going deep within Bhutan and that created the problem for us. We believed that we could resolve this peacefully because of good relations with Assam and we believed that they could not have an independent Assam and Bodoland. For six years, we tried to have a dialogue with them and did not succeed. In Bhutan, the responsibility for safeguard the security and integrity of the kingdom is the responsibility of the King. I told the National Assembly that (I would do) whatever it takes to fulfil this responsibility and in all sincerity I tried my level best to resolve the problem peacefully by talking to them.

I met the leadership in the camps. I went to practically all their camps. It was not easy for them to come for a dialogue, they said. KLO never came here for a dialogue. I went without security and without being announced, without a big entourage, to these heavily fortified camps where they had been living for years. I talked to NDFB, Ulfa, KLO and tried to reason with them and explain to them but they were not responsive. They wanted the independence of Assam and Bodoland. I said, "How can you have two independent states, including Bodoland inside Assam?" I told them this

was impractical since they were surrounded by Indian states. They gave the example of East Timor. I was not successful in convincing them.

## **On criticism that Bhutan should have taken action earlier**

What many people simply overlooked was that these people - call them militants, terrorists or anti-nationals - were Indian nationals. To launch an operation against Indian nationals was difficult. We have such good relations with Assam going back a thousand years. We were very concerned that this would have strong repercussions on Assam and our relations with Assam. From what we hear, there is a lot of relief and appreciation that people do not have to pay taxes to the militants, which were being collected earlier. Very large amounts were collected from Assam and from Assamese working in Bhutan. What many people forget is that there are only three road links between Bhutan and the rest of the world: all of them go through India. We are totally dependent on these routes, two of which go through Assam including the Bodo areas. All our trade, our oranges, ginger and cardamom is transported through these routes. We tried to stop Bhutanese from trading with the militants; it affected all our border towns and markets. Not one shop was left open and it caused a lot of economic hard-

ship. We supplied goods to people from the Food Corporation of Bhutan godowns, but the media reported militants starving and in poor conditions. This was not true. They had plenty of money.

## **On the failure of talks**

The National Assembly in its 81st session decided to authorise only one more round of talks and if that failed it was to be followed by military action. The position of Ulfa at the last round of talks was... they told us flatly they could not go. Our basic demand was not that they should remove all the camps, we wanted their GHQ and CHQ to be relocated from Bhutan. The National Assembly which wanted all camps to close agreed to my suggestion that at least one of the two HQs should go. It would be too much to expect them to close everything at once. Then the others would follow. Ulfa told us they had nowhere else to go. As far as the NDFB was concerned, they said they could not leave Bhutan and if they were to go today, they would be back tomorrow. The KLO never turned up here. But we have also to ask why they came here. It was not a Bhutanese problem. There are two sides to a coin. Assam has untapped potential and natural resources, it could bloom with tourism. But governance is important.

## **On the crackdown**

We knew that if it was a prolonged thing, we could lose. We knew that in all our planning and discussion. We knew that unless it was quick and decisive, we might get beaten. All I can say, is look at the seriousness of the situation: our army had never had any experience of conflict, our officers had zero combat experience. Since the 1865 battle with the British, we have known nothing but peace and stability. It was a totally new experience for us.

Their camps were fortified, there were observation posts. There were a total of 2,000-to-3,000 militants at different times, depending on the season; during the winter months the recruits were trained; during the monsoons, they would slip into Assam because movement was easier. After the operations, we recovered large numbers of arms and explosives. But all this stuff about mortar shells and artillery, well, we have no artillery. We did use mortars but we just had enough mortar shells for the first day. There was a lot of fighting and all of them did not run because they were committed and have been trained and lived in the jungles for many years. We knew that we had to remove them in a short span of time. (Bhutan, he said, suffered 13 dead and 36 wounded.)

## **On relations with India**

A good thing about being around for 32 years is that whatever government comes to power in Delhi, you will see many familiar faces! For us it is important that India should have a stable government.

(The author is a Consulting Editor with The Statesman.)

# 'If it was a prolonged fight, we knew we could lose...'

SANJOY HAZARUKA  
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

THIMPU, May 29. — The King stood at the entrance to the ornate, sprawling audience hall on the second floor of the Trashichodzong, the seat of government authority in Bhutan, where he receives visitors. He cuts a handsome figure in the traditional *go*, the short robe which is the Himalayan Kingdom's national dress, and royal scarf.

In his first interview in six years, King Jigme Singye Wangchuk focused on last December's successful military campaign that himself led to drive North-eastern militants out of his tiny, landlocked and vul-

## EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH KING JIGME SINGYE WANGCHUK

nerable nation. He spoke in detail for the first time of his personal efforts to negotiate the departure of the armed groups, his determination to bring a multi-party, parliamentary democratic system to Bhutan to "provide good governance" and to convince his people of the efforts to draft a Constitution that would reflect the concerns of people and reduce his own role to that of a figurehead.

"I went to practically every camp ... I met the leadership in the camps. Since they said it was not easy for them to come for

because otherwise it may have been misunderstood, I talked to the NDFB, Ulfa, KLO and tried to reason with them ... I told them this (aim of independence) was impractical as they were surrounded by Indian state. We believed we should resolve this peacefully because of our good relations with Assam," he declared.

When all efforts failed, the King chose "short and decisive action". He said: "We knew that if it was a prolonged thing, we could lose... that unless it was quick and decisive, we might



King Jigme Singye Wangchuk

dialogue, I went without security and unannounced

get beaten. All I can say, is look at the seriousness of the situation: our army had never had any experience of conflict, our officers had zero combat experience. Since the 1865 battle with the British, we have known nothing but peace and stability. It was a totally new experience for us."

But he also sounded a warning note now that the militants have been driven out, saying that his country could not drop its vigilance since small armed groups from the NDFB had been recently sighted in eastern Bhutan near the Arunachal Pradesh border, in thickly forested area.

(For full interview, see *Perspective*, page 9)

# India-Nepal move to thwart Maoists

Pramod Giri  
Siliguri, April 14

POLICE, BSF and intelligence officials in North Bengal have felt the need for an Uttar Pradesh kind of strategy to be adopted by the governments of India and Nepal to thwart any attempt of Nepali Maoists to infiltrate into North Bengal.

The home ministry has been urged to increase joint surveillance by the two governments along the India-Nepal border in Bihar during the ensuing Lok Sabha elections.

On Tuesday, Nepali security officials, including the chief district officers of Rautahat, Sarlahi, Parsa, Bara, Chitwan and Nawalparasi districts (all in Nepal) and the district magistrates and superintendents of police of East and West Champaran and Customs officials of Raxaul in UP met and agreed to enhance joint patrolling along the India-Nepal border in Uttar Pradesh. The meeting was held at Raxaul, UP.

The decision to enhance joint patrolling along the border was taken after the two governmen-

ts got intelligence reports that Nepal Maoists might infiltrate into India during the April 26 Lok Sabha elections in UP.

There are also reports that the Nepal Maoists' activities in India have increased after the arrest of Mohan Baidhya, third leader of the Nepal Communist Party (Maoist) in Siliguri, West Bengal on March 29.

A top-ranking intelligence official said, since Siliguri has always been a safe haven for the NCP(M) cadres, the joint operation to stop Maoists' infiltration into North Bengal during the May 10 Lok Sabha elections was extremely important.

The presence of the Kamtapur Liberation Organisation (KLO) in North Bengal and its seeking working relations with the NCP(M) have given rise to a serious situation.

According to reports, the KLO - which had suffered a big blow after the Royal Bhutan Army launched anti militant operations in mid-November inside the Bhutan jungles - is seeking NCP(M) assistance to reassert themselves. The report has been taken seriously.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

15 APR 2004

# India's options in Nepal

By C. Raja Mohan

APR-14  
14/4

**NEW DELHI, APRIL 13.** As the crisis in Nepal deepens amidst a growing confrontation between the monarchy and the political parties, the rising influence of the Maoists, and brazen attacks on Indian targets, the Government will soon have to rethink its policy towards its special neighbour to the north.

Until now India has urged King Gyanendra to work out a compromise with the political parties and put in place a credible government that could address the Maoist threat. Second, it has provided military assistance to the Royal Nepal Army in its war against terrorism. Both these lines have come under stress as King Gyanendra refuses to work with the political parties and the RNA has been unable to make headway against the Maoists.

When King Gyanendra ousted the elected government of Nepal in October 2002, there were suspicions in the country that he wanted to rule by himself. He has done nothing to allay these apprehensions.

Instead of uniting the country against the Maoist threat, he has deepened the rift within the traditional political establishment of Nepal. An alliance of five major political parties in Nepal has stepped up the agitation against the King demanding a full restoration of democracy.

King Gyanendra seems to have, mistakenly, believed that he could cut a separate deal with the Maoists. But these negotiations failed quickly and the ceasefire between the two sides collapsed. Since then the Maoists have returned to the countryside and steadily expanded their territorial control.

King Gyanendra's apparently self-defeating policy that threatens the future of both the monarchy and the state itself can only be explained in terms of his likely motivations.

He might have made the political assumption that when the final confrontation between himself and the Maoists arrives, India and the international community would have no choice but to back him unconditionally.

Despite the advice from the South Block to move towards political accommodation, King Gyanendra might have come to believe that the links he has assiduously cultivated with the *Hindutva* parivar provide him an unassailable insurance against any real pressure from New Delhi.

The political parties, struggling to restore democracy at the national level and fighting for survival against the Maoists in the countryside are disenchanted with the apparent paralysis in Indian policy towards Nepal.

While New Delhi rightly emphasises the importance of both constitutional monarchy and multiparty democracy, the chattering classes in Kathmandu see India

## NEWS ANALYSIS

*India to be neighbour*

acquiescing in what they see as an attempt by King Gyanendra to move towards an executive monarchy by transgressing the limits of the 1990 Constitution.

Meanwhile the Maoists seem to believe they have gone beyond the phase of a "strategic stalemate" with the Nepalese state. Despite military assistance from India and the United States, the Royal Nepal Army has not been able to tame the Maoists. Meanwhile, there have been growing complaints that the RNA has been indiscriminate in the use of force and has been alienating the people rather than winning them over to its side.

It is a matter of time, the Maoists sense, when they would be in a position to launch the decisive strategic offensive against Kathmandu. They clearly want to neutralise India in what they see as the approaching final confrontation in Nepal. The recent attacks against Indian businessmen and properties appear designed with this goal in mind.

Sensing the strong reaction from India to these attacks, the Maoists have tried to play down their significance. They have said the attacks were unplanned ground level reactions to the recent Indian arrest in Siliguri of Mohan Vaidya who is a leading ideologue of the Maoists.

The seeming attempt to mollify India may in fact be an unambiguous Maoist signal to New Delhi — just stay out of this war or your interests in Nepal will suffer. It comes amidst continuous signals from the Maoists that India has no reason to worry about their potential capture of power in Kathmandu.

The credibility of the Indian policy has begun to erode with all the three elements of the current power struggle in Nepal — the monarchy, political parties and the Maoists. New Delhi can no longer afford to remain a bystander in Nepal, where the crisis is maturing into a bloody confrontation.

India is indeed busy with the general elections. But the crisis in Nepal need not necessarily accommodate the Indian political calendar. The time has come for New Delhi to think of specific actions before the situation in Nepal gets out of hand. Acting in time might prevent more difficult and desperate remedies in the future.

New Delhi must dispel the impression in the Nepali court that it can take Indian support for granted. It must convey in clear terms to King Gyanendra that if he does not come quickly to reasonable terms with the political parties, India will have to think of other alternatives. Of special importance will be assurances of support to the political parties and pressure on them to get their own act together.

There are voices in New Delhi arguing that the war against the Maoists cannot be won through military means and their genuine political grievances must be addressed. Dealing with the Maoists now could only tend to undermine India's credibility. Any future Indian talks with the Maoists must be linked to an end to their violence and a return to negotiations. Meanwhile New Delhi needs to crack down hard on the sources of their support within India.

Indian actions must be designed to ensure that there is a productive dialogue between the King and the political parties and an early ceasefire between the Royal Nepal Army and the Maoists. Only then will there be some space for politics to avoid a calamity in Nepal.

# Under attack, Nepal guns for Indians

7-10  
10/9  
VIVEK CHHETRI

**Pashupati Nagar (India-Nepal border), April 9:** Nepalese officials today condemned the manner in which Indian security forces remained "mute spectators" during the Maoist attack here on Wednesday night.

This was the first time Maoist guerrillas used Indian territory to carry out a successful strike on Nepalese establishments.

Nepal's security officials are peeved at the fact that despite the presence of Special Services Bureau personnel barely half a kilometre from the site of the offensive, nothing was done to push the rebels back into Nepalese territory.

The Maoists not only penetrated as far as 60 metres into the Indian side of the border, but also provided covering fire to their comrades inside Nepal from vantage points.

The chief district officer of Illam, Prem Prasad Sapkota, told **The Telegraph** over phone that he was surprised at the inaction of the Indian forces when the militants used Indian territory to their advantage for almost an hour.

"They (Maoists) fired from the Indian soil but your security personnel remained mute spectators. You should ask your per-

sonnel what they were doing," he said.

Sapkota said the Royal Nepal Army has been deployed at

## Community bears brunt

**Pashupati Nagar, April 9:** The attack on select establishments owned by Nepal nationals of Indian origin has left the community, already on the backfoot, scurrying for cover.

The attack comes in the wake of the arrest of top Maoist leader Mohan Baidya by Darjeeling police last week along with a treasurer of the Nepalese National Democratic Front of India, an association now under intelligence scanner.

Shops owned by Sangeeta Singhal, Shyam Agrawal, Asok Agrawal and Harikash Agrawal were ransacked during Wednesday's offensive, the first on this town 36 km from Darjeeling. Earlier, the Maoists had desisted from attacks on civilians.

Sangeeta said: "My husband and father-in-law had left for Siliguri and I was with my 12-year-old son Ashish during the raid. We didn't expect them to target my shop, but they did."

Pashupati Nagar but refused to comment on whether the charge against the Indians would be pursued at higher levels.

The Indian security establishment was reluctant to speak about the incident.

"I do not have any comment to make. We have intensified patrolling in the area and have asked the Special Services Bureau to deploy forces and assist our patrols," said B. Mishra, the north Bengal inspector-general of police.

A bureau official posted at the Pashupati Nagar outpost had said yesterday that nothing much could be done in the darkness of night and the force was more concerned about remaining alert to thwart any attempt by the rebels to storm the Indian post and snatch the weapons stored there.

Around 140 Special Services Bureau personnel of the Charlie Company's 24 Battalion are deployed in the area. However, the force has to guard two other posts apart from the one at Pashupati Nagar.

Though no reports of the 41 police personnel kidnapped by the Maoists was available, officials confirmed that around 200 Royal Nepal Army personnel arrived today to take up positions in the border town.

# Nepal Maoists burn 18 Indian tankers

Sudeshna Sarkar  
in Kathmandu

April 4. — India's concern at the escalating violence in Nepal received more ammunition today with news reaching here of three Indians being shot at and 18 tankers with Indian number plates being torched by Maoists.

The tankers, hired by Nepal Oil Corporation to ferry petroleum products from India, had been stranded in the border district of Kailali for days due to a blockade by Maoists. The vehi-

cles were set ablaze at Dhangadhi town last night for venturing out during the blockade.

Close on the heels of the tanker attack, another Indian vehicle, reportedly carrying sanitation ware from Rajasthan, was attacked by the rebels in Rupandehi district, 200 km west of Kathmandu, today. The vehicle was torched and the three Indians in it shot at. They were admitted to a hospital in Bhairahawa. Maoists today set on fire another goods vehicle in Nawalparasi district.

Last year, a bus carrying tou-

rists from West Bengal was set ablaze by Maoists outside Kathmandu.

The attacks, coming in the wake of a series of blockades announced by the rebels, are a matter of concern, especially for India-Nepal joint ventures in Nepal. At least one such venture has been shelved because of the disruption in supplies.

The Nepal Maoists, who had earlier been trying to reach a rapprochement with India, seem to have hardened their stand after India extradited

two of their top leaders and arrested one more in Darjeeling recently.

The rebels' website has recently posted a press release issued by three Indian Maoist organisations — the People's War, the Maoist Communist Centre and the CPI-ML (Janashakti) — asking Indians to boycott the Lok Sabha elections.

Reports said security forces have killed at least seven Maoists in two encounters in Kailali and Dolakha districts over the past few days.



# Good policies, good neighbours

**E**CONOMIC indicators like Gross National Product (GNP), or Gross Domestic Product (GDP) are generally used to measure economic progress. But, in Bhutan, under the enlightened leadership of King Jigme Singye Wangchuk, progress is determined not by levels of GNP or GDP, but by an index of what is called as 'Gross National Happiness' (GNH). The level of GNH is determined by the extent of modernisation and development that Bhutan achieves, while simultaneously retaining its cherished traditions and values.

It is this commitment to his country's GNH that has enabled Bhutan to proceed with a process of decentralisation and democratisation. The monarchy in Nepal has traditionally resisted pressures for democratic change and adopted a policy of fanning anti-India sentiments to retain power. Bhutan's monarch, in contrast, has shrewdly adopted a policy of deriving maximum benefit from India, by being sensitive to its security concerns, and using its growing demand for electrical power and a vast range of goods and services, for the prosperity of his people. Yet he has also conducted himself with such dignity that no Indian government can take Bhutan for granted.

It is largely as a result of this sagacity that the kingdom today has a life expectancy of over 66 years and the highest per capita income (\$755) in the subcontinent. While India has contributed substantially to Bhutan's development, it is that nation's decision to exploit its vast hydroelectric potential and natural resources that has rapidly enhanced its prosperity. The 336 MW Chukha hydroelectric project, completed in 1988, enables Bhutan to earn around Rs 140 crore annually by selling electricity to India. When the 1020 MW Tala hydroelectric project becomes operational next year, Bhutan's per capita income could well double. Besides this, negotiations are now under way



## Bhutan and Bangladesh relate to India in sharply differing ways

■ G. PARTHASARATHY

for the development of the 1000 MW Punatsangchhu hydroelectric project that will raise prosperity in Bhutan to levels that will be the envy of the rest of South Asia.

While Bhutan has been correct in its relations with China, India owes the kingdom a debt of gratitude for the effective manner in which it has dealt with insurgent groups armed and trained in Bangladesh. For around 12 years 3,000 armed cadres of the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) and the Kamtapur Liberation Organization (KLO) intruded into Southern Bhutan and launched

operations, Myanmar's foreign minister, U Win Aung, made it clear that his country would not allow anti-Indian forces to seek shelter on its territory.

In contrast to this, Begum Khaleda Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) has a long track record of joining hands with the ISI and fomenting insurgency and religious fundamentalism in India's northeastern states. New Delhi has provided Dhaka with details of over 90 camps on Bangladesh territory where anti-Indian groups are being trained. Shortly after the BNP government assumed its present term in office, the Bangladesh Directorate General of Forces Intelli-

### In contrast to Bhutan's exemplary crackdown on militants operating from its soil, Khaleda Zia's BNP has a long track record of fomenting insurgency in the Northeast

terrorist attacks on Indian territory. The ULFA had 13 camps, the NDFB 12 camps and the KLO 5 camps in Bhutan. Bhutan rejected suggestions by New Delhi to let Indian armed forces enter the kingdom and flush out the terrorists. It, however, strengthened its own armed forces and sought to persuade the intruders to leave Bhutan. When every effort to get them to leave through negotiations failed, the newly established Royal Bhutan Army moved decisively to throw them out. In a brilliant military operation, 30 insurgent camps were destroyed, 181 insurgents killed, 416 apprehended and 463 surrendered. The remaining insurgents fled into India, where relentless pressure has continued. Even as the Bhutanese army was conducting its op-

erations, Myanmar's foreign minister, U Win Aung, made it clear that his country would not allow anti-Indian forces to seek shelter on its territory. In contrast to this, Begum Khaleda Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) has a long track record of joining hands with the ISI and fomenting insurgency and religious fundamentalism in India's northeastern states. New Delhi has provided Dhaka with details of over 90 camps on Bangladesh territory where anti-Indian groups are being trained. Shortly after the BNP government assumed its present term in office, the Bangladesh Directorate General of Forces Intelli-

gence took on the role of not merely supporting insurgent groups like ULFA, but also working hand in glove with the Jamaat-e-Islami Party — a member of the ruling coalition — to promote Islamic militancy in Assam and other border states. They even entertain fanciful ambitions to set up an Islamic State in these areas. The strength of the ISI in the Pakistan High Commission has been beefed up and the ISI is now given a free hand to operate in Bangladesh. General Musharraf will perhaps claim that there is nothing wrong in such ISI activity on Bangladesh territory, as he had merely promised India that he would not allow Pakistan's territory to be used for terrorist activities!

Afghanistan has led to a number of groups associated with Osama bin Laden's International Islamic Front seeking refuge in Bangladesh. The fundamentalist Harkat ul Jihad ul Islami that has been a part of the ISI-sponsored Jihad in Jammu and Kashmir now has a strong support base in Bangladesh. Groups funded by Osama bin Laden operate in Bangladesh under the umbrella of a Dhaka-based group, 'Servants of Suffering Humanity International'. Supporters of the fundamentalist Jemaah Islamiyah outfit involved in terrorist violence in Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore have now found haven in Bangladesh. Intelligence agencies here have also provided support to the Rohingya Muslims to set up a separate Islamic state in the Rakhine Province of Myanmar. These cadres have been reinforced by those who have returned from Afghanistan and Pakistan after the Taliban ouster.

Over 2,100 Indian security personnel and 4,500 militants have lost their lives since 1992 in ongoing insurgencies in our northeastern states. India has thus far shown remarkable patience in dealing with Bangladesh. But once a new government assumes office after the forthcoming elections, some hard decisions will have to be taken on how to deal with Bangladesh. We should now consider actively exposing Bangladesh involvement with terrorist outfits, both to its aid donors and its ASEAN neighbours. Bangladesh also perhaps feels that we are so keen to obtain supplies of natural gas from it that we will overlook its involvement with fundamentalist, terrorist and separatist outfits operating on our soil. In fact, given the vast potential of gas resources on our east coast and off the coast of Myanmar, we should review our policy of seeking natural gas from Bangladesh. Finally, covert and other capabilities will have to be developed to respond to problems our eastern neighbour seems determined to create.

# Lucknow Maoist handed over to Nepal

Statesman News Service

KATHMANDU, Feb. 10. — The official visit of India's former home secretary, Mr N Gopalaswami, now Election Commissioner, to Kathmandu last week to discuss security cooperation and border management seems to have yielded immediate results with reports reaching here about the arrest and extradition of a top Maoist leader from Lucknow on Sunday.

Matrika Prasad Yadav, member of the outlawed Maoists' politburo and the talks team that held peace parleys with two governments last year, before his party broke off the ceasefire and launched urban guerrilla warfare, was reported to have been handed over to the Nepalese immigration authorities along with Suresh Ale Magar. Magar

headed the Madheshi Autonomous People's Government declared by the insurgents in Sarlahi district a fortnight ago.

Sources said Yadav was currently in army's custody and confined to a barrack in the midwest region. However, the Indian Embassy here said on Tuesday it was yet to get any confirmation from New Delhi.

Yadav's arrest would be a decided setback for the Maoists who in the course of their eight-year-old insurgency are now seen as losing man and fire power. Yadav, who was arrested once before during the Sher Bahadur Deuba's government, comes from the Terai plains, where the majority of the people are Nepalese of Indian origin. He had been demanding an autonomous state for the population with Hindi as the national language. The reported arrests come on the heels of Mr Gopalaswami telling the Indian

media during his last week's trip that India was ready to cooperate with Nepal in apprehending the Maoists hiding on Indian soil provided the Nepalese authorities provided accurate information in advance. "We have been telling the Nepalese government, give us quick intelligence and more appointments information and we'll act on it," he had said, answering allegations that India had so far deported only junior Maoist leaders.

The allegations were especially fuelled by the arrest of another Maoist politburo leader, Chandra Prakash Gajurel aka Gaurab, at the Chennai airport late last year while trying to fly out to Germany on a forged passport. Gajurel is currently in Chennai jail with his family unable to furnish the security demanded by the Madras High Court that has stayed his deportation.

"We can immediately extradite those

Maoists against whom there are no cases in India," Mr Gopalaswami had said. "For those who have violated Indian laws, we would like to take care of that first. Lucknow was the site of another recent rendezvous between a Nepalese opposition leader and the two topmost Maoist chiefs, Madhav Kumar Nepal, general secretary of the Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxist-Leninist, had held a secret meeting in a hotel there with the rebels' supreme commander Pushpa Kamal Dahal aka Prachanda and Dr Baburam Bhattarai, his deputy. Disclosures about the visit triggered an outcry in a section of the Nepalese media that India was harbouring Maoists on its soil. While Yadav's arrest will quieten the accusations, it could mean some discomfort for Indian businessmen and traders in Nepal.

Yadav's extradition is also being regarded

as the Indian government's tactic to put pressure on the rebels, who have of late tried to extort two of the largest Indian joint ventures in Nepal, Dabur Nepal and Surya Nepal, a JV of tobacco giant ITC. When both companies declined to pay up, the rebels had hurled bombs at their offices without however causing any damage.

This morning, another bomb went off in the Bishal Bazar complex in the heart of Kathmandu city, causing panic. Though there were no casualties, the blast in a complex where many of the shops are owned by Indians is being interpreted as a retaliation. It is also an effort to scare the city into obeying the industry, businesses and transport bandh call given by the rebels on Thursday as well as a five-day all-Nepal shutdown called by the Maoists' student wing starting from 25 February.

*India & her neighbours*

11 FEB 2004

# জঙ্গি দমনে নেপালও সামরিক অভিযান শুরু করুক, চাইছে দিল্লি

জয়ন্ত ঘোষাল • নয়াদিল্লি

১ ফেব্রুয়ারি: মাওবাদী জঙ্গিদের বিরুদ্ধে সর্বশক্তি দিয়ে সামরিক অভিযান আরম্ভ করতে নেপালের কাছে দাবি জানাল ভারত। সম্প্রতি নেপালের রাজা জ্ঞানেন্দ্রের পুত্র পারস দিল্লি এসে প্রধানমন্ত্রী অটলবিহারী বাজপেয়ীর সঙ্গে বৈঠক করে এই বিষয়ে কথা বলেছেন। যুবরাজ মারফৎ প্রধানমন্ত্রী নেপালের রাজার কাছে এই দাবি জানিয়েছেন। পাশাপাশি এটাও পরিষ্কার বলে দেওয়া হয়েছে, নেপাল মাওবাদী জঙ্গিদের বিরুদ্ধে অভিযান চালালে ভারত সব রকম সহযোগিতা করবে। মাওবাদীদের খতম করতে নেপালকে অভিযান শুরু করার কথা অনেক দিন ধরেই বলে আসছে আমেরিকা ও ব্রিটেন। ভারতও একই দাবি

তোলায় নেপালের উপরে আন্তর্জাতিক চাপ বাড়ল বলে মনে করা হচ্ছে।

ভারত চাইছে, ভূটান যেমন সম্প্রতি তার মাটিতে আলফা, কামতাপুরী, এন ডি এফ বি-র মতো জঙ্গি গোষ্ঠীগুলির বিরুদ্ধে সর্বাঙ্গিক অভিযান চালিয়েছিল, নেপালও একই কায়দায় মাওবাদীদের বিরুদ্ধে সামরিক আক্রমণ শুরু করুক। সপ্তাহ খানেক আগে যুবরাজ পারস বাজপেয়ীর সঙ্গে সৌজন্যমূলক সাক্ষাৎ করতে এসেছিলেন। তখন মাওবাদীদের দৌরাখ্য থামানোর বিষয়ে প্রধানমন্ত্রীর সঙ্গে তাঁর কথা হয়। তবে নেপালের পক্ষ থেকে এই নিয়ে কোনও সুনির্দিষ্ট প্রতিশ্রুতি এখনও পর্যন্ত নয়াদিল্লির কাছে আসেনি। বাংলাদেশও ভারতের দাবি মেনে সামরিক অভিযান চালানোর ব্যাপারে এ যাবৎ

কোনও আগ্রহ দেখায়নি।

ভারত নেপালকে কথা দিয়েছে, মাওবাদীদের হৃদিস সম্পর্কিত গোয়েন্দা-তথ্য দেওয়ার পাশাপাশি নেপালের পুলিশ ও ফৌজিদের আধুনিকতম অস্ত্র দিতে চায় ভারত। জঙ্গলে-ঢাকা পাহাড়ি এলাকায় অভিযানের জন্য হেলিকপ্টার দিয়ে সাহায্যেও ভারত আগ্রহী। ভূটান যখন আলফা ও অন্য জঙ্গিদের বিরুদ্ধে অভিযান চালিয়েছিল, তখনও ভারত একই ভাবে সাহায্য করেছিল।

নেপালের প্রতিনিধিদের হাতে একটি গোয়েন্দা-রিপোর্টও তুলে দেওয়া হয়েছে। যেখানে মাওবাদীদের গতিবিধি, কোথায় কেমন ঘাঁটি, এই সব বিস্তারিত তথ্য রয়েছে। রিপোর্টে বলা হয়েছে, উত্তরপ্রদেশের তরাই অঞ্চল, শিলিগুড়ি



করিডর এবং বিহারের পূর্বিয়া এলাকা দিয়ে নিয়মিত যাতায়াত করে জঙ্গিরা। নেপালের



পক্ষ থেকে বলা হয়েছে, মাওবাদীদের বিরুদ্ধে লড়ার জন্য ইতিমধ্যেই সে দেশের

সেনাবাহিনী 'রয়্যাল নেপাল আর্মি'কে আরও মজবুত করা হয়েছে। সম্প্রতি সেনাবাহিনীতে ৬,৪০০ ফৌজি নেওয়া হয়েছে। এখন সেনার সংখ্যা ৭০ হাজার। নেপাল সরকার নয়াদিল্লিকে জানিয়েছে, ইতিমধ্যেই জাতীয় বাজেটের এক চতুর্থাংশ তারা খরচ করছে নিরাপত্তা-খাতে। যার বেশির ভাগটাই যাচ্ছে মাওবাদীদের মোকাবিলায়। ২০০৩-০৪ সালে ১৪০০ কোটি নেপালি টাকা ব্যয় হয়েছে নিরাপত্তা খাতে। এবং মাওবাদীদের কিছুটা নিস্তেজ করে দেওয়া গিয়েছে।

গত বছর ২৭ অগস্ট নেপাল পুলিশ মাওবাদীদের বিরুদ্ধে যুদ্ধবিগ্রহি ঘোষণা করেছিল। কিন্তু সেই শান্তি-প্রয়াস কিছু দিনের মধ্যেই ভেঙে যায় জঙ্গিরা হামলা শুরু করার পরে। মাওবাদী কার্যকলাপ

নেপালে ভয়াবহ আকার ধারণ করেছে। এটা যেমন নেপালের নিজের কাছে আশঙ্কার বিষয়, তেমনই প্রতিবেশী ভারতের জন্যও চিন্তার কারণ। কারণ, এ দেশের নকশালপন্থী বেশ কিছু জঙ্গি সংগঠন সরাসরি মাওবাদীদের কাছ থেকে সাহায্য পাচ্ছে। গোয়েন্দা সূত্রে বলা হচ্ছে, ছত্তীসগড়, মধ্যপ্রদেশের মতো ৬-৭টি রাজ্যে নকশালপন্থী কার্যকলাপে মাওবাদীদের মদত রয়েছে।

কেন্দ্রীয় সরকার সূত্রে খবর, নেপালে গণতান্ত্রিক ভাবে নির্বাচিত সরকার থাকলেও বাজপেয়ী চান নেপালের রাজপরিবারকে জানিয়েই এই বিষয়ে এগোতে। তার কারণ, নেপালের সমাজ ও রাজনীতিতে রাজপরিবারের প্রভাব রয়েছে। নেপালের সঙ্গে যোগসূত্র কী ভাবে

হবে, তা নিয়ে বিদেশ মন্ত্রক ও প্রধানমন্ত্রীর দফতরের কর্তাদের চিন্তাভাবনা করতে হয়েছিল। প্রধানমন্ত্রী বাজপেয়ী এখন ভোটের মুখে বিদেশ সফরে যাবেন না। ইতিমধ্যেই তিনি তাইল্যান্ড ও অস্ট্রেলিয়া সফর বাতিল করে দিয়েছেন। অন্য দিকে, রাজা জ্ঞানেন্দ্রকে ভারতে নিমন্ত্রণ করে আনতে হলে অনেক সময় প্রয়োজন। তাই সব দিক খতিয়ে দেখে নেপালের সঙ্গে আলোচনার পরে, উপ-রাষ্ট্রপতি ভৈরৌ সিংহ শেখাওয়ার্তের আমন্ত্রণে দিল্লি আসেন পারস। নেপালের রাজপরিবারে হত্যাকাণ্ডে পারসের নামও এক সময় সন্দেহের তালিকায় উঠেছিল। কিন্তু ভারত সরকার এই বিষয়টি নিয়ে মাথা ঘামাতে নারাজ। নেপাল-রাজের কাছেও নিজের ছেলের থেকে ভাল দূত অন্য কেউ হতে পারে না।

# Ghisingh 'advises' Nepal: Emergency, King in that order!

Sudeshna Sarkar in Kathmandu

Jan. 16. — While the Indian government has said that it wants constitutional monarchy and multi-party democracy to continue in Nepal with fresh elections as soon as feasible, the maverick Darjeeling leader, Mr Subash Ghisingh, has advocated Emergency for the Himalayan kingdom with a greater role for the King.

The chairman of the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council was in Kathmandu on a lighting trip yesterday to attend a felicitation programme organised by a local organisa-

tion — the Media Reporters' Club of Nepal. The leader of the Gorkha National Liberation Front raised hackles here with the local media who in turn dubbed him "controversial" and accused him of having come to Kathmandu to promote the King and run down the kingdom's Opposition leaders.

But an undeterred Mr Ghisingh said that King Gyanendra should impose Emergency and then amend the constitution of the country. The multi-party system, the GNLF leader said, was not feasible in Nepal, which had a highly centralised power structure with one party running the government with

and Mahakali temples in Kathmandu, he came down heavily on the prevailing custom of offering sacrifices to deities during the Hindu religious festivals. "In a country which is supposed to be very holy and peaceful, there is bloodshed. This is because people here are slaughtering hens and goats," he told the local media and added: "No deity will be happy with this. Only the black powers would be appeased."

According to reports from Darjeeling, Mr Ghisingh's attempts to visit Nepal in the past had been rebuffed by the earlier King, Birendra.

His open letter to the King in the late



**'I've the power'**  
DARJEELING, Jan. 16.  
— Mr Ghisingh has said that he has the power to declare Emergency in Darjeeling in a crisis situation, the *Kathmandu Post* quoted him as saying.  
— SNS

Kathmandu as its base.

Though Mr Ghisingh found time during his brief trip to pay a visit to the Kalbhairav

India - & Nepal

1980s, seeking support for the Gorkhaland movement, had turned the hill leader into political hot potato for Nepal.

Accompanying Mr Ghisingh during his trip this time were Mr BS Thapa, private secretary, Mr Hem Gurung, protocol officer, Mrs Nimchiki Pradhan, Mrs Hema Lama, Ms Sujata Rani Rai, Mr Birahi Kaila, Mr Nirpa Narayan Pradhan and Mr LB Rai, among others.

The visit reportedly had the clearance of the government of India; but there is speculation over the repercussions given the general impression that Mr Ghisingh shares an "understanding" with the present King.

CANONICAL OFFICE

# SR-8 13/1/04 Rebel rousing

India & her neighbours  
Bhutan must answer vital questions

**B**hutan may feel satisfied that it has at last been able to bust the hideouts of the Ulfa, National Democratic Front of Bodoland and Kamtapur Liberation Organisation. But several questions demand answers. There have been too many evasive, confusing and contradictory statements blurring an accurate account of what happened. By Thimphu's own admission, the three militant outfits together comprised 3,000 cadres. True, about 120 of them were reportedly killed but the bodies have yet to be handed over to the Indian authorities.

A couple of hundred were said to have been captured, or surrendered. So where did the rest disappear? Besides, the size of the arms cache seized from at least 30 rebel camps does not tally with reports that the militants were in possession of heavy armoury and sophisticated weapons. It is necessary to get precise information on them before finally declaring the crackdown a success.

Politically, there is not much to crow about over the capture of Ulfa ideologue and founder member Bhimkanta Buragohain and publicity secretary Mithinga Daimary, as they were more or less spent forces and had been inactive. While the former is an octogenarian, the latter has been ailing for some time. Some leaders have been nabbed but Ulfa stalwarts like Robin Neog, Bening Rabha, Ashanta Bagh Phukan and NDFB publicity secretary B Erakdao are still at large. The biggest catch will be Ulfa commander-in-chief Paresh Barua, a hard nut to crack. Only after his capture can one say Ulfa's backbone has been broken. India is greatly relieved because the Bhutan sanctuary was logistically important for the rebels to mount attacks on Assam and North Bengal.

Even if some of them have sneaked into Bangladesh they will not enjoy that advantage. In the interest of good neighbourly relations, Dhaka must cooperate to flush out North-east insurgents who are running a number of training camps in that country. Harsh action against the three anti-Indian outfits is justified on grounds that they have refused to abjure violence and ignored peace overtures. But if India is seen getting directly involved in operations against the Khaplang faction of the NSCN in its stronghold in the Sangaing division of Myanmar, as reports suggest, then Delhi is violating the ceasefire agreement with the outfit. The military pressure in Myanmar is likely to set off an influx into Nagaland, creating problems for the state.

THE STATESMAN

13 JAN 2004

## সেনা অভিযান মায়ানমারে

গুয়াহাটি, ৫ জানুয়ারি— উত্তর মায়ানমারের ভারতীয় জঙ্গিদের ঘাঁটিগুলি উচ্ছেদের জন্য মায়ানমার সেনা আজ অভিযান শুরু করেছে। দিল্লির ক্রমাগত চাপের ফলেই মায়ানমার সরকার এই সেনা অভিযান শুরু করেছে বলে জানা গিয়েছে। ভূটান সরকার কিছু দিন আগেই নিজেদের দেশের দুর্গম পাহাড়ি এলাকায় সেনা অভিযান চালিয়ে প্রায় ১৫০ জন ভারতীয় জঙ্গিকে হত্যা করার পর মায়ানমারও এই পদক্ষেপ নিল। ভারতীয় সেনা কর্তৃপক্ষ জানিয়েছেন মায়ানমারের উত্তরাঞ্চলে প্রচুর জঙ্গি প্রশিক্ষণ শিবির থাকলেও এগুলিকে হটাতে মায়ানমার সেনা ব্যবস্থা নিয়েছে এমন কোনও খবর তাঁদের কাছে নেই। — রয়টার্স

# Sting for Pak in pat for Thimpu

Vinod Sharma & Agencies  
Islamabad, January 4

HE AVOIDED the "issues" with Pakistan; he never mentioned Bangladesh. In his five-page address on the opening day of the 12th Saarc summit, Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee spoke of Bhutan.

But it was easy for Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali and Begum Khaleda Zia to read between the lines.

Vajpayee began by regretting the continued "mutual suspicions" and "petty rivalries" that poison regional ties and asked Saarc members to be "sensitive" to each other's security concerns.

## Musharraf pitch for bilateral issues

AT THE previous Saarc summit in Kathmandu, Musharraf had caught Vajpayee off guard with a surprise handshake. This time, at the banquet at his residence, the Pakistan President avoided mentioning Kashmir as promised. But he sprang the suggestion that the Saarc

*India & few nei shans*

charter be amended to allow discussion of bilateral issues. Else, problems will not be confronted and "cynicism will take over and Saarc will lose credibility and momentum". He said Saarc members mustn't "interfere" in one another's affairs.

Details on Page 4

Then he cited Thimpu's "coercive action" in flushing out Indian militants from its territory. "It is an outstanding example of sensitivity to the secu-

rity concerns of a neighbour." Pakistan and Bangladesh — the two neighbours which New Delhi thinks, haven't done enough to address India's secu-

rity concerns — couldn't have missed the point.

Thimpu's action, Vajpayee continued, "is at the same time in the direct long-term security interests of Bhutan itself". He didn't rub it in by mentioning the recent attempts on the life of President Pervez Musharraf by terrorists who had been nurtured by Islamabad itself.

That point had already been made by Bhutan Prime Minister Jigmi Thinley, who spoke just before Vajpayee. "While we take comfort in the failure of the attempts" on Musharraf, "we cannot but see it as yet another rude reminder of our lack of will to root out the menace of terrorism," Thinley said.

# Bhutan flushout causes ripples in Bangladesh

OUR BUREAU

✓ 21/1/04 T-6

**Jan. 3:** The tremors of the Bhutan flushout have reached Bangladesh, triggering a bloody rebellion in the ranks of Tripura militants hiding there and apparently prompting Dhaka to round up Ulfa activists.

Five National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT) militants were shot dead by their comrades who were tired of being on the run and wanted to surrender. News of the killings, which occurred at the end of December, came to light today.

Intelligence sources said in Agartala that the six NLFT militants who shot dead their colleagues later sneaked across the international border into west Tripura. The fleeing militants have been trying to contact security forces in order to surrender, the sources said.

They said the six were part of a 17-member group staying at the outfit's base camp in Dudhpatil in Bangladesh's Habiganj district. The six rebels, led by Karnajay Debbarma, were keen to surrender.

However, when the NLFT leadership came to know of their plans, the rebels shot dead those who opposed the surrender and fled the base on December 31.

The news of the rift in the NLFT ranks coincided with reports that the Bangladesh Rifles has detained 34 suspected United Liberation Front of Asom rebels in Dhaka.

However, the reports were swiftly denied by the Bangladesh home ministry, which said they had been "fabricated to strain the friendly relations between Bangladesh and India". Dhaka's official position is that there are no militant camps on its soil. It has sought to portray an ongoing crackdown as one aimed at flushing out criminals.

The reluctance in declaring open war on Indian insurgents hiding in Bangladesh could stem from the domestic compulsions of the Khaleda Zia government,

which came to power on an anti-India platform.

The ruling coalition contains many hardliners, including the Jamaat, and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia cannot afford to antagonise them.

Dhaka's *Ittefaq* and *Jugantar* dailies reported that suspected Ulfa rebels had been detained in the Bangladesh capital on Friday night. The raids were carried out after four strangers injured in a bomb blast in Mohamadpur on Thursday went to the state-run Suhrawardy Hospital, raising the doctors' suspicions.

Police detectives followed the injured men's trail and raided six houses on Friday, allegedly netting the Ulfa members.

## Summit twist

India has chosen to carefully watch Bangladesh's undeclared drive before deciding if it represents a shift in Dhaka's policy.

Sources in Delhi said the Indian government believes that a real change of tack can come about only if the Islamabad Saarc summit results in better India-Pakistan relations.

"If India and Pakistan, the two biggest nations in the region continue their engagement and repair ties, the situation in the entire region will improve," a senior home ministry official said.

North Block believes Pakistan is the source of the anti-India sentiments that drive smaller nations like Bangladesh. It reckons that if Delhi and Islamabad can improve relations, anti-India feelings and support for insurgents will diminish.

Officials in Delhi said Bhutan's offensive has put pressure on Bangladesh to act. Dhaka realises that international opinion against countries harbouring militants has hardened since the September 11 attacks. The anti-terrorism deal reached by Saarc nations in Islamabad yesterday will also make Bangladesh's position less tenable.



# Atal sees Bhutan as role model

Diwakar

ISLAMABAD 4 JANUARY

**P**RIME Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee on Sunday cited Bhutan's military campaign against Indian insurgents to reinforce his message for anti-terror cooperation among India's neighbours. "It is an outstanding example of sensitivity to security concerns of a neighbour," said the Prime Minister in a subtle reminder of the track record of other countries in counter-terror cooperation.

As he tried to showcase the Indo-Bhutanese collaboration saying that it was in the long-term security interests of Bhutan itself, he got good support from Bhutanese Prime Minister Jigme Yoezer Thinley.

Standing in for his king, Jigme Singye Wangchuk, Mr Thinley said it was the killing of innocents — the *raison d'être*

for India's persistent campaign for a zero-tolerance approach towards terrorism — which forced Bhutan to move against the insurgents.

It was, however, Mr Thinley's reference to the twin assassination attempts on General Pervez Musharraf which must have rankled Pakistan. The Bhutan Prime Minister called the jihadi attempts on General Musharraf's life a "rude reminder" of the crippling potential of the terror menace.

Even as other leaders such as Maumoon Abdul Gayoom of Maldives and Chandrika Kumaratunga expressed their horror over the daring jihadi plots, Pakistan did not need others to remind itself that the threat might have reached their doorstep. Its growing fear of the terrorists is indicated by the anti-aircraft guns mounted on the Margalla Hills.

The Economic Times

3 JAN 2004