

NEPAL

BY
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**SRI AUROBINDO
DIVINE LIFE EDUCATION CENTRE**

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INTRODUCTION

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|---|--|
| (1) Capital | – Kathmandu |
| (2) Other Large Cities | – Biratnagar, Lalitpur |
| (3) Area | – 147181 sq, km: |
| (4) Population | – 27 million |
| (5) Population of principal cities upto 1995: | |
| (a) Kathmandu (capital) | – 239,160 |
| (b) Biratnagar | – 93,544 |
| (c) Pokhara | – 46,542 |
| (d) Birgunj | – 43,642 |
| (e) Nepalgunj | – 34,015 |
| (f) Bhairahawa | – 31,190 |
| (6) Latitude | – 28° 00' N |
| (7) Longitude | – 85° 00' E |
| (8) Language | – Nepali, Maithili, Bhojpuri etc. |
| (9) Currency | – Nepalese Rupee (US \$1 = 77.33) |
| (10) Per Capita Income (P.P.P.) | – \$1,400 |
| (11) Literacy | – 27% |
| (12) Religion | – Hinduism (official-90%), Buddhism, Islam |
| (13) Head of State | – King Gyanendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev. |

“The kingdom of Nepal (Nepali Adhirajya) is a landlocked

Asian country in the Himalayan mountain range. It is bounded north by Tibet, on the east by Sikkim and West Bengal, on the south by Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. Nepal extends roughly 500 miles (800 kilometers) from east to west and 90 to 150 miles from north to south. Nepal, long under the rule of hereditary prime ministers favouring a policy of isolation, remained closed to the outside world until a palace revolt in 1952 gained admission to the United Nations in 1955. In 1991 the kingdom established a multiparty parliamentary system.

Wedged between two giants, India and China, Nepal seeks to keep a balance between the two countries in its foreign policy – and thus to remain independent. A factor that contributes immensely to the geopolitical importance of the country is the fact that a strong Nepal can deny China access to the rich Gangetic Plain; Nepal thus marks the southern boundary of the Chinese sphere north of the Himalayas in Asia.

As a result of its years of geographic and self-imposed isolation, Nepal is one of the least developed nations of the world. In recent years many countries, including India, China, the United States, the United Kingdom, Japan, Denmark, Germany, Canada, and Switzerland have provided economic assistance to Nepal. The extent of foreign aid to Nepal has been influenced to a considerable degree by the strategic position of the country between India and China.”¹

PHYSICAL AND HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

(A) RELIEF

“Nepal contains some of the most rugged and difficult mountain terrain in the world. Roughly 75 % of the country is covered by mountains. From the south to the north, Nepal

can be divided into four main physical belts, each of which extends east to west across the country. These are, first, the Tarai, a low, flat, fertile land adjacent to the border of India; second, the forested Churia foothills and the Inner Tarai zone, rising from the Tarai plain to the rugged Mahabharat Range; third, the mid-mountain region between the Mahabharat Range and the Great Himalayas; and, fourth, the Great Himalaya Range, rising to more than 29,000 feet (some 8,850 metres).

The Tarai forms the northern extension of the Gangetic Plain and varies in width from less than 16 to more than 20 miles, narrowing considerably in several places. A 10-mile-wide belt of rich agricultural land stretches along the southern part of the Tarai; the northern section, adjoining the foothills, is a marshy region in which wild animals abound and malaria is endemic.

The Churia Range, which is sparsely populated, rises in almost perpendicular escarpments to an altitude of more than 4,000 feet. Between the Churia Range to the south and the Mahabharat Range to the north, there are broad basins from 2,000 to 3,000 feet high, about 10 miles wide, and 20 to 40 miles long; these basins are often referred to as the Inner Tarai. In many places they have been cleared of the forest and savanna grass to provide timber and areas for cultivation.

A complex system of mountain ranges, some 50 miles in width and varying in elevation from 8,000 to 14,000 feet, lie between the Mahabharat Range and the Great Himalayas. The ridges of the Mahabharat Range present a steep escarpment toward the south and a relatively gentle slope toward the north. To the north of the Mahabharat Range, which encloses the valley of Kathmandu, are the more lofty ranges of the Inner Himalaya (Lesser Himalaya), rising to perpetually snow-covered peaks. The Kathmandu and the

Pokhara valleys lying within this mid-mountain region are flat basins, formally covered with lakes, that were formed by the deposition of fluvial and fluvio-glacial material brought down by rivers and glaciers from the enclosing ranges during the four glacial and intervening warm phases of the Pleistocene Epoch (from about 1,600,000 to 10,000 years ago).

The Great Himalaya Range, ranging in elevation from 14,000 to more than 29,000 feet, contains many of the world's highest peaks—Everest, Kanchenjunga I, Lhotse I, Makalu I, Cho-Oyu, Dhulagiri I, Manaslu I, and Annapurna I – all of them above 26,400 feet. Except for scattered settlement in high mountain valleys, this entire area is uninhabited.”²²

(B) DRAINAGE

“The Kathmandu Valley, the political and cultural hub of the nation, is drained by the Bagmati River, flowing southward, which washes the steps of the sacred temple of Pashupatinatha and rushes out of the valley through the deeply cut Chhobar gorge. Some sandy layers of the lacustrine beds act as aquifers (water-bearing strata of permeable rock, sand, or gravel) and springs occur in the Kathmandu Valley where the sands outcrop. The springwater often gushes out of dragon-shaped mouths of stone made by the Nepalese; it is then collected in tanks for drinking and washes and also for raising paddy nurseries in May, before the monsoon. Drained by the Seti River, the Pokhara Valley, 96 miles west of Kathmandu, is also a flat lacustrine basin. There are few remnant lakes in the Pokhara basin, the largest being Phewa Lake, which is about two miles long and nearly a mile wide. North of the basin lies the Annapurna massif of the Great Himalaya Range.

The major river of Nepal—the Kosi, Narayani (Gandak),

and Karnali, running southward across the strike of the Himalayan range—form transverse valleys with deep gorges, which are generally several thousand feet in depth from the crest of the bordering ranges. The watershed of these rivers lies not along the line of highest peaks in the Himalayas but to the north of it, usually in Tibet.

The rivers have considerable potential for development of hydroelectric power. Two irrigation-hydroelectric projects have been undertaken jointly with India on the Kosi and Narayani rivers. Discussions have been held to develop the enormous potential of the Karnali River. A 60,000-kilowatt hydroelectric projects at Kulekhani, funded by the World Bank, Kuwait, and Japan, began operation in 1982.

In the upper courses of all Nepalese rivers, which run through mountain regions, there are little or no flood problems. In low-lying areas of the Tarai plain, however, serious floods occur.

The rivers and small streams of the Tarai, especially those in which the dry season discharge is small, are polluted by large quantities of domestic waste thrown into them. Towns and villages have expanded without proper provision for sewage disposal facilities, and more industries have been established at selected centres in the Tarai. The polluted surface water in the Kathmandu and Pokhara valleys, as well as in the Tarai, are unacceptable for drinking.”³

(C) CLIMATE

“Nepal’s climate, influenced by elevation as well as by its location in subtropical latitude, ranges from subtropical monsoon conditions in the Tarai, through a warm temperate climate between 4,000 and 7,000 feet in the mid-mountain region, to cool temperate conditions in the higher parts of

mountains between 7,000 and 11,000 feet, to an Alpine climate at altitudes between 14,000 and 16,000 feet along the lower slopes of the Himalaya mountains. At altitudes above 16,000 feet the temperature is always below freezing point and the surface covered by snow and ice. Rainfall is ample in the eastern portion of the Tarai (which receives from 70 to 75 inches [1,800 to 1,900 millimeters] a year at Biratnagar) and in the mountains, but the western portion of Nepal (where from 30 to 35 inches a year fall at Mahendranagar) is drier.”⁴

(D) PLANT LIFE

“The natural vegetation of Nepal follows the pattern of climate and altitude. A tropical moist zone of deciduous vegetation occurs in the Tarai and the Churia Range. These forests consist mainly of Khair (*Acacia catechu*), a spring tree with yellow flowers and flat pods; sissoo (*Dalbergia sissoo*), an East Indian tree yielding dark brown durable timber; and sal (*Shorea robusta*), an East Indian timber tree with foliage providing food for lac insects (which deposits lac, a resinous substance used for the manufacture of shellac and varnishes, on the tree’s twigs). On the Mahabharata Range, at elevation between 5,000 and 10,000 feet vegetation consists of a mixture of many species, chiefly pines, oaks, rhododendrons, poplars, walnuts, and larch. Between 10,000 and 12,000 feet, fir mixed with birch as well as rhododendron, abound.”⁵

“The vast forested area below the timberline in the Great Himalaya Range bears some of the most valuable forests in Nepal, containing spruce, fir, cypress, juniper, and birch. Alpine vegetation occupies higher parts of the Great Himalaya Range. Just below the snow line, between 14,000 and 15,000 feet, grassy vegetation affords favourable grazing ground in summer.”⁶

(E) ANIMAL LIFE

“The forested areas of the Tarai are the home of tigers and leopards, gaurs (wild ox), occasional elephants and buffalo, and many deer; the deer include chital, or axis, deer (which have white-spotted bodies), sambar (a large Asiatic deer with coarse hair on the throat and strong antlers), and swamp deer. The Lesser Rapti Valley, in south – central Nepal, is some of the last homes of the great Indian rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros unicornis*). Much poaching has gone on, as the horn of the rhinoceros is reputed to be valuable as an aphrodisiac, but in the 1950s the Nepal government organized protective measures.

There are few wild animals in the central zone because of the clearing of forests. Occasional leopards, bears, and smaller carnivores inhabit the forests and ravines, and muntjacs (a kind of small deer, also called the barking deer) are found in the woods. In the Alpine zone are musk deer, widely hunted for the musk pods they carry, the tahr (a Himalayan beardless wild goat), the goral (any of several goat antelopes closely related to the Rocky Mountain goat), and wild sheep, which are preyed upon by wolves and snow leopards. Pheasant are common. The Yeti (bear-man or Abominable Snowman) is said by Sherp to inhabit the high snow mountains but has eluded discovery by several expedition. Strange tracks are often found in the snow, but it is believed that they are probably made by bears. River wildlife includes the mahseer, a large freshwater food and sport fish.”⁷

THE PEOPLE

“The large-scale migrations of Mongoloid groups from Tibet and Indo-Aryan people from northern India, which

accompanied the early settlement of Nepal, have produced a diverse linguistic, ethnic, and religious pattern. Nepalese of Indo-Aryan ancestry comprise the people of the Tarai, the Pahari, the Newar, and the Tharus – the great majority of the total population. Indo-Aryan ancestry has been a source of prestige in Nepal for centuries, and the ruling families have been of Indo-Aryan and Hindu backward. Most of the Tibeto-Nepalese groups—the Tamang, Rai, Limbu, Bhutia (including the Sherpa), and Sunwar—live in the north and east, while the Magar and Gurung inhabit west central Nepal. The bulk of the famous Gurkha contingents in the British army have come from the Magar, Gurung, and Rai groups.

The principal and official language of Nepal is Nepali (Gorkhali), spoken in the Tarai and the mid-mountain region. Nepali, a derivative of Sanskrit, belongs to the Indo-Aryan branch of the Indo-European family. There are a number of regional dialects found in the Tarai and mountain areas. The languages of the north and east belong predominantly to the Tibeto-Burman family. These include Magar, Gurung, Rai, Limbu, Sunwar, Tamang, Newari, and a number of Bhutia dialects, including Sherpa and Thakali. Although Newari is commonly placed in the Tibeto-Burman family, it was influenced by both Tibeto-Burman and Indo-European languages.

In Nepal a vast majority of the population is Hindu, but a small percentage follows Buddhism or other religious faiths. Hindus and Buddhists tend to be concentrated in areas where Indian and Tibetan cultural influences, respectively, have been dominant.

Almost all Nepalese live in villages or in small market centres. Outside of Kathmandu, there are no major cities. Small urban centres (Biratnagar, Nepalganj, and Birganj) are

located in the Tarai along the Indian border, and Pokhara is situated in a valley in the mid-mountain region. In addition, a few townships – such as Hitaura, Butwal and Dharan-have begun to emerge in the foothills and hill areas, where economic activity has developed.”⁸

THE ECONOMY

“Landlocked, lacking substantial resources for economic development, and hampered by an inadequate transportation network, Nepal is one of the least developed nations in the world. The economy is heavily dependent on imports of basic materials and on foreign markets for its forest and agricultural products. Nepal imports essentials commodities, such as fuel, construction materials, fertilizers, metals and most consumer goods, and exports such products as rice, jute, timber, and textiles.

The political and administrative system of Nepal has not made those changes in trade, investment, and related economic policies that would expedite economic development and attract foreign capital. The government’s development programs, which are funded by foreign aid, also have failed to respond directly to the needs of rural people.”⁹

(A) MINERAL RESOURCES

“Nepal’s mineral resources are small, scattered, and barely developed. There are known deposits of coal (lignite), iron ore, magneste, copper, cobalt, pyrite (used for making sulfuric acid), limestone and mica. Nepal’s great river systems provide immense potential for hydroelectric development. If developed and utilized within the country and exported to India (the principal market for power generated in Nepal), it

could become a mainstay of the country's economy."¹⁰

(B) AGRICULTURE

“Agriculture – primarily the cultivation of rice, corn (maize), and wheat – engages most of Nepal's population and accounts for well over half of the country's export earning. Yet agricultural productivity is very low. The low yields result from shortages of fertilizers and improved seeds and from the use of inefficient techniques. Because only a tiny percentage of Nepal's cultivated land area is under irrigation, output depends upon the vagaries of the weather. Potatoes, sugarcane, and millet are other major crops. Cattle, buffalo, goats, and sheep are the principle livestock raised.

On the whole, Nepal has a small surplus in food grains. There are, however, major dislocations in supply and demands. Periods of shortage between harvest of various crops occur in the mountain areas. At the same time, substantial amounts of food grain are moved to India from the Tarai. Because of the lack of adequate transportation, surplus food grain from the Tarai does not move north into the food deficit areas of the mid-mountain region, some food grains move northward from the Tarai and the mountain area into Tibet, however, despite a shortage in the mountain regions.

The greatest potential for increases in agricultural production is in the Tarai. In the mid-mountain region the potential for increasing production is limited. Because of high population concentration in this region, almost all land capable of cultivation is tilled. Increasing the cultivated land area by cutting into standing forests aggravates erosion and results in reduced yields and land losses by landslides. Major projects have been undertaken in an effort to halt soil erosion and deforestation.”¹¹

“Much of the country is forested and too steep for cultivation, yet in 1991 about 91% of the labour force were engaged in agriculture, forestry and fishing. This sector contribute almost 59% of Nepal’s GDP and provides an estimated 60% of export earning.”¹²

(C) FORESTRY

“About one-third of Nepal’s total area is forested; most of this area is state-owned. In spite of over cutting and poor management, timber represents one of the country’s most valuable resources and is a major source of potential revenue. Exports of forest products constitutes an important source of Indian rupees. Almost all timber is exported to India. The sawmills of the Timber corporation of Nepal, a government – owned lumber – processing concern, supply Kathmandu Valley with construction and furniture wood.”¹³

“Forest cover has been reduced from 60% of the land to around 30%, since the early 1950, mainly because of the rapid increase in Nepal’s population.”¹⁴

(D) INDUSTRY AND TRADE

“Industrial production represents a small but growing segment of economic activity. Most industries are small, localized operation based on the processing of agriculture products. The jute industry, centred in Biratnagar, is an important earner of foreign exchange. Sugar factories are located in Biratnagar, Birganj, and Bhairahawa. There are sawmills and a meat-processing plant in Hitaura and a number of rice and oil mills in the Tarai. Other industries include brick and tile manufacture; processing of construction materials, paper, and food grain; cigarette manufacture; cement production; and brewing of beer. In general, there are more

industrial enterprises in the private than in the public sector, although most of these are cottage industries. The main areas of manufacturing concentration are Biratnagar, the Birganj – Hitaura corridor, and the Kathmandu Valley.”¹⁵

“Industry contributes about 10% of Nepal’s GDP. Its major trading partner is India.”¹⁶

“Tourism represents a small but expanding industry. Foreign tourism is primarily confined to the Kathmandu Valley, which is the only area equipped with the necessary hotels, food supplies, roads, and international transport services. There are, however, many areas outside the Kathmandu Valley with potential for the development of tourism; these include Pokhara, the Mount Everest area, and the Narayani area (where big game exists).

For geographic and historical reasons, nearly all of Nepal’s trade is with India. Attempts have been made to diversify trade through agreements with Europe and some other countries in Asia and the USA. The state trading agency, National Trading Limited, has expanded its activities by fostering the development of commercial entrepreneurial activity. Large-scale commercial activity has hitherto been in the hands of foreigners, primarily Indians.

Nepal’s foreign trade and balance of payments have suffered setbacks, and exports have not increase enough to pay for imports of consumer goods and basic supplies. Nepal’s dependence on the Indian market for most of its, imports and exports and on the port of Calcutta for its access to the sea has been the source of periodic friction between the two countries.”¹⁷

“Principal exports are food grains, jute, timber, oilseeds, ghee (clarified butter), Potatoes, medicinal herbs, skins, and

cattle. The chief imports are textiles, cigarette, salt, petrol and kerosene, sugar, machinery, medicines, boots and shoes, paper, cement, iron, steel and tea.”¹⁸

ADMINISTRATION AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS

(A) GOVERNMENT

“Although reforms in the 1950s began to move the kingdom toward a democratic political system, the crown dissolved Parliament in 1960 and subsequently banned political parties. Thereafter, Nepal become only nominally a constitutional monarchy, and the constitution of 1962 (amended 1967, 1976, and 1980) effectively gave the king autocratic control over a multitiered system of panchayats (local bodies, or council). In the 1980s, political restrictions were eased, and organization such as the Nepali Congress Party, the Communist Party on Nepal, numerous small left-leaning student groups, and several radical Nepalese antimonarchist groups were allowed to operate more or less openly. Political parties, however, were not again legalized until 1990, when nationwide unrest forced King Birendra to accept the formation of a multiparty parliamentary system.

A new constitution promulgated on November 9, 1990, greatly reduced the power of the monarchy. The King remained the head of state, but effective executive power was given to the council of Minister, headed by the prime minister. Appointed by the king, the prime minister is required to be either the leader of the majority party in the House of Representatives (the lower house of Parliament), or, if there is no majority party, a representative who can form a coalition

majority.

The King is constitutionally also a part of Parliament and is charged with giving assent to bills that have been passed by both legislative chambers – the House of Representatives and the National Council (the upper house). The House of Representatives consists of 205 member popularly elected to five-year terms. The 60 member of the National Council hold six-year terms; 10 are nominated by the king, 35 are elected by the House of Representatives (of which 3 must be women), and 15 are selected by an electoral college. The constitution gives the House of Representatives considerably more power than the National Council.”¹⁹

Prior to 1990 the country was divided for administrative purposes into 5 development regions, 14 zones, and 75 districts; in addition, there were corresponding regional, zonal, and district courts, as well as a Supreme Court. The 1990 constitution mandated the elimination of the regional and zonal courts, which were to be replaced by appellate courts. The administrative divisions themselves continued to exist as provisional units.”²⁰

(B) TRANSPORTATION

“Transport facilities in Nepal are very limited; independent nations in the world of comparable size have such little road mileage and so few motor vehicles. Construction of new roads has been undertaken since the 1970s with aid from India, China, Great Britain, and the United States. The main means of transportation has been the network of footpaths, which interlace the mountain terrain and valley. Trails have evolved into main trade routes, which tend to follow the river system.

The meagre road-transport facilities in Nepal are supplemented by only a few railway and air-transport links. Increased use of road transport has reduced the significance of the two narrow-gauge railroads that run from Amlekhganj to Raxaul (India) and from Janakpur to Jaynagar (India). The Royal Nepal Airline Corporation, an autonomous government agency, is the only commercial airline. Together with Indian Airlines, it operates flights from Kathmandu to various points in India and other nearby countries. Domestic air service within the country has been expanded. The United States built the Kathmandu–Hitaura aerial ropeway in the 1950s, and it is still used for carrying goods into the capital.”²¹

(C) ARMED FORCES AND POLICE

“Nepal’s armed forces consist of the Royal Nepalese Army, predominantly an infantry force. The Army Flight Department operates all aircraft. Except for a few simple weapons, all military supplies are imported. Nepal is famous for the fighting qualities of its Gurkha soldiers; nearly 10,000 of these serve in British Gurkha Units, and 50,000 in Indian Gurkha Units. The British maintain a recruiting center at Dharan. Gurkha veterans are a valuable human resource of Nepal.

For police purposes the country is divided into three zones: eastern, central, and western, with headquarters at Biratnagar, Kathmandu, and Nepalganj, respectively. Each zonal headquarters, under a deputy inspector general of police, is responsible for several subsections composed of four to five police districts operating under a superintendent of police. A district superintendent is in charge of police stations in his area, and each station normally is supervised by a head constable.”²²

(D) HEALTH AND EDUCATION

“The Ministry of Health is responsible for the support and administration of public health services, including hospitals and health clinics. Although the government has taken steps to improve existing health centers and to establish new ones, health care remains inadequate. Malaria, tuberculosis, cholera, and typhoid are prevalent in spite of government projects to control or eradicate them. Ayurvedic medicine, the traditional Hindu system of medicine, is popular in Nepal.

The Ministry of Education and Culture is responsible for administration and supervision of all elementary and secondary education. Higher education has developed relatively recently. The first college was established in 1918, and Tribhuvan University in Kathmandu, with facilities of arts, sciences, commerce, and education, was chartered in 1959. The University Senate has sole legal responsibility for higher education and the authority to grant academic recognition to colleges but is largely dependent upon the Ministry of Education for funds.”²³

CULTURAL LIFE

“The relaxation of censorship that followed the overthrow of Rana rule in 1951 encouraged a revival of artistic and intellectual expression. In literature and poetry, Nepali works emphasize the cultural renaissance and national patriotism. King Mahendra, a poet whose Nepali lyrics have been published in English translation under the name of M.B.B. Shah (for Mahendra Bir Bikram Shah), did much to promote the revival of arts and literature.

The cultural heritage of Nepal, particularly contributions made by the Newar of Kathmandu Valley to sculpture,

painting, and architecture, is a source of great pride. Hindu and Buddhist religious values have provided the basic source of inspiration to Newar artisans. The themes of most artistic works have been primarily religious; the lives of the gods, saints, and heroes and the relationship of man to society and to the universe are expounded in sculpture, architecture, and drama. In Kathmandu Valley some 2,500 temples and shrines display the skill and highly developed aesthetic sense of Newar artisans.

Music and dance are favourite pastimes among the Nepalese. Religion ceremonies require the use of drums and wind instruments preserved from ancient times. Important in most religions and family occasions are devotional songs that have elements of both classical and folk music and that have been used by some contemporary musical revivalists in their attempt to bridge the gap between two. The government-owned Radio Nepal broadcasts programs in Nepali and English. The country's first television station, at Kathmandu, began broadcasting in 1986.

Newspaper and periodicals are published in Nepali and in English. Newspaper are frequently sensational in tone and are poorly staffed and financed. *Gorkha Patra*, published by the government, occupies a commanding position in the Nepalese press. Nepalese newspaper readers rely on the foreign press, particularly Indian newspaper, which are flown daily into Kathmandu, for more sophisticated coverage of World and national news.

After 1960 King Mahendra required newspaper to obtain official clearance for all report of political activity. Subsequently the government increased its censorship, and in 1985 the publication of many newspapers was suspended. In 1990, reflecting the change in the country's political climate,

freedom of the press was restored.’²⁴

HISTORY

(A) PREHISTORY AND EARLY HISTORY

“Nepal’s rich prehistory consists mainly of the legendary traditions of the Newar, the indigenous community of Nepal Valley (now usually called Kathmandu Valley). There are usually both Buddhist and Brahmanic Hindu versions of these various legends. Both versions are accepted indiscriminately in the festivals associated with legendary events, a tribute to the remarkable synthesis that has been achieved in Nepal between the two related but divergent value systems.

References to Nepal Valley and Nepal’s lower hill areas are found in the ancient Indian classics, suggesting that the central Himalayan hills were closely related culturally and politically to the Gangetic Plain at least 2,500 years ago. Lumbini, Gautama Buddha’s birthplace in southern Nepal, and Nepal Valley also figure prominently in Buddhist accounts. There is substantial archaeological evidence of an early Buddhist influence in Nepal, including a famous column inscribed by Ashoka (emperor of India, 3rd century BC) at Lumbini and several shrines in the valley.

A coherent dynastic history of Nepal Valley became possible, though with large gaps, with the rise of the Licchavi dynasty in the 4th or 5th century AD. Although the earlier Kirti dynasty had claimed the status of the Kshatriya caste of rulers and warriors, the Licchavis were probably the first ruling family in that area of plain Indian origin. This set a precedent for what became the normal pattern thereafter – Hindu Kings claiming high caste Indian origin ruling over a population much

of which was neither Indo-Aryan nor Hindu.

The Licchavi dynasty chronicles, supplemented by numerous stone inscriptions, are particularly full from AD 500 to 700; a powerful, unified kingdom also emerged in Tibet during this period, and the Himalayan passes to the north of the valley was opened. Extensive cultural, trade, and political relations developed across the Himalayas, transforming the valley from a relatively remote backwater into the major intellectual and commercial centre between South and Central Asia. Nepal's contacts with China began in the mid-7th century with the exchange of several missions. But intermittent warfare between Tibet and China terminated this relationship; and, while there were briefly renewed contacts in subsequent centuries, these were reestablished on a continuing basis only in the late 18th century.²⁵

(B) MIDDLE HISTORY

“The middle period in Nepalese history is usually considered conterminous with the rule of the Malla dynasty (10th-18th century) in Nepal Valley and surrounding areas. Although most of the Licchavi kings were devout Hindus, they did not impose Brahmanic social codes or values on their non-Hindu subjects; the Malla perceived their responsibilities differently, however, and the great Malla ruler Jaya Sthiti (reigned 1382-95) introduced the first legal and social code strongly influenced by contemporary Hindu principles.

Jaya Sthitis successors, Yaksha Malla (reigned 1429-1482), divided his kingdom among his three sons, thus creating the independent principalities of Kathmandu, Patan, and Bhaktapur (Bhadgoan) in the valley. Each of these states controlled territory in the surrounding hill areas, with particular importance attached to the trade routes northward

to Tibet and southward to India that were vital to the valley's economy. There were also numerous small principalities in the western and eastern hill areas, whose independence was sustained through a delicate balance of power based upon traditional interrelationships and, in some cases, common ancestral origins (or claims there to) among the ruling families. By the 16th century, virtually all these principalities were ruled by dynasties claiming high-caste Indian origin whose members had fled to the hills in the wake of Muslim invasions of northern India.

In the early 18th century one of the principalities — Gorkha (also spelled Gurkha), ruled by the shah family — began to assert a predominant role in the hills and even to pose a challenge to Nepal Valley. The Mallas, weakened by familial dissension and widespread social and economic discontent, were no match for the great Gorkha ruler Prithvi Narayan Shah. He conquered the valley in 1769 and moved his capital to Kathmandu shortly thereafter, providing the foundation for the modern state of Nepal.”²⁶

(C) MODERN PERIOD

“The Shah (or sah) rulers faced tremendous and persistent problems in trying to centralize an area long characterized by extreme diversity and ethnic and regional parochialism. They established a centralized political system by absorbing dominant regional and local elites into the central administration at Kathmandu. This action neutralized potentially disintegrative political forces and involved them in national politics, but it also severely limited the center's authority in outlying areas because local administration was based upon a compromise division of responsibilities between the local elites and the central administration.

From 1775 to 1951, Nepalese politics was characterized by confront actions between the royal family and several noble families. The position of the Shah dynasty was weakened by the fact that two kings who ruled successively between 1777 and 1832 were minors when they ascended the throne. The regents and the nobility competed for political power, using the young rulers as puppets; both factions wanted a monopoly of political officers and power for their families, with their rivals exterminated, exiled to India, or placed in a subordinate status. This was achieved by the Thapa family (1806-37) and, even more extensively, by the Rana family (1846-1951). In these periods, the Shah ruler was relegated to an honorary position without power, while effective authority was concentrated in the hands of the leading members of the dominant family. Although interfamilial arrangements on such questions as the succession and the distribution of responsibilities and spoils were achieved, no effective national political institutions were created. The excluded noble families had only two alternatives-to accept inferior posts in the administration and army or to conspire for the overthrow of the dominant family. Until 1950 and to some extent thereafter, Nepalese politics was basically conspiratorial in character, with familial loyalty taking precedence over loyalty to the crown or nation.”²⁷

EXTERNAL RELATIONS, 1750-1950

“Prithvi Narayan Shah (reigned 1742-75) and his successors established a unified state in the central Himalayas and launched an ambitious and remarkably vigorous program of expansion, seeking to bring the entire hill area, from Bhutan to Kashmir, under their authority. They made considerable progress, but successive setbacks in wars with China and Tibet

(1788-92), with the Sikh kingdom in the Punjab (1809), with British India (1814-16), and again with Tibet (1854-56) frustrated Nepal and set the present boundaries of the kingdom.

The British conquest of India in the 19th century posed a serious threat to Nepal – which expected to be another victim – and the left country with no real alternative but to seek an accommodation with the British to preserve its independence. This was accomplished by the Rana family regime after 1860 on terms that were mutually acceptable, if occasionally irritating to both. Under this de facto alliance, Kathmandu permitted the recruitment of Nepalese for the highly valued Gurkha units in the British Indian Army and also accepted British “guidance” on foreign policy; in exchange, the British guaranteed the Rana regime against both foreign and domestic enemies and allowed it virtual autonomy in domestic affairs. Nepal, however, was also careful to maintain a friendly relationship with China and Tibet, both for economic reasons and to counterbalance British predominance in South Asia.

The British withdrawal from India in 1947 deprived the Ranas of a vital external source of support and exposed the regime to new dangers. Anti-Rana forces, composed mainly of Nepalese residents in India who had served their political apprenticeship in the Indian nationalist movement, formed an alliance with the Nepalese royal family, led by King Tribhuvan (reigned 1911-55), and launched a revolution in November 1950. With strong diplomatic support from New Delhi, the rebels accepted a settlement with Ranas under which the sovereignty of the crown was restored and the revolutionary forces, led the Nepali Congress Party gained and ascendant position in the administration.²²⁸

NEPAL SINCE 1950

“The introduction of a democratic political system in Nepal, a country accustomed to autocracy and with no deep democratic tradition or experience, proved a formidable task. A constitution was finally approved in 1959, under which general elections for a national assembly were held. The Nepali Congress won an overwhelming victory and was entrusted with the formation of Nepal’s first popular government. But persistent controversy between the Cabinet and King Mahendra (reigned 1955-72) led the king to dismiss the Nepali Congress government in December 1960 and to imprison most of the Party’s leaders. The constitution of 1959 was abolished in 1962, and a new constitutional was promulgated that established the crown as the real source of authority. King Mahendra obtained both Indian and Chinese acceptance of his regime, and the internal opposition was weak, disorganized, and discouraged. Mahendra died in January 1972 and was succeeded by his son Birendra, who was crowned in 1975.

Throughout the 1970s King Birendra sought to expedite economic development programs while maintaining the “nonparty” political system established by his father. The results were disappointing on both accounts, and by 1979 a systemic crises was evident. To meet the first serious political challenge to the monarchy since 1960, King Birendra announced in May 1979 that a national referendum would be held to decide between a nonparty and multiparty (by implication, parliamentary) political system. In the referendum, which was held in May 1980, the political groups supporting the existing nonparty system won by the relatively small margin of 55 percent, accurately reflecting the sharp differences in the country on basic political issues.

It was in this context that King Birendra decided in 1980 to retain the 1962 constitution but to liberalize the political system by providing for direct popular election of the National Assembly. The government also permitted the “illegal” political parties, such as the Nepali Congress Party, to function under only minimal constraints. Elections were still formally held on a “partyless” basis, but many candidates ran informally and openly as members of political parties.

This partial movement toward a democratic parliamentary system satisfied neither the supporters of a multiparty constitutional monarchy nor several more radical leftist factions, and in February 1990 a coalition of centrist and leftist opposition forces began a campaign demanding basic political reforms. A series of protests and strikes followed nationwide, and the royal government’s efforts to April, as the situation in Kathmandu Valley worsened, King Birendra lifted the ban on political parties, abrogated the more repressive security ordinances, and on April 16 appointed a coalition interim government headed by the president of the Nepali Congress, K.S. Bhattarai, but also including the moderate faction of the communist movement, the united Leftist Front.

The policy objectives of the interim government were “to maintain law and order, develop a multiparty system on the basis of constitutional monarchy, draft a new constitution, and hold general elections” to a parliament. Within a year, all four tasks were accomplished with remarkable success despite the board divergence of views among the major political organizations. A draft of the new constitution, prepared by a broadly representative government commission, was submitted to the Palace and the Cabinet on Sept.10, 1990. In November, following two months of vigorous debate on a

number of key issues—including the role of the king, the development of a secular state, emergency powers, and the status of Nepal’s many languages—an amended version of the constitution was promulgated by King Birendra that provided for both a constitutional monarchy and a multiparty parliamentary political system.

General elections held on May 12, 1991, gave the Nepali Congress a majority in Parliament (110 of 205 seats), but the moderate United Marxist-Leftist Party (UML), with 69 seats, emerged as a strong opposition party. The two “Pancha” parties usually associated with the old system won only four seats. The elections were thus perceived to constitute a strong endorsement of the 1990 political changes, and G.P. Koirala the brother of Nepal’s first elected prime minister (1959-60), was nominated by the Nepali Congress and appointed by the king to head the new elected government.

Nepal emerged from this period of rapid political change facing a multitude of economic and social problems; among these were a stagnant economy and a variety of regional ethnic and religious movements, some of whose basic demands were not acceptable to the country’s Hindu majority. Although overwhelming support existed for the new democratic constitutional monarchy system, at both the party and the public level, the democratic movement itself remained badly the new government’s attempt to introduce the kind of hard-hitting economic and social policies the panchayat government had carefully avoided in an effort to mollify several small but important interest groups.”²⁹

(A) CALENDER OF EVENTS SINCE YEAR 2000

2000 – “Prime Minister K.P. Bhattarai resigned in March 2000 and G.P. Koirala took over as Prime Minister.”³⁰

2001 – “On the night of June 1, King Birendra, Queen Aishwarya and six other member of the royal family were assassinated. Crown Prince Dipendra is believed to have shoot them and then shot himself, following arguments over his marriage plans. Prince Dipendra (in a state of coma) was made the king (he died later) and after his death Prince Gyanendra, youngest brother of the King Birendra was made the acting king.

On July 19, Prime Minister G.P. Koirala resigned. He was beset by growing Maoists insurgent activities, a bribery scandal and recriminations over the June 1 massacre. Sher Bahadur Deuba was elected the new Prime Minister.”³¹

2002 – “Maoists insurgent activities reached a very high level. 150 guerrillas were killed in June. G.P. Koirala was ousted as Nepali Congress Party leader in June.”³² “The government, though shaken was determined to press on. Some \$ 40m in new defence spending was announced, but it was not clear how much was to be used to fight the Maoists, who seemed to have a hold on Nepal’s rural poor. The Prime Minister, Sher Bahadur Deuba, was under pressure from within his own party to resign.”³³

2003 – In January, 2003 both the army and Maoists declared ceasefire. “Surya Bahadur Thapa, became the new Prime Minister on June 3, 2003.

After peace talks with Maoists insurgents, Nepal Govt. said in Aug. 2003, it was ready to form a multiparty interim regime.”³⁴

2004 – “The government set a deadline of January 13th for the Maoists to enter Talk. In March, 500 Maoists were killed in gun battle with the security forces.

Curfew was imposed in the Capital Kathmandu in

September, 2004 after protests over the Killing of 12 Nepali hostages in Iraq turned violent.”³⁵

2005 – “On February 1, 2005, King Gyanendra of Nepal dismissed the government led by Sher Bahadur Deuba whom he had nominated Prime Minister only a few months earlier, for his failure to control the Maoists challenge to law and order in the country and also to conduct fresh elections for Parliament.”³⁶

“According to the Informal Sector Service Centre, a human-right groups, at least 126 of the more than 10,500 people killed in the nine-year war have been teachers, two-fifth of them killed by the state.”³⁷

“A brutal nine-year war between the royal government and Maoists insurgents had already claimed 11,200 lives.”³⁸

“The Chinese are actively engaged in penetrating in Nepalese affairs. They described King’s February action as the internal affairs of Nepal. Their Foreign Minister paid an official visit to Nepal and the Nepalese Foreign Minister, Ramesh Nath Pandey, went on an 11-day official visit to China. Even his Majesty the king and the Finance Minister of Nepal visited China during this period. Chinese have promised all support, economic and military to Nepal. Shri Ramesh Pandey on his return from China to Kathmandu in September said if India, the US and UK were not extending their cooperation, they had to get it from other countries. A few decades back China helped the military government in Myanmar, both economically and military. Today Myanmar is completely, in the Shadow of China.”³⁹

(B) THE ROYAL MASSACRE AND ITS AFTERMATH

On the night of 1, 2001 King Birendra, Queen Aishwarya and 9 other members of the royal family were assassinated.

The murderer was apparently his son, the Crown Prince Dipendra, who was drunk, on drugs and in love with a woman his mother regarded as beyond the pale. Dipendra also shot himself, following arguments over his marriage plans. Prince Dipendra (in a state of coma) made the king (he died later) and Prince Gyanendra, brother of the late king Birendra, was made the acting king.

Nepal's elected government was widely despised even before the murders. There was danger that the monarchy, regarded hitherto as untainted by politics and a unifier of a fissiparous country, may be loathed.

The street version of events was very different. There were variations, some involved conspiracies by India or other foreign forces, but most suggested that the new king the least popular person in Nepal, was somehow behind the massacre. Several thousand people with this view took to the streets of the capital Kathmandu on June 4th. Three people were killed. The government had to impose curfews three times in order to keep situation under control. A committee appointed by King Gyanendra to investigate the massacre was supported the official version of events in its report. Nepal was unstable already in 1990 when King Birendra relinquished in 2005, Gyanendra, having in October 2002 sacked the elected government and then ruled through a succession of appointed ones, took power himself. The Chinese are actively engaged in penetrating. In Nepalese affairs. They described King's February action as the internal affairs of Nepal. Their Foreign Minister paid an official visit to Nepal and the Nepalese Foreign Minister, Ramesh Nath Pandey, went on an 11-day official visit to China. Even his Majesty the king and the Finance Minister of Nepal visited China during this period. Chinese have promised all support, economic and military to Nepal.

Shri Ramesh Nath Pandey on his return from China to Kathmandu in September said if India, US and UK were not extending their cooperation, they had to get it from other countries. A few decades back China helped the military government in Myanmar, both economically and militarily. Today Myanmar is completely, in the shadow of China.

(C) MAOIST IN NEPAL

“The Maoists Insurgency was born in the poverty of rural Nepal in 1996. The Maoists are led by a former agricultural student and teacher named Pushpa Kamal Dahal, who assumed the *nome de guerre* Prachanda. He in his early 50’s, he is rarely seen in Public and never photographed.

When Nepal is democratic government ordered strict enforcement of rulers on Pranchand’s band of militants, the police were indiscriminately vicious. Suspects were tortured, villagers driven from their houses, and woman were raped. As rebellion spread, the government started its campaign. Security forces fired on a primary school in Jajarkot district during an evening dance performance. Killings mounted, and support for the Maoists grew.

Prachanda and his top rebel leaders are hardcore idologues. They studied the works of Mao Zedong and – despite being disavowed by the Chinese government as not true Maoists – created a new Nepali patriotism. Prachanda Commands both the people’s Army and the rigidly hierarchical Maoists political wing. At the apex is a standing committee, supported by a politburo, central committee, regional bureaus, district committees, area committees, and cell committees.”²⁴⁰

“With an army estimated at 12,000, the Maoists have spread to all 75 districts of the country. Maoists are entrenched in classic guerrilla terrain from which the Royal Nepalese Army had been unable to dislodge them. The Maoists have become a force in most rural areas, leaving control of Kathmandu and district capitals to the government. In all 13,000 people have been killed by the state and the insurgents, and millions of villagers remain caught in the deadly cross fire.”⁴¹

“The Maoists control half a dozen of Nepal’s 75 districts in the impoverished hills, and swathes of some 25 others. Their style o government mixes enlightenment (they insist in girls going to school) and animal brutality. Some 12,700 people have died since their revolt started in 1996. the Maoists are several thousand strong, but have potential sympathisers among the millions who do without education, electricity and decent wages. At least 40% of Nepal’s 23m people live in poverty.”⁴²

(i) The Maoists and the Government After the Royal Massacre

The royal massacre changed the relative strengths of the various Nepal power seekers. The Maoists had, perhaps, gained the most. Many detected their hand in the anti-Gyanendra protests. The Maoists leaders, known as chairman Prachanda, never a friend of the monarchy, had praised Birendra as a liberal, and by implication damned the new king as anything but liberal, hoped that the investigation of the massacre will be seen as a white wash, enraging people enough to welcome the Maoists down from the hills and the massacre to storm the palace his Maoists could conceivably take over. But all this did not materialise.

Some democrat feared the palace itself. King Gyanendra, one of Nepal’s most prominent businessman as thought to

be decisive and hardnosed, more like his father, who ended an earlier spell of democracy. Since the country's 50,000 strong army answered mainly to him they felt that he had the means to do it.

The new king did his best to lay these fears to rest at his coronation by proclaiming his adherence to democracy and to constitutional monarchy. Even so, the fears were revived when the government ordered the arrest of the editor of a newspaper for publishing an article by a Maoists calling on the armed forces to revolt against the king.

Some people speculated that democracy will probably survive the crises, but relations between the king and the government could change and Gyanendra will try to make more assistive use than his brother of the powers the king retained especially over the army and some aspects of foreign policy. The Maoists had little incentive to negotiate with the government and they demanded the resignation of the prime minister as their price.

(ii) Maoists Fiercest Attack

A symptom of Nepal's backwardness is that it has one of the few remaining communist insurgencies left in the world, and it seemed to be growing more serious. On November 25th 2002, communists attacked police and army posts across Nepal, killing at least 100 people. It was the fiercest attack since the insurgency started in 1996, and broke a truce that had been agreed on in July 2001. The government declared a state of emergency and asked for outside help.

The communist party of Nepal (Maoists) is believed to have between 5,000 and 10,000-armed supporters. The range of the estimate is wide because no one in the government really knows but it was assumed that the party had some

support on most towns and villages throughout Nepal.

The government had been reluctant to send the army against the rebels, for fear of making things worse, and had left the task to the police. But after attack, soldiers were deployed in the mountainous solukhumba district, where the insurgents were believed to be strong. However, army had little experience of guerilla warfare. Many of its 45,000 men, including its formidable Gurkhas, were abroad of the time of the attack, helping out with United Nation no peacekeeping efforts around the world. Nepal had no air force, although the army had a few helicopters. The government told its large neighbour India in 2001 that it was shoot of most items of military equipment, including ammunition.

The rebels were believed to have their links with leftist groups in the Indian border states of West Bengal and Bihar. Like comrade Prachanda, Indian leftists seek to win supporters in by calling for land reform. The Indian government said it was tightening security along its border with Nepal. China, Nepal's other big Neighbour, will probably ignore 2001 events. Its semi-capitalists government regards militant "Maoism" with distaste even though the originator was formally reversed.

However, despite the growing violence of the communist attacks, Nepal seems likely to remain stable. King Gyanendra, who took the throne after the palace massacre in June, which wiped out most of the royal family, seems to be gaining popularity.

(iii) The Massacre of February 16, 2002

It was by all accounts, the bloodiest and most one-sided battle ever fought on Nepalese soil. On the night of February 16th, guerrillas from Nepal's Maoists movement raided

Mangelsen, a 600 km from the capital Kathmandu. Dressed in camouflage fatigues, faces darkened with soot, they poured down from the hills in their hundreds. They fired rocket-propelled grenades and machineguns looted from an army weapons store in a raid in November 2001, and set fire to dozens of buildings. Of a 57-man army platoon, only three soldiers survived the slaughter. Two contingents of policemen, one in the town, another at a nearby airport, were massacred.

In all, 153 policemen, soldiers and civilians died. The retreating Maoists did not even bother to take the dead policeman's vintage Enfield .303 rifles. The pickings were better at a military arsenal nearby. Hundreds of thousands of dollars were looted from a burnt out bank.

In Kathmandu, news of the attack hit at an eerily bad time. It was sixth anniversary of the start of the Maoists "people war", and the Nepalese parliament was being asked to approve a three-month extension to the state of emergency declared in November 2001, to enable the army to engage the rebels. The assumption by the capital's elite that the Royal Nepal Army would easily crush the Maoists revolt, had proved dangerously hollow. So too had official statements in the weeks before the massacre, which tended to claim that the authorities were gaining the upper hand over the guerrillas.

Others accused the military chiefs of being more interested in Sierra Leone than western Nepal, a reference to the army's help with United Nation's peacekeeping. The army used to be above criticism, seen as a competent force in its own right and for national unity. Now that reputation was tarnished. Ministers to were blamed for ignoring warning of an imminent attack.

The government, though shaken, was determined to press on. Some \$40m in new defence spending was announced in

2002, but it was not clear how much would be used to fight the Maoists, who anyway had a hold on Nepal's rural poor that cannot be fought with arms. The Prime Minister, Sher Bahadur Deuba, was under pressure from within his own party to resign. Nepal's fractious polity looked set to enter one of its alarming periods of instability.

(iv) The Ceasefire of February 2003 and the Events After It

There was a ceasefire between the government and the Maoists in the first week of February 2003. It was normal job is looking plans and works and who demonstrated his diplomatic skills by spending nearly 90 days talking to the rebel leaders in their hide-out and briefing his cabinet colleagues and King Gyanendra in his palace in Kathmandu. Commander, Comrade Prachanda ordered his fighters to stop shooting and rely on dialogues to achieve their aims. The government accepted their initial demands to stop calling them terrorists and to scrap Interpol warrants for their arrests. Tougher demands like the abolition of the constitutional monarchy were not raised at that point.

Mr. Pun was made the leader of the government side in the talks and he declined to discuss possible bargaining positions. No doubt in his mind he had a previous attempt at peace talk in 2001. Those were conducted under intense media scrutiny and collapsed after four months and much violence followed.

In October 2002, the king angered many politicians with his own appointees. Then affronted parties have been attacking the monarchy since, and their acceptance of the ceasefire announcement was grudging at best. Talks between the Maoists and the government foundered in August 2003, after 21-suspected Maoists and sympathisers detained by the army were shot dead. In 2004, the Deuba government tried

to reopean peace negotiations. The Maoists rejected the offer, arguing that the government ruled the country through a succession of nominees. The government, at the end of 2004 put a deadline of January 13th, 2005 by which the Maoists must begin talk with the government or the government will again start its military campaign against them.

(E) THE KING ASSUMES DIRECT CONTROL

Invoking his ancestor, Prithvi Narayan Shah, the 18th-century founder of his dynasty and unifier of the nation Nepal, on February 1, 2005 King Gyanendra felt it necessary to take the government completely in his hands so, he suspended constitutional freedoms of expression, assembly and movement, the protection from preventive detention and the rights to information and privacy. Then on February 2nd he unveiled a new cabinet of ministers under his chairmanship. As dictators usually do, the king pronounced himself a democrat and promised to restore multiparty rule within three years.

Democracy under a constitutional monarch was introduced in 2002. But never before he had taken power in his hands directly. Oddly in 2004 he himself had appointed the ousted government whose prime minister was detained at his residence with some of his minister. His deputy was also taken into custody and political leaders were put under house arrest. This none by king was not followed by an significant demonstration of displeasure on the part of general public.

THE PRESENT SCENARIO

Now we are going to talk about the present scenario of Nepal after the King Gyanendra took hold of the government. The Nepal's elected government was widely despised before

the royal massacre. There was danger that the monarchy, regarded hitherto as untainted by politics and a unifier of a fissiparous country, would also be loathed. The street version of events was very different. There were some who involved conspiracies by India or other foreign forces, some other suggested that the new king and his son, Paras, whose excesses had made him the least popular person in Nepal was somehow behind the massacre. Several thousand people with this view took to the street of the capital Kathmandu on June 4th 2004. Three people were killed. At that time the government imposed curfew three times to keep situation under control. The government of the centrist Nepali Congress Party had a big majority in the lower house of parliament but had ruled no more ably than its predecessors. After the massacre, Maoists gained most. Many detected them in the protests against King Gyanendra. Some people speculated that democracy would be tried to avert a crisis and some felt that King Gyanendra was trying to make more assertive use than his brother of the powers the king retained, especially over the army and some aspects of foreign policy. The Maoists had little incentive to negotiate with the government and they demanded the resignation of the prime minister as their price. On November 25th 2001, communists attacked police and army posts across Nepal, killing at least 100 people. It was the fiercest attack since the insurgency started in 1996, and broke a truce that had been agreed on in July 2001. The government declared a state of emergency and asked for outside help. The Maoists Communist Party of Nepal is believed to have between 5,000 and 10,000 armed supporters. This was assumed that the party had some support in most towns and villages throughout Nepal. After the attack soldiers were deployed in the mountainous Solukhumba district where

the insurgents were believed to be strong. The rebels were believed to have their links with leftist groups in the Indian Border States of West Bengal and Bihar. Like Prachanda, Indian leftists seek to win supporters in by calling for land reform. China's semi-capitalist government regards militant "Maoism" with distaste even though the originator was formally revered. On the night of February 16, 2002 in district of Accham 600 km from the Kathmandu, Maoists came down from the hills in their hundreds and started firing, and they looted rocket-propelled, grenaded and machineguns from an army weapon store. Only three soldiers survived the slaughter. Two contingents of policemen, one in town and other nearby airport, were massacred. The pickings were better at military arsenal nearby. Hundreds of thousands of dollars were looted from a burnt out bank. The government though shaken was determined to press on. Some \$40m in new defence spending was announced in 2002, but it was not clear how much would be used to fight the Maoists who anyway had a hold on Nepal's rural poor that cannot be fought with arms. The Prime Minister, Sher Bahadur Deuba, was under pressure from within his own party to resign. Nepal's fractious polity looked set to enter one of its alarming periods of instability. And on February 2003 there was a ceasefire between government and Maoists. Maoists demand was to stop calling them terrorists and to scrap Interpol warrents for their arrest, so government accepted it. Mr. Pun was made the leader of the government side in the talks and he declined to discuss possible bargaining position. No doubt in his mind he had a previous attempt at peace talk in 2001. Those were conducted under intense media scrutiny and collapsed after four months and much violence followed. In October 2002 the king angered many politicians when he sacked the appointees. Then affronted parties attacked

the monarchy and their acceptance of the ceasefire announcement was grudging at best. Talks between the Maoists and the government foundered in August 2003, after 21-suspected Maoists and sympathisers detained died. In 2004, the Deuba government tried to reopen peace negotiations. The Maoists rejected the offer and argued that the government ruled only the army. The government, at the end of 2004 put a deadline of January 13th, 2005 by which the Maoists must begin talk with the government. After this on February 1, 2005 King Gyanendra had taken government fully in his hands. He suspended constitutional freedoms of expression, assembly and movement, the protection from preventive detention and the right to information and privacy. Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba was put under house arrest. Other politicians and activists were under arrest in Kathmandu.

On March 8th 2005, the political parties staged demonstrations against the coup around the country. These were easily contained, by detaining hundreds of people. But there was little sign that the king was making progress either in winning international acceptance or in persuading the Maoists to talk peace.

Nepal's foreign minister, Ramesh Nath Pandey went to Delhi in 2nd week of March 2005, in an apparently fruitless attempt to mollify India, which had suspended military assistance. He was told that India, like other foreign countries such as Britain and America, thinks the coup had only deepened Nepal's crises. In Kathmandu and the surrounding valley, the king and the army were given some credit for the fact that shops were open and traffic moving during the blockades the Maoists called for two week's after the coup, and again in April 13th 2005. After a year on February 8, 2006

it was easy to find the polling stations in Kathmandu for the municipal elections held. There were armoured cars and sandbags, and large contingents of armed policemen with orders to shoot any one trying to disrupt the voting. Only a trickle of votes appeared. Maoist insurgents blamed for killing of two candidates, had called a week long national strike to foil the election and had staged daily attacks. The parties holding more than 90% of the seats in Nepal's last parliament had called a boycott. Of 4,146 local-government posts at stake in 58 of Nepal's 75 districts, more than half had no candidates at all and a third had only one. Nearly 650 candidates had withdrawn, surprised to find themselves nominated.

The sheer pointlessness of the exercise seemed evident to everyone except the royal government. For King Gyanendra, who seized dictatorial power a year ago, this was part of a promised return to democracy, to be followed by parliamentary elections next year.

As polls closed the Maoists claimed victory for, their campaign against of the main democratic parties also declared its boycott a total success. But the commission reported a national voter turn out of about 20%, a respectable, if disputed, tally. A random sample in Kathmandu suggested that voters were mainly civil servants and soldiers acting on orders. The winning candidates, naturally, were almost all royalists.

FUTURE PROSPECTS

So far I have discussed what happened in Nepal since King Gyanendra took hold of the government. Now I am going to discuss about Nepal's future. Since the uprising of Maoists in Nepal, they have carried a tremendous amount of

attacks on Nepal's people. Government has also faced difficult problems due to them. In Nepal every year thousands of people are massacred by them. So it is clear that Nepal is slowly and slowly going down. In future it may be that Maoists get established in Nepal. If Maoists rule the country, then Nepal will not remain a peaceful country and there will be no discipline or order. I think that Maoists rule will destroy the country. If the government stays as it is then neither the present circumstances will impose nor the government will collapse, because the king is trying so much and taking necessary actions even though they are not working in a very efficient way. King Gyanendra has taken full power in his hands. So now he is able to take some decisive actions. If Maoists surrender, then Nepal can develop very much. Because then there will be no difficulties of law and order and peace will be restored in the country. If the king recovers much of the lost public trust in him, then he can take some bold actions and some important good steps for the development of the country.

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