

INDIA

Is the CPI (Maoist) Loosing Ground?



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The *South Asia Conflict Monitor (SACM)* aims to provide in-depth analyses, country briefs, summary sketches of important players and a timeline of major events on issues relating to armed conflicts, insurgencies and terrorism. It also aims to cover the government's strategies on conflict resolution and related policies to tackle these risks and crises.

The *South Asia Conflict Monitor* is a monthly bulletin designed to provide quality information and actionable intelligence for the policy and research communities, the media, business houses, law enforcement agencies and the general reader by filtering relevant open source information and intelligence gathered from the ground contacts and sources

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India: Is the CPI (Maoist) Losing Ground?

For the third year running, Maoists also known as Naxalites (Indian version of left-wing-extremism) related fatalities and incidents have come down in the affected provinces of India. The Maoist conflict review reports indicated that in the year 2013 a total 1,129 incidents took place as compared to 1,415 incidents in 2012. Similarly, the number of fatalities across the country came down to 394 in the review period from 415 in previous year. Jharkhand was the worst-affected with 383 incidents and 150 deaths, which is lower in comparison to the previous year, followed by Chhattisgarh, Bihar and Odisha.

Does this trend reflect success of government policy or change in the Communist Party of India (Maoists) tactics? A cursory review of the CPI (Maoist) documents, related incidents and government policy indicates that the Maoists have lost ground in terms of popularizing the movement. There could be a combination of factors behind this trajectory. Some of the important factors are: First, the government policy of targeting top Maoist leaders disturbed the political hierarchy of the outfit. Over the last five years a large number of central committee leaders have been arrested, have surrendered or have been killed. This led to a serious leadership crisis in the party. The security agencies took advantage of differences within the central committee (CC) and the leaders in the state committees, regionalism in the party, ideological differences, debates over the domination of Telugu leaders in the central committee and the politburo and also the views of the People's War (PW) and the Maoist Communist Centre (MCC) at the lower level especially in the central-eastern part of the country. Apart from this, many top leaders surrendered due to age, poor health and disillusionment with the party ideology.

Important central committee members who were killed or deserted the party in the last five years include:

- November 24, 2011: Mallojula Koteswara Rao alias Kishanji
- July 02, 2010: Cherukuri Rajkumar alias Azad
- March 12, 2010: Sakhamuri Appa Rao alias Ravialias Venkanna
- May 24, 2009: Patel Sudhakar Reddy alias Suryam alias Srikanth K. Venkataiah
- April 02, 2008: Gajerla Saraiah alias Azad alias Bhaskar
- June 22, 2007: Sande Rajamouli alias Prasad

Importantly, most of the leaders who deserted the party were second-rung leaders. Further, the Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee (DKSZC) spokesperson, GVK Prasad, who

surrendered to the Andhra Pradesh police in January 2014, told the media that the CPI-Maoist will have a serious leadership crisis in future since many of its top leaders are either planning to quit the party or surrender due to health, age and ideological differences. Prasad's surrender was a surprise and a major loss for the party. Media sources indicated that the outfit has 17 CC and six politburo members as of January 2014. The numbers were 40 and 14 respectively in 2007.

The second factor could be the implementation of the two-pronged strategy (development programmes and police action in Maoist-affected areas) by the Centre. Under this strategy, the pressing socio-economic and governance issues in Maoist-affected provinces are addressed, which have been the major planks that help the Maoists to retain sympathy in tribal and rural areas. Deployment of more than 80 battalions of paramilitary forces along with the state police, modernisation of state police forces, fortification of remotely located police stations, frequent joint-operations, etc., adversely affected the Maoists' free recruitment and training drives. The use of UAV (unmanned aerial vehicle) facilitated information gathering about Maoist cadre movement in the jungles and training camps. This resulted in speedy and resolute action against them by security forces. Besides this, reactivation of civil administration in the remote areas, police-villagers interaction programme and periodic local body elections severely curtailed recruitment into the outfit. The presence of heavy security and intelligence gathering capacity of the state police forced the Maoists to adopt 'retreat tactics' in some newly established zonal committees and base areas. For example, just before the 2009-parliamentary elections, the party decided to change the structure and manpower strength in the squads in certain pockets to evade police attention and used IEDs instead of direct confrontation with the security forces. The party did this to preserve its manpower and inflict maximum damage to the security forces.

Third, the government's tactic of choking materials supply, funding and source of weapons affected the organisational expansion and capability of the outfit. The central government declared that anybody supporting the Maoists in terms of material and money would be treated as a serious offender. It specially instructed the mining companies operating in the Maoist-affected areas not to give any security money for smooth operation of their business. This policy resulted in breaking of some linkages between mining companies and the Maoists. Fortification of police stations and the district armoury, extra vigil at the borders, initiation of the peace process in the Northeast, dissipation of the LTTE and the mainstreaming of Nepalese Maoists, etc., affected regular supply of sophisticated weapons into the outfit's armoury. In the last five years, therefore, the outfit used mostly explosives collected domestically. Most importantly, the change of government in Bangladesh in 2009 and Awami League's actions against anti-India

elements drastically affected the free-flow of the ISI-supplied weapons to the ULFA and other Northeast-based militant outfits.

Fourth, the degradation and criminalisation of the Maoist movement gave rise to an anti-Maoist movement in some pockets, especially in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Odisha. This local resistance against the Maoists helped the security agencies to regain the areas earlier dominated by the Maoists. The state also carried out anti-Maoist propaganda by citing these examples. Since the Maoists frequently targeted the leaders of these anti-Maoist protests, later, the state obliged them with security. The state also recruited local tribal youths in manage the conflict.

Lastly, some other factors like attractive terms for surrender, recruitment of tribal and rural youth in the Indian army and paramilitary forces, job opportunities in private companies, etc., adversely affected the cadre inflow to the outfit. The youth of these regions were attracted more towards the availability of jobs in the cities than the CPI (Maoist) rank and file. Moreover, a large number of youths from both the rural and urban areas were engaged in civil society-led anti-government movements since 2009. The Maoists, to some extent were supported by these youths earlier on these issues. This alternative political platform has turned many urban and rural youths away from the revolutionary path.

Among the above factors, the leadership in the party was most affected. The party found it difficult to replace the top leaders. Since most of the top leaders are senior citizens, have been ailing, and a committed and dynamic second rung leadership is missing, the outfit may find it difficult to retain its present geographical reach and revolutionary ethos. Moreover, criticism of Maoism in China and failure of the movement in Nepal will make it difficult for the party to justify the relevance of revolution in India before the informed masses. Therefore, the party will focus more on political campaigning to generate awareness among the masses. This will upset the hardline leaders of the party, who have been arguing for immediate armed struggle (military campaigning) to achieve the political goal. This will further intensify the so called ‘two-line struggle’¹ in the party. In the absence of a committed second rung leadership and deepening ‘two-line struggle’ may lead to a split in the party in the near future.



¹ NOTE: *There are two views-hardliner and moderate- in the Maoist party. The hardliners argue that the party should immediately capture power through armed revolution. Moderates argue that the party should first initiate awareness programme about the movement then go for military campaigning.*

SACM Profile: I**Kamatapur Liberation Organization (KLO): Northeast Militant Fights for Independent Kamatapur**

The KLO was established on December 28, 1995 with an objective of the formation of a sovereign country comprising six districts of north-west Bengal and four districts of lower Assam, after separating from the then All-Kamatapur Students Union (AKSU). The outfit was dormant for ten years after “operation flush out”, conducted jointly by the Indian security forces and the Royal Bhutanese Army in 2003.

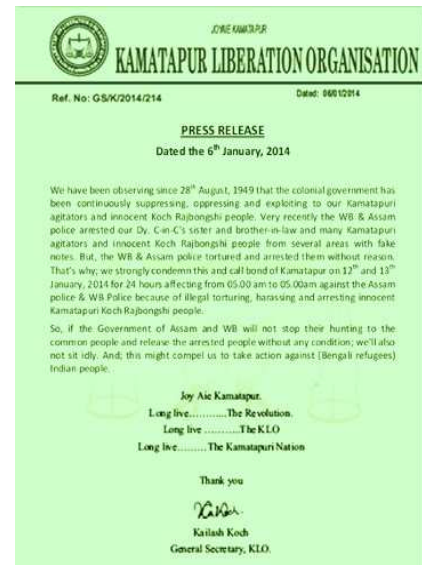
The outfit re-grouped and revived its movement in December 2013. Its presence in the northern- districts of West Bengal was felt while it orchestrated a bomb blast at a crowded place in which six people perished. There are reports that the KLO has also revived its training camps in Bhutan. The king of Bhutan was apprised of this development by the Government of India during his five-day official visit to Delhi in January 2014.

Anticipating reprisal against it of the kind witnessed in 2003, the KLO has also reportedly opened some shelter zones in the south-eastern part of Nepal. It took advantage of prolonged political instability and growing anti-India sentiments there. Its presence in Nepal surfaced while Nepal police reportedly arrested two second-rung leaders of the KLO, Tom Adhikary alias Jaideb Roy, the self-styled vice-chairman of the outfit, and Nilambar Rajbanshi, on February 06, 2014 from Bhadrapur in Jhapa district. Adhikary is wanted in India for the Jalpaiguri district’s Bojrpara blast where six persons had died on December 26, 2013, and other attacks in 2003. He was reportedly trained in an ULFA camp in Bhutan in the mid-nineties.

Jeeban Singh alias Tamir Das alias Tushar Das is the chairman of the outfit. After Harshavardhan, Milton Burma and other frontline leaders were killed during 'Operation All Clear', Tom Adhikary became the vice-chairman of the outfit. Before that, he was commanding the ‘crack squad’ of KLO.

After the Jalpaiguri incident, two KLO leaders – Narayan Roy alias Tarun Thapa, the Dy. Commander-in-Chief and Pradip Roy alias Iqbal Siddiqui, the Assistant General Secretary, were arrested from Adhikary village near the Indo-Nepal border.

The outfit enjoys the sympathy of a large number of people belonging to the Rajbanshi community of north Bengal. The organisation began with 60 members belonging to the Rajbanshi community and reached around 400 by 2003. Its area of operation is mostly confined to six districts in north Bengal– South Dinajpur, North Dinajpur, Coochbehar, Jalpaiguri, Malda



and Darjeeling – and four districts in Lower Assam – Dhubri, Bongaigaon, Kokrajhar and Goalpara. Jalpaiguri has been its main operational area.

Intelligence reports suggest that the KLO may get support from the newly-formed Burdwan district committee of the CPI-Maoist. The outfit also has a strategic understanding with the ULFA and the Pakistan Intelligence agency ISI, especially when it comes to the use of arms and ammunitions.

The KLO collects funds by extortion from the business community and the tea industry in the region. Other sources of funding of the outfit are: voluntary donations, drug trafficking and circulation of fake Indian currency supplied by the ISI.

Before 2003, the outfit had training camps-cum-shelter zones in eastern Nepal, southern Bhutan and in some pockets of Bangladesh and Myanmar. After its revival in 2013, apart from its linkages with the ISI, the outfit has illegal training and shelter camps in Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Myanmar. These counties have been strongly opposing KLO's operations from their territory and periodically, they share intelligence about KLO's movements with India.



COUNTRY ROUND UP

BANGLADESH

The country witnessed its bloodiest parliamentary elections. Around 30 people were killed in poll-related violence. The opposition parties called a series of general strikes to thwart the election process. In the post-election period, Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI) supporters targeted Hindu minorities for their participation in the elections. The strikes turned violent and many innocent civilians were killed because of the presence



of a large number of JeI supporters in the rallies. The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), which does not have cadre-based voters, is heavily dependent on the JeI and the Hifazjt-e-Islam. Therefore, despite international pressure on the BNP to maintain distance from the JeI, the BNP remained silent on JeI atrocities on the Awami League (AL) activists and minority communities. The BNP, which performed well in the local body elections in the middle of 2013, gradually lost its popularity due to frequent strikes and mindless attacks by its allies on civilians.

Despite rallies and strikes, however, the BNP carried out an introspection on its failure and tried to distance itself to some extent, from the JeI. After the elections, the JeI leaders did not participate in the BNP-organised meetings and rallies. Given the BNP's dependence on the JeI and other religious extremist organisations, the former may not disrupt its relations with them completely. However, under pressure from the international community, the party may ask its alliance partners not to resort to any violence in future and adhere to democratic norms during rallies and protests. Also, BNP refused to accept the Mid-January European Parliament's resolution suggesting the party should keep distance from the Islamist parties Jamaat e Islami (JeI) and Hefazat-e-Islam, indicating there is no evidence of the Islamist party's link to attacks on minority communities, esp. Hindus and Christians in Bangladesh.

Moreover, AL's success in the January parliamentary elections may bring political stability due to organised street protests by the opposition parties in future. They feel that their demands still remain unaddressed. The BNP chief has already committed to more strikes and non-cooperation against the new government. On the other hand, the international community is still exerting pressure on both the leaders for dialogue on the election issue, which is unlikely to happen in the near future. The BNP has already blamed the new government for increase in

disappearances and killings of its cadres post elections. Therefore, the country may continue to experience political unrest for some time which may also affect the economy, especially agriculture and the manufacturing sector.

Major Events

January 01: Dhaka and major cities of the country remained shut as the BNP-led opposition alliance began a blockade of roads and waterways for an indefinite period to thwart the national elections scheduled for January 5. One person was killed during clashes between the supporters of the blockade and the police in Chandpur (New Age, January 02, 2014).

January 05: The 10th Parliamentary elections were held amidst boycott by opposition parties that labeled them as a 'farical' contest. Despite high security, many places in Bangladesh witnessed violence and chaos when polling began. Around seven people were killed on the day of polling. Later, the Daily Star reported that a total 18 people were killed on polling day. More than 100 people were killed since opposition parties announced boycott of the elections in 2013 (Zee News, January 05, 2014).

January 05: Around 250 BNP-Jamaat activists attacked Hindu villages in Abhaynagar upazila of Jessore. They vandalised 130 houses of the minority community and burnt 10 more in Malopara village because the villagers had cast their votes. The attackers also looted valuables from houses (Daily Star, January 06, 2014).

January 06: The Awami League (AL) won three-fourths of the seats in the parliamentary elections, which were conducted on January 05, winning 102 seats out of the 147 contested (Daily Star, January 06, 2014).

January 06: The BNP-led opposition alliance enforced a fresh 48-hour general strike. The fresh strike was enforced amidst the prevailing non-stop blockade of roads, railways and waterways, across the country, to press for cancellation of the January 5 elections and protest the killing of the alliance leaders and activists (New Age, January 06, 2014).

January 07: Two people were killed on the second day of the countrywide shutdown enforced by the opposition alliance. The opposition announced extension of the strike by another 12-hours demanding cancellation of the 10th parliamentary elections and in protest against the arrest and 'killing' of opposition activists (New Age, January 08, 2014).

January 14: Police recovered 29 crude bombs and one magazine near Rampura Bridge in Dhaka (New Age, January 14, 2014).

January 17: BNP refused to accept the European Parliament's resolution suggesting the party should keep distance from the Islamist parties Jamaat e Islami (JeI) and Hefazat-e-Islam. BNP said that there is no evidence of the Islamist party's link to attacks on minority communities, esp. Hindus and Christians in Bangladesh. The EU resolution accused JeI and Hefazat of responsible for attacks on minorities and asked the government to ban those political parties that pursue terrorist activists in the name of politics. (The Independent, January 18, 2014).

January 19: Bangladesh Police arrested three Pakistanis of Myanmar origin militants, having links with the banned militant outfit Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) at Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy in Segunbagicha, Dhaka. A Dhaka court placed three militants on a 13-day remand in connection with two cases – one filed over illegal trespass and another under anti-terrorism act.

(Daily Star, January 21, 2014).

January 26: A leader of Jamaat-e-Islami and two leaders of Islami-Chhatra Shibir, including an alleged suicide squad member, were killed in an encounter with the security forces in separate incidents. Six police personnel were injured in those incidents (Daily Star, January 26, 2014).

January 27: Eleven cadres of Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) were arrested around Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (SUST) in Sylhet District following cases filed over vandalism on the campus (Daily Star, January 28, 2014).

January 30: A Chittagong district Court awarded death penalty to 14 people, including Motiur Rahman Nizami, Chief of Jamaat-e-Islami and United Liberation Front of Asom-Independent (ULFA-I) commander-in-chief Paresh Baruah for smuggling 10 truckloads of arms and ammunitions into Chittagong district in April 2004 (Daily Star, January 31, 2014).

INDIA

The effect of December ethnic conflict between The effect of the ethnic conflict in December between Assam and Nagaland tribes continued till the second week of the month. The region remained under propitiatory orders to bring the situation under control. Although the exact reason of the ethnic conflict is yet to be verified, it is believed that it began over a land dispute. Other than this, around 12 militant organisations in the region opposed the Republic Day celebrations. Despite heavy security arrangements, some of these outfits, attacked the camps of the security forces and triggered bombs in public places. This is a reflection of the fact that peace in the region is at the mercy of these outfits . The anti-talks faction of the NDFB and the ULFA were allegedly responsible for some of the major attacks during this period. The training camps of both the organisations are still active in some border regions of Bangladesh and they are also trying to revive their training camps in Bhutan. The revival of the KLO in northern West Bengal and four districts of lower Assam made the region further vulnerable. The arrest of KLO second-in-command in Nepal indicated that the outfit has shifted its base to Nepal.



Although the Jammu & Kashmir region did not witness any major violence during the review period, a number of infiltration attempts from across the border were neutralised. Cross-border firing between the security forces of both the countries came down drastically after meetings between senior military officials on ceasefire violations. According to a government source around 541 infiltration attempts were made in 2012-2013 from Pakistan. Around 56 militants

were killed in different encounters in Jammu & Kashmir. The people of the region again expressed their displeasure over the Indian Army's decision to close the case of the Pathribal alleged fake encounters of 2000.

The rest of the country grappled with twin challenges— left-wing extremism in central India and Indian Mujahideen (IM) attacks in the major cities. The attacks from these groups became imminent due to the 65th Republic Day celebrations. . The Maoists opposed the Republic Day in their strongholds and organised strikes on that day. They, in fact, were successful in targeting security forces in Bihar and Jharkhand. In one such incident, the Maoists ambushed a patrolling party in Giridih district in Jharkhand. Further, after a gap of two years, the Maoists re-grouped in West Bengal and challenged the Republic day celebrations there. The outfit had been dormant after Kishanji's killing in an encounter with police on November 24, 2011. Moreover, the IM's change of tactics to attack soft targets, kept the security agencies on tenterhooks.

The revival of the KLO and the Maoists in West Bengal could complicate the already fragile peace process in the Northeast. These organisations may take advantage of deployments of security forces prior to the parliamentary elections. Since the CPI-Maoist is going to celebrate its 10th anniversary this year, it may carry out some high profile attacks.

Major Events

January 02: Tripura police said two banned outfits – the National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT) and the All-Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF) — have more than 16 hideouts in Bangladesh concentrating at Chittagong Hill Track (CHT). About four to six hideouts were adjacent to the Indo-Bangladesh border while others were farther (The Hindu, January 02, 2014).

January 02: A high alert was sounded across India, including in Maharashtra, against a possible escalation of terror attacks in 2014 by the Indian Mujahideen (IM). The IM could change its strategy by carrying out such attacks through one or two highly-trained militants instead of a module of five terrorists or more, as was the case earlier (DNA India, January 02, 2014).

January 05: Two armed Maoists were killed and three seriously in an encounter with security forces at Pathakchak village in a forest area in Jamui district of Bihar (Times of India, January 06, 2014).

January 06: Curfew or propitiatory orders continued on the Assam-Nagaland border, especially on the Assam side, following clashes between the Karbi and the Rengma Naga communities since December 27, 2013. Around 16 civilians were killed in the ethnic clashes (NDTV, January 06, 2014).

January 08: Top Maoist leader and spokesperson for the Dandakaranya special zonal committee (DKSZC) Gumudavelli Venkatakrishna Prasad alias Gudsa Usendi, and his wife Raji surrendered

before the special intelligence branch (SIB) of Andhra Pradesh Police (Indian Express, January 09, 2014).

January 13: Three terrorists were killed in an encounter with security forces in the Sopore district of Jammu & Kashmir (IBN Live, January 13, 2014).

January 18: National Democratic Front of Bodoland- IK Songbijit faction (NDFB-IKS) militants attacked Muslim villagers in the Panbari area of Chirang district of Assam. Also on the same day suspected NDFB-IKS militants killed a Hindi-speaking person in Udalguri district (Times of India, January 19, 2014).

January 20: Surrendered CPI-Maoist leader Gumudavelli V.K. Prasad indicated that the CPI-Maoist should reshape its strategies and course of action failing which the party will continue to suffer reverses (Hindu, January 21, 2014).

January 24: The Maoists announced their presence in West Bengal by issuing an "open letter" in Burdwan calling upon the people to join them in overthrowing the Indian state through an armed struggle (Hindustan Times, January 24, 2014).

January 24: Two persons were killed when a bomb exploded in a car in Assam's Dima Hasao district. Police suspect that the deceased could be members of the anti-talks faction of the ULFA that asked people to boycott the Republic Day on January 26. In another incident, suspected militants attacked at an oil depot by hurling two grenades in Dhekiajuli town in northern Assam on January 23 (Zee News, January 24, 2014).

January 26: Militants attacked the Assam Rifles (AR) post near the Myanmar border by triggering four explosions in Manipur despite strict security arrangements in place in view of a boycott call given by militant outfits. Two personnel of the 21 AR were injured in the attack (India Today, January 26, 2014).

January 27: One security person was killed and 11 others were injured in multiple (seven) IED blasts carried out by the Maoist at Dolkata area of Giridih district in Jharkhand. The attacks took place while a search party was in operation to trace four government employees, who were abducted by the Maoists on January 25 (IBN Live, January 27, 2014).

January 27: Maoists killed two villagers branding them as police informers, at Kishtapur in Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra (Indian Express, January 28, 2014).

January 28: A policeman was killed and five others were injured when suspected members of the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) anti-talks faction ambushed a patrolling party at Batasipur area of Sonitpur district in Assam (NDTV, January 28, 2014).

January 29: Nearly ten people have been killed and many injured when a gunfight was ensued between two groups in the Behali Reserve Forest area of Sonitpur District, Assam. The Behali Reserve Forest was witnessing trouble for some time as frequent clashes took place in the area between encroachers from Arunachal Pradesh and Assam (Assam Tribune, January 30, 2014).

MALDIVES

After the presidential elections, the coalition partners of the Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM), especially the conservative Adhaalath Party (AP), expressed their displeasure over the distribution of portfolios. The AP in fact, hinted at contesting the primaries and the parliamentary elections in March, alone. Several rounds of meetings and negotiations over contesting the elections between the PPM and the AP, did not yield desired results. However, the AP declared that it may not withdraw support from the PPM-led coalition government.



The major political parties were busy in primaries for the March 22 parliamentary elections. Both the MDP and AP were fined for submitting fraudulent membership forms. Therefore, poll-related violence in the coming months cannot be ruled out there.

Major Events

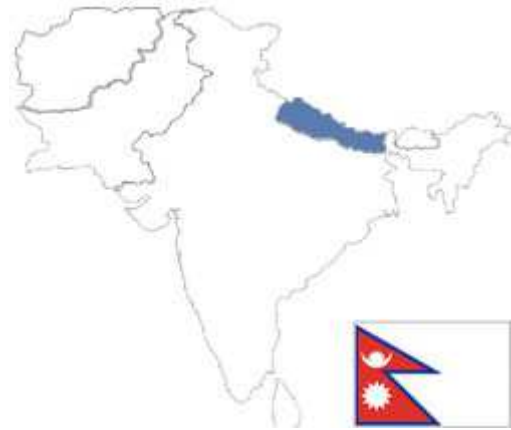
January 01: The Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) announced the names of candidates contesting in its parliamentary primaries for thirteen Male' City constituencies. The party also announced that three candidates won the ticket without a primary because they were the only candidates contesting in primaries for those seats. Maldives is going to hold parliamentary elections on March 22 to elect 85 members of the 18th People's Majlis for a five-year term (Minivan News, January 01, 2014).

January 14: The ruling Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM) initiated discussions with its coalition partner, the Adhaalath Party (AP), to jointly contest the upcoming parliamentary elections. The AP on the other hand, has hinted in favour of contesting both the parliamentary and local council elections without the other coalition partners (Minivan News, January 14, 2014).

January 26: The AP voiced concerns that, despite its assistance to the PPM in the presidential elections of 2013, the ruling coalition has failed to include the party in its discussions on the allocation of constituencies for the upcoming parliamentary elections (Minivan News, January 26, 2014).

NEPAL

The political stalemate continued after 70 days of the completion of the second Constituent Assembly (CA) elections. The process was delayed because first, parties failed to submit their Proportional Representation (PR) list on time. Second, three major political parties took different positions over the summoning of the first CA meeting. Third, they also failed to elect their leaders in the Parliament. Fourth, the second and third-largest parties– the CPN-UML and UCPN (Maoist) –forged a common understanding on whether or not to hold fresh elections for the post of president and vice-president.



Although the country is gearing for a new government under the Nepali Congress (NC), the largest party in the CA, the smooth function of the government will be affected due to contentious issues like sharing of constitutional positions between the CPN-UML and the NC, federalism and election of a new President. The CPN-Maoist, an ultra radical outfit's, decision to carry out protests against the new CA and the formation of a parallel government in its strongholds from March onwards, will aggravate the political instability.

Major Events

January 02: The dispute within the UCPN (Maoist) deepened after senior leaders of the party, Baburam Bhattarai and Narayan Kaji Shrestha, submitted a note of dissent against party Chairman Puspa Kamal Dahal's proportional representation list (Republica, January 02, 2014).

January 08: The CPN- UML, the second largest party in the new Constituent Assembly (CA) toughened its stand on holding a fresh presidential election. The issue of the presidential election, UML leaders said, has become "a matter of prestige for the party" (Ekantipur, January 08, 2014).

January 14: All Nepal Farmers' Association (ANFA), one of the Mohan Baidya-led Communist Party Nepal-Maoist (CPN-Maoist) affiliated groups captured five Bigha land (unit of measurement for land) in Nawalparasi district. A team led by CPN-Maoist district secretary Chhabilal Kharel said the land was captured as per the ANFA's central policy. According to him, the party would distribute the land to the landless farmers (Himalayan Times, January 15, 2014).

PAKISTAN

As part of its programme, the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) carried out attacks against the security forces, shrines, political leaders and the Shia community. In a major attack, around 50 Shia pilgrims from Iran were killed. Some pro-Shia and Suni organisations protested against the attack strongly opposed any attempt by the Nawaz Sharif government for peace talks with the TTP. On the other hand, the TTP faced heavy casualties due to continuing counter-insurgency operations in Balochistan, Karachi and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.



Meanwhile, despite the deployment of Rangers and other Paramilitary forces to curb violence in Karachi, the city continued to be violent. Around 200 security men were dead since the special operation started in the city in September last year. Moreover, the TTP has threatened by writing to the people that they should not visit the Gulshan-e-Maymar shrines.

Given the TTP's political objective, the fresh proposal for peace talks by the government, within six months, may not be successful. Although the Army has remained silent over the fresh peace talks offer, it still believes that the TTP's acceptance to the offer could be tactical. The TTP may be looking for temporary peace in Pakistan to preserve its resources and settle its ongoing leadership crisis.

Major Events

January 02: The Majlis-i-Wahdatul Muslimeen (MWM) called a strike in response to the January 01 suicide attack on a bus carrying 50 Shia pilgrims from Iran in Akhtarabad town of Quetta. Three people were killed and 31 were injured in the attack (Dawn, January 02, 2014).

January 01: The Majlis-e-Wahdat-e-Muslimeen (MWM) and the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) opposed the proposed talks between the government and the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). Top leaders from both the parties claimed that they would not allow the Government to hold talks with the terrorists at the cost of the Constitution (Daily Times, January 02, 2014).

January 06: Nine people, including three children, were killed and several others wounded, in a bomb attack on the house of a tribal elder in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Dawn, January 06, 2014).

January 07: Nine people were killed in different incidents of violence in Karachi. Police said six out of nine killings were carried out by the TTP. The outfit left a note at the incident site warning that those who will visit the Gulshan-e-Maymar shrines would meet the same fate

(Nation, January 08, 2014).

January 10: Three TTP militants were killed in a police encounter at Musharraf Colony of Karachi (Dawn, January 10, 2014).

January 10: The Nation said 200 security men were killed and 1,200 terrorists were arrested since the targeted operation began on September 5, 2013 in Karachi (Nation, January 10, 2014).

January 12: Three political activists were shot dead including a senior leader of the opposition ANP along with two others near Peshawar, hours after a bomb attack in Shangla district, targeting an adviser of the prime minister, killed six of his security staff (Nation, January 13, 2014).

January 15: Four militants were killed during counter-insurgency operations in Khuzdar district of Balochistan. Security forces seized an unspecified amount of arms and ammunition from the militants' possession (Dawn, January 15, 2014).

January 19: Twenty soldiers were killed and scores of them were injured when a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device ripped through a military convoy in the Bannu Town of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) claimed responsibility as its spokesman Shahidullah Shahid said that the attack was part of their fight against a secular system. (Daily Times, January 20, 2014).

January 26: Six policemen were killed in separate attacks on their vans by militants in Landhi area of Karachi. Separately, seven people – including a policeman and two political workers – were killed in various sectarian attacks in the same city on January 25 (Daily Times, January 26, 2014).

January 29: Four people, including three Rangers were killed in three separate bomb blasts including a suicide attack targeting security personnel in Karachi. The TTP claimed responsibility for the attacks (Dawn, January 29, 2014).

January 29: Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif announced peace talks with the TTP, naming a four-member committee to facilitate the talks. Addressing a session of the National Assembly, Sharif said the government wanted to give peace another chance (Dawn, January 29, 2014).

SRI LANKA

Although the country did not witness major violence during the review period, the trust deficit between the government and Tamil leaders over devolution and Human Rights continued. The government came under criticism from the international community over Sri Lanka's poor track record in Human Rights during the last phase of the war with the LTTE. The government also remained silent over attacks on the Christian and Muslim communities by some Buddhist extremist organizations.



Since the Bodu Bala Sena (BBS) has vowed to carry out a protest rally to impose ban on Halal meat, the marginalised Muslim community may oppose it strongly. The Sri Lankan government may silently encourage the religious tension in the county for some time to divert the attention of the international community over the Human Rights issue.

Major Events

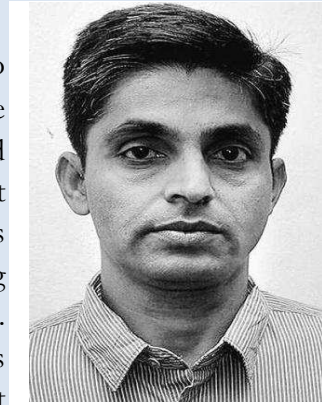
January 07: The Bodu Bala Sena (BBS) said though it respects the right of Muslims to consume Halal products, the products should not be enforced on others. Earlier, the All-Ceylon Jamiyyathul Ulama (ACJU) said that it would stop issuing Halal certificates. The BBS has also been planning to re-launch the campaign against the enforcement of Halal products on those belonging to other religions (Daily Mirror, January 07, 2014).

January 09: Under international pressure over alleged Human Rights violations during the last phase of war with the LTTE, President Mahinda Rajapaksa sought more time to deal with the Tamil issue (Daily Mirror, January 10, 2014).

January 12: A mob led by a group of Buddhist monks attacked two Christian religious establishments in Hikkaduwa, to protest against Christian prayer establishments operating in the region (Colombo Page, January 12, 2014).

*SACM Profile-II***Brief Sketch of Gummadavalli V.K. Prasad (a.k.a Gudsa Usendi) of CPI Maoist**

‘Gudsa Usendi’ is not a name. Rather, it is a kind of title given to the Maoist leader who takes over as the spokesperson of the Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee (DKSZC) of the outlawed the CPI (Maoist). The DKSZC is known as top most and largest special zonal committee located in the central India. The Maoists started using that title after death of a young tribal while fighting against security forces in DKZ whose name was Gudsa Usendi. Gummadavalli Venkata Krishna Prasad had been holding this special title since he became the DKZ spokesperson in 2006. He left the CPI (Maoist) in January 2014 citing ideological differences with top leaders, which the outfit later called untrue. The outfit accused Prasad for betraying them.



GVK Prasad is a native of Kadavendi village under Devaruppula mandal of Warangal district, Andhra Pradesh, used many aliases, Malu, Premlal, Amar, Hari, and Sukhdev. Prasad was born in 1968. He studied till intermediate level. Prasad was attracted towards the Maoist ideology since his school days. He discontinued college education and joined the then outlawed People’s War Group (PWG) in 1985. He worked as currier of Nambala Kesav Roa, a central committee member. He was arrested in connection with the Visakhapatnam Arms case of 1987 but released in the same year in exchange for seven IAS officers kidnapped by the PWG.

After the release, he worked as Dalam (squad) member in Thandava Dalam. Later he was transferred to Bhalaghat Dalam of Madhya Pradesh in 1990 and worked there for three years. He was again shifted to DKSZC in 1996 and was in charge of Party Magazine "Prabhat" (published both in Telugu and Hindi). He is known for finest strategists and with strong courier network. He married three women cadres of the outfit and a strong supporter for formation of a separate Telangana province.

According to available sources, Prasad was asked to manage the press unit of the special zonal committee in 2000 besides continuing as the official spokesperson of the DKSZC since 2006. He was also working in the propaganda team of the party since 2009. Police suspect his involvement in the June 2013-Darbha attack in Chhattisgarh, where top Congress leaders of the province were killed.

