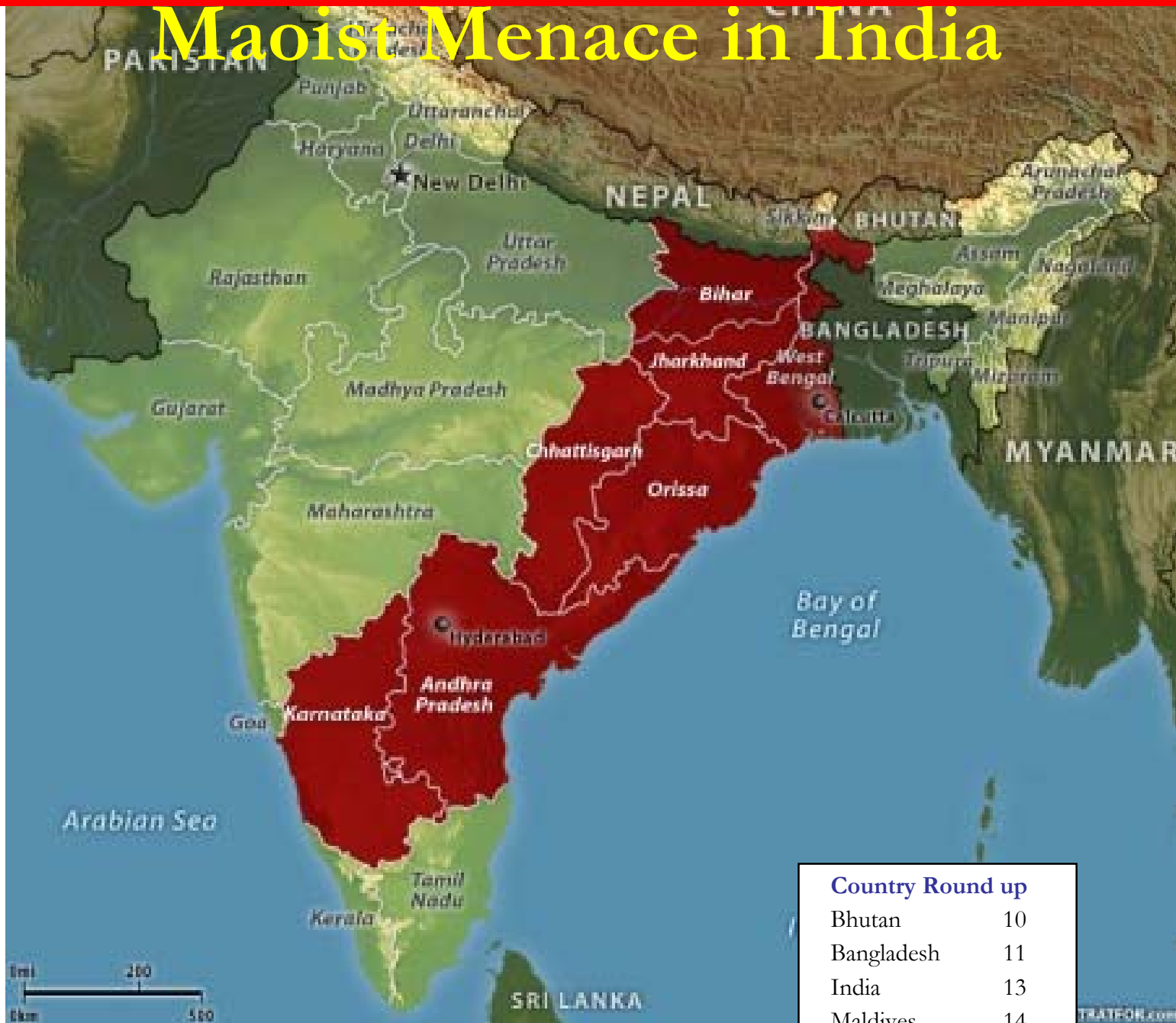


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Resurgence of the Rabid Red

Maoist Menace in India



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

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Resurgence of the Rabid Red: Maoist Menace in India

Within a month of Union Government's assessment on Maoist¹ rebels that their movement has squeezed to some limited areas and the Security Forces (SF) have been gaining upper hand gradually, the Maoists have once again proved the government's strategic thinking wrong. The Chhattisgarh attack indicates that despite massive military campaign and development programmes to counter it, the Maoist insurgency has remained the biggest internal security challenge for India. The complacency from the State side and undermining of rebel strength in the Bastar region by political parties had resulted in death of 27 people, including Congress leader and Salwa Judum (peace march) promoter Mahendra Karma. Around 32 others were injured, including former senior congress leader Vidya Charan Shukla on May 25. The precision attack with killing of so many congress workers and SF indicates the support base and geographical control of the Maoists in that region. Adhocism in the government policy to deal with the Maoist problem could lead to more such incidents during the forth-coming Parliament and State Assembly elections in 2014.

The conflict has accounted for a higher number of casualties than in the other conflict theatres of the country. According to the Ministry of Home Affairs annual report 2012-13, around 415 people had died in the year 2012 in Naxalite-related violence. The numbers of casualties are less than previous years (2011: 611, 2010: 1005 and 2009: 908). Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Bihar and Odisha have been the worst affected states. Of late, Maharashtra has become the fifth worst-affected state. Although the numbers of casualties have declined in comparison to previous years, the Maoists reportedly have expanded their geographic reach. According to the Union Home Ministry, the number of districts under Maoist influence declined to 180 in 2011 from a high of 223 districts in 2008. The Ministry has revised its assessment and found that around 203 districts are still under Maoist influence in varying degrees. Meanwhile, the Maoists have spread to three north-eastern states – Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Tripura. In north-western India, they have spread their tentacles in the National Capital Region (Delhi), Haryana, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Punjab. Though these areas have not witnessed serious Maoist violence, Maoist front organizations are very active in the region.

Interestingly, in the first week of May 2013, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs expressed concern in the Parliament over Maoists training camps organized to impart military training for

¹ In this analysis Naxalites, Maoists and Left wing extremism are used alternatively. There are around 12 Maoist outfits active in India. However, the analysis is based on the activities of CPI (Maoist), which is responsible of 98 percent of left wing extremist violence in India.

new recruits and planning of special operations against security forces. The Dandakaranya forest region had held maximum number of camps in the last one year. The camps were organised in Sukma, Bijapur, Dantewada, Narayanpur and Kanker district in Chhattisgarh and Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra. The report suggested that “In 2012, 26 training camps were reportedly organised in these districts. During the current year, till April 15, 2013, six such training camps were reportedly organised in these districts. Similar camps are organized in other left wing extremists affected states, including Odisha, Jharkhand and West Bengal (New Indian Express [Chennai, India], May 2, 2013).

SALWA JUDUM

Salwa Judum (SJ) (Peace March), the so called anti-Maoist movement in the Bastar region of Chhattisgarh, was began in 2005. The movement has been in controversy since then. While the pro-SJ claim it as a spontaneous anti-Maoists movement, its opponents including Maoists and some civil society groups, interpret it as a corporate-political intuitive against Maoists to displace the local tribal for land. They also claim that it is a joint programme of the BJP and Congress of the Chhattisgarh state against the Maoists. Some tribal families, who have been living in the SJ camps, feel that they have been forcefully kept in the SJ camps. They have lost their entire livestock, stocks of grain and forest produce. The issue became controversial further after SC declared the SJ as illegal and arming local tribal against the Maoists in a judgement in July 2011.

Existing documents suggest that the SJ was started by a local tribal Congress leader Mahendra Karma, who was killed by the Maoists on May 25 incident. According to CPI (Maoist) Chhattisgarh State Committee, 'Operation Salwa Judum' began as early as January 2005, when the police launched overt and covert operations to mobilize villagers against the Maoists. But the movement was executed in June 2005 from Kutru. It is a propaganda management. [Source: Salwa Judum A 'New Front' Of 'Hidden War' The Inside Story, CPI (Maoist) Chhattisgarh State Committee]

Since the SJ members are branded as anti-Maoists, they are frequently targeted by the Maoists. In an effort to provide security to them, the state government with the support of security forces kept them in some designated roadside relief camps in the south Bastar region. There are around 50 thousand tribal living in 20 relief camps located in the both the sides of main metal roads in Bastar region. Youths living in the camps are recruited as SPOs (Special Police Officers) for providing protection to these camps and also help the SF in anti-Maoist operations. They are trained and armed by the state police. One report indicated that as many as 3,000 Salwa Judum supporters are recruited as SPOs.

New Geographic Reach

Contrary to the Annual Assessment report, for the first time, defying the existing theory that underdevelopment is the root cause of Maoism in India, government sources have revealed that around seven districts in the National Capital Region have Maoist influence. The districts that have come under the influence of Maoists due to the presence of their over-ground front

organizations are: Central Delhi, New Delhi, South Delhi, North West Delhi, South West Delhi, North Delhi and North East Delhi.

Rajasthan is being used as shelter zone for the Maoists. Intelligence sources indicated that the Maoists are targeting Rajasthan as resource state for fund-raising activities through dacoit and extortion and shelter zone. The plan was disclosed during interrogation of four Maoist sympathizers, who were arrested in Rajasthan in 2012. In the year 2008 the intelligence agencies had found that districts like Banswara, Dungarpur, Pratapgarh, Jhalawar, Dhaulpur and Karauli were being used as shelter zone by the Maoists from Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh.

Worried over the Maoist spread to some new regions, the Union Home Ministry organized a meeting of senior police officials on 6 September 2012 in New Delhi. The meeting was addressed by both the Prime Minister and the Home Minister. The Home Minister said that the Maoists continue to pose a significant challenge. There are indicators of an increase in the number of trained and armed cadres, reorganization of military potential for formation of new battalions, and the creation of well-developed indigenous capacity for accretions to their arsenal. It was also observed in the meeting that Maoist-related incidents have declined in Bihar and West Bengal in 2012 due to strengthening of grassroots politics and development programmes. In West Bengal, according to government sources, human intelligence-based specific operations as well Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's approach to reach out to people directly in the Maoist-affected districts have played an important role in improving the situation. The ministry data also show that significant spatial reduction in Maoist violence has been noticed in Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh since 2009.

New Challenges

The mismatch between the reduced number of casualties and violent incidents and the Maoist presence in virgin regions indicates that the rebel outfits may have changed their tactics, given the loss of leadership due to arrest, surrender, killings in encounters and desertions. The change in tactics could have also been influenced by the heavy presence of security forces in the Maoist hotbed region, frequent joint operations and rejuvenation of civil administration in remote areas, which were earlier major support bases of the Maoists.

The leadership and committed cadre issue has emerged as a major challenge before the organisation. The party finds difficulties in getting committed cadres as its operational area has expanded over the years. As a result, the party has been recruiting petty criminals. This effort has

diluted the discipline and ideological ethos of the party. Second, many second ranked regional leaders are not happy with the domination of Telugu leaders in the organisation. Protesting against discrimination and exploitation of cadres from Odisha, senior Maoists leader Sabyasachi Panda who was Secretary of the Odisha State Organizing Committee of CPI (Maoist), had written a 16-page letter addressed to the General Secretary of the CPI (Maoist) on July 14, 2012. In response to that letter the party expelled Panda from the party on July 16, 2012 on the ground of dissent. Panda has formed a separate party in Odisha after that action.

Similarly, a media report indicated that the outfit faces leadership problem in Jharkhand since 2010. This has resulted in arrest, surrender and encounter killing of many senior leaders (e.g. for example Amitabh Bagchi, Ravi Sharma and Misir Besra) in the state. Moreover, Jharkhand has got maximum number of splinter groups, which separated from the CPI (Maoist). According to police sources, the first major split in the CPI (Maoist) of Jharkhand State Committee was happened when a section of its disgruntled cadres formed Jharkhand Liberation Tiger (JLT) in 2005-06. The JLT later renamed into People Liberation Front of India (PLFI) in 2008-09. (Times of India, September 7, 2012)

These are not isolated leadership crisis cases with the CPI (Maoist). There were also reports of differences between Karnataka and West Bengal leadership with the Central Committee. The dissent has never been tolerated in the party. Sabyasachi incident was third action against dissent by the CPI (Maoist) since its formation. The first incident happened in 1986 while Kondapalli Seetharamaiah expelled K. G. Sathya Murthy and Mukka Subba Reddy in 1986 on dissent ground and they were replaced by Muppala Lakshmana Rao (a.k.a Ganapathi), present general secretary of the party, and others. Surprisingly, after six years, Kondapalli Seetharamaiah was himself expelled by Ganapathi in 1992.

New Tactics

The CPI-Maoist objective is to establish a “New Democracy” in India. To accomplish this objective, the party has adopted the strategy of “Protracted People’s War”, with various tactical alternatives. In the face of the massive counterinsurgency operation by the affected states with the support of the Union Government, the Maoists have also adopted some new tactics. The cadres have been advised to take advantage of policy paralysis at the Union level and the global economic crisis at the international level to expand both their support and geographical base. These new tactics were declared during the recently concluded “Martyrs Day” from 28 July to 3

August 2012. Maoist documents released in August last year indicated that the party has the following targets:

- Establish *Janata Sarkar* (People's Government) at divisional level like in Dandakaranya and Bengal-Jharkhand area. Dandakaranya is already in operation. The next target is the Bengal and Andhra-Orissa Border (AOB) zone. According to police sources, the Maoists are trying to set up parallel "janata sarkars" in the interior pockets of AOB. The Gumma area committee in the neighbouring district of Malkangiri in Odisha set up a "janata sarkar" in the interior villages of AOB in August this year when the Maoists distributed rice to 800 tribal families. They also assured them that they would construct cement concrete roads to the interior villages, provide medical facilities in public health centres and appoint teachers to the schools with their own funds.
- Prevention of loss of top leadership and, if possible, improve the security of top leaders by acquiring sophisticated weapons.
- Preserve PLGA (People's Liberation Guerrilla Army) and inflict heavy casualties on the state forces.
- Change in work methods in accordance with the prevailing material conditions in India and increase the mass base. Mobilize the masses, especially the peasants, militantly to defeat the civic action and military campaigning. Also mobilize the middle class and intellectuals by taking advantage of the material conditions in the country.

According to Maoist tactics, over-ground activities mostly focus on undertaking awareness programmes amongst the masses in newer areas as a first step towards launching an armed revolution. These organizations work as NGOs, which are mostly engaged in propaganda against the State and its various agencies, especially the security forces. Intelligence reports have already warned of the presence of over-ground activities of the front organizations of the CPI (Maoist) in Haryana, Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir and Gujarat and in the industrial pockets in Delhi.

- Expand the guerrilla zones and intensify guerrilla warfare. Urban areas should be used both for diversionary and resource purposes.
- Kidnapping should be used to bargain for the release of key arrested cadres, putting pressure on the government for withdrawal of security forces in particular areas. Government officials could be the targets.
- Arm the people further to strengthen their political power and guerrilla base. Also arm the people involved in anti-displacement struggles.
- Oppose the Army Training School in Bastar.

- Mobilize people against usage of UAVs (unmanned aerial vehicles)/drones; educate them about the impact of UAVs in Afghanistan, Pakistan and elsewhere.
- Seek international support against the deployment of the army.

The Maoists are taking a lot of interest in economic and social issues and have been trying to exploit the current contradictions in society. An example is their active opposition to the increase of petroleum prices. To create divisions in the Indian society, they demanded that Babri Masjid should be rebuilt at the same site. They also have declared that they will intensify mass struggles to end institutionalized corruption. They have condemned state repression of people of Jaitapur, etc.

After analysing the Basaguda incident in which around 20 Maoists were killed during a Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) operation in June this year and subsequent attacks on the CRPF, the Intelligence Bureau (IB) has warned that the CPI (Maoist) would increasingly resort to the tactics of using human shields against security forces. Since the security forces have been frequently venturing into their stronghold areas, any civilian casualties during their operations would provide its front organizations an opportunity to carry out anti-security forces propaganda. To note, the Basuguda incident became controversial because the civil society and Maoists accused the CRPF for killing civilians by branding them as Maoists. The state argued that the Maoists are using civilians to protect themselves from security forces attacks and they are doing it deliberately.

Maoist presence in interior pockets has adversely affected economic activities in India. Reports by the Comptroller and Auditor General indicate that land acquisition, forest clearance and the Naxalite problem are the three primary reasons power and steel companies have cited for delay in projects for which they were given exclusive coalmining rights several years ago. The operations of the railways and execution of mega projects are also being affected by frequent strikes or protests organized by the Maoists. Recently, the Maoists asked bauxite mine workers to abandon their work in Jharkhand's Lohardaga District.

State Response

The response of the State, including both the Indian Union and the affected states, has explicitly been a 2+1-pronged approach to manage the conflict. The three prongs of the response include police action, massive development programmes, and surrender plus rehabilitation. The Union

government coordinates between Maoist-affected states in terms of sharing information and joint operations. It also provides them funds for capacity building.

Some states have come out with innovative programmes. For example, the Maharashtra government has been focusing on winning the hearts and minds of the tribal people. A couple of months ago the state police with the support of other departments organized Jan Jagaran Melas (public awareness meet) at many police stations of Eastern Maharashtra. At these Melas, the local people had access to the different departments at a single venue. The police have also been trying to send a message to the cadres through their families that a generous surrender policy awaits them.

Apart from the three pronged approach, on many occasions, the Union government has offered negotiations for peaceful solution to the conflict. The offer has not materialised due to mutual suspicion and trust deficit between both the sides. Since Maoist ideology emphasises on 'armed revolution' is the only means to capture power, any reconciliation effort from their side is interpreted by state agencies as tactical. Second, the central Committee of the CPI (Maoist) has never responded to the peace offer from the Union Government. In fact, making the situation conducive, in May this year, the Naresh Chandra panel submitted its report, which recommended that the government should explore the possibility of opening a channel of communication with pro-talks elements within the top Maoist leadership (Times of India, August 22, 2012).

Despite the government spending huge amounts of money, material and manpower, the Naxalite movement remains strong due to blurred conflict analysis, lack of political will to deal with the conflict, and difference of understanding of the conflict by the chief ministers of the affected states.

COUNTRY ROUND UP

BHUTAN

The country has set for Second National Assembly elections which have started on 31 May. This is the second time Bhutan votes for such elections after completion of first term of the National Assembly since 2008. While two political parties contested the 2008 National Assembly elections, during present elections five political parties have registered before the election commission (EC) of Bhutan. Among which Kuen-Nyam Party did not get EC approval for contesting the primary round of elections because it did not have any candidates for both the constituencies in Gasa. The EC action was initially protested by other four political parties- Druk Chirwang Tshogpa, Druk Nyamrup Tshogpa, Druk Phuensum Tshogpa and People's Democratic Party. However, the issue was resolved amicably after EC's clarification on the decision. The four contesting political parties in their manifestos have promised better economic life to people. Some political parties also criticised the 'gross national happiness' policy of previous government.



Despite five years of democratic experience, the freedom of media is yet to take full shape. Some democratic institutions are still show obliged to Palace than adhering to the democratic values. Despite main opposition party's silent reservation on India, the outcome of the July 13 would not dismantle the India-Bhutan hydroelectric exchanges rather will be adding more generation.

Major Events

May 07: Four political parties in Bhutan would contest the primary round of National Assembly elections, after scrutiny of letters of intent election commission. Bhutan Kuen-Nyam Party, the first of the new parties to apply and secure registration, could not make it past the scrutiny stage (Kuensel Online, May 07, 2013).

May 31: Bhutan conducted the primary round of voting for the lower house of Parliament. Four political parties were in fray (Kuensel Online, May 31, 2013).

BANGLADESH

While the country yet to recover from reactions to the war crime tribunal verdict from opposition parties and Shabagh movement, the opposition parties including Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) undertook a series of *hartals* (general shutdown) with the support of radical groups over the formation of an interim government with representatives from all parties.



The opposition parties' demand got support from fringe parties, which expanded further the support base of the BNP that has been trying to destabilize the Awami League (AL) government. Frequent strikes by opposition parties affected the normal life and economic condition of the country. In fact, rescue operation to the Savar building accident in which 1127 people died, some extent affected. The worst of the *hartals* happened on 6th and 7th of May while 15 persons were killed and 50 others were injured in a clash between Hefajat-e-Islami (HeI) and security force personnel in Dhaka and Narayanganj. The HeI and BNP opposed the pre-dawn crack down on the protestors and blamed the government for killing more than two hundred protestors.

Brief Profile of Hefajat-e-Islam (HeI)

HeI emerged into the scene in 2008 when it opposed national women's development policy under the caretaker government. Then it came to notice briefly in 2010 and then came into open in 2011 with its real agenda. Along with Islamic Okiyo Jote and Jamaat-e-Islami, Hefajat voiced its concern against anti-Islamic developments in the country.

The group is associated with Quwami madaras in the Chittagong. It receives support from other Ulemas associated with Quwami madaras in other parts of the country. The Chief of HeI is Mufti Shah Ahmed Shafi, who is the Chairman of the Bangladesh Quwami Madarsa Board and present rector of Al-Jamiatul Ahlia Darul Ulum Moinul Islam Hathazari, Chittagong. HeI is believed to be a shadow organization of JeI and Shibir and presently trying to hinder the trials of 1971 war criminals and remains at the forefront during Anti-Sahabagh movement.

Political stalemate in Bangladesh deepened further with rigid position of the AL over formation of an interim government. The BNP led opposition alliances called for another *hartal* by mid-May for government's failure to restore the caretaker government. Anticipating more protests and rallies, the AL government declared ban on all kinds of demonstrations, including meetings and processions, across Bangladesh for the next one month. The opposition parties responded to that by saying "will affect the country more if compared to the impact of introduction of Baksal in 1975." Despite the ban, the opposition parties had organised three protest rallies since May 19. Given the rigid position of both the top political parties and absence of dialogue between them, Bangladesh may witness another round of political instability in near future. Amid this political instability, the Army which has been mute spectator to deterioration of law and order may force to intervene if the political leaders fail to resolve their differences soon.

Major Events

May 03: Prime minister Sheikh Hasina said she had no objection to the formation of an interim government with representatives from all parties but ruled out transfer of power to unelected people (Newagebd.com, May 04, 2013).

May 06: 15 persons, including three security force personnel were killed and 50 other were injured between clash between the Hefajat-e Islam (HeI) and security forces in Dhaka and Narayanganj (Daily Star, May 06, 2013).

May 07: Hefajat-e Islam called countrywide daylong shutdown for May 12 protesting last week's (May 06) crackdown on its leaders and workers (Daily Star, May 07, 2013).

May 13: The 18-party alliance postponed their rally as it did not get permission. The opposition alliance called the rally as the 48-hour ultimatum over restoration of the caretaker government system expired last week (Daily Star, May 13, 2013).

May 14: Bangladesh Imam O Alem Ulema Somonnoy Oikya Parishad threatened with Dhaka siege programme on June 23 if the government does not ban Hefajat-e Islam and Jamaat-e-Islami by June 20 (Daily Star, May 14, 2013).

May 19: The activists of Jamaat and its student wing, Islami Chhatra Shibir, set fire to a police motorcycle and vandalised a human-hauler during an eight-hour hartal in Satkhira. No casualty reported in the incident (Daily Star, May 19, 2013).

May 19: The AL government declared ban on all kinds of demonstrations, including meetings and processions, across Bangladesh for the next one month. The opposition party responded to that by saying "will affect the country more if compared to the impact of introduction of Baksal in 1975" (Daily Star, May 19, 2013).

May 22: BNP called a daylong hartal in Dhaka district for protesting the re-arrest of its Joint Secretary General Amanullah Aman and demanding release of former MP Dewan Salauddin Babu. The party also protested to the government's prohibitions on rallies and processions (Daily Star, May 22, 2013).

May 27: BNP called for one day strike in Bangladesh over warrant issued against its Deputy Chief, Tarique Rahaman. BNP termed the arrest warrant false and politically motivated. Many parts of Bangladesh witnessed violent incidents (Gulf-times.com. May 29, 2013).

INDIA

Leakages of major scams, scandals and involvement of some cabinet ministers in those issues led to political paralysis in India. The functioning of the Parliament affected due to protests by opposition parties for taking action against corrupt officials. The opposition parties tried to change the public opinion against the government on all these issues as the Parliament elections is due in the first quarter of 2014.



Meanwhile, the Maoist rebels, who were dormant for quite some time, took advantage of pre-election preparations by political parties. Some central and eastern provinces like Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand and eastern part of Maharashtra of India experienced a spurt of Maoist violence's. The Maoists retaliated to killing of their cadres in Jharkhand and Maharashtra last month by targeting security force personnel in their strategic strong hold areas in Bastar region of Chhattisgarh. A total 16 SF and 36 civilians were killed in the month of May in the Maoist attacks across the country. In a major attack, around 27 people, including Congress leader and Salwa Judum promoter Mahendra Karma were died and 32 others were injured, including former senior congress leader Vidya Charan Shukla, in an ambush by the CPI (Maoist) in the Sukma district of Chhattisgarh on May 25. Intelligence report indicated that the Maoists have spread their tentacles to north eastern provinces of India (Assam and Manipur). The Maoists are also getting prepared for planning to target more political parties during election campaigning for the Parliament elections by imparting training to newly recruited cadres in training camps in Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Jharkhand and Odisha.

Major Events

May 01: Two suspected cadres of the Communist Party of India (Maoist) were killed in an encounter with security forces at Kachora village in Narayanpur district of Chhattisgarh (Times of India, May 01, 2013).

May 02: The Union Ministry of Home Affairs informed Lok Sabha (the lower house of Indian Parliament) that around six training camps were reportedly organised in the Dandakaranya forest region of Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra (Indian Express, May 02, 2013).

May 8: A security personnel of Chhattisgarh Armed Force (CAF) was killed and three others were injured in an encounter with suspected cadres of the banned CPI (Maoist) in Sukma district (NDTV.com, May 08, 2013).

May 10: Three policemen were dead and one injured by the suspected banned CPI (Maoist) cadres attack on Doordarshan (State run Television) transmission centre at Marenga village in

Jagdapur district. In another incident, a Chhattisgarh Armed Force (CAF) personnel was killed when the Maoists opened fire at the 9th and 13th Battalion camp of CAF at Temelwada village under Dornapal region of Sukma district of Chhattisgarh (Hindu, May 12, 2013).

May 25: 27 people, including Congress leader and Salwa Judum promoter Mahendra Karma were died and 32 others were injured, including former senior congress leader Vidya Charan Shukla, in an ambush by the CPI (Maoist) in the Sukma district of Chhattisgarh (Hindu, May 25, 2013).

MALDIVES

As the Parliament elections are getting closer in the island country, political parties are engaged in campaigning for providing best governance under the leadership of their respective presidential candidates. The Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) criticised other political parties for interpreting former President Mohamed Nasheed's remarks over Islamic radicalism during an address to the Danish parliament as "irresponsible and misleading". Given the growing popularity of MDP's presidential candidates Nasheed, other political parties tried to defame him over his remarks on Islamic radicalism. The Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM) particularly tried to divert the public attention over Nasheed's remarks to cover up its internal disturbances. Umar Naseer, who contested in the presidential primary election of the PPM filed a case at the Civil Court asking the court to declare the PPM Primary election invalid and void. Earlier, the PPM had suspended Naseer for challenging party decisions on Presidential candidate. The PPM may divide the Maldivian electorate by taking side of Radical groups against Nasheed.



Major Events

May 01: The Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) criticised other political parties, who termed former President Mohamed Nasheed's remarks over Islamic radicalism during an address to the Danish parliament as "irresponsible and misleading" (Minivan News, May 01, 2013).

May 06: Umar Naseer, who contested in the presidential primary election of the Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM), filed a case at the Civil Court asking the court to declare the PPM Primary election invalid and void (Miadhu.com, May 6, 2013).

May 12: The government-aligned Dhivehi Rayyithunge Party (DRP) said it would stand in a coalition with President Dr Mohamed Waheed during September's elections as part of an agreement to strengthen its position in the political "middle-ground" (Minivan News, May 12, 2013).

May 15: Police arrested eight individuals in the island of Maradhoo in Addu City following clashes with Special Operations (SO) officers near a campaign office of the government-aligned Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM). The police reportedly took action anticipating gang fights between rival groups (Minivan News, May 16, 2013).

NEPAL

The country struggled to find an early solution to political stalemate, which emerged since the formation of a Chief Justice (CJ)-Led interim government in March 2013. Several attempts of negotiations between the High Level Political Committee (HLPC), which was formed by four major political parties (UCPN (Maoist), Nepali Congress, CPN (UML) and some Madhesi based parties), and CPN-Maoist led 33 political parties had failed. The government also tried to initiate dialogue with these parties. The CPN-Maoist on May 13 had ruled out the possibility of Constituent Assembly (CA) election in mid-November without broader political consensus and had set a three-point condition to hold talks with the government. The party reiterated that it would not contest CA elections until the Chief Justice-led government steps down and paves way for a partisan election government. The anti-government movement intensified with support from second rung leaders of the Nepali Congress and CPN (UML).



Apart from political parties, civil society groups opposed to the November elections under the CJ-led government. As protest to the November elections, the civil society groups on May 28, 2013, (republic Day of Nepal) did not participate in the government organised 6th Republic day celebration programme. Therefore, in absence of an elected executive, a constitution and robust democratic institutions, the political situation in Nepal will deepen further if the country fails in holding the elections in November.

Major Events

April 30: The Election Commission (EC) witnessed a tussle between the UCPN (Maoist) and CPN-UML over which party should get registered first. EC officials said 34 parties have already taken application forms for the party registration and renewal. A total of 54 political parties had taken part in the 2008 CA election (My Republica, May 01, 2013).

May 02: Negotiations between a government talk team and leaders from the Federal Democratic Forum (FDF), an alliance of six political parties that announced a boycott of polls held under the present government, remained inconclusive (My Republica, May 03, 2013).

May 5: The 33-party alliance led by CPN-Maoist Chairman Mohan Baidya announced a two-week nationwide protest starting May 15, while rejecting talks with the government, the president and the High-Level Political Committee (HLPC) (My Republica, May 06, 2013).

May 5: Normal life in nine districts of the eastern part of Nepal was thrown out of gear due to the strike called by Sanghiya Limbuwan Rajya Parisad (SLRP) affiliated to Sanghiya Loktantrik Rastriya Manch. SLRP demanded the release of its cadres, who were arrested for disrupting the ongoing voter registration. (Himalayan Times, May 06, 2013)

May 13: The CPN-Maoist ruled out the possibility of Constituent Assembly (CA) election in mid-November without broader political consensus and has set a three-point condition to hold talks with the government. (My Republica, May 13, 2013).

May 16: Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN) dropped the idea of single ethnic identity-based federalism (My Republica, May 16, 2013).

May 20: The CPN-Maoist said it would not contest Constituent Assembly (CA) elections until the Chief Justice-led government steps down and paves way for a partisan election government (Ekantipur.com, May 21, 2013).

May 27: Normal life in nine districts to the east of Arun River was affected due to the general strike called by various student unions affiliated to the Federal Limbuwan State Council. (Ekantipur.com, May 30, 2013)

May 28: Civil society boycotted government organised Republic Day celebration programme as protest to the CJ-led government allegedly supported by top leaders of the four major political parties (My Republica, May 29, 2013).

PAKISTAN

The anti-democratic forces and religious fundamentalist groups including Tehrik-e-Taliban (TTP) increased their attacks on political parties and independent candidates in the first week of May. The TTP mainly targeted secular political parties like Awami National Party (ANP), Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) and PPP. Around eight people were wounded in a low-intensity bomb blast near a sector office of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) in Karachi. With the May 02 Karachi blast, around 70 persons were killed and 350 injured in 42 terrorist attacks since April 11 aiming at disrupting the May 11 elections. According to ANP sources, a total of 62 ANP workers had lost their lives and dozens got injuries in 31 terrorist attacks on the party from March 30 to May 11, 2013. Similarly, the PPP election campaigning in remote areas affected. Its leaders feared attacks from TTP.



Despite warnings and attacks from the TTP, according to the election commission of Pakistan (ECP), the turn out at the elections was 55 percent on May 11. There was 44 percent turn out in 2008 elections. Barring couple of incidents, over all polling was peaceful. The EC declared re-polling in some disturbed areas later. Although the number of terrorist attacks on civilians and political parties came down immediately after the elections, TTP's attack on security forces continued. Eight persons were killed and 97 others were injured in a suicide attack on May 13 at the Combined Military Hospital Quetta.

Major events

May 01: Two militant hide outs were destroyed and four militants were killed in a fighter jets attacks in the Orakzai tribal region (Dawn, May 01, 2013).

May 01: An independent candidate, Abdul Fateh Magsi, was gunned down in the provincial capital along with his three supporters while two others were injured in pre-election violence in Balochistan (Daily Times, May 01, 2013).

May 02: Around eight people were wounded in a low-intensity bomb blast near a sector office of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) in Karachi (Daily Times, May 03, 2013).

May 02: With the May 02 Karachi blast, around 70 persons were killed and 350 injured in 42 terrorist attacks since April 11 aiming at disrupting the May 11 elections in Pakistan (Dawn, May 03, 2013).

May 04: Eight terrorist were killed in an operation carried out in Upper Orakzai's Asmat Khanga and Shen Qamar area by security forces in the Orakzai tribal region (Dawn, May 04, 2013).

May 04: Awami National Party (ANP) candidate Sadiq Zaman Khattak, was gunned down along with his four-year-old son by the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TT) in Bilal Colony of Karachi (Nation, May 04, 2013).

May 05: Three people, including an attacker, were killed and another wounded in a bomb attack on convoy of an independent election candidate for PB-21 in Sibi district of Quetta.

May 06: Seven persons killed and 30 others injured in a blast near a public meeting of the Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) in central Kurram tribal region's Sewak area (Dawn, May 6, 2013).

May 07: A blast targeting a rally of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) in Lower Dir's Baba Gam village killed six persons and injured several others (Dawn, May 07, 2013).

May 08: Nine militants were killed and their three hideouts destroyed in security forces operation in Orakzai (Nation, May 08, 2013).

May 10: Five persons were killed and 13 others were injured in two bomb blasts in Miramshah's Khwaja Jan market and check post in the North Waziristan tribal region (Dawn, May 10, 2013).

May 10: Five persons were injured in a militant attack on the electoral office of a Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) candidate in the Brewery area of Quetta of Balochistan. In another incident, militants blew up three polling stations in Dera Bugti district of Balochistan. Separately, the Baloch National Front (BNF) had given call for strike on account of their opposition towards elections in Balochistan. Further, a Balochistan Constabulary personnel was killed and six others wounded when convoy of PML-N candidate Akbar Askani was attacked in Mand area of Kech district (Dawn, May 10, 2013).

May 10: Four people were killed and 15 others were injured in a bomb blast near an election office of an independent candidate Maulana Jamaluddin at the main bazaar of Miranshah in

North Waziristan district (Nation, May 10, 2013).

May 12: Eight persons were killed and 97 others were injured in a suicide attack at the Combined Military Hospital Quetta (Dawn, May 13, 2013).

May 12: Three persons were killed and eight others injured in an armed clash between activists of the PPP and MQM in Nawabshah city (Nation, May 13, 2013).

May 13: Protests were underway in various parts of Balochistan against alleged rigging in polls on May 11th while some parties are demanding re-election in different constituencies (Nation, May 14, 2013).

May 18: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Sindh senior vice president Zahra Shahid Hussain was gunned down by unidentified gunmen in Karachi (Daily Times, May 19, 2013).

May 18: Pakistan Muslim League-Functional (PML-F) leader Ghulam Sarwar was killed by unidentified gunmen near Pir Jo Goth (Daily Times, May 19, 2013).

May 19: Supporters of Altaf Hussain staged a sit-in in Karachi's Aisha Manzil area whereas the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) took out a rally in Hyderabad against remarks made by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Imran Khan against MQM chief Altaf Hussain (Dawn, May 19, 2013).

May 21: Around 11 people were killed in separate incidents in sectarian violence in Karachi (Nation, May 21, 2013).

May 21: Awami National Party (ANP) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa President Senator Afrasyab Khattak revealed that a total of 62 ANP workers had lost their lives and dozens got injuries in 31 terrorist attacks on his party from March 30 to May 11, 2013 (Nation, May 22, 2013).

May 21: A security personnel was killed and five others injured in a blast in Dargai area of North Waziristan (Daily Times, May 22, 2013).

May 30: Around 17 militants were killed and several others were injured during a counter insurgency operation in the Kurram tribal region (Dawn, May 30, 2013).

SRI LANKA

As uncertainty looms large over a balanced devolution package, a movement for rights of Tamil minorities gained momentum in the north-eastern provinces. Both voluntary organisation and Tamil based political parties' appealed people to fight for justice. The Collective of the Displaced Sinhalese in the North demanded that the government should resettle the Sinhalese who have been displaced in the Northern Province as soon as possible. Meanwhile, Tamil National Alliance (TNA) had teamed up with another minor Tamil party and civil society representatives to prepare a draft proposal to address Tamil issues. The parties have decided to appoint a three-member committee to formulate the draft proposal. TNA in fact



persuaded over 1,400 Tamil land owners in the North to file court cases demanding the lands taken over by the military for security purposes should be returned.

Major Events

May 03: Former parliamentarian Gajendrakumar Ponnambalam and member of Sri Lanka's Tamil National People's Front (TNPF) was threatened by four unidentified men (Colombo Page, May 03, 2013).

May 04: The Collective of the Displaced Sinhalese in the North said the government to resettle the Sinhalese who have been displaced in the Northern Province (Colombo Page, May 04, 2013).

May 07: The United National Party (UNP) has vowed to fight together with the people to change the Mahinda Rajapaksa government (Colombo Page, May 07, 2013).

May 8: Sri Lanka's Tamil political sources said several parties in the alliance are planning to register the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) without the support of the major Tamil party Ilankai Tamil Arasu Kachchi (ITAK) (Colombo Page, May 08, 2013).

May 12: United National Party (UNP) has taken measures to draft a new constitution for the country to address the current issues (Colombo Page.com, May 13, 2013).

May 12: Tamil National Alliance has teamed up with another minor Tamil party and civil society representatives to prepare a draft proposal to address Tamil issues. The parties have decided to appoint a three-member committee to formulate the draft proposal (Colombo Page.com, May 13, 2013).

May 15: Tamil National Alliance (TNA) persuaded the over 1,400 Tamil land owners in the North to file court cases demanding the lands taken over by the military for security purposes (Colombo Page.com, May 15, 2013).

May 30: Buddhist organisation Sinhala Ravaya has vowed to launch a fast unto death urging the government to implement nine demands, including 13th amendments to the constitution (Colombo Page.com, May 30, 2013).