



**Kobad Gandhi, Polit Bureau Member
of CPI (Maoist) Arrested in India**

From http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/8270400.stm

India's unlikely Maoist revolutionary

Kobad Ghandy, a top Maoist leader in India, came from an upper class background before he become one of the country's most wanted rebels. He was arrested in the capital, Delhi, on Monday. The BBC's Prachi Pinglay has this profile.

Kobad Ghandy is an "unlikely revolutionary" - a foreign educated urbanite, he is reputed to like joking and socialising.

But not for him the life of a middle class city professional. Instead he has remained committed to the Maoist cause with "discipline and perseverance" for over 30 years - with over a decade spent underground in various tribal areas, his friends say.



Mr Ghandy went to one of India's best known schools

Maoist-linked violence across central and eastern India has killed at least 6,000 people over the past 20 years. The rebels say they represent the rights of landless farmhands and tribal communities.

Mr Ghandy is wanted in various cases, accused of being a member of a banned group, organising demonstrations and writing publicity material for the Communist Party of India (Maoist).

He first became active in socio-political activities in Mumbai (then called Bombay) during the tenure of then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

While his initial years are fairly well documented, very little is known about him in later years.

He spoke to the BBC in 2008, describing Indian society as "semi-feudal, semi-colonial" and saying it needed to be "democratised".

Political activities

A Khoja-Parsi by birth, Kobad Ghandy completed his schooling in India's elite Doon school and St Xavier's College in Bombay. He went to London to pursue studies in chartered accountancy.

His friend PA Sebastian told the BBC that it was in England that Mr Ghandy first became involved in political activities.

After returning to Bombay, he was active during Mrs Gandhi's emergency (from 1975-1977), when democracy was suspended.

Mr Ghandy set up the leading rights group, the Committee for Protection of Democratic Rights (CPDR), along with activist friends like Mr Sebastian and reformer Asghar Ali Engineer.

Mr Engineer remembers how they used to meet at the convocation hall of Bombay University once a week at six pm after office hours.

"He was a thorough gentleman and was very strong in his convictions even then. He regarded the ruling Congress party as a clever bourgeois and capitalist party."

“ Our fight is against land grab and exploitation of the poor, especially focusing on rural India ”

Kobad Ghandy

[Kobad Ghandy 2008 interview](#)

Throughout the late 1970s and early 1980s Mr Ghandy's support of communism seemed to increase.

He married activist-academic Anuradha Shanbag and decided to move to Nagpur with her - dedicating themselves entirely to the cause of tribal rights, women's issues and campaigns on behalf of lower caste people and women.

Anuradha, also a staunch activist, lecturer and member of the Communist Party of India (Maoist) died in April last year after a bout of cerebral malaria.

Her brother, the well-known theatre personality Sunil Shanbag, remembers how the couple made the difficult decision to leave Mumbai as "they felt they were needed more in those areas".

"The atmosphere of those days was different. There was a great sense of liberation and all of us were swept in. The CPDR used to book tickets in bulk for our plays and there would [always] be a discussion [afterwards]. There was a bridging at this time between art and politics and Anuradha and Kobad were not narrow-minded ideologues. They were very non-judgmental."

Mr Shanbag said: "His father Adi Ghandy worked in a pharmaceutical company and they lived in an old sprawling flat in Worli. His father was in fact extremely supportive of the cause. He too led a simple life inspired by his son. Kobad had complete support from his family."

'Inequality'

Susan Abraham, another long time friend of the couple, said: "He was committed to the revolution and revolutionary ideals. He came from an upper class background but led a Spartan life. He was tuned with his surroundings. When you see so much inequality, you want so much to change things.

"In the days after the emergency everyone was influenced by activism," she said, explaining the apparent difference between Mr Ghandy's background and the life he chose to live.

Activist and writer Jyoti Punwani says it was far from obvious that he had had an elite schooling or foreign education.



India says Maoists are present in 182 districts, a third of the country

"We could not have guessed he was from all these places. His behaviour was very normal and he even laughed about his time spent at the Doon school. They had a huge house but never showed off money. He was leftist and committed to changing the system. He did all his work by himself and did not keep a servant."

While his jhola (cotton shoulder bag), his self-discipline and his commitment come up often in his friends' memories, they also mention how he loved mixing with people from all walks of life.

"Kobad and Anuradha gave up their lives to work with the poor but never said anything about it. He was always enthusiastic and he liked to mix with people. He could interact with people from every class and make friends and joke about many things. He is the most unlikely revolutionary, he liked to have fun - he was an ideologue but not an intellectual," Ms Punwani reminisces.



Mr Ghandy's wife, Anuradha, died last year

A police official who has investigated several cases in areas of Maharashtra state where Maoist rebels are active said that Mr Ghandy was also known by the names Kamal and Azad.

"He is a strong ideologue. He has organised demonstrations and written articles and other publicity material," he said.

"He is a senior in their ranks. Cases are registered against him in Nagpur and Chandrapur. However, charges against him are not of a serious nature," he said.

Mr Ghandy has been remanded in custody and it is not clear if he will be transferred out of Delhi.

Activists who campaign for the release of political prisoners have started rallying to demand that he is given his legal rights.

Mr Shanbag says some sections of the media may have got it wrong about Mr Ghandy.

"Kobad cannot be called a blood-thirsty terrorist as some in the media are calling him. Somebody has to get real."

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/8270583.stm

Kobad Ghandy 2008 interview

Kobad Ghandy, the Indian Maoist leader who has been arrested, worked in Chattisgarh state, a main centre of rebel activity. Shuvojit Bagchi of BBC Bengali met him last year. The following are excerpts from his interview:

Has the Maoists' emphasis on educating the poor contributed to their rise in Chattisgarh?

We are trying to give basic education through mobile schools. We are teaching children basic sciences, mathematics and indigenous languages. Teams involved in the process are specialising in designing courses for the people who are backward, so that they can learn faster.

We are taking extra care to improve health facilities, as well. We have told the tribals to boil drinking water. It has reduced diseases and death by 50%. Even independent NGOs have said so. Child mortality decreased because we have managed to empower women to an extent.

The level of under-development in these areas is worse than, as some indicators suggest, sub-Saharan Africa.

Are you saying you are not killing but helping people to live?

Yes. But we are defined by the prime minister as the deadliest virus... (laughs)

Why do you think so?

We have a clear-cut definition of development. We think the society is in a semi-feudal, semi-colonial state and there is a need to democratise it.

The first step is to distribute land to the tiller. So our fight is against land grab and exploitation of the poor, especially focusing on rural India.

Is that why you have managed to consolidate so strongly in Chattisgarh?

One important reason why we have managed to consolidate is because we talk about dignity of work.

For example, villagers here collect tobacco leaves to make local cigarettes. This industry runs into billions of dollars. But the daily wage of these tribals was less than 10 rupees a day before we came to Chattisgarh.

That is far less than the daily wage defined by even the government of India. We have forced these contractors to increase this daily wage - we have managed to push it up by three to four times. That is one reason why people like us.

But you have armed wings, don't you?

I can't tell you much about that. Because I don't deal with that and don't even know their members.

You are talking about development. Will you be open to the government extending development to these areas?

Why not? We have not opposed developmental works here. For example, we did not oppose the building of some schools. But if they build schools to convert those to army barracks - which India always did in various places - we will oppose.

So you will do politics on basis of guns?

Guns is a non-issue. Some villages of Uttar Pradesh or Bihar have got more guns than the entire Maoist force in the country.

What the government or some section fears is our ideology and the society we seek to build up. So we are projected as criminals.

Do you think it is possible to hold on to your bastions in face of a state-led offensive against you?

It's a difficult battle. But with capitalism and the government colliding with each other - with American economy going into recession and increase of exploitation - we do hope to consolidate.

Will you ever participate in mainstream politics?

No. Because we believe a democracy which respects people, cannot be established in this country.

<http://www.expressindia.com/latest-news/Maoist-who-went-to-school-in-Doon-London/520448/>

Maoist who went to school in Doon, London

Zahid Rafiq, Manoj Prasad

Posted: Sep 23, 2009 at 1316 hrs IST

New Delhi/Ranchi They had not seen him in years but today, when the frail, white-haired, 60-plus was being led away by police, many recognised Kobad Ghandy instantly. There was no mistaking him despite the white hair — he was the “Doon School boy” from the “huge house at Worli Seaface in Bombay” who went on to chase chartered accountancy in London before quitting it all to return home.

And after all these years, he was suddenly on TV screens, arrested for being a key politburo member of the outlawed CPI (Maoist). Police said Ghandy was assigned the task of spreading Maoist influence in urban areas, running its publication wing. He was also alleged to have been in touch with global ultra-Left organisations.

The transformation of Ghandy always puzzled friends who recalled his “privileged childhood” from “a well-to-do Parsi family” in Worli Seaface. “His father was a top official in a big pharmaceutical company. They were affluent, had a huge house and quite a lifestyle in Bombay then,” said one of his friends.

Ghandy rarely spoke about his childhood and early education. “Everyone knew he was from Doon School but he never said it himself,” said Soma Sen, friend and activist.

In the early Seventies, Ghandy was studying chartered accountancy in London when revolutionary literature consumed him. A Delhi University professor, who saw him on TV, recalled how “I would often bump into Ghandy in the London tube... he would talk about political conditions in India... he was lean, would dress simple and sound like a revolutionary.”

He said Ghandy would always talk about quitting the CA course, of returning to India to work in its interiors. “I last saw him in Bombay in 1974. He was working as a civil rights activist. I never agreed with his politics but he was committed to his ideology. When I saw him on TV, I kept staring at the screen. He was the same person I used to meet in London.”

In the late Seventies and early Eighties, Ghandy was in Nagpur with wife Anuradha, working for the Committee for Protection of Democratic Rights (CPDR). Soma Sen recalled how “he used to

be active with trade unions and worker unions” but would always have time to discuss Tolstoy and Satyajit Ray with students. Anuradha, a sociology post-graduate herself, died of cerebral malaria a year ago.

Ghandy, it is alleged, “preached Maoism in Pune, Nagpur, Mumbai, Nashik, Raipur, Patna, Bhubaneswar and Ranchi”. In Jharkhand police records, his crime portfolio reads “Nil”. But the state police, it is learnt, prepared his sketch and alerted their counterparts in Delhi. “He is a very big catch. We are sure of getting a sea of information on Maoists,” IG(Special Branch) B B Pradhan told The Indian Express.

<http://www.expressindia.com/latest-news/pcs-mantra-patrol-every-street-to-make-delhi-safe/520338/>

PC’s mantra: Patrol every street to make Delhi safe

Express News Service

Posted: Sep 23, 2009 at 0045 hrs IST

New Delhi Union Home Minister P Chidambaram want policemen to be on the beat in “every street” of the Capital for the crime rate to dive southward.

Inaugurating 22 new police stations at Sunlight Colony on Tuesday, Chidambaram said, “Policemen should be walking every street for the crime rate to come down. Senior citizens and students must be safe — even lovers in parks must be safe.”

About the batch of new police stations in the Capital, he said, “Such facilities were sanctioned only after getting an assurance from the brass of Delhi Police that the crime rate would see a downward trend.”

He said he would review the performance quarterly — “I expect outcome,” he added.

Chidambaram said the Delhi Police would get additional intelligence resources and more personnel for effective policing. Helicopter patrolling is also on the ministry’s radar, and the day is “not far” when patrolling will be done on choppers during “special occasions”, the minister said.

Emphasising that mega-city policing is a different ballgame, Chidambaram said ensuring law and order in these cities requires special skills, highest technology and a state of continuous alertness.

A day after the city police arrested top Naxal leader Kobad Gandhi, Chidambaram said, “I compliment the Delhi Police for arresting a very senior Naxal leader. Two top Naxal leaders were arrested before 2007 and four after 2007. This is an indication of how well the intelligence agencies and Delhi Police are working together.” Gandhi, 63, was nabbed from Bikhaji Cama Place in South Delhi on Sunday night following a tip-off from the central intelligence agencies.

Days after Commonwealth Games Federation president Michael Fennel questioned the country’s preparedness to meet security aspects of the multi-sports event next October, Chidambaram today said the government is increasing the level of preparedness to meet any terror threat or terror attack. And in case of a terror threat or attack, he said, “our response will be swift and decisive”.

Games ahead, Delhi behave, says Chidambaram

Ahead of next year’s Commonwealth Games, Home Minister P Chidambaram asked Delhiites to change the way they behave. He pointed out that Germany and China had made enormous efforts to change their citizens’ habits before hosting sporting events of this nature. Germany hosted the 2006 football World Cup, while Beijing played host to the Olympics last year.

“We cannot expect mega city policing to function properly if people do not change their behaviour. We still find vehicles jumping red lights — (even) police vehicles are not excluded; they too jump red lights,” Chidambaram told the media after inaugurating the new police stations.

Then, he added, there are vehicles without registration plates, and people cross roads “where they should not — we want to encourage people to change their mindset” ahead of the event.

His comments came after Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit said at the function that her government was launching a campaign to change the way people behave to make the Capital more “caring and sharing”. Chidambaram said Delhiites, and others coming to the metropolis from outside, should seize the opportunity of the Commonwealth Games to change the way they behave.

“People come to Delhi — this is the national capital and we cannot stop people — but if they come to Delhi, they will have to adhere to the behavioural requirement, the discipline of the city,” he said.

Expressindia » Story

<http://www.expressindia.com/latest-news/top-maoist-leader-held-in-south-delhi-sent-to-judicial-custody/519892/>

Top Maoist leader held in South Delhi, sent to judicial custody

Express News Service

Posted: Sep 22, 2009 at 0134 hrs IST

New Delhi The Special Cell arrested a top Maoist leader from Bhikaji Cama Place in South Delhi late on Sunday evening based on specific inputs from intelligence agencies and the Jharkhand Police.

Gandhi was produced before the duty magistrate in the Tis Hazari court complex on Monday morning and was sent to judicial custody.

Official sources said the accused Kobad Gandhi was staying in the city for the last three years and had made a sizeable network of contacts.

Sources said Gandhi is the 'think tank' of the CPI (Maoist) —recently banned by the Centre — and also a member of the party polit bureau, the top decision-making body, and the Central Committee.

"He (Gandhi) has been attached with the CPI (Maoist) for many years and is in charge of spreading the organisation's influence in urban areas. He was staying alone in Delhi but has sympathisers here, whom we are looking for. His visits, phone details and accounts are being checked," a police source said. Gandhi was also reportedly in charge of the Sub-Committee on Mass Organisation (SUCOMO).

"Gandhi was looking after the publication wing of the party. Jamshedpur police officials have been informed and they may arrive in a few days to take him into custody. We are trying to ascertain if he (Gandhi) had links with any Maoist arrested in Delhi earlier," a police official added.

Officials said Gandhi was involved in party activities in Mumbai, Vidarbha and other parts of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh.

His wife, Anuradha Gandhi, a founder member of the CPI-ML and Vidyarthi Pragatisheel Sanghatana (VPS) in Maharashtra, had gone underground some years ago for fear of police action. The Maharashtra Police had named her in several Naxal-related criminal cases. She died earlier this year.

The couple worked with tribals and beedi workers in Chandrapur district before moving to tribal areas of north Maharashtra.

Expressindia » Story

From <http://www.expressindia.com/latest-news/Top-Maoist-leader-arrested-in-Delhi/520015/>

Top Maoist leader arrested in Delhi

Express News Service

Posted: Sep 22, 2009 at 0848 hrs IST

New Delhi The Special Cell of the Delhi Police arrested top Maoist leader Kobad Gandhi from an undisclosed place in Delhi late Sunday evening. A Tees Hazari court on Monday sent him to 14 days judicial custody.

Gandhi, a Politbureau and Central Committee member of the banned CPI (Maoist), was reportedly staying in Delhi for the past three years and was traced after inputs from intelligence agencies and Jharkhand Police.

“He has been with the CPI (Maoist) for last many years and was in-charge of expanding the party in urban areas. He “is widely acknowledged as an ideologue and was also in-charge of the party’s publication wing, and played a crucial role in getting international recognition to the party,” a senior police official said. “He was staying alone in Delhi but he has sympathizers here. We are checking his visits, mobile phone details and accounts to know about his contacts here in Delhi,” a senior police official said.

The police, however, did not disclose details about the place he was arrested from or recoveries made from him. The police is also clueless about the motive behind his stay in Delhi.

Gandhi has worked in Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh. His wife Anuradha Gandhi, a founder member of the CPI-ML and Vidyarthi Pragatisheel Sanghatana (VPS) in Maharashtra, died some time ago.

The Gandhis worked with tribals and beedi workers in Chandrapur before moving to tribals areas in Maharashtra’s Dhule and Nandurbar districts. But after their peers and top CPI (Maoist)

leaders Madanlal, Murli, Arun Ferreira, Vernon Gonsalves and Vishnu were arrested by the police, the Gandhis went underground.

Gandhi will now be handed over to Jharkhand Police. "The Jamshedpur police officials have been informed about his arrest and they may arrive in a few days to take his custody. Till now, we have not found him involved in any unlawful activity in Delhi but we are trying to know if he had any link with any Maoist arrested in Delhi earlier," a police official said.

From <http://webpoori.blogspot.com/2009/09/kobad-ghandy-arrested-in-delhi-maiost.html>

Tuesday, September 22, 2009

Kobad Ghandy Arrested in Delhi, Maiost Kobad Ghandy Profile

Kobad Ghandy was an unlikely rebel – from an affluent Parsi family, alumnus of Doon School and St Xavier's College, Mumbai, and trained in accountancy in England. Kobad Ghandy, 58, could well have been on boards of several companies. However, he went on to become one of the top Naxalite leaders in the country and a politburo member of the banned CPI (Maoist).

Ghandy, who was arrested from Bhikaji Cama Place in south Delhi on Sunday, was among the young urban elite enticed by the romance of classless society and fled his giltedged life to join the radical Naxal movement in the late 1960s and 70s. However, unlike most others who ended their dalliance with Naxalism quickly, Ghandy remained committed to the 'cause'.

Born and brought up in Mumbai, Ghandy's father was managing director in a multinational company. His brother had an ice-cream factory and Ghandy used to help him in the business. Although not many Mumbai Parsis have heard about him, one old-timer from the community, who vaguely remembers the family, spoke of an incident during Ghandy's growing up years in a sprawling family bungalow in Worli Sea Face.

It so happened that one day, an expensive gold watch was missing at the Ghandys'. When they asked young Kobad about it, he casually said he had given it away to a servant. Ghandy became one of the leading figures in the city's radical Left movement during the mid-70s and in the post-emergency years.

From Riches To Reds

Kobad Ghandy, 58, joined the Naxals in the 1970s & rose to become a CPI (Maoist) politburo member, 1 of just 13. Worked to spread Maoist influence in urban areas).

Ghandy's father was MD of an MNC. Brother owned an ice-cream factory. Family home at Worli Sea Face famed for antique furniture Studied at Doon School and Xavier's, Mumbai. Did CA course in London.

In 1977, married Anuradha, a student of Elphinstone, whose family owned a coffee estate in Coorg.

Couple went underground years ago; didn't have children. Anuradha died of cerebral malaria last year.

From <http://beta.thehindu.com/news/national/article23734.ece>

Kobad Ghandy's arrest: Major blow to Maoist movement

K. Srinivas Reddy

The Hindu Maoist Central Committee member, Kobad Ghandy, who was arrested in Delhi on Sunday.
Photo: Special Arrangement

The arrest of top Maoist leader Kobad Ghandy in Delhi on Sunday will have a strong impact on naxalite movement in India, especially in South Indian states, where the ultra left revolutionary party is trying to gain a stronghold, having consolidated its position in Orissa, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Chhattisgarh.

That such an important naxalite leader had been operating from the national capital for the last one and half years was itself a rude shock to the intelligence agencies which helped Delhi police nab him. Ghandy had been liasing with revolutionary parties in Belgium, Peru, Philippines, Turkey, Germany and Nepal.

The 63-year-old leader was in charge of the South Western Regional Bureau (SWRB) coordinating the naxalite activity in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala and Maharashtra, where rebel activity remained stagnant despite herculean efforts made by the Maoist party. Taking into consideration his ability to analyse the national and international developments, he was also entrusted with the job of building up the naxal movement in urban areas.

Ghandy is stated to have admitted that despite the rapid spread of the naxalite movement in Central and North India, it failed to strike roots in other states. Even in Orissa, Jharkhand, Bihar and Chhattisgarh, the rebel party failed to win over people in plain areas and in towns, while the movement was getting strengthened in tribal belts. With the Maoist party realising that it was consistently failing in garnering support from the middle class and the intellectual sections of society, it had asked Ghandy to devise strategies and identify issues that could win over these two sections. For this purpose, Maoists had formed a Sub-Committee on Mass Organisations (SUCOMO) and Ghandy was heading it.

Though the naxalite movement began in Maharashtra in Gadchiroli division abutting Andhra Pradesh three decades ago, it had failed to spread to other areas. In Kerala also the naxalite party had failed to make much of an impact. Karnataka where the movement was relatively strong just a decade ago, had seen a split in the rank and file of Maoists after a section of leaders questioned the very principle of area wise seizure of power starting from forest areas. Ever since the split, the Maoist party failed to strike roots in this state.

In Tamil Nadu, the Maoist think tank had been trying to get a foothold in districts abutting Andhra Pradesh and Kerala but instant response from the police agencies had halted the spread of the Maoist movement. The exchange of fire near Theni River in Tamil Nadu two years ago forced the Maoist party to slow down on its plans.