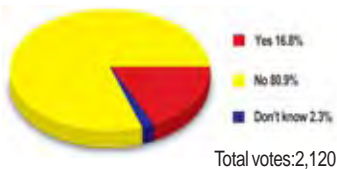


Weekly Internet Poll # 153

**Q. Was Girija Prasad Koirala justified in calling for a Valley shutdown on Sunday?**



Weekly Internet Poll # 154. To vote go to: [www.nepaltimes.com](http://www.nepaltimes.com)

**Q. Did state security respond adequately during the riots of 1 September.**

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**KANAK MANI DIXIT**  
in NEW DELHI

**W**hen Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba alighted in Delhi with wife Arzu, son Jaiveer Singh and five ministers in tow, the formal agenda seemed rather sparse for a four day 'working visit'.

Even though everyone's focus was on India's role vis-à-vis the Maoist insurgency, the agreements signed Thursday were on relatively mundane subjects like sharing weather reports, the Raxaul to Amlekhganj pipeline and cultural exchanges.

Deuba had told the press before his departure from Kathmandu that resolving the Maoist problem was his "prime agenda". But there is no one in the 72-member all-male delegation from the home or defence ministries. The prime minister is holding the cards close to his chest, indicating either poor preparation (the suspicion of many) or lack of confidence to go it alone with the Indian leaders.

Some in the Kathmandu cognoscenti had hoped Deuba would use his trip to pressurise New Delhi into agreeing to UN good offices vis-à-vis the Maoist issue. But Minister for State for Foreign Affairs Prakash Sharan Mahat ruled it out. "This is an internal problem of Nepal which can be tackled without the help of third parties," he said.

Mahat is also quick to quash speculation that Deuba might give unreasonable concessions to India on sensitive matters, including those which would activate Article 126 of the Constitution for treaties on natural resources that require two-thirds majority of parliament. He added there was no plan to sign an extradition treaty where questions hinge on third-country nationals.

The visit started on a sour note even as Deuba was on his way to Delhi, with news that

# The Delhi run

## Deuba's 72-member entourage settles down for a leisurely four-day visit



GAUTAM DAHAL

The Indian State Minister for External Affairs E Ahmed welcomes Deuba Jr, Arzu and Deuba Sr in New Delhi on Wednesday.

Indian Oil Corporation was peremptorily hitting Nepal with a petroleum tax. "This was a shocking announcement, as we could never afford it," said the NOC Executive Chairman Upendra Koirala, also in the entourage. South Block rushed into damage control mode, and the first thing Foreign Minister Natwar Singh did when he met the Deuba Thursday was to reassure him on that score. Joint Secretary Ranjit Ray told us: "It was a miscommunication and status quo ante has been restored on Nepal's ability to buy its oil from the Raxaul depot."

Apart from this muddle, there remains the question of why Deuba is in Delhi for four full days with only one official meeting plus lunch (and no banquet) with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Thursday. One

senior Indian official was reported to have said this was a "most unwanted" visit by a Nepali prime minister, but HMG had insisted on it. Ambassador Karna Dhoj Adhikari pooh-phooed this: "It is an official trip at the invitation of the Indian prime minister. Everything is as it should be."

A New Delhi media outlet reported Deuba was in Delhi to 'seek legitimacy and support', a point of view probably based on talk in Kathmandu about how Deuba pipped King Gyanendra to the post by visiting New Delhi first.

Discussions in closed-door meetings between Deuba and Manmohan Singh, Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee and Home Minister Shivraj Patil have reportedly centred on the Maoists. The dramatic anti-Indian Maoist

stance after their recent plenum has added to the challenge for New Delhi. A hardline rebel faction seems to have pushed through the new aggressive posture, lambasting the 'reactionary Indian ruling class' for its 'expansionist and interventionist' designs on Nepal. This either reflects the Maoists' ability now to be based entirely within Nepal, and/or anger at India for the capture of senior Maoists.

As one Indian analyst put it: "Given the state of political flux in the kingdom, India is willy nilly forced to support the king and the army to tackle the Maoists. We know this will hurt democracy in the long run, but there is little India can do unless political parties band together and offer a solution." ●

**Editorial p2**  
**Post mortem**

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# Double-digit lumpenisation

## What plagues the national lumpen economy plagues hydropower too

**E**arly morning last Wednesday, the first sign of trouble reached Pokhara: airlines were cancelling flights. I had to reach Kathmandu to talk the next day about whether hydropower could accelerate a double-digit growth in Nepal, so I scrambled onto the first plane available. From

**GUEST COLUMN**  
**Dipak Gaywali**



the air, Kathmandu looked like a city of smokestacks. The security guards at the airport warned us that even army trucks had to return from Tinkune, unable to negotiate bonfires of furniture and rampaging crowds.

I decided to walk, and walked right into the heart of

the madness. Broken glass and furniture were raining down on the narrow streets of Buddhanagar to the cheers of a frenzied mob. This flood plain of the Bagmati used to be green fields. Now it is a characterless neighbourhood—one of Kathmandu's symbols of individualism run amok. Bagmati degraded from a river to a sewer during the same period that the Valley lost its old charm.

Marxian analysis distinguishes two types of proletariats: the wage earning workers in the formal sector and the lumpen, a class of uprooted flotsam dispossessed of its social base and prone to criminality or vandalism. In coming to terms with capitalism, many of the enlightened non-western societies such as Meiji Japan or Mongkut Thailand managed to pull their lumpen into an ordered and respectable working class. Last week it was clear that we in Nepal have moved in the opposite direction with our economy and politics both uncontrollably lumpenised.

Nepal's nascent capitalism has benefited from the lumpen and has mushroomed in the semi-underground. It began in the late 1960s with *jhiti-gunta* trade, the officially patronised practice of allowing air passengers to porter in luxury goods from Hong Kong or Bangkok. Soon thereafter, and continuing today, windfall

profits from this as well as aid industry related trade were directed towards land speculation that has resulted in the encroachment of public space and the legalised stealing of land belonging to temple trusts. Prospering alongside were a semi-criminalised land management bureaucracy and a house reconstruction industry catering to a rural population that was uprooting itself to be closer to where jobs and schools for their children were located.

In the 1980s and 1990s, this semi-underground capital moved into carpets, garments, mini-buses, three-wheelers, dance restaurants and—since 1997 when transaction costs of passport acquisition came down with its decentralised issuing in district headquarters—into manpower export. Over time, rather than formalising themselves more and more, these industries, encouraged by a rent-seeking bureaucracy and an aid industry that ignored this structural malaise, migrated towards the informal, often the criminal, sector.

Nepali politics since 1990, rather than preventing and reversing this drift, became the democratised handmaiden of the lumpen economy. Many politicians across the spectrum are owners, partners or patrons in such enterprises. These ventures, besides providing access to significant sums of money, were useful in the mass

## POST MORTEM

**D**ante wrote in his *Inferno* that the deepest layers of hell are reserved for those who remain neutral in times of moral turpitude. In Central Europe, there is a saying: 'If all those around you are crooks and you remain silent you, too, become a crook.'

A week after the unprecedented communally-tinged riots in Kathmandu, there are certain inescapable truths. The original anger may have been spontaneous, but there was nothing spontaneous about Wednesday's mosque attack. If it was an impulsive explosion of anger, we would have seen it erupt first in Nepalganj. It didn't. In fact, Nepalganj didn't even need a curfew.

Then there was the systematic ransacking of recruitment agencies. In eight hours, more than 150 agencies were gutted, their records destroyed. Such house-to-house arson is never spontaneous as we have seen in pogroms in New Delhi and Colombo. The clue to culprits is to hunt for motive. Aside from rival fly-by-night manpower companies, the only beneficiaries were those who want to wreck the country's economy and spread anarchy.

The media is a double-edged sword, and we must take a part of the blame. The inflammatory phone-in interviews on Tuesday night over FM, some even inciting Nepalis to take revenge, were grossly irresponsible. As it turned out, the media itself became a target of the mobs for advocating restraint.

But by far the most negligent and mysterious lapse was the outright refusal of state security to get involved in quelling the riots (see p 10). The government did not take the abduction of Nepalis seriously enough soon enough. When they were killed, it waited and didn't anticipate the anger on the streets. It waited too late to take steps to prevent the riots even when everyone knew it was coming. And when Muslims shops were being ransacked, mosques burnt, airline offices looted and media houses attacked state security just watched from the sidelines. Who didn't give the order when Kathmandu was burning?

Everything we do is too little too late. The mosque was being guarded by a mine-protected vehicle only after it was a smouldering wreck, and there was an armoured carrier guarding the ashes of Siddhi Bhawan and two airline offices housed there a day too late. You don't need a ventilator when the patient is already dead.

We have to learn our lessons and move on in this season of turmoil. Now it is the Maoists' turn to wipe out what's left of Nepal's economy. They rode the wave of anarchy and are using the momentum of last week's chaos to catapult their plans to bring the country to its knees.

We have a question for both the Maoists and the palace: don't you think Nepalis have suffered enough on your behalf? How much longer do you intend to punish us?



## RETURN OF THE BARBARIANS

I used to greet the owners of the small Muslim-run shops behind Dharara which used to sell *sekuwa* saying "*Assalam Araikum*". Once they invited me to their simple rooms behind the shops during the Eid holiday. Sad incidents happened to Kantipur Publications, Spacetime Network and Qatar Airways and were repeatedly broadcast during three days of curfew. However, no news covered what happened to the most marginalised people in Kathmandu. Recruitment agencies, airline offices and news agencies can claim what they lost due to the riot, but Muslims working in the informal

sector have lost everything and no one is thinking of them. They are afraid to go back to their homes and shops. I would like to request journalists to report on not only what happened to themselves but also what happened to the most vulnerable. Media can play a significant role in reconciliation after such sad communal hatred.

**Masako Tanaka, Lazimpat**

● Thank you for showing me how Hindus mourn. How reassuring when the citizens, the police, the army and fascist scum unite in one cause. Thank you for reminding me of the 1930s in the country of my parents with Kristalltag on September First. I raise my usual five daily Martinis to Mr Carl

Sagan: "We are on the eve of discovering that nothing should be done for the sake of gods, but all for the good of man—nothing for another world—everything for this."

**Hans B Nix, Jamsikhel**

● As if the shocking news regarding the brutal murder of 12 Nepalis in Iraq was not enough, we Nepalis poured salt into our own wounds with our senseless acts the next day. Trust takes a lot of time to build, but only a moment to crumble. On Black Wednesday we drove a wedge between Nepal's Hindus and Muslims who have lived peacefully for over 500 years. I wonder what must be going through the minds of Nepali Muslims like Ali Mian, our *lok kabi* who has contributed so much to our culture. So, as we mourn the loss of lives of our brave brothers in the sands of Iraq, may we all give ourselves a moment for introspection if at all the events that followed in the streets of Kathmandu were the appropriate reaction to it.

**Shovendra Gautam, Kolkata**

● The news of the horrific slaughter of 12 Nepalis in Iraq came as a shock to everyone in Nepal, but not to the inept staff of the Foreign Ministry. This ministry does not train its diplomats in language, history, communication skills and culture,

let alone etiquette. Look how the Indians handled the same kidnapping case. Instead of securing the release of the kidnappers we were engaged in useless interviews. Our ambassador in Qatar spoke to Al Jazeera but did the kidnappers understand his English? At times of national crisis, the Foreign Ministry has really let us Nepalis down. Our career diplomats are only interested in perks and plum postings. These lethargic, corrupt and useless bunch of dullards in foreign missions should be sacked and the Foreign Ministry revamped completely. I want to see more on the lapses of the Foreign Ministry in your paper. For 12 days, the ministry, its third-rate minister and equally unqualified staff waffled as the hostage crisis unfolded.

**K Sharma Tennessee, USA**

● My question to the Nepali media: why did you handle the hostage murders so insensitively? First, there were the grieving mothers, the gory pictures of the executions. I understand that the media has an obligation to get the news out but the way in which these pictures were shown to viewers was done so carelessly that it was a factor in the anger spilling over into the streets. Isn't there a limit to what the media can and can't do? Aren't there guidelines? My conclusion is that if the media

had used more discretion in its work, the riots would not have been as bad. Also the security apparatus could have been more alert as the riots spread.

**GB Gurung, email**

● For a country that is teetering precipitously close to the edge of total implosion, anything that could aid in delaying that slide down into the abyss of anarchy would be a godsend. Unfortunately, one of those things that is in shortest supply during such times is sanity, and once again we have the case of Nepal to underscore that point.

I won't ask if any of the people who went about spreading insanity through the streets of Kathmandu ever thought about the tens of thousands of lives they were helping ruin almost as effectively as those savages in Iraq did the lives of those they butchered. Mindless thugs exist everywhere in the world and can't be wished away. That there were more of them in Kathmandu on Black Wednesday was a revelation, but not a profound one. It is the state's response that seems to have been the most shocking. Were the riots but dry runs instigated by the Maoists? Why was there no law and order when it was most needed?

**Name withheld, email**

● I would also like to apologise



KIRAN PANDAY

politics of the 1990s where strength was measured in terms of the number of people a party could bring to the streets to burn tyres, vandalise public property and bring city life to a standstill. It became a macabre art in which the partnership between political parties and a rapacious bureaucracy ended up lumpenising the formal sector and leaving it to the mercy of extortionists in *daura surwal*. The Maoists are only the latest entrants that have recently wised up to their own muscle power in such a polity.

Now, where does that leave hydropower as the engine of double-digit growth? It is not even remotely possible unless a genuine, competitive and above-board private sector is firmly established. While there are some hopeful signs, private sector entry into this field is mired in the controversy of crony capitalism, uncompetitive license raj and insider trading. What plagues the overall national lumpen economy plagues this sector too. We too have our mini-Enrons where individual promoters of a company prosper, indeed with double-digit growth, but the formally registered parent company itself wastes away. This disease not only saddles the consumer with unnecessarily high tariffs but spreads the infection to national public lending institutions that in turn are saddled with bad loans. Lumpen political economy is just allergic to anything orderly, legal and organised.

Unfortunately, the streets exploded on Black Wednesday saying it all with greater punch than I would have at the seminar that had to be cancelled. ●

# Self-immolation

## When we damage the tree to its very roots, there is no point complaining it doesn't bear fruit

**T**he traumatic events of last week triggered some introspection, but the Nepali intelligentsia is still in a state of denial. Instead of confronting real issues, we are trying to hide behind the wall of

STATE OF THE STATE  
CK Lal



lies erected by the power elite to maintain the status quo.

Brought up with chauvinistic patriotism, Nepali opinion makers have a sense of victimisation hardwired into them. We refuse to take responsibility. Blaming Big Brother down south for every ill has always been a national past time.

There is a Russian saying that the past is quite unpredictable. Last week, there was a constant reference to the history of 700 years of religious tolerance in this country. While it is true that the Malla kings of the Valley weren't fundamentalists despite being ardent temple builders, all that changed once King Prithbi Narayan Shah made Kathmandu the capital of the Gorkha Empire. The Divine Counsel ordained that Nepal was the true land of Hindus, *Asli Hindustan*. Followers of all other faiths have so far survived by accepting subservience. The

minorities understand any attempt to assert themselves will attract a backlash.

It is also seldom acknowledged that the emergence of Nepal as a political state is still work-in-progress. With the 1990 constitution we did begin to take faltering steps towards democracy, but it was stopped in its tracks by the violent Maoist insurgency. Since 4 October, 2002, we have regressed back to Sultanism, a system involving an administration and military force which are personal instruments of the master. No wonder it took so long for law enforcement agencies to respond even when parts of the city were already in flames. In Sultanism, the buck starts and stops at the door of the ruler's palace. It is pointless to blame poor Home Minister Purna Bahadur Khadka or even Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba. Unless the authority to act is devolved, the response time of the state machinery will be slack.

The political economy of popular disenchantment is even less understood. Governments formed after the political changes of 1990 failed to estimate the pitfalls of neo-liberalism thrust upon them by various donors and loaners. The state withered with the privatisation of the economy, which sapped the enthusiasm of civil servants who had lost the

will to assert themselves during the times of crisis. And the conspicuous consumption of the neo-rich antagonised the masses.

International investors did come to Nepal, but they destroyed labour intensive technologies that could have created job opportunities for the poor in infrastructure. Result: a loss of faith in the government. Administrative reforms that the government is being forced to carry out through an ordinance under ADB pressure is the right medicine for the wrong ailment: downsizing of state machinery in Nepal needs to be aimed at the military service, not the civil service.

Middle-class squeamishness about popular politics too needs to change. Politicians may be 'corrupt', 'incompetent', and 'irresponsible', but the challenge is to change them, not to get rid of them. Politics is the soul of a democratic state, and political parties various parts of its body. By constantly running down politicians, we have managed to weaken the very foundation of the state.

Criticism is desirable for the proper functioning of the political system, but incessant attacks end up questioning the very existence of political parties. When we damage the tree to its very roots, it's pointless to complain that it didn't bear fruit. After the crisis erupted on



MIN BAJRACHARYA

Black Wednesday, no political party had the strength left to confront it head on. Everyone blaming the parties for lack of initiative must pause to reflect: as a state, what has Nepal done to build credible political parties? As individuals, what hasn't the bourgeoisie done to weaken them?

Crisis is an opportunity of catharsis. We must learn to confront the evil within. A modern nation or state can't be built on the glorious legacy or good intentions of the ruler, howsoever benevolent. A framework of democratic institutions is a necessary condition for building a sustainable and modern state in a multi-cultural, multi-lingual, and multi-ethnic society like ours. There are no shortcuts. ●

to the entire Muslim community in Nepal for the crimes committed against them the last few days. The desecration of the mosque in Jamal was an act of utmost intolerance and ignorance. There aren't enough words to say sorry, except to ask for forgiveness and hope that we Nepalis may in future continue to live in harmony as we have done for centuries.

**'Bishal', email**

● Democracy is a wonderful thing: it allows student movements to exist. They can be powerful forces for change. But it is time Nepali students stopped being pawns of corrupt politicians. It is time the youth of Nepal started to think for themselves. Where is the glory in tearing up roadside railings and burning public property? Where is the glory in burning taxis and buses that ordinary people worked hard for many years to acquire? How smart is it to destroy the records of manpower agencies, however corrupt, when those very records are needed to keep track of their whereabouts? Where is the honour in attacking fellow Nepalis just because they have different religion? How does this help Nepal? It is time the 'student movement' in Nepal seriously examines its motives and charts its own independent course and avoid being

manipulated by political forces. Will it be an eye for an eye until the whole world is blind?

**S Sherpa and W Lama, email**

● Many may believe the power of opinion in Nepalis is inert, that we have become indifferent to happenings around us as long as we are not directly affected by them. This belief has been challenged by the unified voice raised by Nepalis last week. What is unfortunate is the fact that this voice has not been channelled in the right direction. Twelve Nepalis killed by an external force and we clamoured on the streets seeking justice and explanation. What about the thousands killed, ironically, by an internal force over several years of insurgency? Why weren't we on the streets shouting for explanation then? And why is this voice, strangely, still subdued? What about political leaders that survive on personal agendas rather than national priorities, what about undelivered promises and false hopes? Change is a relative term. For something to rise, something else must fall. For something to start anew, something else must wither and perish. The day will come when we will tear down all that stop change, wipe out elements that weaken the pillars of society so that new structures can be erected.

**Akash Shrestha, email**

## Tapas & Margaritas

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# “The last thing

The destruction of airline offices, media companies and hotels on 1 September grabbed headlines, but few hear the cries of Nepali Muslims who lost all



ALL PICS: MIN BAJRACHARYA

## NARESH NEWAR

At 10:30 AM on Wednesday 42-year-old Nisar Uddin and his friends in Naya Bajar were so upset by news of the brutal slaughter of Nepalis in Iraq that they began preparing a statement condemning it.

Just then, they heard the roar of an approaching mob. On the street below people were running house to house, shouting anti-Muslim slogans and banging on their main door. The family rushed up to the first floor balcony and screamed for help. Nisar's Hindu and Buddhist neighbors helped throw blankets, mattresses and

pillows into the courtyard below their house. One by one, family members jumped the 7m to the ground. Nisar wrapped his two sons, aged three and five, and threw them off the balcony, their fall cushioned by the mattresses below.

They escaped in the nick of time. For one-and-a-half hours the mob vandalised their house, burnt their car and destroyed almost everything they owned. They looted jewellery and about Rs 200,000 in cash. “If we had not escaped they would have definitely killed us that day,” recalls Nisar's 21-year old daughter, who studies in Dubai and was home on holiday. “We

have never experienced such horror.”

There are many similar tragic stories and close escapes. But there are also many heart-warming instances where non-Muslim Nepalis prevented mobs from burning Muslim houses and rescued their neighbours.

In Battis Putali, Mohamad Salim and his family cowered in the bathroom for five hours as the mob completely destroyed their house and made off with Rs 700,000. “They weren't religious fanatics, they were just looters and gangsters” a Nepali muslim told us. “This is the last thing we expected in Nepal.”

At Raqi Bajar in Indra Chowk, some Newari-speaking Muslims, whose ancestors came to Nepal more than 300 years ago are so traumatised by 1 September that they refused tell us what happened. “What is the use of talking about it now? Whatever happened is in the past. We just pray this doesn't happen again” a 50-year-old Nepali Muslim told us in Newari.

His neighbours, however, are more than willing to talk and say the only way to heal the new communal rift in society is to bring the crime out in the open. “The saddest part for us was the burning of

the Koran. We didn't really care about the money looted and houses burnt,” says Jubir Ahmed, who lost everything in his small eatery, where most customers are labourers and street vendors. The mob burnt all his tables and chairs. They also looted all his savings from the past month. Jubir tells us in fluent Newari, “I don't know where to find money to start my shop all over again, but I'm more worried about my children.”

Five days after the orgy of violence, Matim Baks is still sifting through the ashes that used to be his watch repair shop in Dilli Bajar. “I'm a poor

## Three years after 9/11

The breeding ground for monsters are in Jerusalem, Moscow, Washington...and Kathmandu

Like Dr Frankenstein in Mary Shelley's book, we make our own monsters. Not just on a personal level either—far more damagingly, the creatures we engender at the community, national and international level are the lumbering, slobbering beasts to watch out for.

The Al Qaeda monster, Chechen terrorism, Palestinian suicide bombers, religious fanatics who believe in

### HERE AND THERE Daniel Lak



violence, even, I dare say, Nepal's

own Maoist rebel movement. All of these are beasts spawned and/or nurtured in some establishment laboratory somewhere.

Consider for example the beasts who took so many children's lives in the school siege of Beslan in the Russian territory of North Ossetia. Examine the facts. Russia needs Chechnya for a very important reason—an oil pipeline that connects Central Asian petroleum to European Russia. Never mind national pride, that doesn't even enter into it.

So when Chechen rebels, whose desire for independence goes back

hundreds of years, and who come from a clannish, warlike mountain culture that reveres banditry and feats of arms, start agitating for independence in the early 1990s, the Russian state comes down on them hard.

Grozny, the Chechen capital, is invaded and destroyed twice in ten years. Thousands of young men are captured, killed, beaten, tortured, and the women are raped by Russian security forces and their proxies. A population that may once have been indifferent to dreams of sovereignty or wary of violence becomes rabid, radical and religiously aware. Russia's heavy hand created and nurtured the terrorists who so regularly kill innocent people in the name of Chechen independence.

Al Qaeda was nothing before the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1989. But an American strategy that seemed clever at the time, arming and training mountain Muslim Afghans, soon washed back on its perpetrators. Osama Bin Laden was



taught to shoot a gun by CIA trainers. The monster beat the Communists but once that battle had been one, it turned its baleful eye on its patrons in Washington. The war continues to this day, with all sorts of dire and tragic consequences.

Iraq has become another spawning ground for ugly, venomous creatures. A sort of Palestinian occupied territories on a grand scale. And as for Israel, who can argue that its policies on the West Bank and Gaza Strip haven't given birth to a phalanx of suicide bombing beasts. Yes, you have

to have gone beyond humanity to kill innocents for a cause, but no one is born this evil, with this much hate in their hearts. You have to be taught to be a suicide bomber or a 9/11 hijacker.

Alongside all this global monster breeding, Nepal's Maoist movement might seem, well, a different sort of creature. After all, comrades would argue, it's an indigenous movement that taps rural rage against a distant, callous Kathmandu elite. Yes and no. Yes, rural alienation exists in Nepal on a grand scale, and it grew during democracy in the 1990s as high expectations were never met. But that's not the only reason for the successes of the Maoist rebellion. Without Operations Romeo, or Kilo Sierra II, without the constant human rights violations by the security forces, without the continuing insistence of that distant elite that the enemy is evil, would there be a Maoist monster at all?

Nepal is a laboratory and Dr Frankenstein lives in Kathmandu. And Jerusalem. And Moscow. And Washington. ●

# we expected in Nepal'



**VOICELESS VICTIMS:** (l-r) Tabassum Ansari weeps inside her battered store, Matim Baks cleaning up the remains of his customers' watches, terrified Muslims at Raqi Bajar gather with sympathetic neighbours, Nisar Uddin's family is still unable to finish cleaning up its devastated home.



man and I want to tell them in person that I had nothing to do with the terrorists who killed my fellow Nepalis. They were also my brothers," says Matim, wiping away a tear with his scarf. His main worry now is how to pay back the Rs 70,000 worth of watches belonging to his customers that were destroyed by the vandals.

Down the road in Bagh Bajar, Tabassum Ansari and her children hid upstairs in a room while her kurta shop was being ransacked and looted. She kept praying and crying to drown out the noises of hatred and destruction from below. It went on for an hour, her entire stock

of kurtas and pashminas were burnt, mirrors, furniture and shelves were broken. The mob looted the Rs 200,000 she had in a clay pot to pay her dues and rent. Tabassum has no hope she will ever be compensated, instead some of her customers have stopped by demanding compensation for their clothes that were destroyed.

"Moral support from our Hindu neighbours is the only reason we have hope for a better future," says 40-year-old Khursid Alam, who owns a meat shop near Dharara and recounts how many non-Muslims in his community came to their rescue. But Alam still shivers

with fear when he recalls the slogans he heard the mob chanting that day. "They were shouting 'kill Muslims, kill Muslims'. I have nightmares at night," Khursid says. He hid on the roof of his meat shop the whole of Wednesday until long after the curfew went into effect.

"Let no innocent Nepali suffer like we did that day," says Farukh Ajam, whose tailoring shop in Bagh Bajar is still littered with broken glass and all that remains of his shop are broken shelves. "If the government won't help us, then we might end up on the street," he says. ●

## Iraqis trapped in Nepal

Among the most terrified people in Kathmandu as the arson and anarchy spread, last Wednesday, was the small community of Iraqi refugees.

In a sad symmetry to the Nepalis who found themselves in Iraq via Jordan, these refugees travelled in the opposite direction via Jordan to Nepal. The human traffickers brought them to Kathmandu saying it was easy to go to New Zealand and Denmark from here. Instead, they were arrested at Kathmandu airport and accused of travelling with fake passports. They have been here for four years.

"We felt hurt by the brutal killing of innocent Nepalis at the hands of those inhuman terrorists," says one of the Iraqi refugees, F Safi. "Here we are living safely with Nepali people and the Nepalis were killed in our country for no reason."

When the mob started attacking the Nepali Muslims on Wednesday, Safi and other Iraqis were so scared they would be identified and killed that they appealed to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees office in Kathmandu for protection, but the UN told them to move into a hotel.

"They told us that they could do nothing to help, but offered to pay Rs 500 per day for a hotel," recalls Safi, who has recently been granted refugee status here. UNHCR says it is now safe enough for them to return to Iraq.

"Should you face any security threat, please make sure that you report it to the nearest police station," reads an email from the Kathmandu UNHCR office to the Iraqis.

Another refugee, Akhter, is here with his 73-year-old grandmother. She is diabetic and has high blood pressure, and the panic created by the rioting has made her health worse. She hasn't slept for the whole week, fearing her family would be attacked by mobs. Living in a home with an European expatriate, the Iraqis meet and console each other—all are suffering psychological trauma and live in constant fear. "We can't go back to our country and it's not safe to live here anymore," says Akhter.

Some of the Iraqis living here are on the hit list of the same terrorists that killed the Nepalis. "It's more dangerous in Iraq today than during Saddam's time because it is in a state of anarchy. We have lost our houses, our families are scattered all over," says 25-year-old N Akhtar, who has not seen her parents for the last five years.

Her mother was working as a nurse and when she refused Saddam's orders to cut off the ears of army deserters, she was arrested but she and her husband managed to escape and were given refuge in Denmark.

N Akhtar and her younger brother were denied refugee status by the Danish government since they are above 18. They lived in Jordan, from where they came to Nepal in a desperate attempt to join their parents. Despite constant appeals to UNHCR, they have not yet gotten refugee status. The Danish Embassy in Kathmandu turned them down and directed them to the UN, saying Iraq is now safe enough to return to. "We have nowhere to go. Don't we have the right to find a home and be reunited with our parents?" asks N Akhtar.

Safi has nearly given up hope, he tells us: "They will probably show some concern after we are killed. The UN should be ashamed it can't even help a handful of Iraqis." ● (Naresh Newar)

## Nepali Muslims



MADAN PURASKAR PUSTAKALAYA

Nepali historians believe that the first Muslims settled in Kathmandu during King Ratna Malla's reign in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century. Kashmiri traders were probably the first Muslims to arrive, followed by Afghans, Persians and even Iraqis. The Raqi Bajar in Indra Chok gets its name from the Iraqi merchants.

The chaubise rajas of west Nepal also employed Afghan and Indian Muslims to train Nepali soldiers to use firearms and ammunition. Ratna Malla's envoy to Lhasa invited Kashmiri Muslims to Kathmandu in an attempt to profit from the rugs, carpets, shawls and woollen goods they traded between Kashmir, Ladakh and Lhasa. The first batch of Muslims came with a Kashmiri saint who built the first mosque, Kashmiri Taquia, in 1524, writes Shamima Siddika in her book *Muslims of Nepal*.

Influenced by the system of Mughal courts in Delhi, the Mallas also invited Indian Muslims to work as courtiers and counsellors—leading to rivalry with Newar nobles of the Malla courts. While the Muslim courtiers did not last long and returned to India, other Muslims stayed on. The Mallas also got Indian Muslims from

the Mughal Empire to join their courts as musicians and specialists on perfumes and ornaments. Historian Baburam Acharya believes they were also there to protect King Ratna Malla from rebellious relatives and senior court officials.

Following Nepal's unification, King Prithbi Narayan Shah also encouraged Muslim traders to settle down with their families. Besides trade, the Muslims from Afghanistan and India were experts in manufacturing guns, cartridges and canons, while others were useful in international diplomacy because of their knowledge of Persian and Arabic.

Many Muslims, especially Kashmiri traders, are said to have fled to India during the economic blockade that Prithbi Narayan Shah imposed on the Valley. Fearing persecution from a Hindu king due to their religion and their ties with the Mallas, the traders left despite assurances that they would come to no harm. By 1774, only a handful of Kashmiri merchants remained. Even so, Kashmiri traders proved to be a great help during the unification process. Historians say that Prithbi Narayan Shah employed them as spies and informants as they had personal contacts with the Malla rulers. After his victory, he gave them permission to build a mosque, now near Tri-Chandra Campus (see pic, left, taken in 1925 from top of Ghanta Ghar).

During Jang Bahadur Rana's regime, a large number of Muslims migrated to the tarai from India fleeing persecution by the British army during the Sepoy Mutiny in 1857. These refugees settled in the tarai, selling leather goods or working as agricultural labourers. A senior courtier to Delhi Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar also fled to Kathmandu. Later, he renovated the Jama Masjid and was buried there. During the Sepoy Mutiny, Begum Hazrat, wife of Nawab Wajid Ali Shah of Lucknow also escaped to Kathmandu via Nepalganj and was allowed by Jang Bahadur to take refuge in Nepal. She settled down at the Thapathali Durbar, and later died in Kathmandu and was also buried at the Nepali mosque. ●

# Kalapani's new 'line of control'

## The Indians have moved border posts again

SHARAD KC in KALAPANI

We had just crossed Upper Kawa and were walking along the steep banks of the Mahakali when we saw four Indian policemen approaching us. We were still in Nepal, so we weren't worried. The sight of the Indian security was a sign we were nearing the disputed Kalapani region on Nepal's northwestern tip, where the borders of China, Nepal and India meet.

The terrain flattened out, and some distance away was a hut covered in a black plastic sheet. A man in civvies was watching us intently. Along the eastern bank of the Mahakali, a red warning flag was fluttering

in the breeze. As we approached, we also saw a sentry post and a pipe painted red between two boulders at what looked like a checkpoint.

Strange, we thought. The disputed part of Kalapani was still another five km away where the river bifurcates. We stepped over the checkpoint and walked on and spotted two paramilitary policemen were climbing up to us.

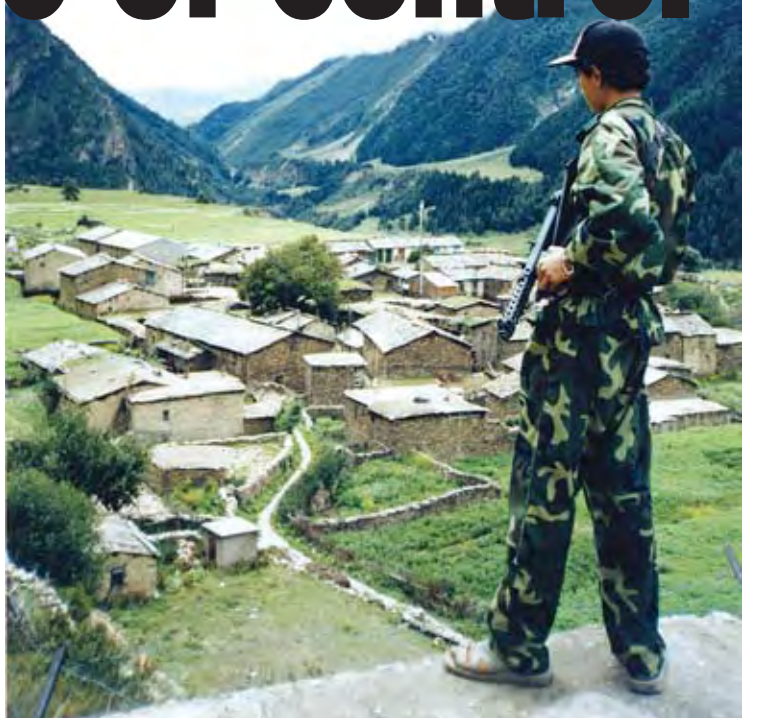
"Where are you going?" they asked in Hindi angrily. We said we were going up to the border and tried to move on. They stopped us again and asked for IDs. We said we were journalists and they snatched our IDs and camera. By this time seven more soldiers had arrived and were

firing questions at us, not even waiting to hear our answers.

"Didn't you see the flag? Why did you cross the checkpoint? Why are you really here? How many Maoists are on that side? What kind of weapons do they have?" A uniformed senior official then accused us of being Maoists and tried to scare us by telling his runner to have blindfolds and red hot iron rods ready at their camp.

This was getting serious. Just then another senior-looking fellow in civvies from the Indo-Tibetan Border Police approached and asked us who we were and why we were there. We told him. He pointed to a barren mountain to the east and explained that was the border. He finally let us go, but not before one of his assistants had exposed the film in the camera.

Later after comparing maps and talking later to officials in Darchula, it was clear that now the Indians don't just regard the east bank of the Mahakali as their territory. They don't even regard the smaller tributary that comes down from Lipu Lekh as the border, and nor even the small stream that feeds into it. What is the de facto 'line of control' where we were stopped is now 600m southeast of the stream on a bluff overlooking the river, which is supposed to be right inside Nepal (See map.). In Kathmandu, no one we spoke to in the government was aware of this.



SHARAD KC

## Maoland

After the police moved out of Chharung, the Maoists set up a platoon here. A Maoist flag flies on the Nepali side of Sita Pul, not the Nepali flag. Platoon leader Barun surveys the Indian security patrols across the river in Garbyang through binoculars (pic, above right). Earlier, we had seen the Indians doing the same, peering at the Maoists in Nepal. Barun says the Maoist presence here is for "propaganda purposes" and to "keep an eye on the Indians".

But there seems to be another motive. The Tinkar Lipu Lekhu track to Mansarobar and Tibet is a notorious conduit for wildlife trafficking. Between 1990 and 2000 alone, more than 500kg of tiger skins, tiger bones and parts, musk deer pouches and yarsagumba have been seized. Maoist Platoon Commander Ramesh told us the rebels charge Rs 35,000 tax on each kg of yarsagumba transported through his region. This would put income this season alone at about Rs 35 million. There is a separate tax on wildlife, and this year alone 250 tiger skins and bones have gone across from India to China. Explains Ramesh "As long as they pay the tax, it is our duty to give the traders safe passage."



The vacuum created by the withdrawal of all border police posts along Nepal's western border with India in the past two years has been filled by the Maoists. The Indians set up the sentry in Nepal six years ago when leftist students marched to Kalapani in a much-publicised attempt to "liberate" Nepali territory. They seem to have stayed on ever since. The Indian officials here told us this was now the new border.

When Nepal signed the Sugauli Treaty with British India in 1816, Nepal's western border with India was supposed to be the main channel of the Mahakali River. For 150 years, Nepal maintained that the real Mahakali was the one that flowed down from Limpiadhura. But in the 1962 Sino-Indian War it was a

strategic necessity for India to control the passes that came down from Tibet through the Nepal side along the trijunction. By 1998, Girija Prasad Koirala as premier was telling parliament that Nepal accepted the much smaller tributary flowing down from Lipu Lekh as the Mahakali.

Even so, records of censuses as far back as 1961 and elections before that show villagers of Kuti, Garbyang and Gunji all voted and were counted as Nepalis. These villages along the east bank of the real Mahakali are now in India. But even if Nepal has accepted the much smaller tributary that flows down from Lipu Lekh as the border, Indian border police is now manning a checkpoint another 600m on the Nepali side. ●

## VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), an independent humanitarian organization whose mandate is to provide protection and assistance for victims of armed conflict and internal disturbances has regularly vacancies for:

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#### Selection requirements

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e-mail: [katmandu.kat@icrc.org](mailto:katmandu.kat@icrc.org); [www.icrc.org](http://www.icrc.org)

## All together now

Thousands in Kathmandu marched in an inter-faith rally, calling for restoration of Nepal's traditional communal harmony and tolerance during a break in the curfew on Sunday morning. Priests, clerics, nuns and imams from Hindu,



GOPAL CHITRAKAR

Muslim, Buddhist, Christian and Jain faiths took part in the rally, which went around the streets of central Kathmandu. Civil society groups joined in, carrying placards calling for religious tolerance and peace. Many Muslims also took part. They marched wearing Nepali caps and joined an all-faith prayer meeting at Ratna Park. At another public meeting, musician Sishir Yogi sang his hit song, 'Sarangi' with its poignant lyrics by Nepal's poet laureate, Madhab Ghimire. The gathering was also addressed by Basanta Thapa, Karna Shakya, Yubaraj Ghimire and Krishna Pahadi.

## Nepali architect cited for conservation



A Nepali architect who took personal initiative and invested his own money to renovate a traditional Newari house in Bhaktapur is one of those getting an 'Honourable Mention' in this year's 2004 UNESCO Heritage Awards for Culture Heritage Conservation.

The Award for Excellence went to Baltit Fort in Pakistan's Hunza Valley, while Awards for Distinction went to heritage preservation efforts in Gujarat, Australia and Kazakhstan. Rajendra Puri from Nepal is cited for for his Namuna Ghar in Bhaktapur, along with other candidates from India, Australia, China and India. "Today I am really proud that my small effort was recognised," Puri told us. "It wouldn't have been possible without the recognition I got from conservationists in Nepal." Namuna Ghar was featured in *Nepali Times* (#126) and UNESCO says in its citation: 'The restoration and revitalisation of this archetypal Newari village farmhouse has successfully preserved a fundamental building type central to the traditional architectural vocabulary of the Kathmandu Valley.' UNESCO commended Puri for helping raise public awareness with his 'traditional vernacular structures within a contemporary setting' with modest, low-cost changes and the sensitive introduction of contemporary facilities.

See also: <http://www.nepalitimes.com/issue126/architecture.htm>

# What they say about us

## Beslan and Nepal

by Isabel Hilton

*The Guardian*, London, 4 September

*The Guardian*

In asymmetrical war, the most vulnerable will always be on the frontline. Beslan is an extreme example of what is rightly seen as a depraved military tactic. But the equally unpalatable truth is that hostage taking is also a rational tactic in the desperate context of asymmetrical warfare. Despite the likelihood of a bloody end to most hostage situations, they are likely to grow more, rather than less, frequent.

In asymmetrical warfare everyone is involved and anyone is a potential victim. To promise that security in such conflicts will result from the deployment of large military machines is a sham. To fight asymmetrical war with tanks makes as much sense as trying to shoot mosquitoes with a machine gun. The result is counter-productive.

In Iraq last week, the resources of the French state were, rightly, mobilised to try to save the lives of two French journalists. But the names of 12 Nepali workers gruesomely murdered last Tuesday have not even been published in most of our newspapers. In hostage-taking, too, there is a hierarchy of importance.

The Nepalis were victims twice over. They came from one of the world's poorest countries, which suffers the legacy of a rapacious aristocracy who built lavish palaces while denying even basic education to the majority. Today a tiny elite still dominates business and commerce while the mass of the people suffer the familiar catalogue of deprivation. To add to the country's misery, Nepal is in the grip of its own 'war on terror'. An increasingly successful Maoist rebellion now operates in 73 out of 75 districts in an insurgency that has cost 10,000 lives in eight years. When the Maoists declared Kathmandu under siege, nothing moved. When they order foreign businesses to leave, they obey in increasing numbers.

The government has responded with force, but there is no military solution in this war on terror, any more than in Iraq, Chechnya or Palestine. An outright victory by either side in Nepal could only come at appalling cost and would presage further suffering. If Nepal is to have a future, it must be a negotiated one—and one which addresses Nepal's extremes of social injustice.

For now, for Nepal's poor, the best chance of escape from this misery and violence is to find work abroad, legally or illegally. Women are trafficked into the sex trade, men recruited into international labour gangs that service the lifestyles of the well-off. The 12 victims of last week's atrocity were poor: cooks and cleaners, recruited by an agency in Kathmandu that told them they were going to Jordan. Once there, they were ordered to Iraq.

The Nepal government has no troops in Iraq and has banned its own citizens from going there. But the ban is gesture politics. The realities of Nepal are what counts. According to recent reports up to 15,000 Nepalis have gone to Iraq, some recruited by agencies in Kathmandu, others through Indian operators in Mumbai. In the final video, one of the men, a US flag pinned to his chest, read out a statement that accused the US of using deception to recruit them. "We ask anyone who wants to come to Iraq not to be cheated by these high salary (sic) because they are false and America is lying," he said.

The Nepal government was given no chance to negotiate. The US was at one end of the long chain of lies that brought the men to Iraq, their miserable conditions at home at the other. The men who murdered them picked them not for their connection to the US, but because they were unprotected and their deaths would be a warning to others to stay away. In Nepal, it will probably work. For the hostage-takers, that is enough.

## Poor Nepal

by Ghassan Charbel

*Al-Hayat*, Riyadh, 1 September



Poor Nepal, it has no fleets that can be deployed to a sea near Iraq. Its airplanes do not have the range to reach it, its very humble arsenal includes no missiles that could reach Mesopotamia. It is not an economic superpower to retaliate with sanctions. Poor Nepal. As if it was not enough to live in poverty and suffer the Maoists' practices, who were not informed that Mao's country changed, the world changed.

Most likely, the Nepalis went to Iraq searching for their daily bread, just as truck drivers and workers from Egypt, Turkey and other countries did. It is a bit difficult to say that they came within the framework of the 'war on terror', or to establish a Western democratic model in the land of Saddam Hussein. No one gave them a dangerous mission.

They came looking for a job or because a job is better paid due to the dangerous situation. True, the mere fact of coming to the ever-kindling scene is a risk, but what is also true is that they never imagined an end like the one they reached. Ethics say that the journalist should deal with developments objectively, away from bias and personal feelings in reporting, or commenting on, the developments. Yet, what was published on one of the websites yesterday augments feelings of anger and resentment. The kidnappers could have sent with the Nepalis messages to their governments and the world denouncing the occupation and calling for the foreign companies to go away.

However, the Ansar Al-Sunna Army opted to express themselves and send their messages differently. The first question that comes to mind on seeing these terrible pictures is: does Iraq's liberation need such a massacre? Would Iraq's future be built on the blood of Nepalis who came to this dangerous land seeking their daily bread? Is the resistance allowed, any resistance, anywhere, to slaughter or execute an innocent and justify its action by the fact that he has other beliefs and nationality, and what about the moral and religious deterrent?

We were following the news hoping that the French journalists would be freed when the news agency brought news of this massacre, then the website displayed the pictures of the slaughtered and shot people. We were hoping that freeing the French journalists would diminish the disaster about the Iraqi resistance practices like slaughtering and killing, and then, the Nepali massacre came to remind us of the worsening situation in Iraq. It is dangerous that the Nepalis were killed by Iraqis. What is more dangerous is that the killers are among those wandering fighters who came in search of an opportunity to clash with the Americans, and the world.

## Nepal stares into the abyss

by Gwynne Dyer

*Sydney Morning Herald*, 31 August

*The Sydney Morning Herald*

"If we have a Pol Pot scenario, this would be extremely destabilising for the region, said a Western diplomat in Nepal when the last ceasefire went into effect early last year. "India would probably come in and that would upset the Chinese and Pakistan and who knows what would happen."

Unfortunately, we may soon find out what would happen next, because the Maoist rebels in Nepal may be only a year or two away from victory.

The ceasefire of last year is long over and the insurgents already control almost half the country. On 18 August they declared a blockade of the capital and for a week almost nothing and nobody moved on the roads in or out of the Kathmandu Valley (population 1.5 million). Then they lifted the blockade and let the city have fresh food again—but not because they had to. They didn't even have to put roadblocks on the highways, they closed them by threats alone. They can do it again whenever they want.

There have been attempts at reform from above in Nepal, but they all quickly ran out of steam. Mass demonstrations in 1990 forced King Birendra to allow

## Terror vs terror

by David Aaronovitch

*The Observer*, London, 5 September

*The Observer*

French Communications Minister Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres appealed to the kidnappers, arguing: "We do not understand why journalists (were taken hostage) when our country, in terms of Iraq, expressed with immense force in the United Nations the necessity of respecting international law to restore peace."

I sympathise entirely with the desire to free these two men from the threat of death, but isn't de Vabres's position essentially that he quite understands why these groups kill Italians, murder some miserable Nepalis and execute a few Turks, but that it just isn't fair to do it to the French?

So the Islamic Action Front of Jordan (currently attempting to prevent proper penalties against so-called 'honour killers' in that country) says that the journalists' lives should be spared 'Because of France's distinguished position in rejecting the Anglo-American occupation of Iraq'. Not because you shouldn't murder journalists.

A Hamas spokesman in Gaza agreed, arguing that freeing the Frenchmen would increase the isolation of Israel and the US. Not because you shouldn't kill journalists. The French argument, regrettably, amounts to the same thing.

Or, to put it another way, if you leave everyone alone you should be able to avoid being terrorised. Yesterday, in the wake of the Beslan school horror, the historian Corelli Barnett more or less blamed the crisis on the war against terror itself. His thesis was that, since September 11<sup>th</sup>, the actions of the West (and particularly the Americans) had made things far, far worse.

The problem with this is the simple one that the war with terror was declared by terror itself. The idea that, had we negotiated with the Taliban, left Saddam in place and put more pressure on Sharon to settle, kids would now be safe in North Ossetia, is just wishful thinking.

This is an era of asymmetric warfare in which, regrettably, outgunned insurgents eventually come after kids, journalists and Nepali cooks. What else are they going to do? But wasn't Gandhi's situation asymmetric? Did he take over schools and kill the kids? Did Mandela? Is it really the case that what we have here are outgunned liberation movements?

## 21<sup>st</sup> century pornography

by Noga Tarnopolsky

*The Jerusalem Post*, 4 September

*THE JERUSALEM POST*

Have you ever heard the name Jit Bahadur Khadka? Or maybe just Jit Bahadur? It is the middle of the night here in Jerusalem, almost 3AM, and this man's name appears two ways on an AP wire story in front of me. There is no way to know.

He is a Nepali man, and I know nothing about what may sound right or be reasonable when it comes to Nepali names. Of Nepal itself, I know only that it is a distant and indigent nation in which the crown prince a year or two ago shot to death almost the entire royal family. For a while I had a minor obsession with the ber-Romanoff baroque of this story, and I followed it assiduously.

I still remember that the murdered king's brother and sudden heir was out of the country when his family was killed, and was not well-liked, though his son, who had the reputation of being a womaniser and a drunk, was liked even less.

Tonight I am awake late at night, at home, in Israel, and the distorted face of this man whose name I cannot even guess at leaps out at me from almost every news source on the web. I suppose he is poor and may not know the world observes his agony. I'm allowing myself to guess not because he is Nepali, but because I know his son agreed to the offer of menial labor in Iraq, and I cannot see a man doing this unless he is incapable of imagining any other options in his life.

The gleaming 'global village' is a pretty meaningless term for many who provide its muscle. There really is not much else I know, except that this son is now dead. There are images to prove it: a video was released a number of hours ago showing a Nepali man being beheaded in Iraq, and the shootings—in the back of 11 remaining Nepali labourers who were taken hostage alongside him.

Another picture shows these 11 dead lying in a row on their bellies, shot up as if this were a cheesy Western and they are the Mexicans. A paragraph from an AP story says: 'The video showed a masked man in desert camouflage apparently slitting the throat of a blindfolded man lying on the ground. The victim moaned and a shrill wheeze was heard. The masked man then showed the severed head to the camera before throwing it in the dirt and later resting it on the victim's chest.' Apparently?

The caption beneath one of the photographs of 'Jit Bahadur Khadka', this time, who is said to be only 55, makes reference to the 'distraught family of Ramesh Khadka, 19, a Nepali worker whose alleged beheading by Iraqi kidnappers was carried on an Islamic militant website'.

Alleged?

It is all too easy to say that these bloodless words of caution veer somewhere between the useless and the obscene. The father of Ramesh Khadka, certainly, is not allegedly writhing before me in the photographs that dispassionately wash up this night on the sullied shores of the World Wide Web.

The entire experience is obscene. Tragedies will happen and barbarity takes its awful place. But nothing even begins to persuade me that it is anything other than obscene to display these photographs as if they were paid advertisements for who knows for what. Perhaps our own depravity.

This man is splayed before me just as the paid actors involved in what we usually call obscene are splayed, except that he has been torn asunder by calamity and may not even know we are watching him. Who among us has the right to look at him this way? Nothing decent can be salvaged from these images.

multi-party democracy, but it never really worked since all the major parties were led by people from the old elite who simply saw another opportunity to feather their nests.

The Maoists could well win in Nepal, but that would be a much bigger disaster, for they belong to the same tradition of ultra-egalitarian and anti-foreign extremism that animated the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia and Sendero Luminoso (the Shining Path) in Peru. Mercifully, the latter group never attained power, but between 1975 and 1979 the Khmer Rouge murdered about a quarter of Cambodia's population in a drive to exterminate everybody who was a "class enemy" or had been exposed to foreign influences.

Comrade Prachandra, the 42-year-old former horticulture teacher who is the Nepali Maoists'

leader, never gives interviews, but the deputy leader, Baburam Bhattarai, whose PhD thesis was a Marxist analysis of Nepal's problems, was chilling when asked whether his movement's policies would be similar to those of the Khmer Rouge: "There is no independent and authentic account of events in Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge available so far. Whatever is emanating from the Western media appears to be highly exaggerated." In other words, they are the same.

If the Maoists win, an early Indian intervention might spare the Nepali population the worst horrors of a Khmer Rouge-style genocide, but only at the cost to India of a long and thankless guerilla war in Nepal. Nepal is heading straight for hell, and nobody in the country seems remotely capable of stopping it.

## Hitting where it hurts

Nepal tourism industry, which was all set for a turnaround this autumn, has been devastated, first by the international media's coverage of the weeklong blockade, then by the blasts near Soaltee Crown Plaza and finally by last week's riots.

The rebels had selected top companies from each sector—tourism, garment, carpets, even gas stations and bus companies—for indefinite closure since 17 August. On Friday, 34 other business houses were told to close, or else. As if to drive home the point, the Maoists exploded three bombs at Malla Hotel on Tuesday night.

The rebels say their demands for labour reform have not been met. FNCCI Chairman Binod Bahadur Shrestha says labour issues can be sorted out, but it is clear the Maoists are only using the closure to pressurise the government.

Nepal's business and industry has never faced a crisis of this magnitude before. Aside from the thousands who have lost their jobs, the closure of hotels like Soaltee have a huge indirect impact on the tourism industry, which in turn multiplies the impact on ancillary businesses dependent on tourism. In addition, there is the huge loss of revenue to the government. Surya Nepal alone has an annual turnover of Rs 4.8 billion and pays Rs 2 billion in taxes to government coffers. Surya's closure also affects hundreds of thousands of tobacco farmers and their families in the tarai.

"The country will lose nearly Rs 8 billion every day because of the closure of 46 companies by the Maoists," says industrialist Rajendra Khetan, whose company that produces Mayos instant noodles is among the 35 additional business houses the Maoist are closing. "It will directly snatch away jobs of more than 100,000 workers." (see interview, pg 9)

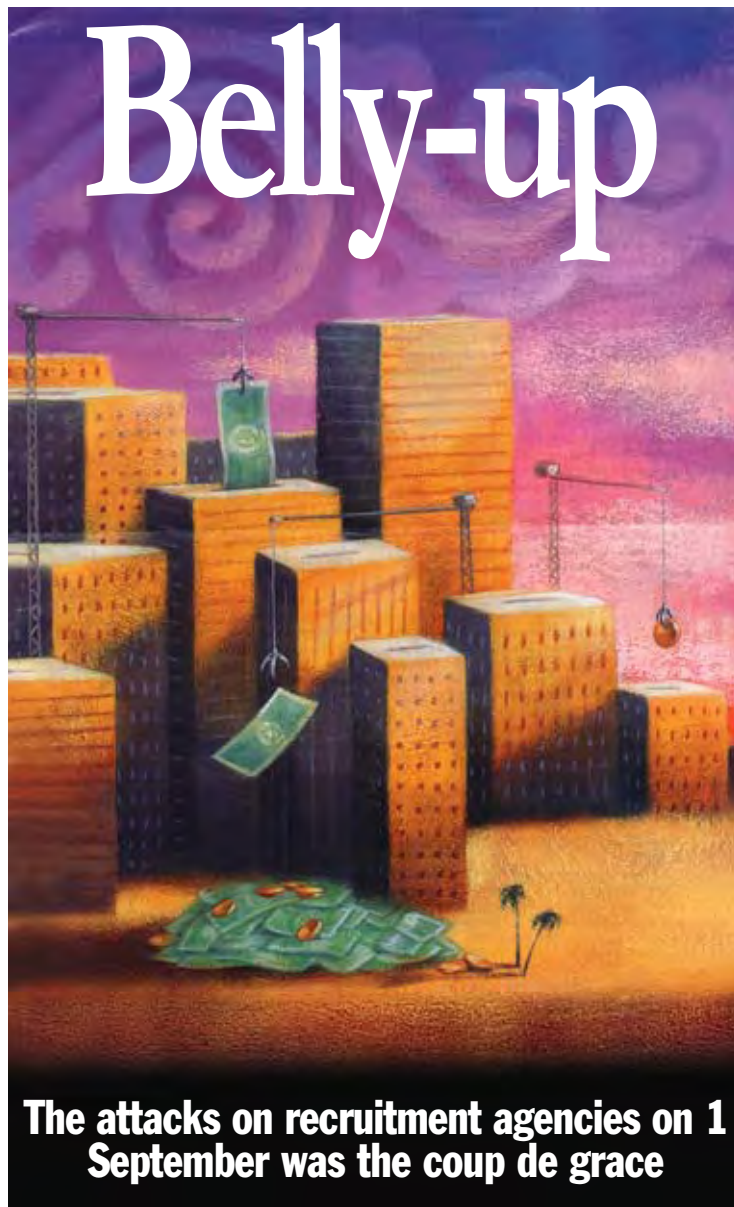
Workers who face the threat of layoffs are placing increasing pressure on the Maoists to allow the industries to reopen. The Maoists issued a statement on 27 August saying all industries except those with American investment could reopen. But hopes were dashed when within a few hours they clarified that this didn't apply to businesses already closed. Then, the very next day, they threatened the closure of the Middle Marsyangdi hydro project, which is being built with a German grant. Then on 29 August they bombed the Nepal Lever factory in Hetauda, causing Rs 70 million in damages even though this is an Indian joint venture. The government has now deployed the army to guard the facility, but managing director of Surya Nepal, Sanjeev Puri told us, "We will only reopen after the situation returns to normal."

But no one can define what exactly 'normal situation' means. The Maoists have told the businesses this is their way of putting pressure on the government to release their comrades, and the rebels have asked them to intercede on their behalf if they want their industries to open. Makalu Yatayat's Birendra Bhakta Shrestha puts it simply: "We are being held hostage by politics."

By choosing prominent targets, the Maoists have ensured that this time they have hit where it hurts. The Soaltee group had 80 percent occupancy on the day it was closed and it was booked for several high-profile regional conferences in August and September. Government officials have openly questioned why Soaltee had to close when it was promised all security. But management says as a part of an international chain it can't legally afford to stay open.

Besides the Maoists, businesses blame the government for not doing enough to address the rebel demands and tactically give in on some of them to get the industries reopened. Chairman of the Hotel Association of Nepal, Narendra Bajaracharya, says: "Closing Soaltee affects the entire hotel industry." More than half the bookings in other hotels were cancelled after word spread internationally that the Crowne Plaza had been forced to close.

Similarly, the closure of Surya Nepal will have an enormous impact on foreign investment. Indian Tobacco Company owns 58 percent of Surya, while British Tobacco Company controls two percent and various Nepali individuals and businesses own another 38 percent. ● (Kiran Nepal)



NAVIN SINGH KHADKA

If anyone was planning this, we would have to hand it to them for doing a systematic and thorough job of dismantling what is left of Nepal's economy.

Tourism, investment and government revenue had already been severely hit in the past four years. But the Valley blockade, threats against Nepal's biggest companies, the sabotage of Nepal Lever and the warning to American-owned investments have, in just one month, wiped out a large chunk of the economy.

The only sector still capable of bailing us out was overseas remittances. The killing of the 12 Nepalis in Iraq last week and its riotous fallout in Kathmandu destroyed that last hope.

Nepali workers in the Gulf, India and East Asia send home an estimated \$1 billion each year—as much as the annual national budget. The backlash against Muslims in Kathmandu has received wide play in the Arab media and this will surely reduce the numbers going to the Gulf. In addition, the destruction of 80 percent of the recruitment agencies in Kathmandu means it will be months, if not years, before recruitment levels for overseas labour gets back to normal. Many labour recruiters say the attacks were not outbursts of spontaneous anger but a systematic and deliberate attempt to destroy the manpower industry.

"It's a big challenge for us to begin our business afresh," said Nirmal Gurung, president of the Nepal Foreign Employment Agents' Association. "More than 300 of the 500 manpower agencies registered with us have been destroyed and the initial estimation of the loss is Rs 2 billion."

thousands of passports were either burnt or misplaced, which means many would not be in a position to reapply for foreign jobs immediately. The government has not made any commitment to get new passports for these people.

"The fallout has been disastrous for the remittance industry," says economist Biswamber Pyakurel. "Suspensions in the employing countries will continue to deepen and that will harm our remittance economy significantly."

Pyakurel notes that increased restrictions on the movement of migrant workers due to terrorism has already resulted in a worldwide decline in remittances. "It is happening everywhere," he says. "That is why it would not be wise to make our economy depend even more on remittances."

That may be a longterm strategy, but for the moment foreign employment is a safety valve for the Nepali economy. The conflict itself is a vicious cycle. As long as there is no peace, there will be no investment, which means there will be no new jobs, and people will be forced to go abroad for work.

The government is in a dilemma. Before this crisis broke, officials were actually planning to legalise the process of working in Iraq, since so many were duped by Indian middlemen and were taking the back door anyway. Now it can't do that, but it is also powerless to stop Nepalis from landing up in Iraq once they get to the Gulf.

Even before the riots, the government had cancelled the licenses of around 110 allegedly illegal manpower agencies, including Moonlight Consultant, which had sent out nine of the 12 Nepalis who were killed. The government has also formed a committee to formulate a policy on foreign employment. Now, the government is trapped, either way there is no real hope of immediately reviving an industry that the country depends on for survival. ●



MIN BAJRACHARYA

## Hola! Tapas and Margaritas are back!

It's not every day that you can enjoy the ambience of a food culture that evolved in Mexican taverns right here in Kathmandu. But the Yak & Yeti Hotel brings you Spanish culture in one tasty, tipsy extravaganza. 'Tapa' translates from Spanish as 'lid'—which may not seem particularly enlightening, but the

Tapa tradition is deliciously exciting. Tapas began as snacks, with pieces of bread heaped with cured meats, sausages, serrano ham, cheese, olives or almonds. Today though, Tapas encompasses a range of hot and cold dishes served in small portions. And at the

Yak & Yeti, these are accompanied with Margaritas, tequila-based cocktails with a sour twist, plus a free swim and a pint of Carlsberg. Add the Mexican-inspired décor and music, and you've got a three-day smorgasbord of food, frolic and sun-kissed fun.

Tapas and Margaritas

11AM-6PM on 10, 11 and 12 September at the Piano Bar & Poolside at Hotel Yak & Yeti, Darbar Marg. Rs 500 per person.



## BIZ NEWS

## Flying back

Had it not been for heavy bookings for September-October, the badly vandalised Qatar Airways office in Kathmandu would not have reopened so soon. Despite suffering losses of around Rs 20 million during the vandalism on 1 September, the airline resumed all of its 15 weekly flights after a week.



"Although we are in such bad shape here due to the vandalism, international tour operators want us to resume operations as soon as possible because bookings for this month and the next are quite good," said Qatar's local agent, Joy Dewan. Earlier bookings show that the international airline had 90 percent occupancy in inbound traffic

during September-October, and there have been few cancellations.

Despite deciding to resume flights, the Qatar management has demanded security assurances and compensation from the government. A committee under the initiative of Tourism Minister Deep Kumar Upadhyay has been set up to see what can be done regarding compensation.

Air Sahara, whose inaugural flight scheduled for the day of the riots was cancelled, has announced it will begin operations on 16 September. Austrian Airlines and the Dutch charter operator, Martinair, which had stopped seasonal flights for the monsoon, are also expected to begin flights this month.

## More mobile

Four years after winning the license to operate Nepal's first private cellphone company, Spice Cell Nepal has finally settled its dispute with Nepal Telecommunication Authority to operate mobile phone services. The Indo-Nepal joint venture is now set to launch its services, but customers may not see a reduction in mobile prices just yet. The reason: NTA is charging Spice Cell Rs 210 million in a bid bond and this cost is sure to be passed down to the consumers. Sources say Spice Cell agreed to pay the bond after the Russia-based Nepali tycoon Upendra Mahato bought shares in the company with a cash infusion.

## WHO certification for Nepali drug firms

Five Nepali pharmaceutical companies have earned the prestigious UN World Health Organisation (WHO) certification and can now export their products internationally. Nepal Pharmaceuticals Laboratories (including  $\beta$ -lactam section), Deurali Janta Pharmaceuticals, National Healthcare, Omnica Lab and Quest Pharmaceuticals all meet WHO's Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) criteria for manufacturing, storage and documentation, with anti-contamination safeguards with multiple air-locking, sanitised facilities, HVAC systems and quality control. In Nepal, the Department of Drug Administration issues the WHO GMP certificate to companies which comply with the guidelines.

## Plagiarised packets

Keeping one step ahead of the pack, the Dairy Development Cooperation has changed the packaging of its DDC pasteurised standard milk. Various other dairies had begun imitating the DDC packaging, confusing consumers. Hopefully, the makeover will distinguish the DDC product and help customers identify original DDC milk.



## Right to do business

The business community needs to both assert and prove itself

An ex-prime minister can't find his way to the right enclosure at the airport, so he calls a shutdown, closing businesses. An Indian actor allegedly says something that

ECONOMIC SENSE  
Artha Beed



nobody heard, and all the country's businesses come to a standstill. When the rebels want to pressure the government, they force businesses to close. People defining or un-defining 'regression' occupy the streets, closing down businesses. When the government or universities ignore student demands, they close businesses. Here is the clincher: businesses themselves announce shutdowns to force the government to agree to its demands.

Over the past decade, we have seen businesses closed on every pretext, but none of the reasons were as important as the result. In Nepal, political victory means closed shutters and empty roads. Last week, we saw yet another infringement on the right to do business, in the form of vandalism and looting. Spontaneous or organised, rioters decided to follow examples from other parts of the world 'as seen on tv'.

Like you, the Beed is fed up. He feels the right to do business is a fundamental human right, like the right to freedom of speech. The business community

needs to emulate the non-negotiable stance the media takes in defending press freedom. In a monetised economy, businesses will exist irrespective of the economic system in place, be it crony- or quasi- capitalism, or socialism, failed or mixed.

The freedom to keep shutters open, the freedom to keep enterprises open, the freedom to have operating supply chains, the freedom to operate businesses, the freedom to make

government needs to take the right to do business seriously!

It is also important that the right to do business does not infringe upon the rights of other people. Businesses must be regulated so they cannot prevent people from breathing fresh air, holding annual general meetings at the right time or protecting copyright. Stories of businesses defaulting on loan payments, businessmen prospering individually by bankrupting organisations or being in cahoots



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investments and the freedom to earn profits are all part of the freedom of doing business. The time has come for the government to protect this freedom. The onus is on the government to protect the rights of its citizens, including corporate citizens, and if it can't then it does not have the right to levy or demand taxes. If it can't fulfil its role as constitutional guarantor then it can't use other tax-related legislation either. The

with corrupt politicians has left the Nepali public with a bad impression of the business community. This is why support for business at this time of need is lukewarm.

Businesses have an opportunity to assert their rights by learning from past mistakes. This has now become important for the very survival of Nepali businesses. If business is done right, consumers will protect the right to do business. ●

## "This is not in national interest"

Rajendra Khetan is the president of the Nepal-Britain Chamber of Commerce and the executive director of the Khetan Group. He spoke to *Nepali Times* about the repercussions of the Maoists' threats to close down 35 more industries.

**Nepali Times:** What is the economic impact of the closures of businesses?

**Rajendra Khetan:** Almost 46 business houses have been forced to close. This will in turn directly affect hundreds of industries like transport and the supply chain. It will have a direct impact on 100,000 employees, and the nation will have to bear loss of Rs 8 billion in revenues every year. I don't feel that it is right to use the commercial sector as an instrument to pressurise the government into peace talks. It is completely counter-productive for the Maoists and for the country. There will be more chaos once the employees lose their jobs and come to the streets. It is a big mistake. We urge the Maoist trade union to withdraw the strike and allow us to run our industries. We shouldn't be made the scapegoats.

**Are the Maoist demands labour-related or political?**

It is political but the labour issue has also emerged in their protest. We are ready to rectify any shortcomings on our part vis-à-vis worker's rights, but the political issues have to be tackled at a political level.

**What is the business community doing to address the issue?**

We have been appealing through human rights activists like Padma Ratna Tuladhar and others. It is time for the activists to play a mediation role and find a way out so we can run our businesses. The solution is for the activists to convince the Maoists and government to enter dialogue. The rights organisations are pressing the



MIN BAJRACHARYA

government to make this happen.

**And what should the government do?**

The government should open up dialogue with the Maoists immediately. The Information Minister said on Tuesday that the government is not ready to talk with Maoist sister organisations, but how are you going to resolve the problem if you don't maintain a channel of communication?

**Is the government taking this issue seriously enough?**

It is not being serious to the extent it should be. The government should be forming a high level task force and make contact with representatives of the private sector. Instead, we are the ones going to the government, warning them over and over again that the situation is going out of control and it will affect the government in the long run. A closure of industries will cut revenue sources, and in addition you will have the fallout right across the economic spectrum.

**What other repercussions will the closures have?**

There could be a shortage of domestic goods in the market, prices will grow and then we may have to import from other countries. There will be absolute chaos. The Maoists must think: what are they really going to achieve with these closures? Is this in the national interest? I fail to understand how this helps the Maoist strategy.

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# Six hours in hell

On 1 September, both the riots and the lack of security response were deliberate



ANATOMY OF ANARCHY: 10:30 AM The mob arrives at Siddhi Bhawan. 11AM Owner of the building, Nirmal Ratna Tuladhar, pleads with rioters not to harm his property. 11:30 AM Rioters set a safe from Qatar Airways on fire. 12AM Nirmal Tuladhar's family and friends rush to the basement with buckets of water to douse the flames at Mani Tara shopping centre. 12AM The fire rages but no police or fire service is in sight. 2PM By the time the Ninjas arrive it is too late. 2:30 PM The airport fire service arrives after the curfew is declared. A next day, on 2 September, a soldier guards the charred hulk of the the Siddhi Bhawan building during the curfew.



ALL PICS: MIN BAJRACHARYA

## NAVIN SINGH KHADKA

Security agencies had information that Maoist rebels planned to infiltrate the mob on 1 September in Kathmandu. Members of a Maoist student wing had met at a hostel in Chabahil on the night of 31 August as news broke that 12 Nepalis had been killed, and street protests had already started. Intelligence agencies had information they were planning to ride the protests to sow chaos and terror in the capital.

If they knew why didn't they do anything? Why did the police, which used to be out in such force to quell anti-'regression' riots three months ago, remain mute spectators? Why did the army stand aside and let the mosques, offices and small businesses burn?

The man who has answers to those questions is Home Minister Purna Bahadur Khadka. But he says he can't comment because a government

commission is investigating the security lapse. "I can't say anything now. It would hinder the commission's work. But we will get to the bottom of this," he promised.

When, and if, the commission finds the real answers, it is doubtful security lapses will be blamed. The commission's terms of reference is to find out who was behind the vandalism, recommend punishment, assess damage and recommend compensation. In the past week, Khadka has admitted there was "lack of coordination" between the government and security agencies. Senior sources told us on condition of anonymity that the police flatly refused government orders to quell the riots.

Sources told us Khadka rushed to the prime minister's residence at Baluwatar because the security agencies were not responding to his calls. Even the prime minister found it difficult to get through on the phone and it was only after he reached the Commander-in-Chief Pyar Jung Thapa and the police brass that there was some action. By then it was too late. In most parts of the city, the police, army and fire services ventured out only after the curfew went into effect. Deputy Inspector General of Police, Ashok Shrestha, acknowledges there may have been delays. "The investigation will point out the mistakes so they are not repeated in future, but it is not about sacking anyone."

Most don't agree. They think heads should roll, and both the Home Minister and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs should have taken responsibility for mishandling the hostage crisis and the riots and resigned. "The attacks went on unhindered for five hours, the security forces were only 100m away, but no one came despite repeated SOS calls. The fire brigade arrived only after the curfew and by that time the whole building was ablaze. There was nothing left to salvage," says Tulsi Ratna

Tuladhar, who had a motorcycle shop in Siddhi Bhawan next to Qatar Airways and Air Sahara.

The coordinator of the Jama Mosque, Taj Mohammad Miya, says police didn't respond when the mosques were being attacked even though the police are right across the road. "We had warned the home minister we expected trouble and even suggested a curfew," Miya told us, "but it seemed they deliberately did not want to listen to us."

Managing Director Kailash Sirohiya of Kantipur has a similar story. Mobs arrived at his complex, they vandalised and burned cars for two hours, but despite many calls to the home minister and police no one came. Two trucks full of paramilitary armed police went by at 1PM, and they just waved. Helicopters hovered overhead, just taking videos.

The Pakistan International Airlines office is located across the street from the Royal Palace. A group of armed police manning a nearby sentry just stood and watched while the office was vandalised. If that was the fate of high profile offices near the palace, the hundreds of labour recruitment offices and Muslim businesses scattered across the Valley were sitting ducks (see p 4-5).

Kathmandu CDO Baman Neupane admits he started getting calls early in the morning and police had been dispatched to some trouble spots. "It is true that security could not be provided where it was necessary, but without investigating the whole issue I can't say why they didn't try to stop the violence."

But another senior official told us the CDO office had been told by "higher ups" not to take any action against protestors and not to declare the city riot-affected. "So we told the police to be restrained and not to interfere unless people were being killed," he said. When we put this to CDO Neupane, he retorted defensively: "How can we stop

people from protesting?" Neupane and others have no answers as to why nothing was done even when the protests took a communal turn and degenerated into arson and looting.

Police sources say it was their restraint that prevented loss of life on 1 September. Even though the riots were widespread and violent, there were only two fatalities. One protestor was shot dead by a police guard at the Egyptian Embassy, while an innocent bystander was killed at Ratna Park, both just before the curfew went into effect. Some 50 policemen were injured, and DIG Shrestha cites this as proof police were in action, saying, "If they had just stood by, how would they be injured?"

CDO Neupane adds that there were just too many riots: "It was all taking place simultaneously. The police couldn't be everywhere at the same time." But most eyewitnesses say even in the places where the police did arrive, it was too little, or too late.

In that case why didn't the administration mobilise the army? There is precedence in times of urban unrest for army deployment at the request of the CDO. Moreover, army intelligence had information that the Maoists planned to infiltrate the riots to create anarchy. As it turned out, even the army footpatrols seen on normal days were not out on 1 September. Just the presence of soldiers or armoured carriers at strategic locations could have deterred vandals. As it did in Kantipur: it was after a military patrol from the airport arrived that rioters retreated.

We asked an army general what went wrong. "The deployment at Kantipur was an exceptional, emergency case. For the army to be deployed formally during incidents like these we need authorisation from the CDO." With such buck-passing, it is doubtful if any meaningful lessons learnt will come out of the Black Wednesday investigation. ●



KIRAN PANDAY

The clock shows 7:50 am, the time the mob started attacking the Jama Mosque. A soldier now stands guard.

# “Dire straits”

Geographer and planner Pitambar Sharma is also a noted economist. In this *Nepali Times* interview, he says the Maoists targeting the economy is a mistake.

**Nepali Times:** How do you think 1 September's riots will affect the economy?

**Pitambar Sharma:** It will have dire consequences. Major airlines were affected so tourism will slide further. The blasts in hotels will make matters worse. The other badly hit sector is our remittance economy. Fewer people will now opt to go to the Gulf and those who were already planning to go may change their minds. So, more and more people will go to India and we will be increasingly dependent on Indian economy. India seems to know this pretty well. The more dependency increases, the more India will be in a position to wrest concessions on water resources, trade and even security.

**What do you make of the Maoists' strategy on the economy?**

There has been a change. They appear much more confident now, not only in terms of international press coverage but also in defining political and economic strategy. To me, it seems like the point of departure and these are indications of things to come.

**Indications of what?**

I think it might indicate a change in military strategy. Perhaps they have gone on to a new strategy where they do not attack things directly militarily. You create a psychological environment and have a much more forceful impact on the economy. You take advantage of the terror that you have created in people's minds and of the government that does not know what to do. You also take advantage of the situation of Nepal vis-a-vis other countries which are supporting Nepal militarily. They are trying to test the reaction within Nepal and outside.

**How about the impact on ordinary Nepalis?**

The economic impact has been disastrous. The government has underestimated the impact on agriculture, especially in the hills. The manufacturing sector, which was not actually down, will now feel the impact. The tourism industry has of course gone down. Though there was some improvement in arrivals last year, this year signs are that it might not pick up. Military expenditure may increase to around five percent of GDP, and spending on health and education will go down. So things don't look good at all.

**The Maoists claim that closing industries hurts the state and capitalists because general people are suppressed anyway.**

I think that argument only looks at one side of the picture. You might be hurting the capitalists, but many people work for those very capitalists. The working class in the urban areas will suffer. That is something that the Maoists have not really cared about. If you look at the hills where they destroyed schools and hospitals, you can see that it is not the rich who are being affected, it is the poor. The Maoists make commitments they will not harm business, and then they go ahead and do exactly that. There is contradiction and a crisis of confidence.

**The business community has asked rebels not to mix politics and economy.**

Politics has many dimensions. Security is one of them and that should always be guaranteed. It is only under the security guarantee that you can run industries and provide employment. Once that does not happen, politics and economy get mixed up. People who say that they can have tourism and sound a economy despite Maoist activities are just daydreaming.

**So what do rebels gain by destroying the very thing they have been promising the people?**

The Maoist began their journey with a political strategy to highlight the problems that the Nepali state never looked at before. That was the positive aspect despite all the human costs. But, as time went on, military thinking took prominence in their strategy and politicisation of the masses took the back seat. That is very tragic because if the rebels had really politicised the people, the government would have been forced to address the major problems of the Nepali state. By resorting to a military course, the Maoists have negated their own early achievements. They are on a suicidal path.

**How much has geopolitics contributed?**

The Maoists have answered the question the progressive leftists had always left unanswered in Nepal, particularly with reference to revolution. Nepal is between Indian and China and therefore there can be no hope for an internal rebellion. The Maoists are trying to prove that wrong. The Maoist rebellion is the first homegrown rebellion in Nepal though ideologically it has been motivated by factors outside Nepal. But it will impossible for the Maoists to get ahead because the Maoists can't capture state power politically or militarily and rule it for any length of time because of our geopolitical situation and the global political scenario.





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MIN BAJRACHARYA

# Rumour mania

Nispaksa, 7 September

निष्पक्ष

As the nation was gripped by shock over the killing of the Nepali workers in Iraq and there was a curfew, rumourmongers made matters worse by spreading false news about the royal family. The rumour of Princess Himani's death spread rapidly and reached Nepali communities across the world. The whole of Saturday the rumour mills worked overtime, causing panic among Nepalis and even foreign media started making inquiries. To quell the rumours, the palace had to arrange a royal visit to Hanuman Dhoka on Saturday afternoon, with images of Prince Paras and Princess Himani broadcast on all television stations (see pic). Even then, rumourmongers were not satisfied. They said the footage was old, and that the princess had already passed away at Chhauni. We seem to easily forget that our country has already suffered a lot due to false rumours, as in the case of the anti-Hrithik Roshan riots. Without even verifying the truth, Nepalis are prone to violent demonstrations in which they vandalise private property, loot and burn cars. Once again, all Nepalis were made complete fools of by a handful of rumourmongers who are nothing but anti-social elements. The sad part was that even some in the security forces believed the rumour and contributed to spreading it. Some doctors at the army hospital in Chauni also played a part in spreading the rumour.

# A pound of flesh



KIRAN PANDAY

Surya Prasad Subedi in Kantipur, 6 September

कान्तिपुर

Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba's India visit comes at a time when Nepal is weak and in crisis. Nepal has had bitter experiences of negotiating with India at such times. Former Prime Minister Mohan Shumsher signed the 1950 treaty with India during a time of crisis for the Rana regime. The arms and ammunitions treaty in 1965 came after an internal conflict in the country. Immediately after the 1990 movement, Krishna Prasad Bhattarai visited India and signed a joint statement which was against Nepal's national interest in the long run.

The Tanakpur treaty after Girija Prasad Koirala's visit is yet another bitter experience. Everybody knows about the Mahakali Treaty which Deuba and the UML signed in New Delhi. It was because of Deuba had agreed on the categorisation of Bhutani refugees that humanitarian crisis was prolonged. Mistakes like these have always kept Nepal-India relations from improving and prevented economic progress here. The laws prepared by parliament can be changed by the next parliament, but treaties can't be changed without the consent of the other country involved. And why should the other country agree to change the treaty when it knows that it is reaping benefits from it?

Most countries have units specialising in international law in their foreign ministries, but there is no such unit in ours. There is also a need to include an international legal expert in the team that makes an official visit. King Birendra had begun that tradition but it was not continued. At a time when Nepal is besieged with all sorts of problems, Deuba must understand that if Nepal tries to get Indian help to solve the Maoist problem, it may have to pay a pound of flesh. The Maoist problem may not remain, Deuba may no longer be prime minister, but the agreements he signs in Delhi will remain. He should not sign a water resource or any other deal with India. It would be better if our agenda is limited to existing problems like the 1950 treaty, Kalapani, Mahakali treaty and Bhutani refugee problem.

At a time when we have no parliament, the government should avoid dealing with new issues that would have a longterm effect. There is a need for an initiative to make the Nepal-India relation transparent, democratic, equal in sovereignty, and based on mutual benefit.

## Goodwill

Foreign Minister of State Prakash Sharan Mahat in *Deshantar*, 5 September

देशान्तर साप्ताहिक

This is Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba's goodwill visit to India. Both India and Nepal have new governments. It has been quite some time that the two countries have not made any high level visits, and that is why this visit is taking place. There is no specific agenda. The main aim is to encourage friendly relations between the two countries.

India has been helping Nepal in different sectors. During the visit, we will be evaluating Indian aid and holding talks for additional assistance. There will also be talks on bilateral issues and benefits. Similarly, there could also be discussions on extradition and the legal assistance treaty, for which there has been intensive homework on the Nepali government officials' part. There could also be talks on the water resources sector, which India has been helping for a long time. There has also been research on surface transport, and there could be a finalisation of policies regarding this as well.

Discussions will also focus on India's help in backing the Nepali government's efforts to establish peace in Nepal. These will include talks regarding cross-border smuggling of arms. We have heard that extremist groups in India have been supplying arms to the Maoists, even though the Indian government has tried to stop these activities and arrest Maoist leaders several times.

## Death threat

*Samaya*, 2 September

समय

BAGLUNG—Despite being only 15 years old, Indrajit Roka Magar has to live under army protection because the Maoists have threatened to kill him the same way they killed his father

Lal Bahadur two weeks ago. The Magar family has no idea why the rebels killed Lal Bahadur, or why they are threatening his youngest son. Indrajit's mother is still grieving over her husband's death, and now faces the added trauma of the threats against her son. They have lived in Baglung for three years after their house and land in Tarakhola was seized by Maoists. Recently, the rebels said they would return the property. It turned out to be a trick to lure Lal Bahadur back to the village and kill him. Father and son had walked four hours to their village. The Maoists abducted them in Billu. Lal Bahadur found out that he was to be executed. Knowing he would be killed anyway, 61-year-old Lal Bahadur grabbed a khukuri from a villager an attacked the Maoists, injuring leaders Chandra Bahadur Buda Magar and 'Anil'. They finally overpowered him and killed him after gouging his eyes. Indrajit watched the whole thing and then ran away.

## Anti-fascist

Editorial in *Nepal*, 12 September

नेपाल

While 12 Nepalis were being held hostage by terrorists, the best that our ministers could do was pray and appeal through a television network like Al-Jazeera for their release. The government made no effort to seek diplomatic help from Egypt, Jordan or even Iran. Even if it had used the help of the United Nations or ICRC, the innocent Nepalis would have had a slight chance of survival. Instead, it focused most of its attention on berating manpower agencies. The government has proved more incompetent than ever and has even failed in its moral responsibility to do something for the murdered Nepalis. Even after the tragic incident, the government has remained indifferent and could not do anything to quell the public frustration that led to riots around the country. It failed to control the attack on the

mosques and Nepali Muslim communities. In an absence of active security operation, the criminal elements easily exploited and mislead the public. The mob was used to attack airline offices. The efforts to spread anarchy and terror in the city were well planned. The media houses were helpless without any state protection as the mob attacked them. The Deuba government showed its total indifference to the situation.

## Muddy waters

*Samaya*, 9 September

समय

On 31 August when news came that 12 Nepalis kidnapped in Iraq had been killed, the extremist Hindu group, Pashupati Sena Nepal, declared a banda for Thursday. The killings were done by radical Islamics in Iraq. Leading Muslim organisations in Nepal had already condemned the killings. But Pashupati Sena and the workers of Hindu Volunteers Association were chanting aggressive slogans against Nepali Muslims. The Jama Masjid was damaged, anything remotely Muslims was attacked. "At this time of sorrow, we all should try to unite instead of attacking each other," said Attaula Khan, a board member of the Islamic library. "We had planned to bring out a rally to protest the killings on 1 September but the Jama Masjid was attacked on Tuesday evening itself." The government is said to have warned the Hindu Volunteers Association, a branch of India's RSS, that if it did not moderate its stance its registration would be cancelled. The killings of Nepalis in Iraq was also misused by political forces. We heard Nepali Congress politicians demanding resignations of ministers. This was no time to make such demands. People close to the Royal Palace were also seen taking part in the violent rallies. Drug addicts and even street children took part, making the situation anarchic.

हे टेलिफोन प्रभु! बन्धकहरूलाई जीवितै त झारेनौं झारेनौं!  
अब कमसेकम शव भएपनि झार्दिउ न प्रभु!



Oh telephone god, you didn't deliver the hostages alive!  
At least send us their bodies!

समय *Samaya*, 9 September

### QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"What are we supposed to do back home? Join the Maoists and get killed?"

Neelam Maharjan, president of Overseas Workers in the Gulf, BBC Nepali, 3 September

# “I didn't believe in killing people”

Shyam Shrestha in *Deshantar*, 22 August

देशान्तरसाप्ताहिक



MIN BAJRACHARYA

The preparation for the 'people's war' had begun way back in 1991. That is why I don't believe that the insurgency began due poverty, unemployment and the failure of the multiparty system, though those were factors. Guns were used because of differences of opinion.

In 1991, the figures who are the leaders of the Maoist movement today, believed in power centralisation. We were all in the CPN (Unity Centre) then. But I was of the opinion that such centralisation would lead to dictatorship. They believed in the class struggle, while I argued that communism is a different cultural revolution. The third difference we

had was about murdering people. They thought they could advance their movement by killing people, I opposed the idea.

The Maoist leadership has always believed that they can make the state bow to them using intensified killings. As a result, the Maoist cadres have become cruel and brutal. Their biggest problem is that they simply can't stand someone with a different opinion. In their documents, they have stated they will respect different opinions but they have not been able to practice that. There is no tolerance in their culture.

With regard to Maoist rebels in India, the Indian government has some vested interests in Nepal. The first is about its security. Ever since the British days, they wanted Nepal as a buffer state so that it would not have to deploy a large number of soldiers along a China border. That is why they left Nepal alone. India has inherited that geopolitical legacy.

The other Indian interest in Nepal is over hydropower. It needs 20,000MW and irrigation water. We have heard India is preparing to hand over Maoist leaders to Nepal in exchange for the Kosi project, and they have agreed with the royal government over the Upper Karnali project.

The fourth difference I had with the leadership was about creating a base area. Like Mao, they believed that they could create bases in rural areas and encircle the cities. I had argued that Nepal is not self-dependent on its economy and therefore we would not be able to sustain our base in the urban areas if other forces encircle us.

But we must accept the fact that the Maoists have been able to consolidate their strength. It is because of them we talk about social, cultural and economic changes today. They have also been able to take advantage of the rifts between the political parties and the differences between the parties and the palace.

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## Invitation for Consultancy

(Date of First Publication: 06/05/24)

The Friends of the Disabled (FOD)/Hospital and Rehabilitation Center for Disabled Children (HRDC) is looking for Marketing Consultant to develop Marketing Plan/Strategy and provide fund raising consultant services to HRDC for one year.

Interested consultancy organization/expert are invited to contact HRDC/FOD Administration for detail information and apply within 15 days from the date of the first advertisement.

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# War of the icons

## Gandhi idealism vs Hindu fundamentalism

It is ironic that Mahatma Gandhi, who led India to independence from British colonial rule in 1947, is now in a popularity contest with Veer Savarkar, arrested for the assassination of the 'Apostle of Peace' but acquitted due to a lack of evidence.

Gandhi was shot dead at a prayer meeting on 30 June 1948 by Nathuram

**ANALYSIS**  
Ranjit Devraj



Godse, who blamed him and his

philosophy of non-violence for the India-Pakistan partition. Actually, it was Savarkar who championed the idea that India consisted of two 'nations'—Hindu and Muslim. Gandhi only agreed in order to avoid bloodshed.

During six years in power, the pro-Hindu Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) did its best to rehabilitate Veer Savarkar, even unveiling his portrait in Parliament House at a ceremony boycotted by the Congress and other opposition parties.

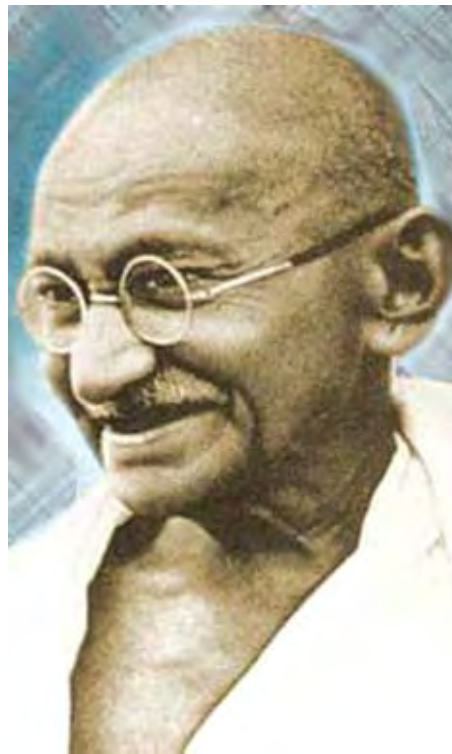
Savarkar is considered a staunch patriot, especially in his native Maharashtra state where he has iconic status rivaling that of Gandhi, but critics

accuse him of getting out of a British jail on the Andaman Islands by swearing fealty to the British Crown. On a recent visit to the Andaman Islands, senior Congress party leader and cabinet minister Mani Shankar Aiyar ordered a plaque inscribed with Savarkar sayings be replaced with another bearing Gandhi quotes.

With Maharashtra set to elect a new assembly next month, the BJP is using the 'insult' to Savarkar as an election issue. It also tried to use the plaque issue to stall the just-concluded budget session of parliament and the important finance bill, which brought in sweeping social changes. The bill was then passed without the participation of the BJP-led opposition.

Sensing danger to its prospects in Maharashtra, the Congress party quickly distanced itself from Aiyar's opinions of Savarkar, with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh himself saying at a press conference that he considered Savarkar a "patriot and a freedom fighter."

India continues to have the second largest Muslim population in the world after Indonesia. Winning the



Maharashtra elections could give the BJP the morale booster it badly needs after its shock defeat in the May general elections, which many of its hardline leaders blame on the abandoning of its core ideology of 'Hindutva', or Hinduness. On the other hand, the Congress party and its ruling United Progressive Alliance (UPA) attribute their victory to their relentless championship of the essentially secular character of the Indian republic.

It all boils down to the Congress championing Gandhi's ideals and the BJP

doing its best to deify Savarkar and present him as an alternative—at least for Maharashtra. In the latest episode of this war of icons, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), which provides men and muscle to the BJP, filed a defamation suit against Union Human Resources Development Minister Arjun Singh for accusing the organisation of involvement in the Gandhi assassination. Singh retorted that he stood by the charges he made at a national convention, saying that little could be expected from an organisation whose "biggest achievement was the killing of Mahatma Gandhi."

One reason the BJP is falling back to historical figures and 'national' issues is that its allies in the ousted National Democratic Allies (NDA), notably the Telegu Desam Party in southern Andhra Pradesh, have warned that they would quit the coalition if it persisted with its communal agenda. Clearly, the BJP's pro-Hindu stance is suffering from the law of diminishing returns.

Even so, the UPA is treading warily on issues that could give the BJP an emotive edge, leaving it to the Supreme Court to sort out the worst legacy of the BJP rule—the 2002 anti-Muslim pogrom in western Gujarat, which left more than 2,000 dead and tens of thousands homeless in the state where Mahatma Gandhi was born and spent much of his life. ● (IPS)



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### INVITATION FOR ENROLLMENT IN PARTNERSHIP ROSTER

WWF, the global conservation organization, has been involved in biodiversity conservation in Nepal since 1967, focusing on programs that link conservation with sustainable livelihoods, and building capacities of government and non-government partners. In its effort to enhance outreach and effectiveness, WWF Nepal Program has fostered partnerships with a wide array of institutions and organizations in Nepal.

In order to further its capacity to meet conservation goals, WWF Nepal Program seeks the interest of qualified Nepali individuals and non-profit organizations to enroll in its "Partnership Roster", first developed in 2003. This shall be used by WWF Nepal Program to select its Service Provider/Consultant and Grantee in the future. Qualified organizations enrolled in this Roster may also serve as implementing partners with some of WWF Nepal Program's projects and activities.

Interested individuals and organizations are invited to send their curriculum vitae with a copy of citizenship certificate, and organizational profile with valid registration certificate from appropriate authority in Nepal, for inclusion in the Roster.

Individuals and organizations who applied last year may submit their updated profiles and areas of expertise/interest.

The areas of expertise/ interest we seek are:

SN	Area of expertise/interest	SN	Area of expertise/interest
1	Agro-forestry and Horticulture	15	Forestry
2	Alternate Energy and Appropriate Technologies.	16	Gender
3	Biodiversity Conservation	17	GIS/RS Spatial data modeling and analysis
4	Climate Change (CDM, Glaciology)	18	Indigenous knowledge
5	Certification (Forests, NTFPs/MAPs)	19	Large Program Development, Strategic , Management & Business Planning
6	Communication	20	Livelihoods
7	Conflict and Risk Analysis and Management.	21	Monitoring, Evaluation and organizational learning.
8	Conservation/Environment Education	22	Natural Resource Management
9	Ecology	23	Policy and Legal Issues(forestry, wildlife NTFPs, climate change, pollution, environment management, trans-boundary issues, international conventions and treaties)
10	Ecotourism	24	Pollutants & Toxics and Waste Management
11	EIA/SEA	25	Socio-economics (including Demographics, Migration etc)
12	Ethno-botany (NTFP/MAP)	26	Wetlands/Freshwater
13	Enterprise/Business Development /Marketing	27	Wildlife Biology and Management
14	Environmental Economics	28	Taxation

The Standard Roster Form is available at our website, [www.wwfnepal.org](http://www.wwfnepal.org). It can also be obtained from our office from 9AM to 5PM on weekdays. Individuals are requested to clearly state a maximum of three areas of expertise/interest on the form while institutions/organizations may list up to a maximum of five areas. The digital Standard Roster Form must be submitted along with the letter of interest by 7 October 2004 at [roster@wwfnepal.org](mailto:roster@wwfnepal.org). Hard copies may be submitted at the following address in an envelope clearly marked "Letter of interest for the Roster".

Director - Development, Research and Monitoring Unit  
WWF Nepal Program, PO Box 7660, Baluwatar  
Kathmandu, Nepal

Telephone and email enquiries will not be entertained.

## Best bet

Pakistan's Army Chief and President Pervez Musharraf is a lucky man. His new prime minister, Shaukat Aziz, is likely to be welcomed in the three capitals that matter most to Islamabad: Washington, New Delhi and Kabul.

Suave and softspoken, Aziz had to remain prime minister-in-waiting for almost three months, waiting to become an elected member of National Assembly first. But Musharraf had named Aziz as eventual prime minister in June, when earlier prime minister Zafarullah Khan Jamali was shown the door.

Aziz is a technocratic prime minister, similar to India's Manmohan Singh. Aziz was a banker and finance minister for five years and is well-connected with Washington's financial and political circles. He negotiated the details of arrangements made between the US and Pakistan in pursuit of 'war on terror'. His elevation symbolises Pakistan's intentions to remain a steadfast Washington ally. Although Pakistan's help was essential in toppling the Taliban regime, some members of the Afghan government and the US ambassador to Afghanistan have complained that Pakistan is not doing enough to prevent Taliban attacks. Aziz's promotion may be calculated to cool incipient tension with the US government and Afghanistan.

New Delhi will welcome Aziz because he carries little anti-Indian luggage. Musharraf is pushing toward an early resolution of the Kashmir dispute, going a long way to accommodate India. In a way, Aziz's choice may have been influenced by India's likely reaction. There appears to be genuine desire on both sides to improve relations. Aziz's essentially non-political character could help in these delicate talks.

Doubtless, Musharraf's life would be easier in the short run in dealing with India through Aziz. But the fact remains that Pakistan's system is basically a one-man show and a quasi-military dictatorship. Musharraf's setting up the institutions of democracy causes irritation because these are not functioning in a democratic way.

But it is recognised on all sides that Aziz has been able to stabilise and markedly improve the country's macro-economic indicators. Aziz remains Musharraf's best bet in pulling in more foreign direct investments. ● (IPS)

# US and them

On the third anniversary of 9/11 this week, it is time to take stock of America's failure to project 'soft power'

America's foreign alliances have become an issue in this year's presidential election campaign. Senator John Kerry, the Democratic candidate, has accused President George Bush of neglecting and offending America's allies, particularly in Europe. A Kerry administration, he claims, will restore respect for America in the world.

OPINION  
Joseph S Nye



Anti-Americanism is not new in Europe, but views have generally been more positive. During the Cold War, the United States pursued far-sighted policies like the Marshall Plan and also represented freedom and democracy.

Many Europeans admire America's devotion to freedom but prefer policies that temper the liberal economic principles of individualism with a robust welfare state. Despite all the rhetoric about 'old' and 'new' Europe, post-Cold War surveys showed that two-thirds of Czechs, Poles, Hungarians and

Bulgarians perceived the US as a good influence, but fewer than a quarter wanted to import American economic models.

Popular culture can often be an important source of 'soft' power. Simple items like blue jeans, cola or Hollywood movies helped produce favourable outcomes in at least two of the most important American objectives after 1945. Today, about two-thirds of the people in 10 European countries say they admire America for its popular culture and progress in science and technology, but only a third think the spread of American customs in their country is a good idea. The US doesn't have to make others look like little Americans, but it does have to live up to its core values in order to use its soft power effectively.

This is why the examples of prisons at Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay have been so costly, and why a free press that reports these problems, congressional hearings that investigate them and a recent set of Supreme Court decisions that give detainees legal recourse are also so important.

America is not perfect, but as long as it abides by its core values, it can overcome its mistakes and regain its soft power in democratic countries.

Some skeptics argue that the real problem between Europe and the US is structural. With the demise of the Soviet Union, according to this argument, the bi-polar balance of power vanished and America became the world's only superpower, engendering resentment and envy—and hence a difficult time for US-European relations.

If European resentment is inevitable, some US leaders say, then the proper response is to shrug it off. Popularity is ephemeral and should never guide national policy. The US, in these leaders' view, can act without the world's applause. America doesn't need permanent allies, they say, a coalition of the willing will suffice. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld put it as, "The issues should determine the coalition, rather than the coalition determining the issues."

But it is a mistake to dismiss



America's declining attractiveness so lightly. While America's status as the world's sole superpower is a structural fact, wise policies can soften the sharp edges of this reality.

The Bush administration's emphasis on promoting democracy in the Middle East suggests it understands the importance of values in foreign policy. But the administration refuses to be held back by institutional restraints. It advocates soft power, but focuses only on the substance and not on the process.

Democracy cannot be imposed in any reasonable time

by force alone. It takes time to set down roots, as the successful cases of Southeast Asia demonstrate. The Bush administration's impatience with institutions and allies thus undercuts its own objectives. The irony is that it was the US that built some of the longest lasting alliances and institutions the modern world has seen, and that were central to American power for over half a century. ● (Project Syndicate)

Joseph S Nye is a former US Assistant Secretary of Defense, teaches at Harvard University and is author of Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics.

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# Not all bad

## How can anyone presume to write-off all foreign aid to Nepal as ineffective?

district headquarters, we say that in the absence of elected people's representatives at local and national levels, it will be all the more difficult for both government and donors to implement the positive components of the PRSP. We go on to suggest that the formulation of an 'Interim Emergency Development Plan', a more strategic and flexible planning instrument than the PRSP (p74).

Bhattarai overly simplifies our analysis and presents a misleading picture. Our premise is that 'foreign aid is an inevitable component for a developing economy trying to stay afloat in a rapidly transforming globe'. We also outline Nepal's continued dependence on aid, pointing out that the Tenth Plan aims to finance 57.5 percent of total development expenditure through foreign assistance. Given the widening gap between domestic savings and national investment, the excess of government expenditure over revenue and excess of imports over exports, we find the relative significance of aid to Nepal has, indeed, increased.

We also list some of foreign aid's achievements. Within limits, it has contributed to social transformation. It has brought into discussion issues of economic and social marginalisation, supported the freedom of press and freedom of association in Nepal and helped the human rights agenda. Foreign aid has played a role in expanding transportation, energy and telecommunications. How can anyone presume to write-off all aid as bad? We do hold, however, that the benefits of aid have not been as widespread as they could have been, had Nepal's societal structure been better understood, as well as the specific ways in which aid should have been targeted to really reach the poorest people.

Our attempt has been to be critical not of aid per se but those aspects of the management and governance of aid which we see as being faulty, and which we think stand in the way of increasing the effectiveness of aid. Apart from specific recommendations addressed at the government, which we take from the Auditor General's report of 1998, we also call for 'more transparent and democratic' aid management as an overall safeguard against aid misuse.

Such decisions, we know, rest first and foremost on

mutual cooperation between the government and donor community and it would be counterproductive to merely point fingers at both parties. We appreciate recent steps taken by the government in addressing the issues at hand, which include the introduction of the Foreign Aid Policy in 1999, the MTEF and the PRSP itself, which for the first time attempts to build poverty reduction activities into macroeconomic planning.

We acclaim the more in-depth poverty analysis of the PRSP, including identification of social exclusion as a core hindrance in past poverty reduction efforts. But there is still a long way to go. We caution against an overly optimistic outlook in view of past plan achievements, the current mentality of politicians, a poorly-functioning bureaucracy and the likely absence of required amounts of private investment on which PRSP outcomes heavily depend.

Poor rates of GDP growth have impeded Nepal's efforts at poverty reduction. Since the purpose of liberalisation is to speed up growth, we hope this should clarify where in the debate we are starting from. Next, we quote the government's own analysis (as it appears in the PRSP) that 'the liberal economic policies of the 1990s, though able to maintain macroeconomic stability and achieve growth in the non-agricultural sectors, especially in urban areas, was less effective in the agricultural sector and in reducing rural poverty' (p67).

We add to this our own analysis, which is that liberalisation in Nepal has not been accompanied by 'clear mechanisms whereby the poor can gain access to the market mechanism and secure its benefits'. We provide the example of the government's decision to cut agricultural subsidies in the late 1990s (a decision which, by the way, hinged on a multilateral loan conditionality), which we consider not to have been very well thought out in view of the realities of poor rural producers. In hindsight, it appears our hunch was correct since the government reinstated some proportions of the subsidies in subsequent budgets.

Finally, we acknowledge that liberalisation is here to stay. However, based on Nepal's experience so far, we caution that 'redistribution of the benefits of high growth

among poor people does not occur automatically, and must be proactively initiated by the government'. Further, specific, micro-level programs targeted at poor people must accompany liberalisation processes to avoid increasing economic inequality, as is also spelled out in the PRSP.

We do state that projects and programs implemented by non-governmental organisations in focusing on basic needs such as health and income, coming in the form of grants and by definition targeted at specific groups within the community and going out of Kathmandu to villages in rural areas, in aggregate, appear to support poverty reduction objectives.

However, we also point out the need for much better coordination and the need to address the misuse of resources. We go on to recommend the establishment of a separate institution for this purpose. Later, in assessing Nepal's PRSP, we take NGO participation, which was part of broader consultation process initiated by the government during PRSP formulation for the first time ever, and equally the participation of local government, the private sector, political parties, academia, and, most importantly, poor people themselves, as something positive, in the interests of drawing up a plan that more people consider themselves to be a part of and which they will help implement when the time comes.

One of PRSP's core strategies is to implement and manage programs in coordination with local government and NGOs. We think this is a wise decision, not for any ideological but for very practical reasons, particularly in implementing the 'targeted programs' of the PRSP in remote and out-lying areas of Nepal where government capabilities are constrained.

Bhattarai could well have criticised us for not having gone into more depth on these issues, or expressed his disagreement with some of our arguments. Instead, he has implied they were not stated at all. We cannot help wondering if in his haste to write a 'politically-not-so-correct' review article, he skimmed but did not actually read through the entire book? ●

Laxman Acharya is with the Citizens' Poverty Watch Forum and Shizu Upadhyia works for ActionAid Nepal.

Thank you for the review of our book, *A Review of Foreign Aid in Nepal 2003* ('Big bad donors', #210) by accomplished aid analyst Binod Bhattarai. Because of the delay

### FEEDBACK

Laxman Acharya and Shizu Upadhyia

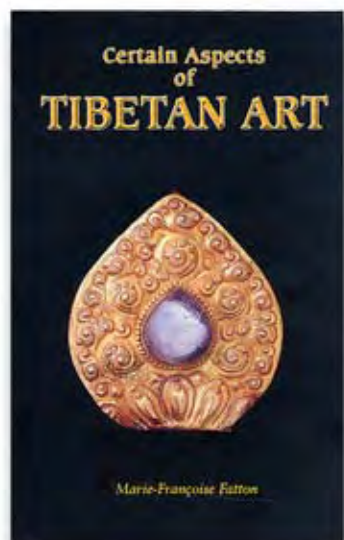
in getting the book finalised, some of the data presented is dated, as Bhattarai points out. But our objective was to analyse medium-term trends over time.

While we have not included a separate chapter on the

conflict, we have analysed it as one of several factors that hold implications for the implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). We present the proportion of defence spending in total regular expenditure since 1974 as well as the proportion of defence spending in this year's budget, and juxtapose poor GDP growth rates since 2001 with (but not only with) the conflict.

Since the present situation requires the confinement of government and donor presence to urban areas and around

### BOOKWORM



**Certain aspects of Tibetan Art**  
Marie-Francoise Fatton  
Mandala Publications, 2004  
Rs 250

In *Certain Aspects of Tibetan Art*, Marie-Francoise Fatton displays her extensive knowledge and fascination for the Tibetan minor arts, as well as provides a short introduction of Tibetan culture and Buddhism as well in. Here Fatton delves into the intricacies of the Tibetan art of wood, textiles and refining metal. She

writes for the layman and the photos help the reader understand the intimate details of the Tibetan culture. This is a wonderful guide for those who want a glimpse into the complexities of Tibetan signs and symbols.

Courtesy: Mandala Book Point, Kantipath, 4227711, mandala@ccsl.com.np



# Business games

## Why corporate heads are hooked

Nothing beats golf as a corporate sport. Chairmen and CEOs of major corporations with hectic and busy schedules still manage to make time for the four to five hours it takes for an 18 hole round of golf. Why?

Are they really enjoying exercising on lush green fairways, sparkling greens, and immaculate surroundings? Or are they just trying to strike another business deal?

Before going further into this question, let's quickly look at some of the benefits of this sport. It can safely be said that golf is a life-long

**TEE BREAK**  
Deepak Acharya



sport that can be enjoyed at any age. A golfer gets to walk up to 8 km reasonably briskly in natural surroundings away from the hustle and bustle of city life, keeps fit,

and burns off quite a few calories while enjoying a challenging sport.

Being a relatively expensive sport, achievers know they will meet the right economic class of people to build up their contacts. Possibly the most interesting point is that for at least half the time the game is played, there is the opportunity and privilege of chatting with fellow competitors. No other sport provides this kind of possibility.

You should have guessed by now that, in reality the game is the perfect answer for both exercise and business. It is said that, businessmen can do more business while playing golf than from the



corporate office. Actual business deals are cemented on a golf course, and just the paper work is done back in the office. Corporate golfers know how difficult it often is in getting a business appointment with other corporate

golfers during the week, but how much easier it is to fix up tee time with them for the weekend.

In most countries, top businessmen, government officials and ministers, and high ranking bureaucrats play golf, and this attracts more professionals and businessmen to take up the game. Undoubtedly this is a business and social sport.

Being the favourite corporate sport, golf generates higher sponsorships than any other sport. This has given great impetus to the game and it is also one of the main reasons behind the substantial prize money for professional golf. Big successful corporations are the main sponsors, an opportunity that is still only slowly being taken up in our country. Corporations like to advertise their products and brands through the medium of golf and reap the benefits of awareness, publicity, and goodwill, producing a perfect win-win situation for both golf and the corporate world. ●

Deepak Acharya is a golf instructor and Golf Director at Gokarna Forest Golf Resort & Spa, Kathmandu. [prodeepak@hotmail.com](mailto:prodeepak@hotmail.com)

# Few records broken

## Record-breaking lagged in Olympic track and field as doping tests got more stringent



LYNN ZINSER in ATHENS

As the women flew, spikes first, into the sand, a little flag with the letters 'WR' poked out of the oversize ruler stretching along the right side of the long-jump pit.

The flag signified the 16-year-old world record in the women's long jump, 7.52 meters, or 24 feet 8 inches, a distance so ludicrous that it served only to mock the athletes as they tumbled past. Twelve of the top female jumpers in the world, competing in the Olympic finals on Friday night, approached it only by falling forward after landing.

Galina Chistyakova of the Soviet Union set that world record in 1988 at a meet in Leningrad. Now the Soviet Union is gone. Leningrad is St Petersburg. But the record remains.

"Our athletes are getting stronger and our training methods are getting better, but still records aren't being broken," said Dick Pound, president of the World Anti-Doping Agency. "I think the reason is all too obvious. There were a lot of doped-up performances out there."

It may or may not be a

coincidence that drug testing is more stringent at the Games than at any other competition. Of the 23 athletes who have been ejected from the Olympics this month for testing positive for drugs or for avoiding drug tests, eight have been in track and field, including the gold medalists in the women's shot put and the men's discus. The only sport with a worse record is weightlifting, in which 10 athletes failed tests.

When Liu Xiang of China won the men's 110-meter hurdles, tying the world record of 12.91 seconds, it was only the second track and field world record set or equaled at these Olympics.

But in the strength events, the discrepancies are glaring. The winning women's shot put was 3 meters shorter than the record, set in 1987. The winning men's hammer throw was more than 3.5 meters shorter than the 1986 record. The winning time in the women's 100 meters was nearly half a second slower than Florence Griffith-Joyner's 10.49 seconds, run in 1988.

The World Anti-Doping Agency, formed by the

International Olympic Committee, began to administer worldwide drug testing after the 2000 Summer Games. That had been the job of the Olympic committee's medical commission at the Olympics. The rest of the time, testing was left to the international sports federations, for which catching drug cheats was at cross purposes with promoting their sports.

The U.S. Anti-Doping Agency was formed by the national Olympic committee at about the same time, taking over the job of testing American athletes. The U.S. and World Anti-Doping agencies are largely independent of the Olympic committees that founded them.

"I think the number we got is a reflection of more tests and better tests," Pound said, referring to the 23 athletes barred from these Games. "I also believe our tests kept a lot of people home, too."

"Swimming remains in stark contrast to track, with a steady progression of world records, only four are more than four years old, and no positive drug tests at the Olympics in Athens or Sydney. ● (cNYT)

हिमाल खबरपत्रिका

WHAT WILL DEUBA DO IN DILLI?

**कर्ण शाक्य**

**सोच 'Soch'**

"Soch is a kaleidoscope that displays the patterns of perception and thoughts. It helps us distinguish many faces of truth, empowering a sense of judgement and eventually increases the power of positive thinking. SOCH is Self-esteem, Optimism, Conviction and Hope. Anxiety and skepticism when reign high, the disillusioned society needs to be resuscitated with morale, confidence and trust. Despite immense political turmoil and instability, when Nepal has progressed in the fields of agriculture, education, conservation, health, media and tourism, just imagine how much we could have achieved, if congenial environment prevailed in our country?"

(Translated from the book Soch)

A new book by **Karna Sakya**  
Page - 310, (in Nepali) Price-250

**In the market from Dashain**

"Lata ko desh ma gaando tanderi." (In a land of fools, even a man with a bad goatee can be a hero.)



Please observe with Herojig a moment of cartoon silence for those murdered in Iraq and Russia while working for the well-being of their families and their nations.

To the 12 Nepalis and 316 Russians - our prayers are with you.

KE GARNE? WHATEVER.

But be a Heroji - Respect all life.

"Violence is not funny."  
- William Friedkin

American Filmmaker (ala The French Connection, 1971)

Next change:  
Herojig returns home after working the summer abroad.

HeroJig's Adventures can also be seen at [www.extreme-nepal.com](http://www.extreme-nepal.com)

#36♥2061 by jigme gaton - read. love. write.

ABOUT TOWN

FESTIVAL AND EXHIBITIONS

- ❖ **Samyak Drishti** photos by Shekhar Kharel, based on one of the eight Buddhist principles. 7-14 September, Siddhartha Art Gallery.
- ❖ **Paintings** by seven young artists at the Moksh Gallery. Until 17 September, 12.30-7.30 PM. Closed Mondays. 2113339

EVENTS

- ❖ **Corporate Sports Meet 2004** Basketball, tennis and squash at the International Club, Sanepa. Until 12 September. 9851074979
- ❖ **Beauti and Boutika** until 13 September at the BICC, 11AM-6PM.
- ❖ **Spanish Film Festival** at the Russian Culture Centre: In the Boundless City, 5.30 PM on 10 September  
The Grandfather, 5.30 PM on 11 September  
Juana la Loca, 5.30 PM on 12 Septmber
- ❖ **Movies** 2PM onwards at the Alliance Francaise: Machaho, 12 September
- ❖ **Discussions at Martin Chautari:** Current politics. 12 September, 3PM  
Open discussion. 14 September, 5PM  
Book publication on Nepali media. 16 September, 3PM
- ❖ **Changa Chait 2061** Kite flying at Club Himalaya, Nagarkot. 25 September, 2 and 16 October. Rs 100. 4410432

MUSIC

- ❖ **The McTwisters** Original compositions by Peter McTwister of the Czech Republic at Moksh. 12 September, 7PM-9.30 PM. Rs 300.
- ❖ **Deo** at Not Just The Jazz Bar Fridays at Hotel Shangri-la, Lazimpat.
- ❖ **Jatra Friday Nites** Live music by The Strings. 4256622
- ❖ **Live music** at Moksh. JCS Trio on Tuesdays and Full Circle on Fridays. 7PM onwards, free entry.

DRINKS

- ❖ **Island Bar** with DJ Raju, Abhaya and The Cloud Walkers. The Rox Bar, Hyatt Regency. 4491234
- ❖ **Free drink deals** at Red Onion Bar, Lazimpat
- ❖ **Monsoon Wine Festival** at Kilroy's, Thamel. Rs 150 per large glass. 4250440/41.
- ❖ **Lychee Martinis** and latest club hits at Rox Bar, Hyatt Regency Kathmandu, 4491234

FOOD

- ❖ **Tapas and Margaritas** at the Yak & Yeti Hotel. 10-12 September at the Piano Bar and Poolside, 11AM-6PM. Rs 500, includes drink, Carlsberg beer and swim.
- ❖ **Delicious barbecue dinner** Fridays at Summit Hotel. 5521810
- ❖ **Friday Nights** at Subterranea Club Kilroy. 4412821
- ❖ **Farm House Café** Nature with your meals at Park Village Hotel. 4375280
- ❖ **Café Bahal** Newari and continental cuisine under the giant Cinnamon tree at Kathmandu Guest House, Thamel. 4700632
- ❖ **Vegetarian Creations** at Stupa View Restaurant. 4480262
- ❖ **Splash Spring BBQ** Wednesday and Friday evenings, 6PM onwards. Radisson Hotel, Kathmandu.
- ❖ **Executive Lunch** at Toran Restaurant, Dwarika's. 4479488
- ❖ **Sunny Side Up Weekend BBQ** at Soaltee Crowne Plaza Kathmandu. 4273999
- ❖ **The Beer Garden** at Vaijayantha, Godavari Village Resort. 5560675
- ❖ **Dwarika's Thali** Lunch at the Heritage courtyard. 4479488



GETAWAYS

- ❖ **Summer in Shivapuri** Birdwatching and great views at Sivapuri Heights Cottage. [steve@escape2nepal.com](mailto:steve@escape2nepal.com). 9851051780
- ❖ **Wet & Wild Summer Splash** every weekend at the Godavari Village Resort. 5560675
- ❖ **Pure relaxation** at Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge. 01 4361500
- ❖ **Bardia National Park** with Jungle Base Camp Lodge. [junglebasecamp@yahoo.com](mailto:junglebasecamp@yahoo.com)
- ❖ **Golf** at Gokarna Forest Golf Resort & Spa. 4451212
- ❖ **Weekend Special** at Park Village Resort, Budhanilkantha. 4375280
- ❖ **Early Bird discounts** at Shangri-La Hotel & Resort. 4412999

Dhoom reinvents the classic cops and robbers tale and brings it into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Kabir (John Abraham) and his gang are a group of slick, mean, fast riding bikers who commit daring robberies and then transform into inconspicuous pizza delivery boys. Jai Dixit (Abhishek Bachchan) plays the honest cop who is brought into catch these speed demons. He ropes in Ali (Uday Chopra) a happy-go-lucky mechanic and prodigious bike rider to help him. And so the chase begins...

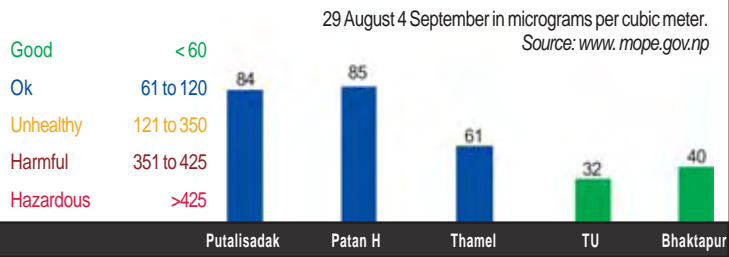
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KATHMANDU AIR QUALITY

The silver lining to Kathmandu's shutdowns always comes in the form of sparkling clean air. Predictably, last weeks' curfews proved even more effective than bandas in bringing down the pollution levels. Despite the burning tyres, the PM10 (particles less than 10 microns) concentrations dropped to levels well below the national standards—a first in a long, long time. In Putali Sadak, the average PM10 concentrations in the four days following 1 September were 32 percent lower than the average value from the previous week.



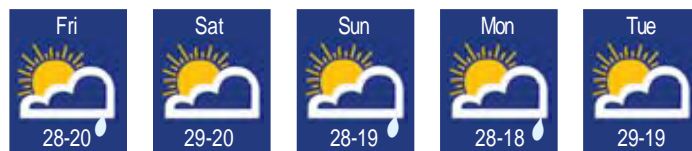
NEPALI WEATHER

by MAUSAM BEED



Although the country received below average rainfall in the first half of August, there seems to be a late resurgence of the monsoon that will continue into next week. A major monsoonal trough is moving east to west across Nepal and will douse the central midhills with copious precipitation this weekend, including in Kathmandu Valley. Minimum temperature will fall a notch but afternoons will continue to be hot and humid.

KATHMANDU VALLEY



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Leisure Works Treadmill, fully automatic (NRs 85,000 new), made in Taiwan. NRs 50,000. 552-9990 or 98510-82828

Alesis QS 7.1 Keyboard-professional synthesizer, from Singapore, (new \$1,175), now \$ 600/ Crate Acoustic Amplifier, 2 channels, onboard digital effects processor, excellent! \$ 300/ A.R.T. Acoustic Effects Processor for acoustic guitar. Sweet and excellent! \$200. Contact 552-9990 or 98510-82828

HP (Hewlett Packard) Deskjet 970 Cse Color Printer, Professional Series, with 5 ink cartridges included. (New -\$ 400), now \$200. Excellent Printer! / Epson 1200x2400 U Perfection Scanner, (new \$ 399), now \$200/ Sony Play station 2, with 30+ games, 4 controllers, multiplayes deck. \$300. Contact 552-9990 or 98510-82828

**HOUSE ON RENT:** At Panipokhari, opposite the American embassy, behind the petrol pump station. 1 master bedroom w/t attached bath, 3 bedrooms w/t semi-attached bath, drawing room, dining room kitchen, store-room, puja room, watchman room, an outhouse and garage. Total area of compound 7500 sq. ft. Details contact mobile no. 9851024874.

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MIN BAJRACHARYA

**GP AND BP:** Girja Prasad Koirala holds up a poster of BP portraits at the inauguration of the BP Koirala museum, formerly the Sundarijal Jail, on Thursday.



KIRAN PANDAY

**DOG DAYS:** Police dogs sniff out the Patan Darbar Square on Monday afternoon just before the arrival of King Gyanendra and Queen Komal at Krishna Mandir on Krishna Astami.



KIRAN PANDAY

**LA HAI:** Dancers warm up at Bhrikuti Mandap on Tuesday for the music video shoot of a song from the upcoming *Chinnai Chodyo Ni* folk album.



KUMAR SHRESTHA/NEPALNEWS.COM

**DEFUSING A CRISIS:** The bomb squad relaxes after defusing a time bomb at Thapathali during the morning rush hour on Tuesday, which created a monstrous traffic jam.



MIN BAJRACHARYA

**CURFEW DUTY:** Women soldiers of the Royal Nepali Army get their first taste of action during the curfew as they stop an airport taxi at Tundikhel on Sunday.



SUBEL BHANDARI

# Cabbie's bar

**C**ozily tucked away behind Himalayan Java, the newly opened Jbar is truly one of its kind here in the city. The concept on its own isn't that different, but Cabinet Shrestha, Gagan Pradhan and Anand Gurung wanted to create an exclusive watering hole. And so they did. After months of planning and construction, the invitees at Jbar's opening on 27 August were all enchanted. They came, they saw and they came again. New

Delhi-based designer, Sonia Gupta was brought in to do the interior décor and she's done it in style. The place fashions a cool and classy retro look with white lounge sofas. The bar itself is shaped in an inverted J and the bartenders, also imported from Delhi, put on quite a show. Glass walls look out onto Kaiser Mahal and the lighting enhances the ambience while an inconspicuous DJ pumps out beats from a corner. Jbar is open only on Wednesdays, Fridays and

Saturdays, between 7PM and 1AM. It caters to private parties and to stresses on exclusivity. The management has made it 'members only' with a Rs 500 membership fee. While most bar patrons are quick to light up a cigarette, Jbar encourages its guests to step out to the balcony should they feel a nicotine itch. So what's with the name? "Its nothing really," explains Cabinet. "We like that particular letter." ● (Kashish Das Shrestha)



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Write a 550 word essay on the subject:  
'Country life is better than city life'. 25 marks.

# Country life is better than city life

One of the ways the wisdom of the ages gets passed down from our generation to generation next is through our hoary tradition of doing our morning business in the wild yonder in groups of three or four. Even today, if one ventures to the rural areas, one sees villagers waking each other up at the crack of dawn, filling up tin cans with water and (treading carefully so as not to step on previous droppings) heading off to a scenic spot to participate in joint exercises.

**UNDER MY HAT**  
Kunda Dixit



By suffering irritating bowel syndrome together as a community we show that we stand by each other through thick and thin. We suffer

together, exchange notes, and analyse the situation by carrying out a free and frank exchange of views as we prepare ourselves for a brand new day. By doing it together in Nepal's great outdoors, we engender a spirit of solidarity with our fellow men and show that we will always be there when we need each other.

Not only is this a great way to fertilise the fields and restore valuable nutrients to the soil so that we can practice organic farming on the radish patch, but it is also a great way to save water. Just for your information, an average flush uses 8 litres of water. If every Nepali didn't flush once a day, this county would be stinking to high heavens.

No, seriously, we would save 200 million liters of water, which is the same as adding a new Melamchi Project to our national coffers daily. Just thinking about it makes me go all queasy in my soft underbelly. Since we, as a nation, can hardly ever keep our mouths shut (even while attending to calls of nature in open-air theatres during the wee hours) collective sanitation is also a valuable way to preserve the grand oral tradition of yakking our heads off from dawn to dusk.

But (and this is a big butt) With the advent of the modern water closet, this bit of Nepali folklore is in danger of becoming extinct especially in the urban areas. Today, we live in a self-centred and egocentric age where we lock ourselves up and go solo, selfishly eschewing the myriad benefits of kinship that have knit our social fabric together. What a wasted opportunity, what a loss to the national development process that we callously fritter away the chance that nature gives us daily to bring back people's participation and capacity building at the grassroots. Unlike in the villages, today in the city it is every man for himself or herself.

Urban solitary confinement also deprives the nation of downstream benefits such as the multiplier effect in ancillary industries and makes Nepal more dependent on imported chemical fertilisers. Just calculating the opportunity cost of phosphorus and nitrogen that goes down the drain nationwide scale adds up to a colossal 2.8 million tons daily loss in Gross Domestic Products, not to mention the unnecessary paperwork and other overheads.

That is 500 words, and I have another 50 words to go. In conclusion I would like to crave your indulgence, dear examiner, because I have to run to great open spaces to attend to an emergency. You can join me if you want. Ten more words to go. Five, four, three, two...one. And we have liftoff. ●



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**Q. From when does Martinair resume its flight to Nepal in 2004-05 season ?**  
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