Back on warpath

ANALYSIS by HARI ROKA

Terrorist tag again

In response to the Maoists breaking off the peace process, the government Thursday declared the Maoists terrorists again, lifting the tag it had put on them in January after the ceasefire came into effect. However, the government has stepped up its strategy to pressure the Maoists to return to the peace process, which began in January last year, after the Maoists reneged on a deal to cease hostilities.

The Maoists had agreed to a ceasefire as a pre-condition for resuming talks with the government, but the talks broke down in May when the Maoists refused to sign the agreement with the government. Since then, the Maoists have been carrying out a series of attacks on the government, including an attack on the government house in Kathmandu on Thursday.

The ceasefire was reached after two weeks of talks between the government and the Maoists, but the Maoists broke it off earlier this week, saying the government had failed to meet their demands.

The government has been trying to find a political mechanism to deal with the Maoists, but so far, it has not been successful.

What now?

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EXIST. Because their very survival is tied up with an misconduct, is the one entity that needs peace to get back into the fray. The rebels knew they to see why this particular demand should have been such an to the statute through reforms as the constituent assembly as the Maoists say they wanted, or have the changes incorporated into the statute through reforms as the government proposed. It was clear the Maoists were in no mood for compromise, and the government negotiators, suffering under the active non-cooperation of the political parties, gave in to almost everything except the constituent assembly. After having got that, it is difficult to see why this particular demand should have been such an insurmountable barrier. Unless the demand itself was just an excuse to buy time to return to war. Just like the last time. An overwhelming sense of national despair greeted Prachanda’s statement. Even though the comrade left a small opening for talks to restart, it is clear that the Nepali people now have to be prepared for the worst while hoping for the best. Prepared for an escalation of the war with all its implications for human suffering and economic losses. No war is civil. It is by definition a nasty affair, but we must be able to control its brutality and prevent the suffering of gents seem to be.”

There is a way. King Gyanendra legitimised his October Fourth action for seven months with this ceasefire. Now as the conflict restarts, he will have to urgently think of other political options. Throughout all this, it was only the people who seemed to crave for peace. The army had evidence all along that the Maoists were using the talks to prepare for new lighting and was itching to get back into the fray. The rebels knew they wouldn’t survive if things went back to non-violent electoral politics. The parlimentary parties, whatever their past misconduct, is one entity that needs peace to exist. Because their very survival is tied up with an end to conflict, they have to be a party to its restoration.

The government and Maoist negotiating teams led by two PhDs, Dr Prakash Chandra Lobani and Dr Bhuban Bhattarai will need many more sessions to work towards the compromise. The good doctors must acknowledge the overwhelming public clamour not to let the peace process be derailed.

Every negotiating process entails give-and-take and the two owe it to society to find that middle ground. But whatever they agree on, we all know that there isn’t much that either of them can do to resolve the two monumental issues of the seven year old conflict: royal powers and the army’s chain of command. These issues can only be decided by people who represent the people. But to our misfortune, the fate of the dissolved parliament continues to hang in the balance.

Hemmed in from the left and the right, the centre simply cannot hold. Things started falling apart four years ago when the righstists first legitimised the legitimacy of people’s representatives by skillfully manipulating politicians like Bhandari Gautam and Sher Bahadur Deuba. Then, the Maoists destroyed its capacity to handle political crises by intensifying their armed rebellion. They may not have been acting in unison, but the net effect of handline royals and extreme left was the demolition of all elected institutions.

In retrospect, the process leading to the supposed democracy was a textbook case of giving the dog a bad name before hanging it from the lamp-post. Many of us in the media and the intelligentsia at that time became unwitting accomplices in the conspiracy of subverting popular sovereignty. The media was manipulated into exaggerating the political illnesses over the undue let out of bands and blowing it out of all proportion. The purported case of corruption in high places was then used as an excuse to prevent parliament from conducting its winter session. Instead of being concerned, we shouted ‘good ridance’ when premier Girija Prasad Koirala was humbled by the army brass in the wake of the Helen debate in 2000, and then made to break out of office in disgrace.

His successor Sher Bahadur Deuba launched half-baked land reform, declared a state of emergency, dissolved the lower house of the parliament, refused to extend the term of local government bodies, and, then went ahead and bought some Belgian guns with unseemly haste. Had he reflected upon the likely consequences of his hurried actions, he would have probably realized that a section of the royalist was just using him as a ladder.

When King Gyanendra found out he was cultivating a constituency within the army, he was sacked for being “incompetent”. But by transgressing the constitution rather than reviving it, the king weakened his own position. Unlike previous Shah kings of Nepal history. King Gyanendra owes his position neither to the natural order of succession nor to the will of an abdicating monarch. His accession to the throne has occurred due to the provisions of Part 6, Article 34, Clause (6) of the 1990 Constitution, the supreme law of the land that was promulgated by his elder brother “in keeping with the desire of the Nepali people” expressed through the “people’s movement”. Right in its preamble, the constitution clearly recognises that “he government and Maoist negotiating teams led by two PhDs, Dr Prakash Chandra Lobani and Dr Bhuban Bhattarai will need many more sessions to work towards the compromise. The good doctors must acknowledge the overwhelming public clamour not to let the peace process be derailed.

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STATE OF THE STATE

Constitutional tug-of-war

All short cuts in politics inevitably turn out to be despotic.
A lot of my academically superior friends "chose" not to come here. Does this not say something? Unlike us, there are people who stayed back and faced adversities. Can't we, for once, be more truthful and honest with ourselves?

Manoj Khatri, Chicago

GLOBAL NEWS

Re: Sagar Ratna Kamal's reply (Letters, #156) to Prasen Saha's letter (#155) regarding the government's new plan to manage Nepal's protected areas—privatisation is one option, but not the only one. While exploring alternatives, discussions and consultation with the local people is absolutely a closed door affair within government circles or the special privilege of retaining the ties that bind the people of a Nepali nation since it follows a single language and even one region to the exclusion of all the others in the country, it is expected to fulfill the role of a 'symbol of national unity'.

Deepak Thapa, Kathmandu

the government must explore alternatives for the management of protected areas—privatisation is one option, but not the only one. While exploring alternatives, discussions and consultation with the local people is absolutely a closed door affair within government circles or the special privilege of retaining the ties that bind the people of a Nepali nation since it follows a single language and even one region to the exclusion of all the others in the country, it is expected to fulfill the role of a 'symbol of national unity'.

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Fee fight keeps tourists away from the Kumari

The caretakers of the living goddess want half the income the municipality collects from tourists visiting Hanuman Dkhoka.

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Tibet, Tibet

In his latest book, Tibet: Tibet, writer Patrick French (left) takes aim at a cause that has long been near and dear to him. French is a veteran of the Tibetan freedom movement in Britain—as well as a superb historian and author—but he’s changed his mind about the usefulness of foreign support for the people of Tibet. He no longer thinks it helps reduce Tibetan suffering under Chinese rule. This book is a powerful, frank and moving tale of one man’s painful discovery that cherished views can be mistaken.

Reading it is both humbling and agonizing. The Dalai Lama himself has been doing so, French points out, much to the dismay of some freedom campaigners in America and Europe.

It is time, French tells us, to do something differently. Buddhism about the cause of Tibetan independence, sovereignty from China, territorial integrity. It is time, for foreigners at least, to “let it go,” to move on, to allow Tibetans to find their own solutions to their own problems. None of this rules out humanitarian support or even subtle political backing. But the flaming fate of Thubten Ngupdup must never, ever be repeated. Not to mention the humiliation and betrayal by Washington of the Khampo rebelling in the 1970s. French says that he agrees with French, and this does colour my reaction to his book. But how can one not be struck by the laudatory behaviour of some Tibetan campaigners in their foreign comfort zone? Earlier this year, the newspaper took up the columnist against one such example—the nayi call for a tourist boycott of Nepal in response to an admittedly nasty event, the deportation of 18 Tibetan refugees by the Nepalese government. People in San Francisco find it very easy to be self-righteous about causes far away, and this, say I and Patrick French, does more harm than good to those at the receiving end of the oppressors’ wrath.

Tibet, Tibet: A Personal History of a Lost Land

Patrick French

It is time for Westerners to move on, and allow Tibetans to find their own solutions to their own problems.
When Dyo-Maji Preeti Sakya was enthroned as the new Kumari in 2001, the global media made a modern-day Twainian recreation of the Newari tradition. Perhaps one of the most基本情况 headlines was in the London Guardian’s “Calls to kill off living goddess.” It went on to describe “the horrifying ritual involved in selecting the Kumari and the bizarre lifestyle the new goddess is expected to lead”. The ethics committee was biased as a handful of Nepali activists who called for an end to this 300-year-old custom.

An Indian filmmaker included the Kumari in a part of her documentary on the exploitation of girls. Recently, the American AXN channel profiled the Kumari in its “Bollywood’s never series”. The activist argues that once a girl is chosen as the living goddess, she will no longer have a normal childhood.

When she retires, she will be able to study or lead a normal life. When she grows up, she will not be that once a girl is chosen as the living goddess, she will not be that once a girl is chosen as the living goddess.

The activists allege exploitation of girls. Recently, the activists included the Kumari as part of a “horrifying ritual involved in selecting the Kumari and the bizarre lifestyle the new goddess is expected to lead”. The activists called for an end to this 300-year-old custom.

The police recovered only IRs 900,000 worth of fake Indian notes exchanged with IRs 900,000 worth of fake Indian notes. The police recovered only IRs 900,000 worth of fake Indian notes exchanged with a fake currency. The police recovered only IRs 900,000 worth of fake Indian notes exchanged with a fake currency.

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**The insurgents**

Nepal is a republic and a constitutional monarchy. The constitution of Nepal can be drafted, endorsed and implemented only if the monarchy is in power. Only an elected government made up of political parties can decide and ensure the conduct of constituent assembly elections with a popular mandate. The constitution of Nepal can be drafted, endorsed and implemented only by a popular will. Neither the Maoists nor a king nor any other single executive power can concede to the point unless the political parties represent the people to decide the matter.

The Maoists, as they claim, are a political force, they should not fear an electoral test. Their claims of political legitimacy and commitment to people’s sovereignty would be indispensably justified. Otherwise they would just be a gun-toting group in the margins, whose adherence to violence would justify repression.

The monarchy, on the other hand, would certainly face the same dilemma in the pernicious environment of domestic politics—unable to win a political dissent of a non-violent movement, its space arrayed against the spurring violence of the Maoist insurgency.

Thickening a tiresome way to show the executive power of the state. King Gyanendra said last week that he has been a “constructive monarch,” perhaps the occasion had arrived for a constructive contribution to untangle this stalemate. Both the insurgent Maoist and a restive monarchy can then meet the popular aspirations of the people by bringing back the democratic process to the centre stage of Nepali politics.

There was a conspicuous absence of another integral factor in the talks sacked by Prachanda on Wednesday. Negotiation first need to allay deep-seated suspicions of each other to build confidence. In our case, neither party has taken up previous commitments and therefore mustard can only grow.

Emotion and insecurity had enveloped the negotiation process. The previous government teams were undone, self-sacrificing and sincere bargainers compared with the disciplined and committed Maoist team. A member of the government negotiation team even disclosed his differential approach to the agenda, publicly exposing rifts.

The Maoists for their part had huskled off so many times by threatening to go back to war if the government didn’t agree to their demands, that it is not credible any more. They had to do something to win back their credibility.

The government’s concept paper tabled at the Third Round involved a minaret route to the king, the army and the parties. Though the document says the makers of the state are the people, it asserts “the role and importance of Nepal monarchy is indispensable for the achievement of the security of the national independence and terrestrial integrity of the country.” Therefore, the institution of monarchy still continue to remain as a symbol of Nepal national identity and national unity.

This confirmed the idea of people’s sovereignty. The government failed to provide a meeting point for dialogue which asked the Maoists to surrender their arms and ammunitions without considering any likely option and promised some other side. To make the case more palatable, the government should have advanced the proposal for demobilisation as a part of a peace process. Conditional upon the agreement for demobilisation both parties could have explored each other’s position to reconcile the deal. The government could also have been a commitment to explore detailed parameters through negotiation.

Third, the government’s negotiating agenda was vague and was thoroughly manipulated. There was no clear set of the government could not be achieved through joint decision, but by

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usical to my jaded ears: the unity conference of Global Nepalis planned for October this year in Kathmandu will seem to tap into their skills, money and knowledge for developing Nepal.

What a timely and welcome undertaking. Especially considering our ailing economy. With no hope of getting our hands on a cent at any time when are we all about to join the WTO. It might be to opportunity to draw the nationalist’s attention to some of the underlying socio-cultural and emotional issues as well. For this, we need a modified definition of Global Nepalis to include a slightly larger diaspora. Nepalis residing outside, Nepalis returned from outside, Nepalis by birth and by-decision for business.

Meet Sundar, who recently returned to Nepal after 15 years in many parts of the world, and now lives in Gari Dhana, Sundar was “on the verge of wakiness, a condition inflicted when one repeatedly endures allegations of ‘what a complete fool you have become’”. The victim of this affliction are not Ceylonese, which, like ones’ immune system, has a varying composition that the doctors define. To support these symptoms, Sundar has learnt to remain vigilant about what he does and says.

Then at the other end of the world, is Geeta, engaged in a dinner-time chit-chat with Ramesh, a visiting friend from Nepal. All is going well with Simone gmaha playing in the background until the topic changes to Nepal politics.

Geeta rakes concerns about the israelism in our leadership and growing political apathy among our youth. Only to be reminded that she has “left the country”, and hence “did she really have the right to raise such issues?” Sheepishly Geeta recites, for the fifth time that year, how she and her husband tried to make it in Nepal but had to leave for their kids’ sake.

These aren’t isolated cases about two individuals. They are becoming rather common scenes with our growing population migrating or moving away from the country. There is no denying this rapidly escalating phenomenon is ushering in copious amounts of revenue into the country, but what gets left behind is our endurance is the fact that there is also the accompanying flood of socio-cultural and emotional complexities which our society must confront and adapt to. Perhaps it was easier 20 years ago, when the numbers were still small: when there were only the elite, the nerds, the super-rich and the very few that doing the rounds.

And we are barely coping. It wasn’t that long ago that a foreign-based Nepali journalist published in a local magazine that Global Nepalis tend to be more critical of the ability of additional achievements of fellow professionals in Nepal. It touched many tender nerves, judging from short responses in the magazine’s letter to the editor. The same appeared in from the other side. What was surprising was how ripe and waiting this us-versus-them debate was, how quickly came the resentment, counter-allegation and self-justification surfaced. We seem unable to accept our own rights to be global, despite the world doing it in leaps and bounds.

If Nepal looked around the globe, it isn’t just we who are struggling to come to terms with this. It is the universal play of inferiority-superiority complexes between resident and non-resident nationals, and the debate of who has the greatest ownership of views and opinions on the homeland, and to what extent.

This has and will remain a problem for countries that have a wide diaspora of nationals outside their borders, and our spread has just begun. It’s not easy for a nation to face this. It takes decades. Just look at our neighbours, Indians are only beginning to grapple with this concept after 50 years of post-colonial and subsequent transmigration to all corners of the world. Abbot later, they are cashing in their NREs (Non Resident Indians), and finally seem to even some ease living in multicultural spaces.

The really our mass exodus is on the increase, exponentially. Children of powerful people are overseas, so is most of their money, and our youth is filtering the foreign labour market. Now, it us up to face this, adjust those old definitions and align our socio and emotional grounds. Otherwise, making policies and joining the WTO may only give us half-baked outcomes. It’s time to stop shuffling with such discomfort about Global Nepalis and addressing the real issues.

Pokeyal is a writer and sanitation engineer who believes in thinking globally and acting locally.

(For more on the global Nepali conference 11-14 October 2003; www.rnm.org)
would, of course, like to see Nepal reducing its dependence on external aid. More loans and less grants. Would this create problems for the ADB?

Nepal's new foreign aid policy wants to reverse the present trend of dependence on external aid. I can assure everyone that we will be watching very closely and we want to be engaged in the process. We also welcome the actions that have been taken to address the issue of compensation. This involves fair compensation for the affected parties, including farmers and local communities.

How has the insurgency hindered ADB operations in Nepal?

The insurgency has indeed caused challenges, and I come with a very serious commitment to help the government meet some of them.

Can these ideas be implemented with all this political instability?

We are deeply concerned about the political instability and the challenges it poses. However, we remain committed to supporting Nepal's development efforts.

Why has the South Asia desk in Manila been created?

This is not a new job, since you were already at the South Asia desk in Manila. Sultan Hafeez Rahman, is the new Nepal country general. If there is any specific allegation about any project of ADB, then ADB has a very stringent anti-corruption policy. What you are saying is quite extreme.

The ADB has supported the CIAA, how do you rate its anti-corruption performance?

We place a very high priority on governance. The ADB has taken significant steps to ensure transparency and accountability in its operations.

How does the ADB support the government in its anti-corruption efforts?

The ADB, through its support to the government, helps in the formulation and implementation of anti-corruption policies and strategies. This includes capacity building, provision of technical assistance, and promoting good governance practices.

What is the ADB's role in promoting multiparty democracy?

The ADB supports the promotion of good governance and democratic principles in Nepal. This includes supporting the development of democratic institutions, advocacy for democratic processes, and supporting electoral processes.

Why did the government provide tax breaks to the Maoist rebels?

The government provided tax breaks to the Maoist rebels in Nepal in 1999, despite the criticisms. However, the government's decision was justified on the grounds of national security and the need to prevent further escalation of the conflict.
FOOD

I t is always a surprise, and a little insulting, when people dismiss Nepali food as boring. That old joke about “dull bhat”. Actually there is no such thing as Nepal food — Nepal’s cuisine is a composite of food experiences from across this diverse land with foods to suit the tropical sun to the drier Himalas. Even if geography alone played a role in our eating patterns, it would logically follow that each region would have a cuisine particular to what was available. And Newari cuisine has also been enhanced by trade, which has blended and blurred our culinary boundaries.

NEWARI

Starting right here in the Kathmandu Valley, the Newars have had links with Tibet and China for centuries. While the ancient salt route is dying out today, the syncretism of culture and taste is still alive in the ubiquitous momo cha. It’s the smaller, spicier version of the Tibetan links with Tibet and China for centuries. While the ancient salt route traditions are vibrant. Most Newars can reel off the dishes in the bhwe, and blurred our culinary boundaries.

RANA

On a x-y axis, Rana food would be at the other end of Newari cuisine. The only thing they’d have in common would be unfermented mustard oil. It all began in the 1840s when Jung Bahadur returned from his victorious campaigns in Lucknow with several khasarmanas in tow. The Muslim cooks specialised in the rich Moghul tradition and divulged their secrets to the bhaja, the only ones allowed to cook for royalty. What came about from this chain of culinary art was a distilled version that rejected heavy flavours and oils but embraced the kebab to create sekwah. Ranas did not eat chicken, especially after the sacred thread was rejected heavy flavours and oils but embraced the kebab to create sekwah. Ranas did not eat chicken, especially after the sacred thread was

SHERPA

More than the gourmet experience, nourishment is the foundation stone of Sherpa cuisine. For generations the Sherpas worked their arid terraces for potato, barley and buckwheat. The harsh, high terrain and cold climate called for hearty stews, and stone of Sherpa cuisine. For generations the Sherpa worked their arid terraces for potato, barley and buckwheat. The harsh, high terrain and cold climate called for hearty stews, and...
and vegetable dishes. For the truly adventurous, Rekha suggests a typically Thakali item: lyetpo khu, head of goat soup—all organs included—diced into small pieces and cooked with timur, salt, garlic and chili powder.

For adventurous vegetarians there is the joy of kinema and gundruk. The first is fermented, and to be honest rather foul smelling, soyabeans that taste divine with Bombay duck in a thick tomato paste. Gundruk is fermented vegetable greens, usually radish tops, that makes a sour soup which is often a substitute for dal. Both features in Rai and Gurung kitchens. During the full moons of Ubhauli (April-May) and Udhauli (November-December) the Rais have their sakela puja, a ritual for good weather and abundant harvests. The sacrificial chicken is made into wachhippa with ash of burnt feathers, ginger, chili and rice that is washed down with raksi.

SWEEET NOTHINGS

The agrarian people of the fertile plains in the south make some of the best sweetmeats. During Chhath most households in the tarai make thakuwa, a deep fried dish made of wheat flour and sweetened with cane sugar. During Holi, malpua, a batter of flour is made with milk, spices, sugar and coconut and deep fried, comes into its own. Then there is the special sel roti, made of rice flour, milk, sugar, ghiu and cinnamon, which is eaten during major festivals like Dasai and Tihar. Yomari is a unique Newari sweet, almost like a Japanese moon cake, sticky rice case stuffed with a mixture of jaggery and sesame. When all else fails, there is card, thick and rich like the famed Juju dha from Bhaktapur. It is the base for perhaps Nepal’s most popular dessert—akarni. Card is tied up in muslin overnight and then sweetened, spiced with cinnamon and cardamom, and served chilled with slivers of blanched almonds.

ETC

Every fashionista knows that accessories pull an outfit together, and so it is with the wide variety of condiments served with most Nepali food. Momos come with a fiery dip made from the red hot dalle khursani. Depending on what type and how dal bhat is made, you could have anything from alu ko achhar, spiced boiled potatoes cubed in yoghurt and sesame, mula ko acchar, labour intensive but delicious radish pickles in either mustard oil or brine, tamatar ko acchar, a thickly reduced tomato paste of garlic, ginger, green chili and onions. As longtime Nepal resident Dubby Bhagat remarks, “Nepal has as many pickles as France has cheeses.” Quite. If, like us, you’re too impatient to make your own, the WEAN Co-operative has a wide selection of pickles that are found on tables as far away as Germany and Japan that get a thumbs up from Nepali consumers. And if you feel inspired to cook up some genuine Nepali food they also have ingredients like bhatmas and masaura.
Peace-loving warriors

Americans keep their soldiers—very busy.

B ecause Americans like to think of ourselves as peaceful people, we can always stand a reminder how busy we have kept our soldiers. From the American Revolution to the recent war in Iraq, hardly a year has passed in which the American military hasn't been in battle against counter- or groups considered, by the administrations, in power, threatening to American interests.

In several cases the hosilities rose to the level of total war, but the perennial campaign has included undeclared naval war (against France in 1798 and Germany in 1941), punitive expeditions (against Barbary pirates in the early 19th century and Mexican guerrillas 100 years later), regime-propping operations (in most countries of the Caribbean basin during the first third of the 20th century), pacification efforts (in the Philippines after 1898), and of course the 100-year war (counting mostly from American independence) against the indigenous inhabitants of North America. Indeed, almost the only and even incomplete escape from the fighting against other peoples came during the Civil War, when Americans killed one another in the most destructive conflict in the Western world between 1815 and 1914. Alessio de Tocqueville famously wrote, in the 1830s, that democratic peoples naturally desire peace; he added, less farsightedly, that democratic armies desire war. Whether our army made us do it or whether Tocqueville was simply wrong about democratic preferences, Americans have shown a remarkable aptitude for armed conflict during our 227-year history.

In America's Splendid Little War Peter Huchthausen concentrates on the latter-century. His story starts after the Vietnam War and ends before this year's invasion of Iraq. He acknowledges that his work isn't comprehensive—he deliberately omits covert operations and peacekeeping missions—but the absence episodes he does describe give a fairly thorough picture of what American warriors have been up to since the evacuation of Saigon in April 1975.

An initial lesson to be drawn from their crop accounts is that the period of post-Vietnam parlay in American defence policy was brief to the point of nonexistence. Huchthausen's first case study covers the rescue of the Mogadishu and its crows in May 1993; and though in certain respects this operation was an epilogue to the Vietnam War, the FOB administration intended it for a signal America's determination to defend its interests abroad, despite the defeat in Vietnam. It will surprise no one that most of Huchthausen's studies involve the Middle East. He shows Jimmy Carter trying to rescue the American hostages in Iran in 1980 and Ronald Reagan sending marines to Lebanon in 1982, whereas planes Libya in 1986 and into the Persian Gulf in the Iran-Iraq war of 1980-88. George HW Bush unleashed all the services against Saddam Hussein in 1990-91 and dispatched the marines to Somalia in 1991. Bill Clinton expanded the involvement in Somalia and interested in Balkans. Huchthausen's outwork, aside from the Mogadishu affair, comes from that traditional training ground for the US marines, the Caribbean. He shows America's invasion Grenada in 1983 and Panama in 1989. Huchthausen's a retired naval officer, and his professional expertise and interest show. When he writes of naval arrangements and operations, he conveys an assurance that, among other things, compensates for the scanty notes. Huchthausen also served as an attache in the former Yugoslavia, and his chapters on the Balkans will similarly benefit. It is in the nature of well-crafted short histories to leave readers wishing for more. Huchthausen wrote the political context in which US military operations took place. Huchthausen's cheery occasionally balm hiatuses questionable interpretations. He writes that the Shah of Iran was threatened by a Soviet-backed coup in 1953. In fact, due to a mixture of a coup by a coup by the popularity of the elected prime minister, Mohammad Mossadegh. But getting our of Saddam Hussein's behaviour in the months before Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait was growing more "unpredictable," he should acknowledge that this was partly because of the minor signals Saddam was sending from the first Bush administration.

Huchthausen's judgements of the operations themselves are in the mode of a Roadside Puffin. In the war, the operations succeed, the soldiers, saloon and aircrews get the credit. When the operations fail, the politicians bear the blame.

No one reading this book today can help asking what lessons it holds for the US in today's Iraq. I would answer that it left our of Saddam Hussein's surprise by the rapid US military conquest. His central message is that when the US preempts and commits, it succeeds militarily. His existence regarding politics less an offside little as to his view of the aftermath of the battle—which in case of Iraq is the test of the whole American adventure.

Here a reader might take caution from Huchthausen's title. When Secretary of State John Hay described the 1898 conflict against Spain as a "splendid little war," he was speaking ironically (as he often the). The "splendid" became evident (though it has lost on historians nonetheless) in the denouement to the Spanish war: another war, this time against much more determined nation which provided longer and bloodier than the one that was the US goal of the Philippines. The "splendid" thing was occupation quickly American's decision of empire; even Theodore Roosevelt, the arch-imperialist of that era in America, confessed that the Philippines had become America's "heel of Achilles.

America's "heel of Achilles" against the Philippines was far more difficult than getting, and required nearly a whole century and part of a world war. Today a similar set of lessons might once again show America's "heel of Achilles.

Huchthausen's studies and his narrative of the political context in which US military operations took place. Huchthausen's as a historian on the Middle East, a man of European feudalism. The late Ashok Rudra, himself a man of European feudalism, The late Ashok Rudra, himself a man of.

Deconstructionists do not intend the construction of their "deconstructionist" movement that has deeply influenced the humanities in America and British universities. Deconstructionists do not believe that any settled "facts" exist. If they are right, there is no difference between the present and the past, history of the Greeks 2,400 years ago to record the present and the future, and the myths that every culture tells to affirm its self-worth. Without history, there is nothing left but the full force of the tales of our imagined pasts, which only mistakenly be imagined lost.

Deepak Lal is Professor of Economics at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Hochman's most recent book is World at War.


Peter Huchthausen Viking 256 pp. $25.95

History, ideology and caste struggle

by DEEPAK LAL

I ndia's ancient and medieval history is notoriously malleable. The country's Hindu nationalists authored the latest furore over the nature of India's past. They reject the widely accepted view, based on early sacred texts, that ancient believers did not ban the slaughter of cattle, and that such a taboo for ancient India isn't a recent invention, part of the Hindu moral code only around the fifth and six centuries AD, when the later Puranas were written. (See Praful Bidwai's "Milking the holy cow," #159.)

Praful Bidwai's "Milking the holy cow," #159.)

Where individuals were available intermediaries—into the conception of mutual social ties in the Hindu and European systems.

Where individuals were central in the characteristic rituals of domination and dominance in European feudalism, in Hindu society the relationships were always defined in terms of caste groups. Rudra assumed that caste existed in ancient India because, demand, The late Ashok Rudra, himself a man of the Left, empiricism, provides a perspective on the left, empiricism, the Left in India now question the caste system all served this end. India's ancient and medieval history is notoriously malleable. The country's Hindu nationalists authored the latest furore over the nature of India's past. They reject the widely accepted view, based on early sacred texts, that ancient believers did not ban the slaughter of cattle, and that such a taboo for ancient India isn't a recent invention, part of the Hindu moral code only around the fifth and six centuries AD, when the later Puranas were written. (See Praful Bidwai's "Milking the holy cow," #159.)

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This is in contrast to past policy Pakistan territory and their hosts. have been careful to differentiate April, top leaders of this country hand of peace to Islamabad in
Atal Bihari Vajpayee extended the of terrorism”. quickly condemned them as “acts in India and with which relations usually blamed for such incidents in India and with which relations have lately been on the mend, quickly condemned them as “acts of terrorism.” Since Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee extended the hand of peace to Islamabad in April, top leaders of this country have been careful to differentiate between militant groups based in Pakistan territory and their hosts. This is in contrast to past policy under which India routinely blamed Islamabad for acts of sabotage carried out on Indian soil. After an attack on the Indian Parliament in December 2001, New Delhi responded by moving troops to the Pakistani border, newly triggering off war between the nuclear-armed countries.

No group claimed responsibility for the Monday blasts, one of which went off at the historic Gateway to India monument at the seafront and the other at the prosperous Marine drive in gold and diamonds. At least 150 people were injured, according to official reports. The state of Maharashtra quickly ordered a beefing up of patrols of communally sensitive areas. Other states, which have large Muslim populations, including Gujarat that adjoins Maharanstra, West Bengal, northern Haryana and Delhi, ordered security measures which included spot checks of vehicles.

Pakistan was “separated at birth” from India in 1947 when it was created as a homeland for the sub-continent’s Muslims following the decolonisation of what was a larger British India. India went on to become a constitutionally secular state, but one which became increasingly rocked by communal violence between the Hindu majority and Muslims who form 20 percent of the country’s one billion people. Monday’s blasts seemed to echo a series of bombings that hit Mumbai in 1993 as part of nation-wide sectarian violence that erupted after Hindu fundamentalists demolished the 16th century Babri Masjid mosque at Ayodhya town in northern Uttar Pradesh state. At least 2,800 people died in the post-demolition violence. Many Hindus believe, or have been led to believe, that the Babri Masjid was built by invading Muslims over a temple which marked the birthplace of the Hindu warrior deity Ram 10,000 years ago.

In the decade since the demolition, politics in India seemed to revolve around plans to build a grand temple to Ram on the site where the mosque stood. The issue, an emotional one, helped the pro-Hindu Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) come to power in 1998 under prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

However, the BJP has been stymied in its plans to build the temple by the Uttar Pradesh High Court which has tasked a team of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to carry out excavations and determine the truth of what lay beneath the foundations of the mosque. Monday’s blasts coincided curiously with the release by the High Court of the ASI team’s report which spoke of evidence of a “massive structure” below what were the foundations of the Babri Masjid and construction history of the site stretching back to the 10th century. The High Court, which said its main task is to decide the ownership of the site rather than whether Ram was born there or not, has not accepted the report but handed it over to experts and stakeholders who have six weeks from now to study and comment on it.

Although the ASI findings are non-committal, they are likely to exacerbate bitterness between India’s two main communities over an issue which has already been at the root of much bloodshed, including a pogrom against the Muslim community in BJP-ruled, western Gujarat state last year. The pogrom, in which more than 2,000 people died, was sparked off by the torching at Godhra railway station of a train carrying Hindu pilgrims returning to Gujarat from a religious ceremony in Ayodhya. It resulted in the incineration of at least 60 passengers.

Recent acts of sabotage in Mumbai, such as the bombing of a suburban train in March killing 12 people, have been attributed to people seeking revenge for the pogrom in Gujarat where authorities have ordered a special alert to maintain law and order. For the BJP, faced with general elections next year, the ASI findings are just the cue it has been waiting for to pursue its plans to build the Ram temple and redeem election promises it has been making over the past decade.

“The ASI report proves what we have always said—that a temple existed at the site. Muslim organisations must now do some positive thinking on the issue and come forward for a dialogue with Hindu leaders,” said BJP spokesman Mukhtar Abbas, himself a Muslim. The BJP this Friday out-of-court settlement of the ownership issue brought about by religious leaders from both sides, but their efforts have so far not borne favourable results. Hindu leaders such as Vinay Kataria and Pravin Togadia have sworn that they would ‘liberate’ other ancient temple sites where mosques were built by Muslim rulers, notably in the cities of Mathura and Varanasi which also are in Uttar Pradesh. * (AG)
"We will wake the king up."

Girija Prasad Koirala in Deshanter, 24 August

“We are preparing for a decisive movement. This one will be different from previous ones. It will be quite serious, important and perilous. The 1990 movement was against the Panchayat regime, our sole aim was to bring down the system and restore democracy. Now our focus is on the king. He attacked the achievements of the 1990 movement and is attempting to scrap the constitution. We have to work between the king and the Maoists, guns, which is quite a challenge. If we side with the king we will become regressive too. And if we back the Maoists, we will be joining the cruel, autocratic and radical communist stream. We need to tread carefully.

This movement is also aimed at elevation—for the people from dictatorship and regression, and for the king from regression. True, we oppose the king, but we are not against the monarchy as an institution. Many think they are the same. They are not. The king is a person and he cannot be an institution. The scepter and crown are the symbols of monarchy.

The monarchy will have to be made constitutional, because it happens, the king cannot make mistakes. The monarchy should be an institution not imbued with power, but with respect. It also needs safety and management. I stress safety because of the royal palace massacre on June 01. Nobody took responsibility for the mass murder of King Birendra and his family. The chief of army staff even went as far as to say that the king’s safety was not the army’s responsibility.

The agitating political parties demand that the king should make his property public. What assets were left behind by the late king? How much does the present king own now? These questions are not that difficult to answer. If King Gyanendra is making money through business, he ought to pay taxes.

The 18-point program of the political parties does not aim at replacing the monarchy with a republic, the king has misunderstood us. He is thinking of taking over the country, deliberately or not, toward a republican state. We only want democracy in which the king will keep his position of a constitutional monarch. Regression will end and the constitution will be activated. That, the king, parliament and Maoists can all seek a solution to the current crisis. If there is an understanding, the agreement can be ratified by parliament and activated. After that, the king, parliament and Maoists can all seek a solution to the current crisis. If there is an understanding, the agreement can be ratified by parliament and activated. After that, the king, parliament and Maoists can all seek a solution to the current crisis. If there is an understanding, the agreement can be ratified by parliament and activated. After that, the king, parliament and Maoists can all seek a solution to the current crisis. If there is an understanding, the agreement can be ratified by parliament and activated. After that, the king, parliament and Maoists can all seek a solution to the current crisis. If there is an understanding, the agreement can be ratified by parliament and activated. After that, the king, parliament and Maoists can all seek a solution to the current crisis.

The seven months of ceasefire and the peace talks were already breaking down. At the military and political levels, there were disagreements with the Maoist terms. The Maoists announced that the government had violated the code of conduct and said they had no option but to shelve talks and break the ceasefire.

Neither side was ready to allow a monitoring committee to inspect whether the code of conduct was being followed or violated. One of the main reasons for the failure of the peace talks is due to the absence of an independent and reliable monitoring机制. In the last seven years, 8,000 people died and billions of rupees worth of property was destroyed. Now the government, the Maoists and the people must work to prevent impending disaster. The government has no way of hope for people. We are now in the midst of a situation where the Maoists abandoned their demand for a people’s republic and instead asked to replace people’s sovereignty and constituent assembly, but in vain. But such critical negotiations should not have been abandoned in three rounds just because there were doubts about the government’s intentions. Moreover, without even considering the possibilities or waiting for the government’s consideration and flexibility towards their demands, the Maoists have distanced from the talks, killing the hopes and aspirations of 24 million Nepalis.

The continuity of conflict and a return to violence will turn this beautiful country into ashes by killing arms, the Maoists will worsen the situation of this country. The power of the gun will increase the killing and destruction, which neither the government nor the Maoists will be able to control. The end of the peace talks has been announced but it both sides realise that peace is the only solution to any problem, there may be a chance for us all.

The government and the Maoists have distanced themselves from the talks, but the role of human rights and citizen activism can never be ended. Our responsibility has increased. We can still be the pressure both parties not to be a part of the destruction. Before the two sides mobilise their armies, they should re-evaluate the situation again and give peace another chance.
Kumud Devkota’s Kathmandu of exclusion

Kumud Devkota’s most evocative poems lie somewhere between poetry and prose—they tell stories of characters at important junctures in their lives, though they eschew the option of narrative development to offer readers, instead, the poet’s emotion and insight into the human condition.

It is rare to find a poet, today, who writes in the third person, as Devkota does in his best works, and who pays more attention to the plight of others than to his or her own subjectivity. Devkota focuses closely on the inner life of his characters. In the first poem below, he writes of a Kathmandu everyman bitterly excluded from the opulence of a wedding party:

**NEM BAHADUR MUTTERS**

On the frosty mist covered street at the kind of dead end where I am a person freezing in silence begins in anxiety to add and subtract his desire to take some warmth from the lights in the house that stands before him the lights that glitter from the roof down to the sidewalk

This apparently is where the division lies amid people. The lights are lit so that someone might grant someone else her youth For the person who does divisions for he who bares his poverty for those who suffer the frost and mist—how much longer is the truth to be denied?

Life is bountiful for those who know how to daub bright deceitful laughter across their lips The Sahebs at the gate with their palms joined and their faces made up like those of true citizens—they make a fine topic for poetry. Nem Bahadur mutters—just you wait. We couldn’t become one of your own We were left out of your feasts and gatherings It doesn’t matter. I’ve enjoyed one or two samplings of foreign spirits in my time. Does it matter where it came from? It’s just the desire to be one of your people. It’s just this time sprawling with so much darkness all over the street

Winter features in another of Devkota’s poems, once again emphasising the helplessness of the poor against the elements.

**RISHAV BHATTARAI’S LIFE A COLD ROOM**

A foggy winter’s day—

Kathmandu must suffer the rain that pours endlessly The swarming people must bear what comes—victory or defeat Amid this kind of whispering in a cold room Rishav Bhattarai is stroking life, making love to life He blows smoke from his mouth, targeting the ceiling The representative of a class, he is only just living For whom and for what? Recalling at winter’s sour, unfinished taste moving without shame through the street, the hut, a cold room as if to found a maxim or a truism. This is how to bear life This is how a person must lack faith in himself in order to take pride in his soil. Maybe it is solely for my poem that Rishav has lived so long here under his name Awareness doesn’t rest in only one place The feel of rebellion rises and moves swiftly toward the war that hot electric currents wage against winter far, far beyond the windows with large glass panes isn’t this the same Kathmandu as that one? Where a story had started to be told of the winter, of one who struck life in a cold room and of recalling at a sour, unfinished taste How long to cover the truth and speak of the purity of this soil? How long to hide the self? How long to bear this? This relentless selfish epidemic—Sometimes something arises and a question wants to erupt Why did we get into the habit of tolerating? Why is it that only the years stay out and get exposed? What harm would there be if a new day appeared? The artificial temperatures decked with such grandeur would disappear from the house that decorates Kathmandu The soil that has been stepped on will take on a question and spread through the entire country So far, the winter, not satisfied with fog, has transformed only into endless rain…

Devkota’s poems are translated from his collection Kumud Devkotaka Kabita, published by the Royal Nepal Academy.
**NEPALI WEATHER**

By MAUSAM BEED

True to tradition, this is the time for Bhadra Jharna a time for sharp, short bursts of isolated showers. This week’s torrential downpours in Kathmandu are a sign of these showers that come at the tail end of the monsoon. To be sure, the monsoon is not spent yet, and a series of low pressure systems are still coming out of the Bay of Bengal and loaded our way as this satellite image taken on Thursday morning attests. But as soon as the sun rises, the PM10 levels climb up again. On Saturday, however, with a decrease in the number of vehicles on the road, the pollution level went down to 134 micrograms per cubic meter.

### KATHMANDU AIR QUALITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>PM10 (μg/m³)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>&lt;60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ok</td>
<td>61 to 120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unhealthy</td>
<td>121 to 350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmful</td>
<td>351 to 425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazardous</td>
<td>&gt;425</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Average PM10 levels at selected points in Kathmandu:** 17-23 August in micrograms per cubic meter as of 29 August 2003.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>PM10</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Putali Chowk</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patan H</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thamel</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Source: www.mope.gov.np

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**Visit Ground Zero**

Fine wines, designer cards, cakes, gifts, stationery, wooden items, perfumes and more. Darbar Marg, opposite Hotel de l’Annapurna

**Visit Femilies**, the Exclusive Linenerie Store for ladies undergarments, nightwear, bathrobes and more. 5 min. from Bhatbhateni Supermarket, 2 min. from Bhatbhateni Supermarket. Contact: 4275180

**Flowerdlors** are also flowing. Only at THE BHUSANAGAR NURSERY, tel. 4431797, 5 min. from Bhatbhateni Supermarket, 2 min. from Bhusanagur Chowk (turn right and downhill).

**To Let:** Rithibainau area two storey house 4 bedrooms 2 bathrooms large kitchen dining living terrace lobby and porch and telephone. Contact: Roshani 4275180

To Let: In Jawlakhel near zoo, fully furnished apartment 3 bedrooms 2 bathrooms, spacious living / dining, modern kitchen, indoor telephone, terrace, overlooking English garden with tall trees in quiet surrounding. Available immediately: Contact: 5034389

**House on rent:** 6 rooms: Large Drawing room: Master bedroom with walk-in closet: Attached bathroom with jacuzzi: 4 bedrooms with attached bathrooms: living room, large garden with servant quarters & garage. Contact: 5466214.

**St. Augustine’s School, Kalimpong**

School Day Celebrations Date: 28th August 2003. Time: 6.30 pm onwards Venue: Dechering Garden Restaurant, Thamel For details, call Rajan @ 98102190 or Umesh @ 98102190.

**LIVE IN STYLE** Arcadia Apartments in the heart of Thamel. Centrally located, fully furnished apartments at unbeatable rates. For details: 981026903, 4260187

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**For insertions ring NT Marketing at 5543336-33.**
**Where to eat Nepali Food**

Kathmandu is a melting pot of cultures and cuisines. In this great mandate there are as many places where you can sample a diverse range of Nepali food.

**Bhanchha Ghar**

Has become synonymous with a traditional Nepali culinary feast, since 1989. "Our food is a true Nepali food experience," says Kishore Raj Pandey. Over in Jamal, Kathmandu Kitchen offers exquisite chaat marinated with tomato and cilantro achar. You might even catch a Tamang shankri dancer at fire, the ash from which is traditionally used to cure the sick. In Nepal, in the quiet retreat of Wunjala Moskova you can sample more Newari and even Russian delights. Especially popular are the savoury marinated bite-sized chwela. In the heart of town in Dilli Bazar, Layju Kitchen is ideally located for stunning views and great food. But if you’d rather be in the centre of things, Patan Museum Café has a very good Nepali shalat within the quiet confines of the actual darbar. For a real dining experience that doesn’t cost a king’s ransom Baithak at Baber Mahal Revisited is quite literally the only place to go. Last but not least, if you want elaborate presentation and taste, book ahead at Krishnarpan at Dwarika’s Hotel (pic, top) for a 16-course dinner that will make everyone well and truly abandon the idea that Nepal’s cuisine is dull. (∗Sraddha Basnyat)

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**Bored with things?**

The 23-year-old ABID, American Born Indian Desi, funnyman Vir Das excels at comedy. This Friday, Vir brings biting satire and cutting edge comedy to the Valley. "Bored with the things" sounds like just the ticket to liven up this rather tedious season where everything is a tad washed out. The very antithesis of the slapstick genre, Vir breaks the rules—all of them. Parents, sex, gender, class and caste no bar. In fact, he raises the bar high enough to aim right for the jugular. Leave the kids at home, because under the spotlight and in front of the microphone, this man is fast, controversial and profane, in more ways than one. And so funny you’ll need to wear seat belts. "Bored with the things" by Vir Das on 29 August at the Hyatt Regency Kathmandu.

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**House For Rent**

- Located in the Height of Kathmandu
- 3 Minutes drive from Nehru Park
- 2 Bedrooms
- 2 Attached Bathrooms
- servant and guard Onsite
- Rain water harvesting/ lush green lawn
- A garden House
- A Scenery and Personal Environment
- Most suited for foreigners

**Contact:** 9810151542
Men are from Mars

Every 60,000 years or so whenever Mars and Earth come to within a stone’s throw of each other as the crow flies, we know it is once more time to take a long hard look at Nepali manhood. The last time Mars was this close, our ancestors were still running around naked in their caves, fighting tooth and nail over choice medium-rare mastodon cuts and over prehistoric constituent assemblies. Fighting is something we did well, and that glorious warlike tradition has carried on to this day. We may have failed in just about everything else, but we sure excel in the martial arena.

Being a martian race, therefore, we he Goraksals have never shirked from exhibiting extraordinary valour when we come face-to-face with an adversary: whether it is the East India Company, or a rival Congress faction. Fossilised remains ofpetrified primitive newspapers recently unearthed from 60,000-year-old caves at Ichangu reveal for the first time that the roots of many of our present-day national traits were struck in those hoary days of antiquity at the dawn of history when Man was just beginning his journey to the pinnacle of evolution.

Collision with Mars Averted

By a Cosmic Correspondent

Last week as the two planets came to within hair’s breadth of each other, and disaster was averted only because an alert astrologer was able to apply the Earth’s emergency brakes.

Astrologer Mangal Raj said his namesake planet suddenly swerved towards the Earth’s orbit without warning, and the two missed each other by a whisker. “Whew, that was close,” visibly relieved Mr. Mangal told reporters. “Thank heavens we’re not going have a close shave like this for another 60,000 years.”

Women Fed Up

By a Feminine Reporter

Thousands of women launched the first phase of their agitation against their better halves, called the ‘Tij Offensive’, by migrating to their ancestral caves in droves and threatening to go on a relay hunger strike until their 18-point demand was met. The demands included a moratorium on husband husbands running around in their birthday suits, a ban on, er, all voiding (audible or otherwise) in a confined space, and a requirement that husband-gathered husbands also learn to cook. “We know it won’t happen in a million years,” said one irate wife, “but it may get them off their butts.”

Fire Discovered

By Our President Assistant

Four juvenile male hominoids accidentally discovered fire Tuesday when the woolly mammoth they were herding got stuck by lightning on Chobar Hill, home ministry sources said. The mammoth was burnt beyond recognition, and the young anthropoids said the incinerated mammoth tasted much better than a raw one. “This discovery will revolutionise cooking and warfare,” predicted a prehistoric military historian on condition that this would be a self-fulfilling prophecy. Several disgruntled hominoids immediately started playing with fire, setting ablaze their living quarters and reducing their ancestral homeland to ashes.

Under My Hat

by Kunda Dixit

Lajana’s helping hand

In the months after her husband’s death in an air crash in 1992, when Lajana Manandhar felt her world had fallen apart, she decided the best way to honour her husband’s memory was to fulfil his vision. An architect and urban planner, Ramesh Manandhar always thought outside the envelope, designing cheap eco-friendly houses using mud, working on housing for the urban poor. So, Lajana turned grief into activism and started Lumanti (Newari for ‘memory’) to help landless squatters and slum dwellers in Kathmandu Valley.

Widowed at 30, Lajana also had to raise their son and daughter. She had just finished her MPhil in agriculture economics and had no clue how to go about addressing the issues of urban poverty. But with help from friends and colleagues of her husband, Lajana sought ideas and suggestions to find ways to promote self-help and welfare. It took three years to develop a close relationship with slum dwellers in Patan, and without any other financial support and just a skeleton staff, Lumanti hosted an international workshop on urban and housing issues. In 1997, with support from Action Aid, Lumanti began a women’s saving and credit scheme for squatter families.

Members would contribute Rs. 20-30 per week to a central kitty from which others in the group could take loans at low interest to pay school fees, repair their hut, or invest in a small shop. Within six years, Lumanti set up 110 groups with nearly 2,000 female members from squatter communities around Kathmandu and Lalitpur. Today, their savings total Rs 5 million.

The difference can be seen in the slums of Patan: dirt lanes have been replaced with stone pavements, each ward has a children’s library and learning centre, and all houses have toilets. With the help of Lumanti’s scholarship program, children’s school enrolment has reached 95 percent.

Along the way, Lajana and Lumanti have turned what was once a non-issue into a subject of national debate. The urban poor have now set up a solidarity network called Society for Preservation and Habitation in 22 districts. Says Lajana: “All we did was to show them the way, and give them the support. They did the rest themselves.”

(Naresh Newar)