Weekly Internet Poll #154. To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Hence Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba alighted in Delhi with wife Arzu, son Javeer 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 Amiekipariq 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 Maoists 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.

Deuba is also quick to quash any speculation that Deuba might give unreasonable concessions to Indian sensitive matters, including those which would activate Article 126 of the Constitution for tracts on natural resources that require two-thirds majority of parliament. He added there was no plan to sign an extradition treaty where India can be tackled without the help of third parties, he said.

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PoM

date wrote in his irono that the depths of hell are reserved for those who remain neutral in times of moral turpitude. In Central Europe, there is a saying: All those around you are crooks and you remain silent you too, become a crook.

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

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 culprit is to posture 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 fly-by-night manpower companies, the only beneficiaries in the first in Nepalganj. It didn’t. In fact, Nepalganj didn’t even need a curfew.

If it was an impulsive explosion of anger, we would have seen it erupt. Now this gray characterless, neighbourly—one of Khinthali’s symbols of individualism run amok. Blackened. Burned from a river to a sewer during the same period that the Valley lost its old charm.

My conclusion 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 criminal and revolutionary anarchism. In coming to terms with capitalism, many of the even worse in that it is the Western societies such as Meij Japan or Mongkgut Thai 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 lumpsen.

Nepal’s nascent capitalism has been driven from the lumpen and has mushroomed in the semi-underground. It began in the late 1980s with juil-guns trade, they facailly 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 informal economy and housing construction industry catering to a rural population that was uprooting itself to be closer to where the major job 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 1993—2000s, the mushrooming of passport acquisition came down with its decentralised issuing in distress to an informal manpower expert. Over time, rather than formalising themselves more and more, these industries, ensnared by a rent seeking bureaucracy and an aid industry that ignored this structural malaise, had migrated towards the informal, often the criminal, sector.

Nepal politics since 1980, rather than working towards and reversing this drift, became the democritised handmaiden of the economy. Many politicians who are Nepal’s current generation are owners, partners or patrons in such enterprises. These ventures, being out of direct access to significant sums of money, were useful in the mass

RETURN OF THE BARBARIANS

I used to get out of the small Muslim-run shops behind Dharana which used to sell sekuwa saying “Askamul Arakam” green who. Once they invited me to their simple rooms behind the shops during the Eid holiday. Sad incidents happened to Kathmandu: Recruitment agencies, airline offices and news agencies can claim what they want to. Who doesn’t say? 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 react on the reports 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, London

Thank you for showing me how Hindus move. How reassuring when the citizens, the police, the army and faces 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 edge of discovering that nothing should be done for the sake of gods, all for the god of man—nothing for another world—everyone for this.”

Hans B Nix, Jamshedpur

As the shocking news regarding the brutal murder of 12 Nepalis in language, history, communication skills and culture, it was an armoured carrier guarding the ashes of Siddhi Bhawan and two houses that was an armoured carrier guarding the ashes of Siddhi Bhawan and two houses that were burned down into the abyss of anarchy and useless interviews. Our ambassador in Qatar spoke to Al Jazeera but demoralised. Eight understand his English? At times of national crisis, the Foreign Ministry has never been down. Our career diplomats are only interested in perks and plum postings. These leprous, corrupt and useless bunch of dailors in the Foreign Ministry 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不合格 staff wallad as the heritage 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 family pictures of the executions. I understand that the media has an obligation to get the news out but in the view that these pictures were shown in 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, this would have been as bad. Also the security apparatus could have been more alert that the hostage crisis.

Boru Gurung, email

For a country that is teetering preciously close to the edge of total implosion, anything that could aid in doing that side down into the abyss of anarchy would be a godsend. Unfortunately, one of those things that is shortest supply during such times is sanity, and again we have the need of Nepal to understand that point.

I won’t ask if any of the people who are spreading madness through the streets of Kathmandu even know that they are doing it. All thousands of lives they were helping run 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 only a profound one. It is the state’s response that seems to have made little sense. What 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
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 built up a macabre art in which the partnership between political parties and rapacious bureaucracy ended up hempenising the formal sector and leaving it to the mercy of extortionists in dauna survival. The League is not only the latest entrants that have recently wised up to their own muscle power in such a polity. It has been widely felt that the use of power in such a polity. It has been widely felt that the use of power for the sake of power 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 licensing procedures and insider trading. What plagues the overall national import in the East - 300 too many our mini-Enron where individual promoters of a company prosper, indeed with double-digit growth, but the formally registered parent company itself wastes away. This is not only saddled the consumer with unnecessarily high tariffs but spreads the infection to national public lending institutions that in turn are saddled with bad loans. Lumpy political economy is just another excuse to look for scapegoats, legitimized of failure because the people are with us. Unfortunately, the streets exploded on Black Wednesday - a day of 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

The traumatic events of last week triggered some introspection, but the Nepal intelligentsia is still in a state of denial. Instead of confronting real issues, we are trying to hide behind the wall of minority understand any attempt to assert themselves will attract a backlash. It is also well known 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 Khatik or even Prime Minister Shri Baburam 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, and imposed them by various donors and lenders. 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 squabbling 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 bringing down minority, we have managed to weaken the very foundation of the state. Criticism is desirable for the proper functioning of the political system, but incessant attack 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 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 has the bourgeoisie done to weaken them?

Crimes 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, however 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.

TAPAS & MARGARITAS

This is a time not meant for siesta, but to cherish a special moment and say hello to the great Tapas & Margaritas.

“Tapas” a Spanish term means (lit) a concept which originated many years ago.

Some Tapas depict:

The finest Panna ham with exotic papaya on brown herb rind, Smoked salmon in spoom, Austrian blue cheese and fresh artichoke Mornie in a tartlet, Russian foie-gras on skewer with traditional mustard.

“Margarita” a cocktail made with main liquor base is tequila. It is a sour drink which is a mixture of Tequila and lime.

Taste yourself with the Classic traditional strawberry margarita, Fresh years margarita, Olmex blue margarita and many more.

Accompanied by a host of traditional bread station

Date : 10th, 11th & 12th September
Venue : The Piano Bar & Poolside
Time : 11am - 8pm
Price : 500/- Net
Includes: a cool splash in the pool along with a pint of Carlsberg.

For further information, please contact
Guest Relations at 4248999 extn. 2865.
"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

Three years after 9/11

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

taught to shoot a gun by CIA trainers. The monster beat the Communists but once that battle had been one, it turned its baled-out 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 the 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 insurrection 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. ●

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 Iran 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 doors. 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 jewelry and about Rs 200,000 in cash. “If we had not escaped we 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 homes and rescued their neighbours.

In Battis Putali, Mohammad 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.”

Al Ragi 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 to 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 Jhibar 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. Jhibar tells us in fluent Newari, “I don’t know what to do 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 sift through the ashes that used to be his watch repair shop in Dilli Bajar. “I’m a poor

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, slobering beasts to watch out for.

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

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 clanistic, warlike mountain culture that reveres handedness 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 radical, 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 baled-out eye on its patrons in Washington. The war continues to this day, with all sorts of dire and tragic consequences.

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Nepali Muslims

Nepali historians believe that the first Muslims settled in Kathmandu during King Ratna Malla’s reign in the late 15th century. Kashmiri traders were probably the first Muslims to arrive, followed by Muslims from Afghanistan and India who were experts in international diplomacy.

During Jang Bahadur Rana’s regime, a large number of Muslims migrated to the tarai from India fleeing persecution from a Hindu king due to their religion and to have fled to India during the economic blockade that others were useful in international diplomacy.

Following Nepal’s unification, King Prithvi Narayan Shah also encouraged Muslim traders to settle down with their families. Besides trade, the Muslims were also 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 Prithvi 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 Prithvi 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 Ghar Ghar).

During Jung 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 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 felt hurt by the brutal killing of innocent Nepalis at the hands of those infamous 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.”

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 homes, 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)
Kalapani’s ‘line of control’

The Indians have moved border posts again

SHARAD KC in KALAPANI

W

e had just crossed Upper Kava 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 northeastern border, 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. We thought it was the eastern bank of the Mahakali, a red warning flag was fluttering in the breeze. As we ap-

Proposted by the architecture jury for traditional architectural excellence is the Nari Mandir, a temple-restaurant in Patan. It is a three-story building with a brass balcony and a triple gateway.

Kathmandu, Nepal, 2006

The Vacuum created by the withdrawal of all border police posts along Nepal’s western border with India in the past two years has filled by the Maoists. The Indians set up the post in Nepal six years ago when leftist students marched to Kalapani in a much-publicised attempt to “liberate” Nepal 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 Sugali 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 Liplipaudi. But in the 1962 Sino-Indian War it was

strategic necessity for India to control the passes that came down from Tibet through the Nepal side as well as the Indus. In 1998, Girija Prasad Koirala as premier was telling parliament that Nepal and India should agree to a “tributary flowing down from Lipu Lekh as the Mahakali.

Even so, records of censuses as far back as 1801 and elections before that show villagers of Kuti, Garibyang and Guni were counted as Nepalis. These villages along the east bank of the real Mahakali are now in India. But even Nepal has accepted the much smaller tributary that flows down from Lipu Lekh as the border.

Indian border police are now manning a checkpoint another 600m on the Nepali side.

Maoland

After the police moved out of Chiwaung, the Maoists set up a platoon here. A Maoist flag flies on the Nepal side of Sita Pul, not the Pakistani one. Platoon leaders regularly survey the Indian security patrols across the river in Garibyang though locals insist it is a bigger problem.

We arrived at a time that was a turning point for Maoists. We heard that the Indians were doing the same, peering at the Maoists in Nepal. Baron says the Maoist presence here is for “pro-paganda purposes” and “to keep an eye on the Indians”.

But there seems to be another motive. The Teikar Lipu Leekh trail to Marsanbarar and Tibet is a notorious conduit for wildlife trafficking. Between 1991 and 2000 alone, more than 500 of tiger skins, tiger bones and parts, musk deer pouches and yarsagumba have been seized. Maoist Platoon Commander Ramesh told us the rebel charge Rs 35,000 on each kg of yarsagumba transported through the region. This would have made 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 been gone across from India to China. Exploits Ramesh “as long as they pay the tax, it is our duty to give the traders safe passage.”

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), an independent humanitarian organisation whose mission is to protect individuals affected by armed conflict, is offering the following positions:

INTERPRETERS/TRANSLATORS (NEPAL SPEAKING FOREIGNER ONLY)

Your tasks:

1. Direct interpretation: from English to Nepali, and English to Nepali during confidential interviews with persons detained in prisons, ICRC institutional dissemination and visits to families of victims.
2. Written translation: translation of written Nepali (newspaper articles, correspondence, etc.) into written English.
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1. Age: 20 to 35.
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E-mail: katmandu.kat @icrc.org; www.icrc.org

See also: [http://www.nepalitimes.com/issue126/architecture.htm](http://www.nepalitimes.com/issue126/architecture.htm)
In asymmetrical war, the most vulnerable will always be on the frontlines. Beslan is an extreme example of what it means to be caught up in a no-win asymmetric war that is not just a difficult war but a humiliating war as well. That the children were taken hostage and that they were then killed there are two factors: the first, that the Russian leader, never gives interviews, but the deputy leader, who is Nepali, but because he is Nepali, and not because of who he is or what he did, but because of who he is. The result is counter-productive.

The government has responded with force, but as it continues to fail to defeat the Maoists, it has come to resemble a plain old war, and that the government has been forced to order foreign businesses to leave. Poor Nepal, it has no fleets that can be deployed to a sea near Iraq. Its airplanes do not have the range to get to the supplies that it needs. Even the MSF, which works in many countries, has no airplanes to fly to Nepal.

The idea that, had we negotiated with the Taliban, left Saddam in place and put more pressure on the Israelis to settle, kids now would be safe in North Ossetia, is just wishful thinking. The Middle East is a complex place. It is impossible to predict what will happen next, because the Maoist rebels in Nepal may be a year or two away from victory.

However, the Ansar Al-Sunna Army opted to express themselves and send their messages through paid advertisements. We were hoping that the French journalists would be freed when the news of the sparing came, but the truth is that they were not, and that the French government was not doing anything to save them. Poor Nepal, the French government was not doing anything to save them.

Most likely, the Nepalis were going to search for their daily bread, just as truck drivers and workers from Egypt, Turkey and other countries do. It is a bit difficult to say that they came within the framework of the war on terror, but there is no doubt that they were going to search for their daily bread.

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

The rebels had seized 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 give home the point, the Maoists exploded three bombs at Malta Hotel on Tuesday night.

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

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

Workers 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 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 Marnyangdi Hydro project, which is being built with a German grant. Then on 28 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.”

We 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 remove all such industries if they want their industries to open. Maika’s ‘Yatayat-Birenda 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 time they have hit where it hurts. The Soaltee group had 80 percent

Surya Nepal, Sanjeev Puri told us, “We will only reopen after the situation returns to normal.”

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 Bajracharya, says: “Closing Soaltee affects the entire hotel industry.” More than half the bookings in other hotels were cancelled after word spread internationally that the Crown Plaza was has been forced to close.

Similarly, the closure of Surya Nepal will have an enormous impact on foreign investment. Indian Tobacco Company owns 55 percent of Surya, while British Tobacco Company controls two percent and various Nepali individuals and businesses own another 38 percent. (Kiran Nepal)

The attacks on recruitment agencies on 1 September was the coup de grace

NAVIN SINGH KHADKA

One decreed member said, “Many of our members are so demoralised after the attacks that they have decided to quit the profession altogether.”

The Association of Manpower agencies has formed two committees, one for the assessment of the losses due to vandalism and the other to pressure the government to provide compensation and security.

More than 6,000 Iraqi-bound Nepalis have already returned from Mumbai, the fate of the 15,000 Nepalis already in Iraq hangs in the balance and there are tens of thousands more who were getting ready to take the back door to Iraq stranded in India, Kuwait and Jordan. During the vandalism, thousands of passports were either burnt or misplaced, which means many would not be in a position to repatriate for foreign jobs immediately. The government has not made any commitment to get new passports for them.

“The fall-out has been disastrous for the remittance industry,” says economist Bijwanam Paryakar. “Suspensions in the employing countries will continue to deepen and that will burn our remittance economy significantly.”

Paryakar 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 in search of work.

The government is in a dilemma. Before this crisis broke, officials were actually planning to legalise the process of working in Iraq, so many were doped by Indian middlemen and then had the back door anyway. Now it can’t do that, but it also is powerless to stop Nepalis from lading 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, who had canned out now of the 12 Nepalis who were killed. The government has also formed a committee to formulate a policy on police employment. Now, the government is trapped, either way there is no way it can immediately reviving an industry that the country depends on for survival.

It’s not every day that you can enjoy the ambience of a food culture that evolved in Mexican Highlands, right here in Kathmandu. But the Yak & Yeti Hotel brings you Spanish culture in one tasty, tippsy extravaganza. ‘Tapas’ translates from Spanish as ‘little bits’ — which may not seem particularly enlightening, but the Tapas tradition is deliciously exciting, as snacks with pieces of bread heaped with frothy cream, sausages, serrano ham, cheese, olives or almonds. Today, through 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 drinks with a 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 back! At Hotel Yak & Yeti, Darbar Marg, Rs 300 per person.

Holi Tapas and Margaritas back!
“This is not in national interest”

Rajendra Khent is the president of the Nepal-Britain Chamber of Commerce and the executive director of the Khent 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 Khent: 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 impact 50,000 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 pressure the government into peace talks. It is completely counter-productive for the Maoists and for the country.

What is the business community doing to address the issue?

We have been appealing through human rights activists to the government and the international community. There will be more clashes once the employees lose their jobs and come to the streets. It is a big mistake. We urge the Maoists to have a union to withdraw the strike and allow us to run our industries. We shouldn’t be made the scapegoats.

Are the Maoists demands labour-related or political?

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

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The business community needs to be able to discuss and resolve the issues in a peaceful manner.

**ECONOMIC NEWS**

**Right to do business**

The business community needs to be able to discuss and resolve the issues in a peaceful manner.

A n ex-prime minister can’t find his way to the right target, he said at the airport, so he calls a shutdown, closing businesses. An Indian actor allegedly says something that 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 ‘repression’ 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 shop and empty roads. Last week, we saw 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 Beef 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 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 the corporate citizens, and if it can’t then it does not have the right to levy or demand taxes. If it can’t fulfill its role as constitutional guarantor then it can’t use other tax-related legislation either. The 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 prospecting individually by bankrupting organisations or being in cahoots
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, Nimal Ratna Tululadhar, pleads with rioters not to harm his property. 11:30 AM Rioters set a safe from Qatar Airways on fire. 12AM Nimal Tululadhar’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 police 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.

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,” he promised.

When, and if, the commission finds the real answers, it is double security lapses will be blamed. The commission’s terms of reference is to find out who was behind the vandalism, recommend punishment, assess damages 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 Piyar Jung Thapa and the police brass that some action was taken. 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, Asok 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 Tulsiram Ratna Tululadhar, 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 Srinivasa 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 p4-5).

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’s office had been told by “higher ups” not to take any action against protesters 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 protester 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 IRC Shrestha cites this as good 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 precedent 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 back-passing, it is doubtful if any meaningful lessons learnt will come out of the Black Wednesday investigation.
**“Dire straits”**

Geographer and planner Pitamber 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?

**Pitamber 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 pressed 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 a 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 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 run industries and provide employment.

**How do you think 1 September’s riots will affect the economy?**

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?**

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Goodwill
Foreign Minister of State Prakash Sharan Mahat in Davos, 5 September

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

BAGLUING—Despite being only 15 years old, Indrjit Roka Magar has to live under army protection because the Maoists have threatened 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. Indrjit’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 Tanakot 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 Bukhi. Lal Bahadur found out that he was to be executed. Knowing he would be killed anyway, 63-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. Indrjit watched the whole thing and then ran away.

Anti-fascist
Editorial in Nepal, 12 September

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 totally 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 in the country. Failed to control the attack on the mosques and Nepal 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.

Deuba government showed its total indifference to the situation.

Rumour mania
Nepaksa, 7 September

As the nation was gripped by shock over the killing of the Nepali workers in Iraq and there was a curfew, rumour mongers 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 spike of Satatur the rumour mills soared 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 Haranum Dhoka on Saturday afternoon, with images of Prince Paras and Princess Himani broadcast on all television stations (see pic). Even then, rumour mongers were not satisfied. They said the footage was old, and that the princess had already passed away at Dhairauri. We seem to easily forget that our country has already suffered a lot due to false rumours, as in the case of the anti-Hijriki 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 rumour mongers 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 Chauki also played a part in spreading the rumour.

Muddy waters
Samaya, 9 September

On 31 August when news came that 12 Nepalis kidnapped in Iraq had been killed, the extremist Hindu group, Pushpasi 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 Pushpasi Sena and the workers of Hindu Volunteers Association were charging 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 Atulka 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. The general meeting of 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.

A pound of flesh
Surya Prasad Subed in Kantipur, 6 September

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 ammunition 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 Tarapur 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 Bhutan refugees that humanitarian crisis was prolonged. Misfits 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, Kalipari, Mahakali treaty and Bhutan 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.

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

QUOTE OF THE WEEK
Samaya, 9 September

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

Neeam Maharan, president of Overseas Workers in the Gulf, BBC Nepal, 3 September
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 to 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 ENROLLMENT IN PARTNERSHIP ROSTER

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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 constitute 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.

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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.

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 the 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 edge 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 undermines 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.

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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counter, 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 mutual cooperation between the government and donor community and it would be counterproductive to 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 Development Plan, a more strategic and flexible planning instrument than the PRSP (p74).

Bhattacharyya simplifies our analysis and presents a misleading picture. Our premise is that for a developing country planning to stay aloof 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 education and health, and has helped create political and economic conditions that enabled the government to play a role in planning and implementing public programmes. We also note the multiple uses to which aid is put, both by the government and by non-governmental organisations.

Poor rates of GDP growth have impacted Nepal’s efforts at poverty reduction. Since the purpose of liberalisation is to speed up growth, we hope this study will help us to try to improve the way we look 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 PRSPs outperforms the usual.

One of PRSP’s core strategies is to implement and manage programmes in coordination with the government and NGOs. We think this is a wise decision, not for any ideological but for very practical reasons, particularly in implementing the ‘targeted programmes’ of the PRSP in remote and poverty-stricken areas of Nepal where government capacities are constrained.

Bhattacharyya could well have criticised us for not having gone into more detail on these issues, or expressed other disagreement with some of our arguments. Instead, he is implied they were not stated at all. We cannot pretend to disagree 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 Upadhyaya works for ActionAid Nepal.

**BOOKWORM**

Certain Aspects of Tibetan Art
Marie-Francoise Fallon
Mandala Publications, 2004 Rs 250

In Certain Aspects of Tibetan Art, Marie-Francoise Fallon 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 Her Fallon delves into the intricacies of the Tibetan art of wood, textiles and refining metal. She writes for the layman and the students 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, Kathmandu, 4227711, mandala@ics.com.np

**FEEDBACK**

Laxman Acharya and Shizu Upadhyaya

in getting the book finalised, some of the data presented is dated, as Bhattacharyya 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 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.

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Laxman Acharya and Shizu Upadhyaya

in getting the book finalised, some of the data presented is dated, as Bhattacharyya 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 mutual cooperation between the government and donor community and it would be counterproductive to 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 Development Plan, a more strategic and flexible planning instrument than the PRSP (p74).

Bhattacharyya simplifies our analysis and presents a misleading picture. Our premise is that for a developing country planning to stay aloof 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 education and health, and has helped create political and economic conditions that enabled the government to play a role in planning and implementing public programmes. We also note the multiple uses to which aid is put, both by the government and by non-governmental organisations.

Poor rates of GDP growth have impacted Nepal’s efforts at poverty reduction. Since the purpose of liberalisation is to speed up growth, we hope this study will help us to try to improve the way we look 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 PRSPs outperforms the usual.

One of PRSP’s core strategies is to implement and manage programmes in coordination with the government and NGOs. We think this is a wise decision, not for any ideological but for very practical reasons, particularly in implementing the ‘targeted programmes’ of the PRSP in remote and poverty-stricken areas of Nepal where government capacities are constrained.

Bhattacharyya could well have criticised us for not having gone into more detail on these issues, or expressed other disagreement with some of our arguments. Instead, he is implied they were not stated at all. We cannot pretend to disagree 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 Upadhyaya works for ActionAid Nepal.
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 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, being the favorite corporate sport, golf generates higher corporate appointments, cements business relationships, and cements new business deals.

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

As the women flew, spikes first, into the sand, a little flag with the letters ‘WR’ pierced 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 6 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 competed 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 woman’s shot put was 1 meters shorter than the record, set in 1987. The winning man’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’s eat 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.

“Think of 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.”

Soh – 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 disenchanted society needs to be reusasctuated 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 Sakyä

In the market from Dashain
**NEPALWEATHER**

The autumnal rain is bringing Kathmandu’s air quality always comes in the form of sparkling clean air. Predictably, last week's curfew 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 Patal Sada, the average PM10 concentrations in the four days following 1 September were 30 percent lower than the average value from the previous week.

**KATHMANDU VALLEY**

According to the country’s main air quality monitoring centre, there is a 42% chance of the rainfall in the first half of August, there seems to be a monsoon that will continue. Although the country is experiencing the monsoon trough is moving east to west across Nepal and will douse the monsoon rains. The silver lining to Kathmandu's shutdowns always comes in the form of sparkling clean air. Predictably, last week's curfew 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 time. In Patal Sada, the average PM10 concentrations in the four days following 1 September were 30 percent lower than the average value from the previous week.

**KATHMANDU AIR QUALITY**

Good

<table>
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<th>PM2.5 (μg/m³)</th>
<th>Air Quality Index</th>
<th>Breathing comfort</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 to 10</td>
<td>0-50</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 35</td>
<td>51-100</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 to 50</td>
<td>101-200</td>
<td>Poor</td>
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<tr>
<td>51 to 150</td>
<td>201-500</td>
<td>Very Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>151 and above</td>
<td>501 and above</td>
<td>Hazardous</td>
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**CLASSIFIED**

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*FREE FOR INSERTIONS:* Call 4442220 for show timings.
MIN BAJRACHARYA

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 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? “It’s nothing really,” explains Cabinet. “We like that particular letter.”

(Shrestha)
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 hourly 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 making each other up at the crack of dawn, filling up tin cans with water and (breading carefully so as not to step on previous droppings) heading off to a scenic spot to participate in joint exercises.

By suffering irritating hovel 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 litres 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 even 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 but) 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 lack ourselves up and go solo, selfishly eschewing the myriad benefits of kinship that have knitted our social fabric together. What a wasted talent, 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 phosphorous 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.

The time-honoured method of treating dandruff just got better.

Sunilk Naturals Anti-dandruff Shampoo, a delightful combination of both custard and lemon, is what it takes to tackle dandruff. Extremely gentle on your hair and, then, you’d perhaps call it an exaggeration of sorts, extremely tough on dandruff. True to its claim, no harmful chemicals have gone into its making.

Sunilk Naturals Anti-dandruff Shampoo. Gentle, but effective. Make that very.