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Venue : Orbit Seminar Hall, Putalisadak	Venue : Hotel Deepshika, Chipladhunga

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**Q. Will the interim constitution help check Maoist 'law enforcement'?**

Total votes: 4,027

Yes	22.4%
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# LIGHT OF PEACE

The long-awaited peace accord now needs specifics, trust, and vigilance

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**Now, renounce violence**

**Full story** p4



DEEPENDRA BAJRACHARYA

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## Now, RENOUNCE VIOLENCE

The Maoist invasion of Kathmandu for Friday's planned victory rally was a calculated move: the anger of Valley residents initially seemed to be acceptable collateral damage for a national show of force. Pushpa Kamal Dahal needed a chance to show his warriors the war was worth it.

In the beginning, some families who were coerced into feeding and sheltering rebel squads saw it as a price to pay for peace. But when, for the first time, Valley households got a feel for what has been a reality in the hinterland for years, they hit back.

Dahal called off his address to calm feelings in the capital, but in doing so lost any chance he had of using the rally as his party's coming out celebration, a conversion from militarist force to mainstream outfit. The time is opportune for the rebels to signal their readiness to renounce violence, to publicly fulfil the promise made in last November's 12-point understanding to join competitive politics.

Either that, or the Maoist supremo could decide to waste the opportunity presented by Tuesday's midnight agreement and continue to keep his followers falsely motivated. This would be disastrous not just for the country but also for the Maoist goal of achieving political power through the ballot. The leadership has been late in counselling its fighters and workers of the course-correction at the top.

All peaceful forces are more than willing not to call Dahalji's bluff when he speaks radically, as long as the subtext is 'arms management'. Even the UML, which faces the gravest challenge from a Maoist party in competition, hopes the rebel group will use this agreement to launch its campaigning for constituent assembly elections.

Concessions by the political parties should not be underestimated by the Maoist leaders or anyone else. The seven parties have shown statesmanship in the willingness to give underground armed rebels equal status in an interim legislature and government. In return, Mr Dahal must now implement the agreement with due diligence and publicly reject violence.

The rebels have to go furthest in making the agreement a success. Even as guerrillas head for their seven cantonments, their leaders must rein in the militia which is causing havoc across the land and undermining the Maoists' own support base.

From Baluwater to Palungtar there will be relief only when Maoist fighters are confined with guns locked up in boxes fitted with UN sensors. If the government restores police *chowkis*, if the political parties at last muster the courage to go back to the villages, and if the Maoists make all this possible by renouncing violence, then it will truly be time to celebrate.



# Moving the peace forward

The peace talks may have concluded, but the process has only just begun

The first impression of the midnight accord is that the guns will fall silent and those brandishing them without legal authority will be treated as criminals. Pushpa Kamal Dahal's stature has increased vastly—committing to peace was the only way to earn the people's respect.

But the accord just formalises the long process to come. It was the first phase of what should be a prolonged, well thought-out process to ensure enduring peace and a functioning democracy in Nepal.



**GUEST COLUMN**  
Yubaraj Ghimire

Now, the attitude and actions of the parties and leaders who signed it must echo the spirit and intent of the accord.

Past failures, indifference, or oversight are legion in the career of 85-year-old GP Koirala. Prachanda, in his 50s, is hardly immune. Koirala was hated by the Maoist rank and file until four years ago. But he took the peace process, once half-heartedly initiated by Sher Bahadur Deuba, to its logical next step. Dahal flirted with the king to defeat the parties, but corrected his mistake, as his actions show.

That new approach should be reflected in the peace process in its entirety. Human rights and the ceasefire agreement must

remain an integral part of the proposed peace accord, and all sides must be fully accountable for lapses or violations.

The code of conduct clauses on threats and intimidation, unlawful taxation, recruitment into the 'People's Liberation Army', and arms procurement need to be strictly observed. If the accord is to have credibility, the first issue that must be addressed proactively is the return of internally displaced people.

And today's planned rally should be the last under the shadow of terror. Hospitality is a courtesy Nepali society has adopted as a tradition. But this time it was given grudgingly and attempts to extort it resisted. Prachanda's cadre wielded arms when they approached citizens for free room and board and made threats when met with refusal. Things might be different in a few months if the Maoists display more acceptable conduct.

'Prachandapath' needs to be redefined as a way to peacefully bring about political, social, economic, and structural changes. The Maoists will have to work for the people's endorsement, and for recognition of their politics outside Nepal. Even before the accord was signed, they could effectively stall the signing of the new extradition treaty with India, a decision approved at the Home Secretary level by both countries long ago.

No doubt the way the government rushed the Home Minister to Delhi to sign it without consulting the coalition partners or the Speaker raised questions, but it was also that the Maoists would have been accused of 'selling out to the South' if the treaty had been signed as it was.

One lesson for Nepali politicians is that nationalism shouldn't be narrowly defined as anti-Indianism. Like any sovereign country, Nepal should not 'negotiate out of fear, but neither should it fear to negotiate'. In the interim parliament and the proposed cabinet, the Maoists will perhaps have the occasion to practice this.

No constitution in the world can be foolproof or complete. It is a progressive document that must be enlarged and amended if it doesn't fulfil the people's aspirations on vital issues, such as, for now, citizenship, devolution, and empowerment of dalits, women, and janajatis, in addition to ensuring the safe growth of children, physically, mentally, and in terms of education.

But lest this assessment of the coming phase sound like a one-sided sermon to the Maoists, the government and Prime Minister Koirala will have to ensure the safety of the Maoist leaders, and prevent reprisals from those affected by the insurgents' violence in the past.

The authority of the state will have to be

renewed. If the corruption, nepotism, and demoralisation of the police wrought in the last five months go unchecked, the constitutional machinery could break down completely. Strict enforcement of law and order will be a balancing act that bolsters the positive impact of the peace process, especially in terms of instilling a sense of justice and security among the people.

Profoundly important is how both sides address the past violence, so impunity does not become an integral part of the future Nepal. No conflict can be resolved by condoning such acts. Perhaps Nepal will see a Truth and Reconciliation Commission that will keep record of crimes and criminals. This is an essential part of the solid foundation of a democratic government guided by the rule of law.

With all that, what should the head of state be like? We'll see a spirited debate on the composition of the constituent assembly that is to decide the future of monarchy. But the fundamental question isn't necessarily whether the head is the king or a president. Crucial is that the head of state be strictly ceremonial, and without impunity. Equally important, parliament should have the right to impeach the incumbent in cases of proven misconduct or misdemeanour. ●

Yubaraj Ghimire is editor of Samaya.

## LETTERS

### MONITORS

Your article 'Monitoring the monitors' (#321), though harsh, did reflect public concern and even the discontent of some important members of the committee. But this doesn't necessarily reflect badly on individual members, or on the concept of monitoring.

As you mention, while they are eminent in their own fields, few members of the committee have practical experience of monitoring. Those who do work in human rights are clearly concerned about the lack of clarity in the committee's approach.

It is also clear that the mandate of the monitoring is so vast and vague as to be impossible to implement. This reflects badly not on the committee members, but on the talks teams, which lack practical experience. What good has come out of it so far is that ordinary Nepalis have got a glimpse of what is going on in what is *their* process.

With the proper ceasefire agreement in place—in the drafting of which the ceasefire monitoring committee members should have had a say—the NMCC has a chance to put right its 'bungling'.

Everyone needs to get into the act now—the committee, which must turn its mandate into something objectively monitorable; the negotiating teams, which must make a clear agreement; and donors and diplomats, who must make the monitoring process key, not to denounce the parties, but to forward the process.

Six members of the committee were nominated with no warning and did not want to join. Those posts could now be filled with six highly respected members of civil society. If all were women, that would go some way in rectifying the exclusion of women, dalits, and janajatis.

The quality of the society that emerges from the peace process will in part be determined by the quality of those who participate in it. Making the

committee more representative, and functional, would help give the people ownership in the peace process.

**Anita Sharma, email**

● What was the point of your piece on the ceasefire monitoring committee? More negative journalism with no solutions. When it comes to issues like hydropower, Bhutani refugees, and electric cars, you're happy to play the activist. Why not for all things that really matter?

**SK Gurung, email**

### CK-SPEAK

CK Lal raises an interesting—though hollow—point about the need to stop the brain drain by building think tanks and academic centres. He believes we need to "produce the administrative and technocratic elite necessary to modernise the country." I doubt the Maoists would agree with his premise—they want to restructure all of society, making his point moot.

We should instead concentrate on more plebian centres of vocational excellence, so when our neo-lahures go abroad for work (without whose contribution Mr Lal and the rest of us would have drowned in economic depression), they can get decent paying jobs. Mr Lal, the next time you go abroad on a funded trip, at Kathmandu's international airport, please stop and buy our economic rescuers tea or water, help them fill out some forms, aid them in the bureaucratic hassles, or at least say thank you.

**SN Singh, email**

● CK Lal, a graduate of a Nepali university, writes provocative and insightful pieces on a range of topics. But lately, his writing shows the signs of a frustrated intellect who lacks sympathy or empathy for anyone except himself. Lal accuses Harka Gurung of being egotistical and lacking social skills. Barbara Adams publishes a book and gets a diatribe. Does he have anything nice to say about anybody?

**D Waiba**

### 'LIBERATED'

Prabin Rana was spot on. We Nepalis have been 'liberated' for the third time right? And what is our beloved comrade leading us to? Some scenarios include occupying TV stations, taking over spinning mills, extorting orphanages, abductions, and torture in the name of 'law enforcement'. And what happened to the ceasefire code of conduct observers? Still have their Tihar hangover, I guess.

**Saujanya R, Karachi**

● At last a true picture of Nepal, with a layman's feeling and a journalist's words.

**Rahul, email**

### HEATING UP

Norbu Sherpa did an excellent job highlighting the effects of global warming in the Khumbu region ('The heat is on,' #320). The social, economic, and ecological changes to the high Himal will be immense, and will ultimately affect the whole of Nepal, South Asia, and beyond.

Sherpa is right that many factors behind climate change are far away from Nepal, in North America and Europe. America tops the world league of polluters—its industrial base emits 20.6 percent of global emissions. It refuses to control this, mainly due to self-interest and the need to maintain industrial output to compete with China and India, Nepal's neighbours and new economic powerhouses.

But emissions from China and India together are already equal to those of the US. These Asian giants require vast amounts of power to drive forward their industrial expansion and keep their populations in employment. China puts one new coal-fired power station online

every week, and the World Bank says that China now has 16 of the 20 dirtiest cities in the world due to the sulphur released when coal is burnt.

The Nepal government should consider that the population explosion, industrial expansion, and urbanisation in China and India are a recipe for disaster, from its snow-capped peaks all the way south.

**Fergus Anderson, email.**

### CHEATS

Every time we win the inter-school Subroto Cup in India, I feel ashamed to be a Nepali. We win because we've been cheating. We send our National Under-14 and National Under-17 teams to play against school teams from India. Ganesh Thapa and his colleagues sent the ANFA team disguised as Noble Academy this year, and other schools in the past.

We are teaching our kids to cheat. I'm sure all students know what's going on. On top of that, we are denying some deserving school in India the chance to win the trophy as well as the prize monies of IRs 50,000 and IRs 30,000.

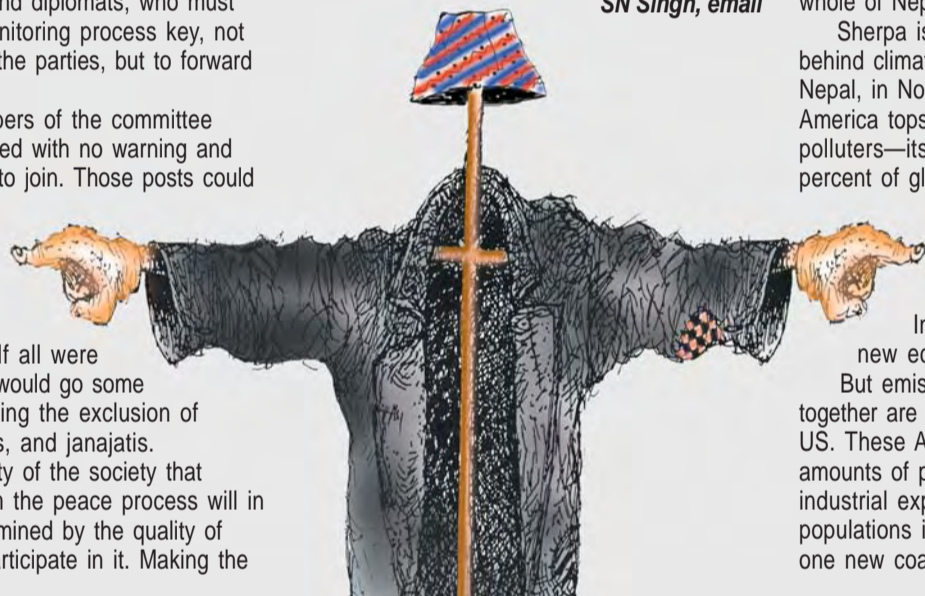
Ganesh Thapa was a great striker and has been doing a good job as president of ANFA. But he needs to put an end to this shameful practice. Let's teach our kids to be honest. Ashutosh Tiwari is right ('At any cost', Strictly Business, #320). We don't have to win at all costs.

**Dinesh Rai, Naxal**

### LETTERS

*Nepali Times* welcomes feedback. Letters should be brief and may be edited for space. While pseudonyms can be accepted, writers who provide their real names and contact details will be given preference. Email letters should be in text format without attachments with 'letter to the editor' in the subject line.

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MIN BAJRACHARYA

The broad brushstrokes of the agreement are positive, but some details are blurry

# We have a deal

NARESH NEWAR

The agreement, when it came at midnight, was greeted the morning after with a combination of over-the-top optimism and anger at the Maoist high-handedness in the capital.

But around the edges of the euphoria were hints of wariness and warning. "There comes only

one chance on one day in an age," Pushpa Kamal Dahal quoted the late poet Gopal Prasad Rimal during his first public press conference in the capital on Wednesday. "I thought of the poem while signing the agreement," Dahal told reporters.

The fact that he was quoting a poem adopted by the UML is ironic at best. And another bad

sign: jousting for political space and polarisation between parties has already begun in earnest. The Maoists claim they 'sacrificed' their decade-long rebellion, and Madhab Nepal claims his party is the binding force between the Maoists and the seven parties.

The two Congresses will likely wait and watch for the next few weeks, and move in to the

growing rift caused by the tussle between the communists. The composition of the interim government was reached through meticulous seat-by-seat negotiation between all parties. On paper, it seems as if the Maoists have gained little. But it was a major concession for the Congresses to hand an underground armed rebel

**NO LONGER REBELS:** Maoist chief Pushpa Kamal Dahal at his first open press conference after coming aboveground, with senior comrades including Deb Gurung, Krishna Mahara, Baburam Bhattarai, Ram Bahadur Thapa, Dinanath Sharma, and his wife Sita Poudyal.

movement almost an equal number of seats as they themselves have in the interim house. In practice, the 16 seats for non-party members will likely be filled by civil society leaders, many of whom have fairly consistently toed the Maoist line.

The militia, vigilante groups, and public security—and that of Maoist leaders—remain potential flashpoints. The arms management arrangement focuses, for the purposes of the deal, on the 'People's Liberation Army'. But the Maoist militia remain at large, and international human rights observers told us, on condition of anonymity, that senior militia leaders closest to the Maoist top brass went underground shortly before the deal was clinched.

The fear of reprisals, which made Dahal and Bhattarai ask for police protection for their headquarters in the capital right before the agreement was signed, is likely to be intense for most local rebel leaders. But some top militiamen told us they'd never give up their arms despite the agreement. A team of conflict experts which toured the tarai last week, also reported seeing small arms being brought over from India, reportedly for sale to militia in Morang. Two weeks ago a large cache of arms was raided in Morang's Bihuni village.

The agreement addresses the issue of interim local governance vaguely, noting only that 'interim local bodies in villages,

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## All smiles to the south



PRASHANT JHA in NEW DELHI

The midnight accord has been welcomed across the political spectrum in India. There is relief and optimism among political actors and analysts here that the peace process is moving towards a successful outcome. Also discernible is admiration for the manner in which the Nepali political class has achieved successive breakthroughs.

Pranab Mukherjee, Minister for External Affairs, called the decisions "a victory for the people of Nepal", and said India looked forward to the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement on 16 November. India played an important behind-the-scenes role in the run up to the deal, and government sources say they are

extremely happy and that this was the best possible deal under the circumstances.

Communist leader Sitaram Yechuri, who has been an active intermediary in negotiations between the Maoists and the SPA in the past, told us, "This is very good. A large part of the challenge has now been overcome and both sides have reached a working understanding. I would have preferred this to have happened earlier though." When asked about the role of the Indian Left in bridging the SPA- Maoist divide, Yechuri said, "This deal is along the lines of what we had advised some months ago."

C Raja Mohan, strategic affairs editor of *The Indian Express*, says New Delhi has stepped back from its demons and respected the aspirations expressed in the 'People's Movement'. "India has shown flexibility, whether by acquiescing to the role of the UN, or engaging consistently with the Maoists." The momentum generated by the recent deal has convinced security experts like Raja Mohan and Major General (retired) Ashok Mehta that India should now formally lift the terrorist tag and release Maoist prisoners languishing in Indian jails.

India's role in the next few months will be that of a silent facilitator. This may extend to sending constitutional experts and election observers, should Nepal need them. Some analysts, however, caution that New Delhi should not exert pressure on issues like ceremonial monarchy, continue to maintain a degree of restraint, and let the process that has been agreed upon take its own course. ●

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municipalities and districts will be constituted on the basis of the agreement between seven political parties and the Maoists'. But there are no guidelines as to how this 'agreement' is to be reached, how inclusive the bodies will need to be, or what their mandate will be in the interim period.

If local bodies are to resemble anything like their pre-insurgency form, the previous leaders need to be able to return to their villages or even just their districts. But most popular grassroots politicians now live in Kathmandu and other urban centres, and do not feel safe going back. The text of the agreement states only that it aims to 'ensure an atmosphere for the displaced to return home' and entrusts responsibility for this to district level committees on both sides. But there is nothing about how the committees will be formed, or who will form them if there are no non-Maoists there to contribute.

The role of the United Nations will be an advisory one, and there are questions about how effective UN monitoring of the cantonment and arms lockdown will be, given that the organisation has no enforcement mandate. No comprehensive plan

has been formulated yet on how the guerrillas will be registered, and we are told it is likely that a number of the Maoists most trusted and experienced fighters will not be cantoned. So it will be mostly new recruits sent to camp.

Dahal cancelled his planned address to what was to be a million man march to spare Kathmandu Valley residents 'inconvenience', but citizens in the capital are unlikely to forget their first taste of visiting cadre 'requesting' food and lodging. Nor will they forget being charged at by angry Maoists outside the party office in Kopundole on Wednesday.

The Maoists will also have to watch out for disaffected cadre and militia who, if not re-oriented as mainstream political workers, could easily turn against their own party. "There is enough proof on the ground that Maoists are losing control of their cadre," a conflict resolution expert told us, "and this is a real concern."

The most pressing weeks will be the next three: by 1 December, all parties need to declare weapons, finalise and implement an interim constitution, and dissolve the parliament and replace it with an interim council of ministers. ●



**GIVE A MAN A STONE:** Maoist cadre charging at Valley residents who had staged a sit-in in front of the CPN (Maoist) headquarters on Wednesday.

KUMAR SHRESTHA

# Our own spin-doctor

Dahal may have the gift of gab but does he have substance?



MIN BAJRACHARYA

In Rolpa, February 1996, Pushpa Kamal Dahal officially started the 'People's War', which has since claimed close to 15,000 Nepalis. That war stood on the cusp of being metamorphosed into an open political force in the wee hours of Wednesday. Historians will



**STRICTLY BUSINESS**  
Ashutosh Tiwari

someday flesh out how Dahal led his underground guerillas to the globally televised press conference at Yak & Yeti, where he announced the beginning of the formation of a new Nepal. But if his recent behaviour gives any indication, what tactics does Dahal use to get what he wants?

**Remain above the fray:** Dahal is a master at giving the impression that he is above the rough and tumble of usual politics. It wasn't him, for instance, who went around asking Kathmandu Valley residents to provide food and shelter to comrades who were going to show

up from all over Nepal for the Friday's million man rally. It was Kathmandu's residents who—abetted by reactionaries—misunderstood the comrades' polite requests for voluntary help. In his magnanimity, Dahal has cancelled the event. The Valley residents can now thank him for taking their worries into account. Besides, how can you not admire the man's selfless credentials? Unlike power-hungry politicians, he says that he is not even joining the interim government.

**Answer with questions:** Rewind and watch his interviews. A pattern emerges. He takes the question, flinches a little, but turns it around and throws it back in the form of a different question. *Is violence justified?* Didn't Nepali Congress too take up arms in the late 1940s to overthrow the Ranas? *Are you sorry that so many people died for your cause?* Why not ask the government first?

**Blame others; take credit:** Dahal's answers, when not in the form of questions, have two parts: blaming others for things that

went wrong and taking credit for things that went right. The Jana Andolan II was a success only because the Maoists played a major role. The recent peace process almost got derailed because of other political parties' shortsightedness. Dahal even managed to take credit for having publicly apologized to the victims of the Madi bus massacre. Never mind that he did not even allow the press corps to be present in Madi. Nor did he mention that Madi residents appeared far less satisfied with his politically calculated PR stunt. In his book, it's the act alone—not the verifiable truth—which plays to the gallery.

**Play to your audience:** Under different circumstances, Dahal would have made an excellent PR executive. He's for free markets when meeting with businessmen, for women's rights when talking with women's groups, for providing compensations when with Maoist victims, for press freedom when having coffee with journalists and so forth. He's a man for all seasons who has painstakingly cultivated an image of physical likeability, speaking plainly, using stirring quotes from poets such as Gopal Prasad Rimal, and knowing when to smile for the cameras. Faced with someone who reminds you of an avuncular ad guy, which journalist is going to keep on daring to ask Dahal about his cadres' extorting small businesses, kidnapping people and murdering indiscriminately?

In the press conference, Dahal talked of forming a new Nepal. What remains to be seen is whether in that process Nepalis will also get to see the formation of a new Dahal. ●

## Smoky's BBQ

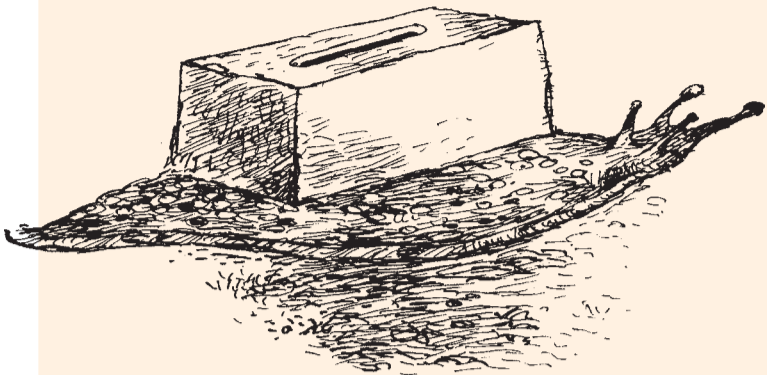
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**Radisson**

# An emerging Nepal



Editorial in Kantipur, 9 November

क्रान्तिपुर

The agreement on the political roadmap between the seven party alliance and the Maoists reached at midnight on Tuesday in Baluwatar has given Nepal a historic opportunity to take the country towards a modern democracy.

On surface level this agreement is only a political roadmap to steer Nepal towards a constituent assembly election. But it is the establishment of a constituent assembly that will decide Nepal's future. Then an emerging Nepal will depend on the victorious representatives of the people and the collective wisdom of the political parties.

The Maoist leadership has wisely chosen to cancel their planned mass gathering after realising that their strategy to pressurise Valley residents into giving their cadres food and shelter was not just unpopular but was also sparking resistance.

By signing the agreement the Maoists have consented to accept the wishes of the people. Now the other parliamentary parties also need to prepare a taskforce for progress and speed up the process of reform amongst themselves.

The responsibility of changing the country falls on the shoulders of the representatives of the people and the political parties, who must be willing to change, respect the voice of the masses, be democratic, transparent, and visionary.

The eight parties must now make it their chief responsibility to ensure a constituent assembly takes place. Unless the parties implement the agreement in action, the roadmap itself will remain unclear.

# Vigilante jungle

Sanghu, 6 November

सोम्वु

The Maoists say they don't want to return to the jungle but seem to have turned the capital city into a vigilante jungle instead. For the last 11 years, they've illegally arrested people and meted out severe penalties through their 'People's Courts' in the name of justice. And now they seem to be involved in vigilantism with constant donation terror drives, abduction and illegal arrests.

People have also been subject to brutal torture and death at the hands of the Maoists. They openly continue to beat up members of independent political parties. Even the loktantrik leaders now fear the trend could signal a comeback of the rampant violence and killings that were prevalent during the conflict.

The Maoists' active policing

has reduced the role of the state police to that of a ceremonial force. Civilians have to plead with the Maoists to leave them alone. Fear and trauma are rampant. The same Maoists who wield gun power are today saying that arms is not really a big issue. The truth is, it is the politics of guns that has brought about all kinds of failure—economic, political, diplomatic, and social.

In the last six months since the inception of the peace talks process, there have been over 356 abductions, 19 killings and countless incidents of physical abuse.

Arms will always be the obstacle to independent and democratic politics. So their management is important. It would be a laughing matter for any political party to think that they can hold nationwide elections until arms management is well taken care of.

# China's call

Ghatana Ra Bichar, 8-14 November

घटना-बिचार

The district administration office in Baber Mahal has annulled the registration of an organisation here after the Chinese government lodged a strong protest. The Foreign Ministry requested the cancellation of the Nepal-Bhot Welfare Society, formed by resident Tibetans, after Beijing accused it of being 'a threat to Chinese security'.

The organisation was registered at the district administration office a day before Fulpati. A few Tibetan businessmen holding Nepali citizenship are also associated with the organisation.

Chief District Officer Sthaneswor Devkota says the organisation was legally registered to help with the education, health, and welfare of Tibetan refugees in Nepal. According to Devkota, all registrations include a clause, which says the organisation will 'not do anything to hinder relationships with friendly nations'.

After the Chinese Embassy here informed its foreign ministry about the organisation, the ministry sent a letter to its Nepali counterpart requesting the registration be cancelled. Sources say China is gravely concerned by increasing Tibetan refugee activities here after loktantra and the government's permission to register the organisation.



KIRAN PANDAY

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हिमाल संग सिताैमा	Times संग सिताैमा	WAVE संग सिताैमा
<p>तीन वर्ष (नाडी घडी वा होटल प्याकेज)**</p>	<p>तीन वर्ष (होटल प्याकेज)***</p>	<p>तीन वर्ष (भित्ति घडी)</p>
<p>दुई वर्ष (भित्ति घडी)</p>	<p>दुई वर्ष (नाडी घडी वा होटल प्याकेज)**</p>	<p>दुई वर्ष (नेपाली म्युजिक एउटा सिडी)</p>
<p>एक वर्ष (नेपाली म्युजिक दुईवटा सिडी)</p>	<p>एक वर्ष (नेपाली म्युजिक एउटा सिडी)</p>	<p>एक वर्ष (नेपाली म्युजिक एउटा सिडी)</p>
<p>* सर्वै लागू हुनेछ । ** एक जनालाई एक रात दुई दिन खास्ने बस्ने सुकिया । *** एक जनालाई दुई रात तीन दिन अथवा दुई जनालाई एक रात दुई दिन खास्ने बस्ने सुकिया ।</p>	<p>* सर्वै लागू हुनेछ । ** एक जनालाई एक रात दुई दिन खास्ने बस्ने सुकिया । *** एक जनालाई दुई रात तीन दिन अथवा दुई जनालाई एक रात दुई दिन खास्ने बस्ने सुकिया ।</p>	<p>* सर्वै लागू हुनेछ । ** एक जनालाई एक रात दुई दिन खास्ने बस्ने सुकिया । *** एक जनालाई दुई रात तीन दिन अथवा दुई जनालाई एक रात दुई दिन खास्ने बस्ने सुकिया ।</p>
Actual Rate	Actual Rate	Actual Rate
Discount Rate	Discount Rate	Discount rate
3 Years	3 Years	3 Years
2 Years	2 Years	2 Years
1 Year	1 Years	1 Years

Victims

Budhabar, 8 November

बुधवार

The health of Maoist victims on hunger strikes has been worsening. Mina Tiwari, who was wounded by Maoist gunfire, has been on hunger strike since last Thursday outside the Nepali Congress central office. Doctors say she grows weaker by the day.

Chinimaya Neupane, Rudranath Lamichhane, and Kalpana Bhandari, who are on strike outside the CPN-UML office are also said to be in deteriorating health. The strikers refused medical help, saying they would rather die. Neupane had been accused of being a spy and was tortured when she went home to her village in Nuwakot to get her citizenship certificate. Now, she doesn't want to return. "They have taken away all that I had. My husband's hands and

feet were broken. Where do they expect me to go now?" she asks. Even though the 12-point agreement signed by the seven parties and the Maoists states that all confiscated property will be returned, it remains to be implemented in practice. Rudranath Lamichhane was sent away from his village in Lalitpur for not being able to fulfil Maoists demands. He wants to go back but fears for his life and says, "My fields are empty, my house is in need of repair, all because of them. And the government is giving them helicopter rides." In Kathmandu, there are thousands of others that have been displaced by the conflict and are unable to go back home. The attitude of Maoists in the villages has not changed, the Maoist leadership is unwilling to apologise to the displaced people and create an environment for them to return home safely.



FIRST PLACARD: Arms management  
SECOND PLACARD: One lock  
THIRD PLACARD: Key management

समय Abin Shrestha in Samaya, 9 November

QUOTE OF THE WEEK



“ The people were the third force that made Prachanda sign the agreement. ”

Nepali Congress leader Ram Chandra Poudel speaking in the House of Representatives on 9 November

SELECTED MATERIAL TRANSLATED EVERY WEEK FROM THE NEPALI PRESS

Go up to Madi

Yubaraj Ghimire, Samaya, 9 November

समय

Prachanda has expressed regret for the Madi bus massacre (pictured) that was plotted and carried out by his own cadres. But instead of going up to Madi to speak with the traumatised victims, he stopped en route at Phulbari and asked the victims to come to him with their demands. He should have placed his trust in ordinary Nepalis and women, in their ability to forgive and reconcile. Had he gone up to Madi by himself and personally met a victimised mother there, he would have been treated with the same respect as Lord Vishnu himself. The only words she would utter are: "Son, let this not happen to others." What else can she say? And incorporating the message into his politics would be a new challenge for Prachanda. He can never earn the same level of respect from state honour or by attaining the seat of power. If the victimised do not forgive Prachanda, his politics will be burdened with self-guilt forever.



KANAK MANI DIXIT

The very fact that a 12-point understanding was made last year suggested the Maoists' intention to tolerate the opposition, end their criminal activities and take the country towards progressive development and democracy. If we are to go by that understanding alone, there is no reason for the issue of arms management to have come up at all. If Prachanda had gone up to Madi, he would have seen for himself how even unarmed people could still protect him. Then, the issue of arms in politics would have been entirely irrelevant. At a time when world politics are entangled in competitive tussles between nuclear powers and fears of wars ignited by religion or belief loom large, Nepal is not going to stay unaffected. Countries like China and Japan continue to move ahead economically but Nepal's own problems like employment concerns, education, and health issues remain unaddressed, and figure nowhere in the peace process. This only indicates shortcomings in the thought, character, and ability of the Maoist leadership. A political agreement and arms management will not manage the conflict or establish peace, it will only create a conducive atmosphere for a roadmap to peace and political understanding. If Prachanda retraces his steps and goes up to Madi, the political journey and achieving the objectives will be much, much easier.



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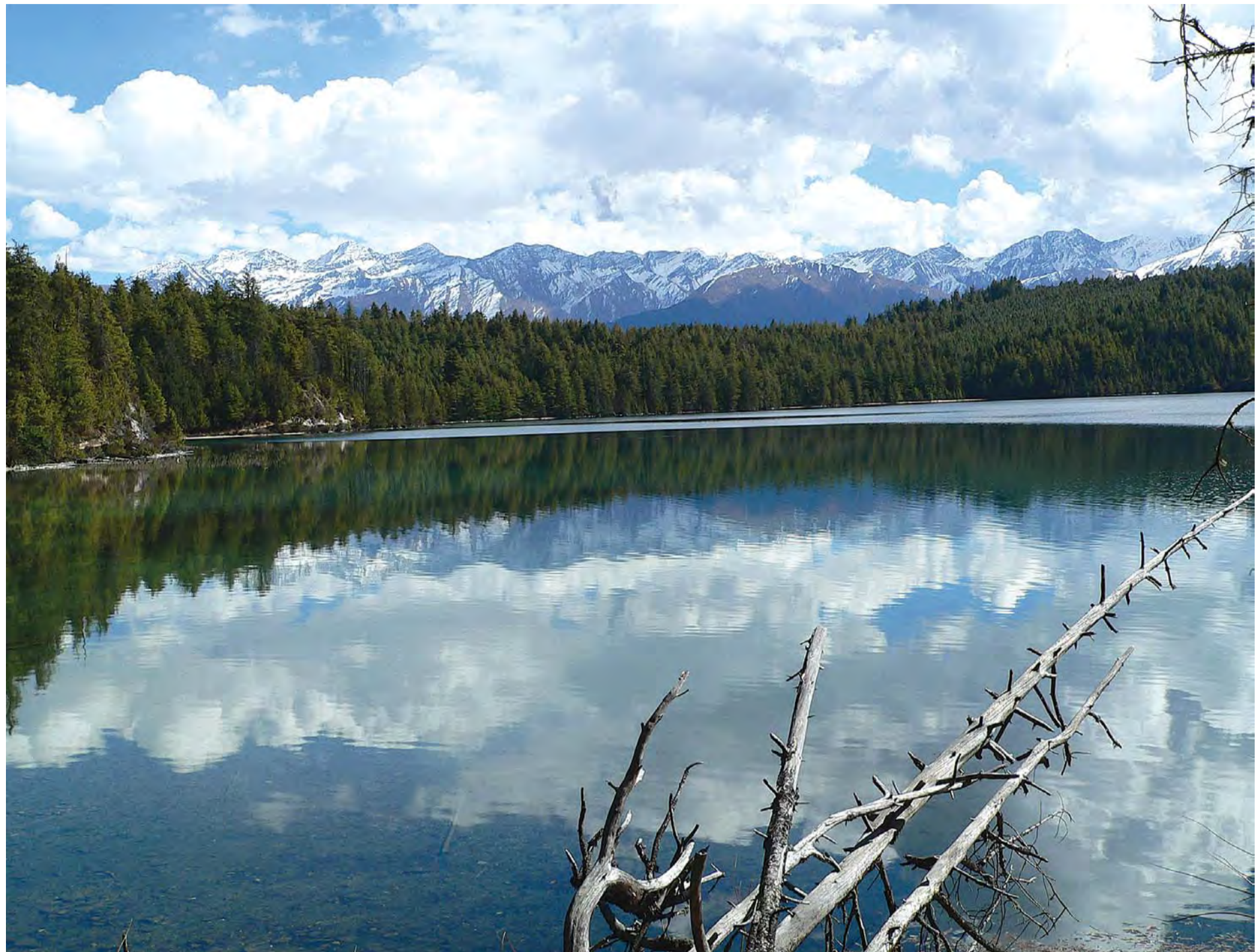


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# Jewel of the west



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#### ALOK TUMBAHANGPHEY in RARA

There are only two ways to get to Rara—either take an expensive and dangerous air route, or walk for days up and down the narrow trails. But once you arrive at 2999m above sea level, the journey is worth it.

The lure of the blue glimmering water of this pristine lake has in the past inspired kings to write poetry. For trekkers and local tourists, the panoramic

beauty of the lake can still leave one breathless with awe. When the sun is out, Rara Lake, also called Mahendra Taal reflects in its icy cool waters the majestic Chuchemara peak (4039m) in the south and the Ruma Kand (3731m) and Malika Kand (3444m) in the north.

Rara Lake spreads across 10 sq km and is also a vital habitat for water birds like ruddy shelduck, coot, mallards, teals, and grebes. The lake is at the heart of Rara National Park,

established in 1976 to preserve this life-giving watershed, as well as the nearby snow-capped peaks and high altitude pine, spruce and juniper woodlands. Hordes of Himalayan wild boar, musk deer, Himalayan black bear, otters and snow leopards roam the sub-alpine coniferous forest where the air is fragrant with the smell of fresh blue pine, black juniper, rhododendron and exotic herbs by the dozen. As the lake drains to the Mugu - Karnali through Nisa Khola, the vegetation




changes into walnut, oak, fir, and birch.

The park itself covers only 106 sq km and is the smallest in the country but hosts the largest lake in Nepal. Little has changed in the lives of the culturally rich people who live around this

magical jewel of Nepal's western Himalaya, once the ancient kingdom of the Khas Mallas.

Lake Rara is two and a half hours walk from Talcha airport in Mugu, two and a half days walk from Jumla and a ten day walk from Surkhet. ●


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# Peaceful end

Palliative care is coming of age in Nepal

JEMIMA SHERPA

The walls of Hospice Nepal are a cheery yellow. It's clean, airy, and quiet, and a far cry from the chaos and sharp medical smells of most Nepali hospitals. A comforting sense of calm belies the stories of the occupants—a 21-year-old woman with an inoperable brain tumour, a 45-year-old with advanced cervical cancer, and a 51-year-old man dying of cancer of the liver.

Hospice Nepal is a leader in a new segment of Nepali healthcare, hospices and palliative care services that allow terminally ill patients to die painlessly and with dignity. Until less than a decade ago, dedicating resources to patients who couldn't be saved was an alien concept even to most medical personnel. The focus is on prevention and cure, so palliative care is low priority.

As death rates from problems like maternal mortality and TB decrease, predictions are that mortality rates from terminal illnesses like cancer, hepatitis B, and HIV/AIDS will rise. To address this shift, several new hospices have been set up in recent years.

Shechen Clinic in Boudha has been open for a year and, unlike Hospice Nepal in Lagankhel's focus on cancer patients, offers its seven beds to all types of cases. They've had 15 patients pass away so far, but Shechen's general manager Dominique Marchal says proper care often means patients live longer and better, sometimes even going into remission and rejoining their communities.

Still, dealing with dying and death is hard on hospice staff. Since opening their nine-bed facility four years ago, Hospice Nepal has seen roughly a hundred deaths a year. "It's difficult, no matter how hard we care, we can't save patients. It's not like other medical fields, where you get to see them get better and leave," says Sanu Maiya Rana, head nurse at Hospice Nepal, which initially began as a few beds hired in HM Hospital six years ago.

Gently caring for an elderly stroke victim, Shechen nurse Furgyalmu Sherpa agrees, but adds that the work is rewarding. "Families are tired after months of caring for patients, so they get a rest too," she says.

Gyan Bhakta Shrestha, sitting by his brother Narayan, who was in Hospice Nepal with liver cancer, sang praises of the staff and talked of how they even arranged for him to go home for Dasain Tika.



COURTESY SHECHEN HOSPICE

**Shechen's nurse Furgyalmu Sherpa and a French volunteer with a 71-year-old stomach cancer patient who passed away in October.**

Medically, the biggest contribution hospices make to their patients' lives is pain relief. Shechen's Dr Dipendra Sharma says that sometimes just Paracetamol or Ibuprofen is effective, but they can administer stronger morphine-based medication as well. Groups like Nava Kiran Plus, which cares for people with HIV, administer anti-retroviral drugs but say that paying for ARVs and getting them on time is a major challenge. However, hospices also deal with the psychological and spiritual aspects of dying as well. Rather than just medical jargon, there's a lot of talk about love and caring too.

Like the Nava Kiran Plus hospice in Budhanilkantha, Maiti Nepal's Sonja Kill Memorial Hospice also tries to provide ARVs, which means some patients become long-term residents. The ten-month-old centre is a 43-bed facility spread over seven ropanis (3.5 sq km) of land in Gokarna. Like Maiti Nepal's first hospice, started in Jhapa in 1999, it is solely for women with AIDS and their children.

Palliative care units are also part of Banepa's Scheer Memorial Hospital and the BP Koirala Memorial Cancer Hospital in Bharatpur. Organisations like Sneha Samaj and Karuna Bhawan run 'care and support' centres for AIDS patients that essentially double as hospices as well.

Funding is always a challenge. Hospice Nepal runs on donations, charging only for medication and oxygen if patients can afford it. Cancer patients have usually exhausted their resources on chemotherapy and other treatment.

Equally problematic is the lack of awareness among medical personnel and the general public. Often, hospitals simply send patients with terminal illnesses home to die. Even patients brought to hospices face trouble, as families sometimes refuse to inform them that they're dying, and gloss over the difference between a hospital and a hospice. Hospice Nepal has started holding workshops for medical staff and lay people about issues surrounding terminal illness and hospices, and is trying to expand a home-based palliative care service.

Hospice staff seem committed and inspired by their work. They talk fondly of the strong relationships that form with patients and their families, and the new perspectives they gain on life. Shechen's Dr Sharma says, "We can't cure them, but helping give a painless, peaceful death has its rewards." ●

# Misdiagnosed



DEPENDENT: Bhubaneshwar Sharma on dialysis at Bir Hospital.

KIRAN PANDAY

SOPHIA TAMOT

Every year thousands of Nepalis die of diarrhoea, close to a million have to live with uterine prolapse, and a handful learn that the cost of being haemophiliac might be living outside Nepal.

There are other medical conditions, not part of any development discourse, that go undetected or are harder to live with here than in many other South Asian countries. It doesn't matter if you're in Kathmandu and are middle class. For disorders like Alzheimer's or kidney disease, options for treatment and even diagnosis are few.

No one knows much about Alzheimer's disease, but in Nepal we know almost nothing. When an elderly relative fails to remember names or faces, recognise objects, or speak in coherent sentences, is that par-for-the course senility, mental illness, or something else? Some estimates put the incidence of mental illness in Nepal at over 25

percent of the population. No one will even venture a guess at how many of these diagnoses are actually people with Alzheimer's.

Alzheimer's disease usually strikes after the age of 65, but can occur as early as 45.

A degenerative disorder, it attacks the brain and leads to dementia, as the brain's cognitive centres are affected, causing memory loss and trouble comprehending logical patterns. As the disease progresses, social interactions diminish, and those afflicted lose the ability to care for themselves. People with Alzheimer's can live for as long as 20 years with the disease. Yet they are rarely diagnosed.

"Nepalis tend to associate mental illness with old age and don't take the matter seriously," says Dr Dhruba Raj Adhikari, a neurosurgeon at Bir Hospital.

The best way to diagnose Alzheimer's is through chromosomal analysis, a test not yet available in Nepal. The alternative is to conduct a battery of tests that costs well over

Rs 15,000. "We have to rule out other diseases first, so the investigation becomes expensive," says Dr Adhikari.

But most Nepalis can't even afford the basic Rs 2,700 CT scan, and for those who can, there are few hospitals where all the tests can be carried out. The well-equipped National Institute of Neurology at Bansbari costs twice more than state-owned Bir Hospital, where patients have to pay Rs 110 for a bed—and all test costs, which range from Rs 120 for a chest x-ray, to as much as Rs 15,000 for a biopsy.

There is no cure for Alzheimer's yet, but recent findings by a Harvard research team, which includes a Nepali scientist, suggest there is hope for the future. (See box.) For now, addressing the symptoms is the only alternative. "With early diagnosis the patient can take drugs which can help them improve their memory, and they can also receive supportive care from families by being placed in familiar surroundings," says Dr Adhikari. When the disease is

# Bodies in the forest



DOMINIQUE VALTER

DHRUBA SIMKHADA

Over a year since Celine Henri was last seen, a joint search last week by the Nepal Army and police recovered remains believed to be those of the 32-year-old French volunteer. A skull, bones from limbs, a rib, and women's undergarments and shoes were found at a 40-minute walk from Andhri Kholsa, below the Jamacho hill. Andhri Kholsa is about 700m from Nagarjun's Mudkhu gate, where Henri signed in at 12.05 PM on 3 September, 2005.

The official story is that a local from Sona Gaun discovered

# and ill-treated

## Many Nepalis are unaware that they are living with Alzheimer's or kidney disease

diagnosed, the patient’s family must then rely on the goodwill of people who travel abroad to bring back new medication.

Now imagine that you have kidney disease, and need a transplant or regular dialysis. At Bir Hospital, which has five working dialysis machines, the facilities are overbooked and under-staffed. The hospital, one of only eight places that offers haemodialysis in Nepal, is turning away all new patients, because it can barely provide services to the old ones.

Bhubaneshwar Sharma, 78, has been on dialysis for over two years now. He needs to be in hospital twice a week for four-hour sessions. But often there are emergency cases, and he is forced to settle for two or maybe three hours. His doctor, Sudha Khakurel, admits that this affects the quality of Sharma’s

life, but says, “we have to adjust to take in emergency patients.”

Dialysis in private hospitals costs from Rs 16,000 to 24,000 a month, while at Bir Hospital it is Rs 8,000. “It’s a sin for a poor man to have this disease,” says Sharma, who has had to sell his land to stay alive, and is worried he won’t have any money left to get his youngest daughter married.

There are 60 dialysis machines in Nepal, and 8,000-10,000 patients who report for treatment regularly. Do the math. If one patient needs on average eight hours of treatment a week, to serve all these people with acute or chronic renal disease, we need at least 230 more machines.

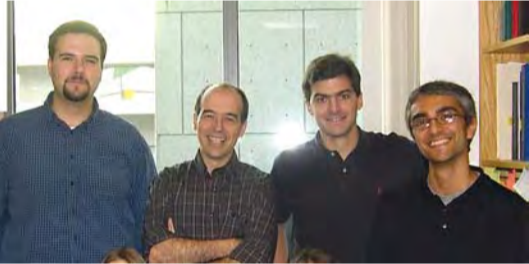
Of six dialysis machines at Bir Hospital, one does not work any more. The remaining ones constantly break down, usually

because of voltage fluctuations. Repair is costly, and spare parts have to be imported. “We have six other machines which were donated, but the instructions are in Japanese. We can’t use them properly, so we have to send them back,” says Dr Khakurel.

The number of Nepalis with acute or renal kidney failure is increasing by about 2,000 every year. Of these, 150-180 come to Bir Hospital, mainly because it is cheaper.

Kidney transplants are often the only viable long-term option, but the expense deters people, as does the fact that most Nepalis go to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (where a kidney transplant costs Rs 200-300,000). “Dialysis will continue to be the preference of the poor, unless there is a mechanism to reduce the cost of transplants,” says Dr Khakurel. ●

## Breakthrough



L to R: Joshua Murtie, Gabriel Corfas, Pablo Sardi, and Samir Koirala.

People with Alzheimer’s, and their families, are often frustrated on finding that even the best doctors have little to say about the ‘why’ of the disease. And because they know so little about it, medication is hit or miss, as is prevention and managing its impact. Now, Samir Koirala, a neuroscientist at the Children’s Hospital at Harvard University Medical School, and his fellow researchers have found something interesting.

The recently-published findings of a four-year study by

the team suggest that a molecule long suspected to play a role in Alzheimer’s also works to regulate development of the human brain and neurons. The team’s findings have spurred the development of drugs that target the molecule, slowing the progress of the disease. The clinical trials will take time, but this is still the closest researchers have come to proposing anything like direct treatment for Alzheimer’s.

In the embryonic brain, a protein called erbB4 on the surface of stem cells helps create various cell types. The team discovered that erbB4 gets cut by another protein, called presenilin, a factor in Alzheimer’s disease.

Researchers have known for several years that in the brains of Alzheimer’s patients, erbB4 is accumulated around amyloid plaques. What they didn’t know was how this contributes to the disease. Their research now shows that excessive erbB4 could inappropriately suppress genes and lead to dysfunction or death of nerve cells. It also suggests the interesting possibility that some cases of Alzheimer’s may have their roots in the defective development of brain cells during the beginning of life.

Drugs are being developed to target presenilin function and inhibit the accumulation of amyloid plaques in the brains of Alzheimer’s patients, preventing neuron death, which would be a huge step forward. Early clinical trials are on and, if effective, such drugs could be available in just a few years.

the remains while collecting mushrooms. However, security sources tell us that Ganga Bahadur Karki, a hunter, recently stumbled upon the remains and informed the French Embassy.

On 11 February this year the body of German national Sabine Gruneklee was found in the same jungle, four months after she disappeared. Last year, a search team recovered both Gruneklee and Henri’s Gruneklee and Henri’s passports, though elsewhere in the Nagarjun forest. (See ‘Celine and Sabine’, #276.)

The remains have been sent to teaching Hospital for DNA and other forensic tests, and DSP Pradhyumna Karki of the Hanuman Dhoka Crime Investigation Branch is careful to say that it is as yet only speculation that the body is the Frenchwoman’s. A forensic expert from the French police

force arrives here today, on deputation from the French Foreign Ministry.

The joint search team, composed of 100-150 personnel of the Nepal Army forces from Bhadrakali and Narayanhiti’s Barda Bahadur Battalion, and the Nepal Police-Crime Investigation branch, has been combing the forest sporadically over recent months. “We tried everything to reach inaccessible areas, even climbing and rappelling, but we obviously never got to the right place,” a member of the team told us.

Even if the remains are positively identified as Henri’s, questions remain concerning the investigation and search. There are conflicting reports on how key pieces of evidence, such as the location of remains and items of clothing, were found, and

when. When the French Embassy team discovered fresh blood traces earlier this year, the team put out, without any tests, that Henri had been ‘eaten by a leopard’.

The search at different points involved former French ambassador Michel Jolivet, who himself hiked through the forest, and came upon fresh traces of a recent violent death, which lead to the recovery of Gruneklee’s body; siblings of Henri and Gruneklee, who went from village to village showing pictures of their sisters; trekking guide Suraj Dahal, whose number was in Henri’s diary; Henri’s brother, who petitioned King Gyanendra to involve the army in the search; and Dominique Valter, a friend of the Henri family who has been liaising with the authorities here. ●

## Women work

The new Foreign Employment Act will likely repeal the ban on Nepali women going to work in Gulf countries. In recent months women have bypassed the prohibition by travelling out via India. After 15 Nepali women were stopped on 20 September at the border by police and Maiti Nepal workers, numerous stories came to light of women being promised jobs in Dubai then being sold to brothels in India or abused and mistreated by Gulf employers (‘Trafficking tactics’, #320).

Representatives from the Ministry of Labour and Transport Management, the Department of Labour and Employment Promotion, and UNIFEM met last week to discuss “the safety of women employed as domestic workers in foreign countries”. There was a general consensus that the ban should be repealed, as a way to monitor overseas employment, and ensure women have legal recourse if mistreated. Advocate Som Luitel said the ban was a violation of women’s human rights, adding that it “has caused more illegal migration, putting women in danger of being abused.”

Official records for 2006 show that so far 175,000 Nepalis have legally gone abroad to work, which means about 500 leave every day. However, there are few estimates for how many women go without government permission or help from manpower agencies. The Association of Foreign Employment Entrepreneurs says that of the roughly one million Nepalis in the foreign work force, about 40,000 are women.

*Dambar K Shrestha*

## New routes

Qatar Airways is expanding its international network to include seven new routes. In 2007, flights will be added to Lagos in Nigeria, Tanzania’s Dar Es Salaam, Bali, Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam, and yet-to-be-finalised European and North American destinations. The Doha-based airline currently flies to 70 destinations worldwide.

## Sharing

A Machhapuchchhre Bank managing committee meeting last week decided that shareholders are to get 15 percent bonus shares from last year’s profits. The decision will come into effect on approval by Nepal Rastra Bank and the bank’s annual general meeting. The bank saw profits rise to Rs 134 million, a 58 percent increase, in fiscal year 2005/6.

## Lucky number seven

Laxmi Bank recently opened its seventh branch in Narayanghat, just four years after beginning operations in April 2002. The Narayanghat branch offers a full range of retail banking services and is expected to serve much of the larger Chitwan area, as well as become a major service centre for remittances.

## Strong foundations

Ace Finance Company now has a new corporate building in Narayanchour, Naxal. The Rs 47 million compound boasts a 712 sq m building set on a one sq km plot, basement parking, and high-tech security features. The company is proposing a 42.11 percent dividend to its shareholders at its 23 November annual general meeting. The 2006 financial year saw Ace Finance Company’s net profits rise by 57 percent.

## Branching out


Bank of Kathmandu opened a twelfth branch in Jawalakhel last week. Services include loans and remittances, and the branch is expected to serve the greater Lalitpur area. Bank of Kathmandu has branches in all five development zones, and over the last financial year made net profits of over Rs 202 million.

## Quick rewards


The Chaudhary Group’s Wai Wai Quick has launched a new ‘Scratch n’ Smile’ scheme, targeted at the youth market. The prizes, all for two people, include movie tickets, dinners, bungee jumping, river rafting, and mountain flights.

### NEW PRODUCTS

**STRONG GLOW:** Dabur Nepal’s new Vatika Saffron Glow Soap with Sandal combines the anti-ageing properties of saffron with sandalwood’s aroma and moisturising effects. The soap retails for Rs 17 for a 100gm bar. The company also launched Vatika Root Strengthening Shampoo with Deep Conditioning, which contains almond and coconut milk and is available in 100 and 200ml packs, priced at Rs 60 and Rs 115.



**SATELLITE:** The new Thuraya SO-2510 mobile handset is touted as the smallest, sleekest, and sturdiest satellite phone on the market. It features a high resolution coloured screen, 32MB phone memory, and enhanced GPS service, and is priced at \$950 before tax.



**COMBUSTO:** MM Trading Centre is launching Combusto, a bio-catalyst oil that can be mixed with fuels like diesel and petrol in order to enhance engine efficiency. Complete fuel combustion means less fuel consumption, better engine performance, and lower air pollution.

# In a state of transit

## We can dream all we want, but do we have a plan?

**M**uch has been made of the emerging possibility of Nepal taking geopolitical advantage of its geographical position between India and China.

With China now India's second-largest trading partner, the opening of Nathu La in Sikkim, and the arrival of the railway in Lhasa, the matter of Nepal being a transit country has taken on a new sense of urgency. Deputy prime minister KP Oli's pronouncement on his return from China in September that the Chinese had actually



**REVIEW**  
Shrishti RL Rana

committed to "study" the extension of the Tibet railway to Panchkhal or Trisuli have raised expectations in the public.

Not only are these expectations exaggerated, they may also be misplaced. It's still not clear how Nepal would actually benefit (other than from road tax) from Indian and Chinese trucks roaring back and forth across future highways linking Tibet with Bihar. What would be much more important is to seek niche export markets for Nepali goods and services in both India and China, allowing Nepali companies to take advantage of our location to facilitate trade between the two neighbours. Instead of focusing on transit,



Nepal should be trying to see how we can hitch our wagons to the locomotives of the Chinese and Indian economies.

A book like *Nepal as a Transit State: Emerging Possibilities* by Nischal Nath Pandey is at least ten years ahead of its time. Being the scion of former foreign minister Ramesh Nath Pandey and the ex-chief of the Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA) Pandey can be forgiven for being gung-ho about the idea. It was while Pandey Senior was foreign minister in the royal regime last year that King Gyanendra made the dramatic pronouncement that Birganj would be linked to Kodari by railway.

The book is a collection of four seminar papers exploring the idea of Nepal as a transit state between China and India. But just as the seminar was not clear about how Nepal would be transformed by being a transit state, the book is fuzzy as well. We can dream all we want, but at the end of the day do we have a plan on how to benefit?

Curiously, instead of looking at the issue outwards from the standpoint of Nepal, the presenters have tried to develop a patchwork theme from the perspectives of China and India. Since the economy of Tibet is at a high of 12 percent GDP growth per year, there is a market for Indian goods.

Similarly as middle class affluence grows among the 220 million people of northern India, Chinese goods are already surging across.

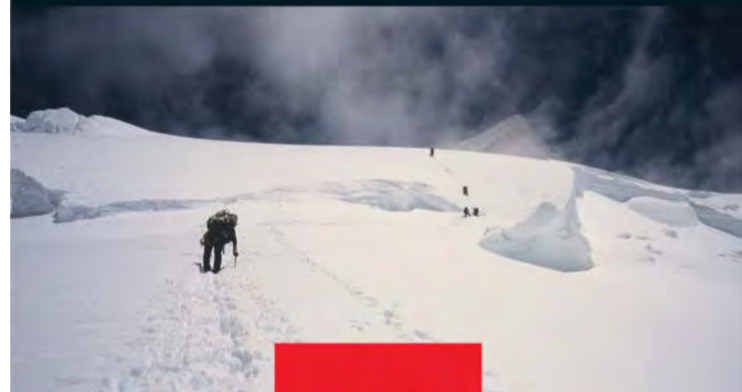
True, Kathmandu has the advantage of regular bus services and flights to and from Lhasa. The Amiko Highway is operational and only 18km needs to be built to link Kathmandu via Syabrubesi to Kerung. The routes through Nepal are open in all seasons, while Nathu La in Sikkim has limited potential, as it is closed due to snow for four months in a year.

The authors (Tara Dahal, Dilli Prasad Bhattarai, Keshav Raj Jha, and Prakash A Raj) think the domestic economy can grow if new transit routes are opened up through Nepali territory, the service sector would prosper, and investments in intermediate goods will increase. They argue that by offering transit facilities, Nepal could benefit from both trade and taxes.

But one gets the feeling the authors are a bit futuristic, especially when they ambitiously propose seven transit routes between Tibet and India via Nepal when even the existing Kodari link is in such poor shape. They make too many assumptions and play down the constraints, such as how surface transport can compete with the ease of sea and air routes. They forget that Lhasa is 48 hours by train from Beijing, and that the eastern seaboard is a long way away from the plateau. ●


*Nepal as a Transit State: Emerging Possibilities.*  
Nischal Nath Pandey (Editor).  
Institute of Foreign Affairs  
Kathmandu. 2006  
ISBN 99946-877-0-0, pp70+

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<p><b>Seminar</b> November 17-27, 2006 Vajrayana Empowerments November 28, 2006</p>	<p><b>Location</b> Ka-Nying Shedrub Ling Monastery The Big White Monastery Boudhanath, Kathmandu</p>
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**Registration: November 16 at the monastery, 10:00 to 15:00.**  
**Seminar Begins: November 17 at 9:00 am Friday**  
**Contact: 4490498**

US\$ 100 for 10-day seminar. All proceeds go to the monastery.

DAILEKH—When the April Uprising rocked the nation earlier this year, and we were raising money for the victims, I called a businessman in Kathmandu and asked for help.

A minister was visiting the businessman and I could hear his voice over the phone. He was shouting: "Forget about it, they'll be finished in a few days." The businessman did not donate any money. In Kathmandu's



**NEPALI PAN**  
Aruna Uprety

comfortable core, a lot of people looked at the protestors and said: "Those hooligans are destroying Nepal." They expected the king and the military to regain control and restore the status quo.

If only the king had listened to the people in the countryside, really listened, and not just nodded at those who came to hand him petitions. If he hadn't gone from temple to temple sacrificing goats, he may have known what his people really wanted. Even if he didn't, Tanka Dhakal, Tulsi Giri, and all his other henchmen should have.

Now that the political parties are back in the saddle, from out here in remote Nepal it looks like they are repeating the king's mistake. They hardly ever come here, and in faraway Kathmandu they don't seem to know what the people really want.

And those with guns seem to know even less that the people's aspiration is for peace and to get out from under the shadow of the gun.

# Set us free



RAMESHWOR BOHARA

## Change does not come from the barrel of a gun

For the time being, it may seem that people are afraid of the militants.

But fear only lasts so long. In the end, either desperation or hope will overcome the dread of physical harm. The only thing that comes out of the barrel of a gun is fear. If any of the mainstream political parties sent their cadre to a farmer's home and "requested" they "voluntarily" feed 50 people for three days, what would he do? If they went to the schools and ordered the teachers to pay them half their salary, what would they do?

Was the 'People's War' a futile exercise? Was the April Uprising just a rehearsal for darker days? In these villages it used to be that main gates were never closed. But these days all doors are bolted from inside, lest you hear footsteps in the dead of night and a harsh voice ordering: "Open up, or we will burn your house down." There is no choice here.

Is this the new Nepal of anyone's imagining? The big political parties made many mistakes that they regret. But will the new party, which came with so much hope, also squander it all away? Maybe those creating the "donation terrorism" are Maoists, or maybe just criminals. But what is the difference? Is this what revolution means, to treat the very people you are trying to liberate as your class enemy?

Will the party survive such wholesale alienation when it surfaces into the political arena? I don't think so. If the leaders don't take strong steps to rein in those sowing fear amidst hopes for peace, the people will rise up, as the mothers of this district did three years ago. A revolution is supposed to improve lives, not brutalise the people so they don't trust anyone anymore. Liberation sets people free, it does not paralyse them with fear. ●

*Dr Aruna Uprety is a women's health and reproductive rights activist.*

Kesar Lall’s poems are as fresh as he is unpretentious

# Ageless wonder

Kesar Lall has spent most of his writing life documenting the lives of others and collecting their folk tales. Many of his admirers have hoped for some time that he would turn inwards, and address his own background and experiences. These poetic *Reflections*, released by the prolific Vajra Publications, are a partial window into his thoughts. And what modest and honest



REVIEW  
Mark Turin

thoughts they are. This collection of 127 of Lall’s poems, with an

appealing introduction by Don Messerschmidt and a candid cover photo by Kumar Ale, is as much a pleasure to read as it appears to have been a pleasure for Kesar Lall to write.

At 81, Lall appears more unstoppable than ever. At a recent meeting, he showed me collections of folders with drafts of his ongoing projects: prose, poetry, translations, and more. What’s more, he writes for himself, for his own happiness, not to please others.

The simple profundity of Lall’s words and his unpretentious sentiments are inspiring, and serve as a reminder that not all good writers have to be tortured or miserable. “An open mind without pride and prejudice is a blessing,” Kesar Lall writes in his preface, and he himself has been blessed with both. The sentiments he captures, particularly regarding changing seasons, convey the joy and wonder of a child:

Summer is a season I’ve sorely missed  
In my reckoning until once in June  
I looked out and found it at my doorstep.

Or:

A summer’s growth holds my home  
In close embrace, denying me  
A view of the neighbourhood.

Lall frequently returns to his mortality and self-worth, taking stock of life’s experiences and challenges:

But I would love to leave my little place  
Lovelier than when I had found it  
When I leave forever.

And:

Once I lent my hands  
To my little child

To walk across the street.  
Now he has paid me back.  
He gave me his hand  
To go from room to room.

The sensuality of nature and of women are recurring themes, sometimes overlapping, as in:

One night, through a half open window,  
I caught the moon  
Shamelessly looking  
At a women on her bed, dreaming.

Although ostensibly apolitical, some of Lall’s poems exhibit shrewdness about the temporal nature of power:

A man who longs to be remembered  
Long after his death  
Is oft forgotten before he is gone.

But enough abstraction and analysis, let his poems speak for themselves. Two of my particular favourites are:

Precious little moments  
Give a garland of memories to wear  
To him who dares to dream...

And

A piece of charcoal  
Is all I can think of  
To compare myself with  
At this late hour.  
Yet it might still be used  
If one has the skill  
To draw a picture of my life.

Mark Turin, PhD, is a linguistic anthropologist and director of the Digital Himalaya Project ([www.digitalhimalaya.com](http://www.digitalhimalaya.com)).



*Reflections: Poems.*  
Kesar Lall. 2006.  
Vajra Publications,  
Kathmandu. ISBN  
99946-720-6-1, pp. 100.  
Rs 300.

# Hip turn

Getting your golf swing right

In every sport, achieving better results means mastering a combination of components. Most golfers I've seen have common problems. Either they lack a shoulder turn on the back swing, don't drop the right shoulder as they downswing, or rotate their hips through the shot.

The trick is to first turn the shoulders to 90 degrees. And as you reach the top of the back swing, drop your right shoulder, followed by the hip turn. With this move perfected, you have more chances of hitting the ball solid.



TEE BREAK  
Deepak Acharya

Masters of the game can hit the ball up to 100 yards longer than most club golfers, seemingly effortlessly. This is because pros use their bigger shoulder and hip muscles to hit the ball whereas club golfers just use their hands.

Now there are few checkpoints to mimic the pros. On the back swing, turn your shoulders until your left shoulder touches your chin. At this point your hands shouldn't be higher than the height of your shoulder, to avoid over swinging.

However, remember to keep the shaft of the ball parallel to the target at the top of the back swing to ensure a solid angle of attack. Then on the downswing start by dropping the right shoulder followed by the hip turn while keeping both hands straight before taking the swing up to the finishing position.

With this move, besides getting the clubface square while hitting the ball, you generate more power and swing speed. That's what I'd call a real swing. ●



Deepak Acharya is a golf instructor and Golf Director at Gokarna Forest Golf Resort & Spa, Kathmandu.

# Art of the senses



NARESH NEWAR

As a young art student at the Sir JJ School of Art in India, Shobha Adhikari Wagley was so affected by the misery of Mumbai's homeless and slum dwellers, she says her own perspective on life changed permanently. The artist's new show, titled *Sense Awareness*, showcases new works in her distinctive, constantly evolving semi-figurative style.

"You see life and something clicks, you get inspired," says Wagley, whose paintings are said to explore the impact a state of mind can have on the senses. Wagley says it took her seven years to refine this idea and develop a style and techniques that helped her explore the connection between patterns of thinking and behaviour. She is especially fascinated by how the mind can be manipulated.

Wagley is first and foremost an artist, not an activist or spiritual leader, but she says she hopes her work can help people become self-aware, and realise how destructive ways of thinking can lead to abusive actions, and the mind of a single person can be dangerous to millions of people around him.

Wagley shot to critical acclaim in 1994, when her solo exhibition in the UK garnered raves for paintings such as *Sense's Awareness*, and *Inner Reality*. She has had solo shows in the USA, Japan and, of course, Kathmandu, and represented Nepal in group exhibitions in India, Tibet, Bangladesh, Korea, Japan, and France. Her paintings are in permanent collections at the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum in Japan and the Birendra Contemporary Art Museum in Kathmandu, and in private Nepali and foreign collections in ten countries.

"I still feel that Nepalis need to be more exposed to different kinds of art, and challenged by styles that they are unfamiliar with," Wagley says. Her new exhibition, which opens on 12 November, at Imago Dei Café in Nag Pokhari, will do just that. ●

Naresh Newar



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## ABOUT TOWN

## EXHIBITIONS

- ❖ **Shankti** paintings by Women Artist Group of Nepal at The Art Shop, Darbar Marg. 10AM-5PM for 12-24 November, 4267063
- ❖ **The Mood of Time** photographs by Samir Jung Thapa and Josh Lustig, 12-16 November, Siddhartha Art Gallery. 4438979
- ❖ **Sense Awareness** paintings by Shobha Adhikari-Wagley from 12 November at Imago Dei Café, Nag Pokhari
- ❖ **Woman in Nature** paintings by Erina Tamrakar at the SAARC Arts and Crafts Village, Hotel Ambassador, Lazimpat

## EVENTS

- ❖ **Living with death** Class and dialogue, 11 November at 1PM at Mind Body Library, Tripureswor. 4279712
- ❖ **Shastrartha** at Martin Chautari by MAPS. 3-5PM, 11 November to discuss evolutionism. 4238050
- ❖ **Can we be what we really are?** Dialogue on 11 November at 3PM at Mind Body Library, Tripureswor. 4279712
- ❖ **November Film Festival** documentaries from Nepal, 25-26 November at Yala Maya Kendra, Patan Dhoka. 5542544
- ❖ **Documentaries** every Wednesday at 6.30 PM till 30 November at Nhuchhe's Kitchen—The Organic Bistro, Baluwatar
- ❖ **Seven habits of highly effective people** three-day workshops on 6-8 and 10-12 December, 9.30 AM-5.30 PM at Soaltee Crowne Plaza. Seats limited, prices vary. 9851036719
- ❖ **Transcendental Meditation** at a 25 percent discount all November at the Self Awakening Centre, Baber Mahal Revisited. 4256618

## MUSIC

- ❖ **Rashmi Singh** live at Absolute! Bar, Pulchok. 10 November, 7 PM onwards. 5521408
- ❖ **Yala Maya Classic** the seventh classical music series at Yala Maya Kendra, Patan Dhoka. 18 November at 5PM, 5553767
- ❖ **Open Mic Night** at ViaVia Café, Thamel every Friday, 8PM
- ❖ **Nekyham Band** live at Shambala Garden Café, Shangri-la Hotel, Kathmandu. Wednesdays, 7 PM onwards, Rs 600 with barbeque
- ❖ **The Patan Trios** classical music every Friday at Nuchhe's Kitchen—The Organic Bistro, Baluwatar
- ❖ **The Cloud Walkers and DJ Raju** at the Rox Bar, Hyatt Regency Kathmandu. 4491234

## DINING

- ❖ **Persian BBQ Night** 24 November for Rs 900 at Fusion, the bar at Dwarika's
- ❖ **Barbeque dinner** with new menu, 6.30-9PM every Friday at Summit Hotel, Kopundole Height. 5521810
- ❖ **Saturday Barbeque Special** at Le Meridien Golf Resort and Spa, Rs 1200 for adults, Rs 600 for children
- ❖ **BBQ Special** on Friday nights at Courtyard Restaurant, Kamaladi. 4253056
- ❖ **Barbeque Ban-Bhoj** at Godavari Village Resort, every Saturday and Sunday. 5560675
- ❖ **November Specials** at Stupa View Restaurant, Boudha. 4480262
- ❖ **The Taste of North India** starting at noon every day at Dhaba, Thapathali. 4243078
- ❖ **Cyclic Buffet** different cuisine each day at the Sunrise Café, Hotel Yak & Yeti. 4248999
- ❖ **Thakali Lunch** at Moksh, Pulchok. 5526212
- ❖ **Theme Dinners** at Shangri-la Hotel. Saturday-Thursday Nepali thali with cultural show, Rs 700. Friday BBQ, Sunday Bhaktapur Nights with cultural show and Newari cuisine, Rs 900.
- ❖ **Shaken Not Stirred** Martinis 007 style. Wednesdays at Fusion, the bar at Dwarika's. Rs 555 including tapas platter
- ❖ **Drinks and Dancing** themed Saturday nights at Jbar. 4418209
- ❖ **Woodfired Pizzas** at Roadhouse Cafe, Thamel 4262768 and Pulchok. 5521755
- ❖ **A Sweet Taste of Life** Italian cuisine at La Dolce Vita. 4700612

## GETAWAYS

- ❖ **Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge** pure relaxation. 4361500
- ❖ **Walk and Lunch** at Shivapuri Heights Cottage, Saturdays until 25 November. 9841371927
- ❖ **Escape to Godavari Village Resort**, overnight stay package with breakfast and swimming or conference packages. 5560675
- ❖ **Winter Package** three days and two nights at Shangri-la Village Resort, Pokhara. Rs 7499 including transfers, breakfast, dinner and use of resort facilities. 4412999.
- ❖ **Harmony** of the mind, body and soul at Club Oasis, Hyatt Regency Kathmandu. 4491234

For inclusion in the listing send information to [editors@nepalitimes.com](mailto:editors@nepalitimes.com)

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by MIKU



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## NEPALI WEATHER

by NGAMINDRA DAHAL



For most of the country November will remain dry as usual, except in the high reaches of the east. It's a good thing there are no climbers on Kangchenjunga facing the windy afternoons and snow. Thursday afternoon's satellite picture shows a dramatic north-south jet stream originating in northeast China dumping cold and dry clouds over north-east India and bringing snowfall all over the eastern Himalaya. The system is shifting westward over Nepal border as it starts to diffuse, and could bring light snowfall and drizzles over the eastern and central hills. Sunny days will be back early next week, but mornings will have a distinct bite. Watch out for the dust, too, as humidity falls below 40 percent.

## KATHMANDU VALLEY



नेपाल कृषिप्रधान मुलुक हो। यहाँका ८० प्रतिशतभन्दा बढी जनता कृषि पेशामा आधारित छन्। कूल राष्ट्रिय आयको रुन्डै ४० प्रतिशत हिस्सा अहिले पनि कृषि क्षेत्रले नै ओगटेको छ। सिङ्गो मुलुकको आर्थिक, सामाजिक मेरुदण्डको रूपमा रहेको कृषिक्षेत्र उपेक्षित हुनु हुँदैन। कृषकहरू देशका वास्तविक नायक हुन्। उनीहरूलाई सम्मान र कदर गर्नुपर्छ। कृषकहरूले पनि आफ्नो पसिनामाथि विश्वास गर्नुपर्छ। नयाँ नयाँ कृषि प्रणाली अवलम्बन गर्नुपर्छ। पढ्दैमा खेती गर्नु नहुने होइन। रुन् कृषिक्षेत्रलाई आधुनिकीकरण गर्न शिक्षित र सचेत कृषकको खाचो छ। त्यसैले कृषि पेशालाई आदर गरौं, कृषकलाई सम्मान गरौं।

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MIN BAJRACHARYA

**FREE RIDE:** Maoist cadre enjoy a bus ride around town on Thursday. Thousands came to the capital to attend Moaist victory rallies including Friday's Million Maoist March.



SAMIR JUNG THAPA

**MASK DANCE:** Performers enact the Bhairab dance on Sunday at the Bhaktapur Darbar Square during the 6<sup>th</sup> Bhaktapur Night 2006, organised by Bhaktapur Tourism Development Committee.



DAMBAR K SHRESTHA

**THE WORLD'S A STAGE:** Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* draws a packed audience on Tuesday. A nine day-long International Ibsen theatre festival is on at Gurukul till 12 November.



KIRAN PANDAY

**CYCLING, NOT TREKKING:** Jean Michel Jorda from France cycles past Tengboche Monastery in Khumbu on Wednesday. He will cycle up to Kalapathar via Dongla-Thame and Gokyo.

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# Mr Raja's neighbourhood

All those who are convinced King G gambled his throne with the February First coup last year won't be surprised to know that his erstwhile majesty has always had a proclivity for games of chance. **Poker** is his favourite, it seems, and he has apparently been known to work his way through marathon sessions in the company of cronies.

The stakes have always been high, although not as high as when he engaged in a bit of **internet gaming** a few years ago or when he actually bet his throne on being able to return his kingdom to his father's Panchayat.

This Tihar, the Ass has **reliably** learnt, relatively modest lakhs were reportedly being won and lost at every poker sitting on Nagarjun. We don't know if his ex-majesty had any **royal flushes**, but given the string of bad luck that has been haunting him lately we wouldn't be surprised if he was caught **high-handed** with a wild card just before a showdown.

And there is less and less to fall back on as the government readies the nationalisation of his brother's property. While Nagarjun and Gokarna will probably be turned into national parks we wonder what will happen to the **strobe light** that was installed at Narayanhiti's east turret after last year's coup. Why is it still winking? Does it know something we don't?



While all this nationalisation is going on, this may be the best time for the army to hand Tundikhel back to the people. The king's army is busying itself with UN peacekeeping, and readying for the prospect of fellow-blue helmets installing close-circuit cameras with **bells and whistles** at armouries and barracks across the land. In the past, successive commanders in chief gradually encroached on Tundikhel thinking that if they did it slowly and quietly no one would notice. Well, Kathmandu's lungs, which during the 1934 earthquake stretched from what is now Dasrat Stadium to Ranipokhari, have now shrunk to a fraction of their former selves.



A sign of things to come: this is an actual news item this week in the government **mouth organ**, Gorkhapatra. The editors thought this item actually belonged on page 1, but the Ass thought otherwise.

## Prachanda keen to help cine industry

7 November, Kathmandu (RSS) - Chairman of CPN (Maoist) Prachanda has expressed his commitment to help for better functioning of the cinema industry in consonance with the changing context of the country. Addressing a large meeting of cine workers, organised by All Nepal People's Cultural Federation and Republican Cine-workers Front, here today, Chairman Prachanda said past movements had sought cultural change for a new Nepal.

"The cinema industry must produce new motion pictures that could depict reality of Nepali society as politics has been seeking new direction," he said.

Stressing the need to make self-assessment on ten years people's war from all sectors of society, Chairman Prachanda said after resolving the prime agenda of the country, the problem faced by the cine-industry would be solved.

President of Cultural Federation Sivaji Lamichhane, Leader of CPN-UMI Bam Dev Gautam and gen sec of Republican Cine-workers Front...

We'll spare you the rest of the **gory details**. But just to remark in closing that the more things change, the more they stay the same. It's clear Nepal's Pravda is the same no matter who rules.



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