LIGHT OF PEACE

The long-awaited peace accord now needs specifics, trust, and vigilance.
NOW, RENEW 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 war for half a decade, they felt cheated. 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 party, and he now laboured back.

Dahal’s first impression of the midnight accord is that the guns will fall silent after he leaves, and those brandishing them without legal authority will be treated as criminals. Pushpa Kamal Dahal’s stature has increased vastly—committing to peace was truly a way to own 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 come. It was the first phase of what should be a prolonged, well thought-out process to come. It was the first phase of what should be a prolonged, well thought-out process to come.

The rebels have to go furthest in making the agreement a success. Even as guerrillas head for their seven cantonments, their 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.

GUEST COLUMN

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 65-year-old CP Girija, Prachanda. Prachanda, in his 50s, is hardly a fresh talent. 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 war for half a decade, they felt cheated.

The Maoists will have to work for the people’s endorsement, and for recognition as a way to peacefully bring about political, social, economic, and structural changes.

The constitution 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 safety of the Maoist fighters.

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 safety of the Maoist fighters.

Heard 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 fighters, 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 demonisation of the police brought about 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.

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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? 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.
Those who participate in it. Making the part be determined by the quality of emerges from the peace process will in women, dalits, and janajatis. women, that would go some civil society. If all were members of respected highly now be filled did not want to join. Those posts could were nominated with no warning and process.

With the proper ceasefire agreement in place—the drafting of which the ceasefire monitoring committee should have had 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 very 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.

- 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, Bhutanese refugees, and electric cars, you’re happy to play the activist. Why not for all things that really matter?

SK Gurung, email

"LIBERATED"

Prabin Rana was spot on. We Nepalis have been ‘liberated’ for the third time right? And what is our beloved composite 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 ‘hangover’, I guess.

Sajay J R, Karachi

HEATING UP

Norbu Sherpa did an excellent job highlighting the effects of global warming in the Khumbu region (‘Climate change for the Kumbu’, November 15, #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, industrialisation 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 its 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, Nepal

LETTERS

Nepal 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.

Email: letters@nepaltimes.com Fax: 977-1-5521013 Mail: Letters, Nepal Times, GPO Box 7251, Kathmandu, Nepal.
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 last 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 omens is relief and optimism among political actors and analysts here that the peace process is 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.

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—is a constant potential flashpoints. The arms management arrangement for arms, for example, part 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 militia leaders told us they’d never give up their arms despite the agreement. A team of conflict experts which toured the tami 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, 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 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 from Maoist leaders—remain potential flashpoints. The arms management arrangement for arms, for example, part 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 militia leaders told us they’d never give up their arms despite the agreement. A team of conflict experts which toured the tami 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.

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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 to how this ‘agreement’ is to be reached, how inclusive the bodies will be to, 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 test 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 cantonnement and arms lockdown will be, given that the organization 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 camps.

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 being charged at by angry Maoists outside the party office in Kopan on Wednesday.

The Maoists will also have to watch out for defected 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, finalize and implement an interim constitution, and dissolve the parliament and replace it with an interim council of ministers.

I n Rolpa, February 1996, Prachanda 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 someday flesh out how Dahal led his underground guerrillas to the globally televised press conference at Yak & Yeti, where he announced the beginning of the formation of a new Nepal. But 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 don’t you ask the government first?

Blame others: take credit: Dahal’s answers, when not in the form of questions, have two parts: his recent behaviour gives any indication, what tactics does Dahal use to get what he wants?

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

Sanghu, 6 November

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

**China’s call**

Ghatana Ra Bichar, 8-14 November

The district administration office in Bhive 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 Falapai. A few Tibetan businessmen holding Nепali 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 greatly concerned by increasing Tibetan refugee activities here after loktantra and the government’s permission to register the organisation.

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**An emerging Nepal**

**Editorial in Kantipur, 9 November**

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.

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**Times**

1st Prize

1st Prize

2nd Prize

3rd Prize

Bumper Prize

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**SAMSUNG**

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**WAVE**

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**Kiran Panday**
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 grew weaker by the day.

Chinmayar 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 fulfill Maoists demands. He wants to go back, but fears for his life and says, “My fields are empty, my house is in need of repairs 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.

Victims
Budhathok, 8 November

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Go up to Madi
Yubaraj Ghimire, Samaya, 9 November

Prachanda has expressed regret for the Madi bus massacre (picture) 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.

The very fact that a 12-point understanding was made last year suggested the Maoists’ intention to tolerate the opposition, and take their criminal activities and 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.
Jewel of the west
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 (3773m) 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. Herds 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.

ALOK TUMBHANGPHEY
in RARA

No dandruff
Just great hair

Dear Wave Customers

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**Misdiagnosed**

Palliative care is coming of age in Nepal

JEAN-VALLIERE VALTER

T he 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 in 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, palliative care services that form 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 Soudha has been open for a year and, unlike Hospice Nepal in Lagankoth’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.

Hospice Nepal has opened its 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 Majra Rana, head nurse at Hospice Nepal, which initially began as a few beds hired in HM Hospital six years ago.

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 treatments.

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 Budhanikancha, Nepal’s Sonija KI Memorial Hospice also tries to provide ARVs, which means some patients become long-term residents. The ten-month-old centre is a 44-bed facility spread over seven rooms (3.5 sq km) of land in Gokarna. Like Nepal’s first hospice, started in Jhapa in 1989, it is solely for women with AIDS and their children.

Palliative care services are also part of Banepa’s Shechen Memorial Hospital and the BP Koilal Memorial Cancer Hospital in Kathmandu. Organisations like Sneh Samaj and Kanana 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 treatments.

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.”

**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 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 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.

“Nepal has to associate mental illness with old age more than we 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 and Neurosurgery is the only such centre in the country.

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. (New York Times) 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
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 you need a transplant or regular dialysis. At Bir Hospital, which has five working dialysis machines, the facilities are overcrowded and understaffed. 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.

Dominique Valter, a friend of the Frenchwoman’s, a forensic expert from the French police, says that it is as yet only a breakthrough and managing its impact. Now, Samir Koirala, a politician, has decided that shareholders are to get 15 percent bonus shares from last year’s profits. The development will give the company a huge step forward. Early clinical trials are under way, and, if effective, such drugs could be available in just a couple of years. On the other hand, it is a matter of fact that the Nepali medical community has been placed in an awkward position. The government, the hospital, and the community itself are all forced to take responsibility for the situation. However, the government has not taken any serious steps to address the issue. The hospital, on the other hand, has been trying to address the situation by providing better services to the patients. The community, on the other hand, has been providing support to the patients and their families. However, the situation is still critical, and more needs to be done to address the issue. The government needs to take more serious steps to address the issue, and the hospital needs to provide better services to the patients. The community needs to continue to provide support to the patients and their families. The situation is still critical, and more needs to be done to address the issue. The government needs to take more serious steps to address the issue, and the hospital needs to provide better services to the patients. The community needs to continue to provide support to the patients and their families. The situation is still critical, and more needs to be done to address the issue. The government needs to take more serious steps to address the issue, and the hospital needs to provide better services to the patients. The community needs to continue to provide support to the patients and their families. The situation is still critical, and more needs to be done to address the issue. The government needs to take more serious steps to address the issue, and the hospital needs to provide better services to the patients. The community needs to continue to provide support to the patients and their families. The situation is still critical, and more needs to be done to address the issue. The government needs to take more serious steps to address the issue, and the hospital needs to provide better services to the patients. The community needs to continue to provide support to the patients and their families. The situation is still critical, and more needs to be done to...
In a state of transit

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

Much 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 crossed the border meant that Nepal would be linked to Kodari by road. Birganj would be linked to Kodari by rail. Nepal should be trying to see how we can hitch our wagons to the locomotives of the Chinese and Indian economies.

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?

Cariously, instead of looking at the issue outwards from the standpoint of Nepal, the presenters have tried to develop a patchwork theme towards 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.

Trans. Kathmandu has the advantage of regular bus services and flights to and from Lhasa. The Arniko 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 Bhattachari, Keshav Raj Jha, and Prakash A Raj) think the domestic economy can grow if new transit routes are opened up through Nepal 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 cannot compete with 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 plains of Nepal.

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 admirers have hoped for some time that he would change seasons, convey the joy and wonder of a child: regarding changing seasons, convey the joy and 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. Lall frequently returns to his mortality and self-awareness, examining the nature of power:

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

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

A view of the neighbourhood.

Yet it might still be used
To walk across the street.

At his late hour.

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 pretension is inspiring,” says Wagley. “It’s refreshing to read as it appears to have been a pleasure for Kesar Lall to write.”

Although ostensibly apotropaic, 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 words speak for themselves. Two of my particular favourites are:

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

And

A piece of charcoal
Is all I can think of
To compare myself
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).

REVIEW

Mark Turin

With this move, besides documenting the lives of others and collecting their folk tales, Lall has also been blessed with an appealing introduction by Don Messerschmidt and a candid cover photo by Kumar Ale, as much a pleasure to read as it appears to have been a pleasure for Kesar Lall to write.

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 Resort & Spa, Kathmandu.

Art of the senses

As a young art student at the Sir J R School of Art in India, Shobha Adhikari Wagley was so affected by the misery of Mumbai’s homeless and slum dwellers, she says her 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 awareness has on the senses. 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 Nepal has 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 Image De Ciel in Nagarkot, will do just that.

Naresh Newar

TEEBREAK

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 your weight is shifted, you get more chances of hitting the ball solid.

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 shoulders, greater upper body strength 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.

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CULTURE

Kesamuseum in Japan and the Birendra Contemporary Art Museum in Kathmandu. 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.

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Naresh Newar
ABOUT TOWN

EXHIBITIONS
- Shankti paintings by Women Artist Group of Nepal at The Art Shop, Darbar Marg. 10AM-5PM for 12-24 November. 4287083
- 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 Image Div Café, Nag Pokhara.
- Woman in Nature paintings by Einra 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. 4297912
- Shastra Ratna at Martin Chanud at 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. 5552444
- Documentaries every Wednesday at 6:30 PM in 30 November at Nuchhe’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 class and dialogue, 11 November at 1PM at Martin Chautari by MAPS. 3-5PM, 11 November to discuss evolutionism.
- A Sweet Taste of Life Italian cuisine at La Dolce Vita. 4700612
- Rhythm of the mind, body and soul at Club Oasis, Hyatt Regency Kathmandu. 9841371927
- November Specials at Stupa View Restaurant, Boudha. 4480262
- Theme Dinners at the Sunrise Café, Hyatt Regency Kathmandu. 9251234
- Drinks and Dancing themed Saturday nights at Jbar. 4418209
- Marrakesh Nights with cultural show and Newari cuisine, Rs 900. Friday BBQ, Sunday Bhaktapur nights at Jbar. 4418209
- BBQ Specials starting at noon every day at Dhaba, Dolakha. Rs 555 including taxes platter.
- Reunion from the land under bringing back all the Rajas at the Rox Bar, Hyatt Regency Kathmandu. 4491234
- Apna Sapna Money Money a fast-paced situation comedy revolving around characters including a mechanic, a cabbie, a club dancer, an obsessed father and his homely daughter, a ruthless gangster, a deadly don and an unpredictable dog. Each worship money, and things turn dramatic as they all start looking for a cache of hidden diamonds.

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. 5537367
- Open Mic Night at Viva Café, Thamel every Friday, 8PM
- Nevyahm Band Live at Shamals Garden Café, Shanki-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 Dwarka’s
- Barbeque dinner with new menu, 6:30-9PM every Friday at Summit Hotel, Kopundole Height. 5521810
- Saturday Barbeque Special at Le Meriden Golf Resort and Spa, Rs 1200 for adults, Rs 600 for children
- BBQ Special on Friday nights at Courtyard Hotel, Kamaladi. 4250356
- 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 Dhiba, Thapathali. 4243078
- Cyclic Buffet different cuisine each day at the Sunrise Café, Hotel Yek & Yal. 4348999
- Thakali Lunch at Moksh, Pulchok. 5526212
- Theme Dinners at Shanki-la Hotel, Saturday-Thursday Nepal Thali with cultural show, Rs 700, Thursday BBQ, Sunday Bhaakpur Nights with cultural show and Newari cuisine, Rs 900.
- Shaken Not Stirred Martinis 007 style. Wednesdays at Fusion, the bar at Dwarka’s. Rs 555 including taxes 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 breakast and swimming or conference packages. 5560675
- Winter Package three days and two nights at Shanki-la Village Resort, Pokhara. Rs 749 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@nepaltimes.com

NEPALI WEATHER
- 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 were no climbers on Kangchenjunga facing the windy afternoons and snow. Thursday 26 November’s satellite picture shows a dramatic north-south jet stream originating in northeastern 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
- Reunion from the land under bringing back all the Rajas at the Rox Bar, Hyatt Regency Kathmandu. 4491234

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Times
10 - 16 NOVEMBER 2006 #322
FREE RIDE: Maoist cadre enjoy a bus ride around town on Thursday. Thousands came to the capital to attend Maoist victory rallies including Friday’s Million Maoist March.

MASK DANCE: Performers enact the Bhairab dance on Sunday at the Bhaktapur Durbar Square during the 6th Bhaktapur Night 2006, organised by Bhaktapur Tourism Development Committee.

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.

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.
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 hauniting 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 Narayanubahi’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 armories 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

Mr Raja’s neighbourhood

A ll 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 hauntinig 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 Narayanubahi’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 armories 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 seeing new direction,” he said.

Addressing 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-UML 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.