Global warming is causing the Himalaya to melt at an accelerated rate. Receding glaciers and snowlines are the most dramatic visible proof of climate change and they are happening before our eyes within a generation. Many Himalayan glaciers have turned into lakes and there are melt pools where there were once snowfields. Large lakes have appeared where there were once glaciers and they are getting bigger, threatening downstream communities. Even so, scientists warn against doomsday scenarios by sensationalist media or cash-hungry development agencies that exaggerate the dangers. Crying wolf too often about a Himalayan catastrophe may tune people out. Kathmande-based ICIMOD is organising a five month exhibition called Climate+Change starting on 11 December, the International Day of Mountains.

Kathmandu-based ICIMOD is organising a five month exhibition called Climate+Change starting on 11 December, the International Day of Mountains.
THE TWO DECADE DETOUR

Nepali voters don’t want politics as usual, in fact they don’t want politics. They want the economy to grow.

It worked then, and Nepal was posting six to seven per cent annual economic growth in the first half of the 1990s. Multinationals were setting up shop, investors were queuing up to start hydropower projects, and the foundations were being laid for rural development through grassroots democracy. Excessive politicising between the NC and UML, intense factionalism within the NC, and the Maoist conflict demolished all that.

After this ruinous 20-year detour, the NC is now ideally placed to go back to where it had started with a blueprint for economic growth. It needs to replicate some of the forward-looking policies from that era and learn to fix the kinks on what was working reasonably well.

Let’s face it, there is no other way forward but to start fixing the economy. Pretty soon, as urban youth with discontentment boils over again, it won’t matter who wins elections and gets to power any more. All the parties will enter the fray, and by and large we know what needs to be done. Jobs are needed at home to stop the haemorrhage of young Nepalis to India, the Gulf, and Southeast Asia. The energy crisis (both the shortage of electricity and the growth in petroleum import) can be addressed with a single silver bullet: hydropower generation including reservoir projects to meet domestic demand and export to offset the yawning trade deficit with India. An aggressive push on infrastructure will create employment, and once highways, airports, and hydropower projects are built they will spur manufacturing which in turn will generate more jobs.

Leaders in the NC, more than any other party, understand this. Now, if they can only get over their internal power struggle and weed out the corrupt in their top rank, we can be on our way from where we left off two decades ago.

BACK TO THE CENTRE

This election has shown the need for electoral reform, as cited in this as well as previous editorials in Nepal Times (Back to the centre, F81, #635). Although the poll results may have been unpleasant for some of the parties and hopeful about the future, it would be foolish, however, for the NC to allow the economy to go off the rails just because the new government has to get moving right away. That is also the message from the electorate: we don’t really care that much about slogans for federalism or secularism, we want healthcare, education, roads, and jobs.

Nepal voters don’t want politics as usual, in fact they don’t want politics. They want the economy to grow.
All together now

The NC and UML have a two-third majority, but they need a consensus on the constitution

The initial euphoria over election results has now been replaced by a sobering reality that the voting was the easy part. Vermilion rallies have been held and those in mourning are taking their time coming to terms with the verdict.

Whether or not there was systematic fraud in the election process as alleged by the UCPN (M) and the Madhes-based parties, is now irrelevant. The NC and UML cried foul in 2008, but were forced to accept the results in the end and the Maoist-Madhesi parties will also have to swallow the bitter pill and move on.

Candidates who suspect anomalies can complain to the Election Court, but by threatening to boycott the CA and refusing to accept poll results, the Maoist and Madhesi parties are showing political immaturity and tarnishing their own democratic credentials. The sooner they realise this and move on, the better for them and us.

In the past two weeks, mainstream media hasn’t been able to hide its glee at the victory of the NC and UML and hailed it as a triumph of the nationalist and democratic forces construing Maoist and Madhesi parties’ loss as a defeat of ethnic and regional politics. On the other side, there were dark allegations of systematic cheating by the Army, EC, and India by pro-Maoist op-ed writers. There was very little balanced and dispassionate analysis about the poll results and how it will impact constitution drafting.

It is a matter of perspective whether people voted against the Maoists and Madhesi parties, or they voted in favour of the NC and UML. But it is clear that the perception of rot at the top of the Maoist leadership and the bad press over sheltering war criminals on both sides contributed to their defeat.

A few weeks before the elections, we compared the party manifestos in this column and concluded that the NC and UML were vague about the constitutional agenda and only the Maoists and some Madhesi parties put their stance clearly on federalism and state structure. But that didn’t seem to have mattered. Days before the elections, we found not many people were interested in the constitution.

“They will take one look at you and tell whether they will vote for you. If you won last time, but didn’t find time to come back and listen to your electorate, you will lose this time,” was how a TMLP PR candidate we met in Sunsari described the public mood before polls. The results proved him right.

Now, it is back to the unfolding power-sharing drama between two big parties. Who gets to be the prime minister? How will the portfolios be divided? Should there be a new president? The NC and UML clearly have the numbers to form a coalition government and the two-third majority in the CA. But the constitution is a consensus document and unless it is owned by all forces, it will lack legitimacy and lead back to street agitation.

Despite championing a ‘progressive’ agenda, the Maoists and Madhesi parties lost popular support because they took it for granted and belittled the opposition. If the NC and UML misinterpret their victory as licence for unilateralism, they will fare no better next time.

The UCPN (M) and the Madhesi parties must respect public mandate and participate in the CA. They may not have numbers to form a government, but so long as they stand by democratic and inclusive agendas, they will be effective in the CA and find popular support outside. It may be their only redemption.
“Where I come from, violence is so pervasive, it is actually a norm,” says Ruby Khan, 25, as she takes a break from preparing a presentation about her work due the next day. Ruby grew up in Nepalganj with her three siblings. Her sister got married at 14 and so did a lot of her friends. “By that time I had seen more than a teenager should see: violence, child brides, children giving birth to children, talak, and breaking up of so many families,” she says.

Her father had never seen the inside of a school and didn’t believe in educating girls. Her mother, however, was educated and hid money so that she could send Ruby to school. After her parents’ divorce, young Ruby grew up witnessing the daily struggles of her mother as she tried to rebuild her life. Fearing a similar fate to her peers, she worked hard to stay out of her father’s sight and perform well at school.

At 14, she took up a part-time job at the National Women’s Rights Forum (NWRF) in Nepalganj. As a liaison between survivors, victims, human rights organisations, and law enforcement authorities, Ruby is constantly travelling around on her big motorbike visiting households and communities and is rarely in the office. “I have worked on horrific cases of domestic violence, rape, and murder. They make me lose sleep at night,” she explains. But that is precisely why she does the work she does. Says Ruby, “There are so many of us who suffer and so few of us who fight.”

However, as a female human rights activist working in different communities with men and women, she has had to overcome a lot of adversities. When she first started out, her neighbours would call her names. “I have been disgraced and disowned, now they have run out of names to call me and I can finally work in peace,” she admits.

Having worked her way up NWRF, Ruby was elected the general secretary in 2008. She is also a central committee member of the National Alliance of Women Human Rights Defenders and holds a Master’s degree in sociology from India. But the feisty activist says she is not done studying.

After years of field experience, Ruby is increasingly beginning to understand how policy related issues affect grassroots activism. She now wants to get involved with the education of young Muslim boys and girls in madrasas because she believes changing the attitude towards woman at a young age will help tackle a myriad of problems later on. “It’s important to catch them young,” she says with a smile.

However, without the unwavering support of her mother, who taught by example that women can do it all, Ruby would not be where she is today. The passion and dedication with which she works, serve as inspiration for others to continue fighting for what they believe in. But for that women need to be strong. “That strength comes in numbers, she says.

Because she has had such a good one, Ruby believes in role models: someone pioneering women can look up to so that they don’t feel alone. “It is still very difficult to be an independent-thinking woman,” she admits. “We need more positive role models, some kind of a support system, or even a sounding board.” Ruby hopes to be for those young women what her mother is to her.
Cities and climate

JEFFREY D SACHS in NEW YORK

The acrobats in the Philippines has now joined the growing list of cities – including New Orleans, Bangkok, Moscow, Rio de Janeiro, and Port-au-Prince, to name just a few – pummelled in recent years by climate catastrophes. Many of the world’s largest cities, built on sea coasts and rivers, face the threat of rising sea levels and intensifying storms. So the new global development agenda now taking shape should empower cities to help lead the way to sustainable development. Today, the share of urbanites is around 53 per cent and is this figure is likely to rise to around 67 per cent by 2030. Because per capita incomes are higher in cities than in rural areas, the world’s cities today are estimated to account for more than 80 per cent of global income. Sustainable development offers a new concept for the world economy in the 21st century. Rather than focusing solely on income, sustainable development encourages cities, countries, and the world to focus simultaneously on three goals: economic prosperity, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability. Achieving these targets will require good governance, public finance, and effective institutions.

Cities will be at the front lines of the battle for sustainable development. Not only do they face direct threats; they also have the best opportunities to identify and deliver solutions. As high-density, high-productivity settlements, cities can provide greater access to services of all kinds – including energy, water, health, education, finance, media, transport, recycling, and research – than can most rural areas. The great challenge, however, is to provide this access inclusively and sustainably. A significant part of the solution will come through advanced technologies, information systems, and materials science. The information and communications revolution has spawned the idea of the ‘smart city’, which places the relevant technologies at the heart of systems that collect and respond to information: smart power grids, smart transport networks, smart buildings, and zoning. Although the advances in materials science open the possibility of much more energy-efficient residences and commercial buildings, technology will be only part of the story. Cities need to upgrade their governance, to allow for a greater role for poorer and more marginalised communities and to enable much more effective coordination across city lines when a metropolitan area is home to many individual cities.

A wise political doctrine known as subsidiarity holds that public-policy challenges should be addressed at the lowest level of government allowed to address them, thereby ensuring maximum democratic participation in problem solving and the greatest opportunity to tailor solutions to genuine local needs.

The world’s governments are now negotiating the Sustainable Development Goals, which will guide the global development agenda from 2015 to 2030. In an important meeting on 25 September, the United Nations General Assembly agreed that the SDG’s would be adopted at a global summit in September 2015, with the next two years used to select the priorities. An urban SDG, promoting inclusive, productive, and resilient cities, would greatly empower tens of thousands of cities worldwide to take up the cause of sustainable development for their own citizens, other countries, and the planet.

www.project-syndicate.org
Behave yourselves

That is the message from the voters to both Maoist and non-Maoist political leaders.

**W**

While the CA2 election was drawing near last month, it was being lampooned widely as a waste of time and resources. Many, including those in this newspaper’s op-ed pages, said it was going to be “the same parties, the same politicians, and the same agenda.” It was widely felt that in no country with a respectable democratic tradition would a political party field the same disgraced politicians for re-election all over again. However, to the pleasant surprise of all, the ensuing result of CA2 election has shown that the thought process of the voters was completely different. Altering the combination of the parties in power sent out a very powerful and unmistakable message to the politicians that the people expect them to behave in a genuinely accountable manner and fully respect their aspiration for democracy and development.

The huge turnout itself was a message to the Baidya Maoists that terrorism and tantrums don’t work anymore. Wide media coverage of fatal petrol bomb attacks on buses and booby trap bombs in the city centre that maimed children did not deter the people from coming out to vote. Whoever said Nepalis are apathetic couldn’t be more wrong: they were willing to risk their lives to cast their ballots.

However, it is still inexplicable why voters should have gone back to the NC and UML, the two parties that are singularly responsible for the lost decade of the 1990s which gave the Maoists the pretext to inflict a cruel and wasteful war on the people as a shortcut to power. The victory of the NC and UML was by default. They didn’t win because they were liked, but because the people hated the Maoists more.

Stance Nepal’s decision to vote against the Maoist and diehard Madhesi agenda for ethnicity and federalism, they went to the parties they have known and the individuals that they trusted. For instance, the newly elected and widely publicised NC candidate from Kathmandu-10, Rajan KC, is a native of Chobhar and has been a highly respected social worker in the area. When people rejected Pushpa Kamal Dahal, KC was a good fallback. Similar is the story in Kathmandu-5. When the UML’s general secretary, Shankar Pokhrel, addressed his voters during the closing days of the campaign, he appealed to them as being the most accessible politician for the local people in their good days and bad and reminded them that he even unfurlingly made it a point to grace their marriage celebrations. The NC and UML did not win on ideology: they just roped a harvest of votes from those who were displaced by the Maoists and Madhesi.

Kamal Thapa’s RPP-N, on the other hand, is a one-leader party. While it did not have its own local good guys to attract the displaced votes from the Maoists and Madhesi, as a nascent party it did very well in the proportional segment of the balloting. The party itself has been going against the current by not just standing up against federalisation of the country, but also rooted for a restoration of a constitutional Hindu monarchy. More than half-a-million votes for a monarchy is not something to be sniffed at and the new CA must also contend with this fact. The distinctiveness of the CA2 election has been that discerning voters have taught the parties a lesson or two in democratic governance. In specific terms, they totally rejected the Maoist and Madhesi politicians’ rather opportunistic stance on ethno-centric and divisive federalisation of the country and their reckless proclivity to mismanage state affairs including the dilution of national sovereignty.

They have spoken in no uncertain terms that Nepal is for peace, order, stability, ethnic harmony, and good governance in the country that assures inalienable opportunity for growth for all people irrespective of their caste, ethnicity, gender, and geographical situation. Most importantly, if the NC and UML in particular fail to deliver on their promises, come next election, they could be facing the same debacle of the Maoist and Madhesi parties.

Justice denied

A

s they get increasingly frail, Nanda Prasad and Ganga Maya Adhikari, who have been on hunger strike at Bir Hospital for the past 50 days, can barely speak. The can sense the end is near, but the justice they crave against the killers of their son, Krishna, in June 2004 by the Maoists is still far.

The couple has refused intravenous saline and appears to be resigned to their fate. Their lips are parched and the two haven’t had anything to eat or drink since 24 October.

On Tuesday, the National Human Rights Commission raised concern about the couple’s health and urged the government to complete the investigation in Krishna Adhikari’s murder.

During their last fast in July, Home Minister Madhav Ghimire had told the Adhikaris flatly that his government couldn’t apprehend the guilty because the crimes came under the rules of conflict-era violence. However, as their health deteriorated, the state assured them that the murderers would be investigated and the two broke their fast on 8 September in the presence of government officials and human rights activists. The UCPN (Maoist) had opposed the arrest of their cadre and forced a Chitwan closure.

Police arrested Ram Prasad Adhikari, but a Chitwan court later acquitted him for lack of evidence. That is when the Adhikaris went back to hunger strike.

In June 2004, Krishna Adhikari was drugged from his home in Phujel of Gorkha district, taken to Chitwan, and killed by the Maoists after being tortured by being dragged behind a motorcycle in a sack. Nanda Prasad and Ganga Maya spent the past few years going from one government office to another seeking justice. They started a hunger strike outside Baluwatar police station in July. They later retreated to the State Basin where they went on a hunger strike and were arrested.

On Tuesday, the National Human Rights Commission raised concern about the couple’s health and urged the government to complete the investigation in Krishna Adhikari’s murder.

According to the complaint the Adhikaris filed at the District Police Headquarters in Chitwan, Januka Posdel and other Maoist cadres are involved in the murder. Foudell was Hirak Yam’s assistant when Bhattarai was prime minister. When the couple came to Kathmandu to seek justice, Bhattarai quashed the investigation.
Every year as winter sets in Kathmandu, thousands of donkeys cross the Nepal-India border into Nepalganj at night. Unchecked by the officers of Banke’s district veterinarian office, the donkeys are then hauled to the Valley in the back of cramped trucks, each truck is packed with up to 25 donkeys. On their very first day at work in the brick kilns, the animals are beaten by their handlers. Thus in the brick kilns, the animals are up to 25 donkeys. The donkeys are then hauled to Banke’s district veterinarian office, night. Unchecked by the officers of India border into Nepalganj at Kathmandu, thousands of donkeys cross the Nepal-Kathmandu, thousands of work animals. And for the intelligent, and highly dependable stupid, donkeys are in fact strong, no longer useful in the fields and provide no further earning. them unattended because they are plains where their owners leave severely ill are simply left to die. The ones who are made to work even when sick are overloaded, underfed, and underpaid, to work long hours under harrowing conditions and repeatedly abused by their handlers (left). Animal Nepal’s donkey sanctuary in Lalitpur, opened in 2009, rehabilitates the animals and lets them live out their remaining years free from exploitation (below). locals involved in supporting the donkeys.

Lukki was 18 months old when was rescued with her mother from a brick kiln in Lalitpur. She was emaciated and badly bruised when she first arrived, but has made a complete recovery and is as friendly as a pet dog. Like Lukki, most of the other former work animals have regained full health and seem to be enjoying their time in the farm, free from exploitation. Come February, more will be brought to the sanctuary. To prevent over-crowding, Animal Nepal is looking for support to build a newer shelter for healthier donkeys. It also encourages individuals and animal rights activists to adopt the donkeys as pets. Till now, half a dozen donkeys have been given to hotels under the condition that they be well-fed and provided regular medical check-ups, just like any other pet.

“It is challenging to protect animals that carry the worst cultural connotations,” explains Kafle. “But letting them die at brick kilns is no way to treat a species so close to humans.”

Animal Nepal is also part of a network of social workers, environmentalists, child rights and animal rights advocates called BrickClean Network (BCN) that is promoting socially responsible brick making through a new certification system. Factories across the Valley are ranked based on 18 criteria including environment, child labour, workers’ conditions, and health and sanitation. By raising awareness on the exploitation that takes place in kilns, BCN hopes to encourage customers to choose cleaner and greener bricks to build their dream homes.

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animalnepali@gmail.com
animalnepal.wordpress.com

BEFORE-AFTER: Donkeys across brick kilns in Kathmandu are made to work long hours under harrowing conditions and repeatedly abused by their handlers (left). Animal Nepal’s donkey sanctuary in Lalitpur, opened in 2009, rehabilitates the animals and lets them live out their remaining years free from exploitation (below).
Tell your story, make a 2-2 min video about how girls are changing the world; contest open to girls aged 12 to 25, winner takes $10,000.
Deadline 31 December, www.letgirlslead.org

Guerrilla celluloid, learn from travelling director Uzair Sawal how to make a film on a shoe-string budget or less.
7 to 8 December, 10am to 4pm, Sattya Media Arts Collective, Jawalakhel, www.sattya.org, www.sattya.org

Tree of life, an exhibition of the paintings on the Mithila cosmos by SC Suman.
10 December to 15 December, 10am to 5pm, Sattya Media Arts Collective, Jawalakhel, www.sattya.org

Abelton Live, an improvisation workshop with acclaimed Italian jazz musician Gianni Denitto. 6 December, 7 to 8pm onwards, Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory, Jhamkhed, 014203554

Events

Starry Night BBQ, catch Ciney Gurung live as you munch on tenderloin.
Rs 1,499, 7pm onwards, Shambala Garden Café, Hotel Shangri-la, Lajimpat, (01)4412999, Ext. 7520, 7515

Kripa Unplugged, young Nepali musicians and seasoned veterans give an acoustic rendition of their favourite songs.
8.30pm and 10.30pm on Sundays, TTV, www.youtube.com/user/KripaUnplugged

Women rock, female singers, musicians, and slam poets come together to speak out against violence against women.
6 December, 7.30pm, The Attic, Uttar Dhoka

TRISARA, with dishes like flaming prawns, crispy chicken, and khaos, it would be a folly to ignore its aromas.
Lajimpat

Cheep cheep, home to over 500 species of birds, including all globally threatened species, Kathmandu Valley’s paradise for birdwatchers.
7 December, 7am, Baprabahari Temple, Lalitpur, 982312193

CIRCUS KATHMANDU, an afternoon of circus and cabaret entertainment, with live music, bingo, food and drinks.
Rs 200/300, 7 December, 4 to 8pm, Moksh Bar, 9841549811

Music

Dining

Abelton Live, an awe-inspiring educational science exhibition about climate change and Nepal’s Himalayas.
December to April, Nepal Art Council

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GETAWAYS

Shangri-La Village Resort, spend your weekend under the shadow of breathtaking mountain views, landscaped gardens, water bodies and a relaxing ambience.

Gharipatan,Pokhara,(61)462222,(01)4410051.

THE LAST RESORT, test your limits with canyoning, hiking, rock climbing, rafting, mountain biking, bungee jumping.

Bhotekosi, Sindhupalchok, (01)4700525/1247

Buddha Maya Gardens Hotel, add value to your travel in Lumbini with a stay at probably the best hotel in the area.

Lumbini, (71)580220, 9801033109, info@ktmgh.com

Raniban Retreat, situated at the other end of the Phewa lake and nested inside the Raniban forest and the World Peace Stupa, this retreat has one of the best views of the Annapurna range.

World Peace Pagoda, Pokhara, (61)692136, 9841382053

Atithi Resort, a perfect place to stay, nearby pool, massage, sauna, and delicious food of your choice.

Shantipatan, Lakeside, Pokhara, (61)466760, (01)4002077

The 11th edition of Kathmandu International Mountain Film Festival is upon us. Opening the festival is debutant Sahara Sharma’s feature Indreni Khojdai Jada, and closing it is The Epic of Everest, the official film record of the 1924 Everest expedition. This year, KIMFF is showcasing 47 films from 20 countries, focusing on a range of subjects from adventure to development, culture to migration.

Other events include an audiovisual presentation on the Great Himalayan Trail by German travel writer Gerda Pauler who walked the trail in 2012 and a short film competition ‘We are all connected’ for filmmakers to articulate their relationship with the natural world.

Focusing on other aspects of Nepal’s Himalayas, there will also be panel discussions on helicopter rescue, railways, challenges of mountain tourism as well as an exhibition of photos taken by the late Swiss geologist Tony Hagen.

11 to 15 December
City Hall, Exhibition Road
www.kimff.org

Jingle Bells

It’s that time of the year again when stores in town bedecked in red and green announce the coming of the holiday season. Spreading the festive cheer is Summit Hotel which as in previous years will host a Christmas market this weekend. If you are a shopper, feed your appetite with a stroll around the dozen stalls that will have clothes, pashmina products, and handicrafts up for sale. And when the real hunger kicks in, sate it with the hotel’s special fare - pit roast wild boar barbeque - that will be laid out at sunset. Joining in the celebration will be Kathmandu Carol who will put up a special performance.

Date: 6 December
Time: 12pm onwards
Ticket: Rs 1,500 + taxes
Venue: Summit Hotel, Sanepa

Education for peace

When the right to movement and speech was curtailed during the insurgency, Nepathya toured across the country to spread the message of peace and harmony among the people.

Now for the seventh time, Nepathya is setting off on a nationwide tour to 10 new cities, this time with the aim of voicing the concerns of children.

6 December Ratnanagar, Chitwan
8 December Birat Chok, Morang
10 December Damak, Jhapa
12 December Labandi, Sarlahi
14 December Taulihawa, Kapilbastu
16 December Gularia, Bardiya
18 December Lamahi, Dang
20 December Abu Khairi, Tarahun
22 December Myagdi, Beni
24 December Gagan Gaunda, Kaski
29 December Patan Darbar Square

www.nepalaya.com.np, (01)4412469/4437893

The mountains are calling

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18 December Lamahi, Dang
20 December Abu Khairi, Tarahun
22 December Myagdi, Beni
24 December Gagan Gaunda, Kaski
29 December Patan Darbar Square

www.nepalaya.com.np, (01)4412469/4437893

Education for peace

When the right to movement and speech was curtailed during the insurgency, Nepathya toured across the country to spread the message of peace and harmony among the people.

Now for the seventh time, Nepathya is setting off on a nationwide tour to 10 new cities, this time with the aim of voicing the concerns of children.

6 December Ratnanagar, Chitwan
8 December Birat Chok, Morang
10 December Damak, Jhapa
12 December Labandi, Sarlahi
14 December Taulihawa, Kapilbastu
16 December Gularia, Bardiya
18 December Lamahi, Dang
20 December Abu Khairi, Tarahun
22 December Myagdi, Beni
24 December Gagan Gaunda, Kaski
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Education for peace
CLIMATE FOR CHANGE

DAVID MOLDEN

Many people see mountains as a remote, awe-inspiring landscape - a jagged texture on a distant horizon, or a destination to explore on an adventurous trek. But mountains are much more than that. While only 12 per cent of the world’s population actually lives in mountains, 40 per cent of people around the globe depend on mountains for the many services they provide, including water, hydroelectricity, timber, biodiversity, minerals, flood control, and recreation.

This is especially true for the Hindu Kush Himalaya - a diverse landscape stretching from Afghanistan, across the Karakoram, the Tibetan Plateau, and the Himalayan arc to Myanmar and extending down to the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The region is home to 10 major Asian river basins, supporting 210 million people in the mountains and 1.3 billion people living downstream. Diversity in all dimensions is extremely high in mountain regions. In the Hindu Kush Himalaya, there are over 1,000 living languages and the region’s mountain communities contain incredible knowledge of sustainable ways to manage mountain resources. The mountains are a rich repository of agricultural biodiversity, storing the seeds on which the food security of our children may depend. Within this landscape of cultural and ecological diversity lies many of the solutions we will need to face a multitude of emerging global challenges. Yet the wealth of the mountains for all of humanity is under-recognised and undervalued by the global community.

Recently the fate of glaciers has brought more attention to the mountains. There is increasing evidence that most glaciers are receding at a rapid pace across the Himalaya as a result of climate change. There is increasing evidence of more frequent high intensity rainfall events, rapid warming at higher elevations, floods of increasing magnitude and frequency, and more droughts. Climate change is only one of many changes mountain people have been witnessing over the last 30 years. Increased pollution, floods, droughts, drying spring sources, and environmental degradation pose major threats. There is a new set of social transformations that challenge...
New challenges face Himalayan communities, but they also present opportunities for sustainable progress

traditional patterns of life including migration out of the mountains, growing cities, and a more connected, globalised world. Mountain people, living in fragile environments, are extremely vulnerable to the negative aspects of these changes.

Given this, Climate+Change is the appropriate name for the exhibition that ICIMOD and GlacierWorks, together with the American Embassy, Thinc Design, photo. circle, Nepal Tourism Board, Nepal Art Council, and other partners in Nepal, are set to open on International Mountain Day (11 December) at the Nepal Art Council. It features stunning images of the mountains, and, at closer look, striking visual evidence of glacial retreat. The exhibition explores the many facets and drivers of change in the mountains, including the accelerated melting effect of black carbon from industrial and biomass burning on snow and glacial melt, as well as the ways in which people in the mountains are responding to new challenges.

Change also provides opportunities. With rapid urbanisation, there is more demand for unique mountain products such as medicinal herbs and organic fruits and vegetables. Linking markets and businesses to mountain producers is essential to get these goods to markets. People who migrate out of mountains come back with more money and more skills. There must be a way to better put these resources to work.

Flood events make the news far too often. At the same time, across the mountains and hills, people complain about spring sources drying up. There is too much water and too little water. We can’t blame this purely on climate change as these are also human-induced problems. It is possible to dramatically reduce flood damage through early warning systems and many springs could be revived through better land and water management.

Cooperation among countries in the region will help improve the knowledge base required for science to deliver solutions. A better regional picture of the status of glaciers, snow, and water is possible with cooperation. Because floods and deteriorating air quality cross borders, transboundary cooperation is essential. Importantly, cooperation raises the voice of mountain people in decision making.

The global community needs a wake-up call to realise the role that mountains play in each and every one of our lives. We need to sound the alarm bells about the impacts of climate change and the need to take action. The incredible photos at the Climate+Change exhibition and the stories around them, are meant to do just that. David Molden is Director General at ICIMOD

dmolden@icimod.org

SEEING IS BELIEVING: Despite stark evidence of glacier retreat like Imja (above), scientists warn against raising undue alarm.

In his book, Ives uses examples like the panic that spread about Tso Rolpa in the Rolwaling in 1995, the overblown threats of an imminent glacial lake outburst floods triggered by a seismic event cannot be taken lightly, just as the threats of a catastrophic earthquake in Kathmandu can’t be overstated. Still, the main message in Ives’ book rings true: ‘The present situation requires planning and constant observation. It doesn’t justify excessive alarmism or false reporting...’

Sustainable Mountain Development
Getting the Facts Right
Jack O Ives
Himalayan Association for the Advancement of Science, 2013 Hardcover 294 pages

inappropriate, if not unethical. He cites data: the snout of the Khumbu Glacier has not retreated visibly between 1950 and 2008, although appreciable thinning has occurred; if all the glacial ice in Nepal melted all at once it would only add six per cent to the volume of water in the Ganges annually, and though the area of Imja Lake has extended rapidly, it has fallen by 37% since 1960. The Himalayan degradation theory may have been proven wrong, but the rampant deforestation of the Siwalik range, subsequent landslides, and erosion have raised riverbeds causing flash floods in the Nepal Tarai. The Himalaya may be more stable than previously thought, Nepali farmers may not be ignorant about the value of forests, but population pressure in the Chure has resurrected fears of degradation on a Himalayan scale.

Climate change is the flavour of the month for funding as just about everything is being blamed on global warming. But the dangers of multiple glacial lake outburst floods triggered by a seismic event cannot be taken lightly, just as the threats of a catastrophic earthquake in Kathmandu can’t be overstated. Still, the main message in Ives’ book rings true: ‘The present situation requires planning and constant observation. It doesn’t justify excessive alarmism or false reporting...’
I'm not even sure that I liked David Lowery's debut feature Ain't Them Bodies Saints enough to write about, but this is one of the pitfalls of reviewing films weekly in a column titled ‘Must See’. This is not to say that the film is not good, in fact, it has received rave reviews from almost all the high minded critics out there in the big old world – which just goes to show how much of an inexact science/purely opinionated (if you will) occupation film reviewing is.

Lowery’s film, which he wrote and produced, however much you may not love it, is worth writing about though even if just to talk about the state of small, independent minded cinema. Lowery came up through the ranks directing adventurous projects here and there that eventually put him on the radar enough to be able make a film like Ain’t Them Bodies Saints which has close to a $4 million budget and a cast with the likes of Casey Affleck, Rooney Mara, Ben Foster, and Keith Carradine. Perhaps it is the lyrical, low key style that initially attracted such actors to a film like this, or perhaps it was just the fascination of taking a fairly archetypal story (boy meets girl, they rob people, someone gets shot, boy takes blame, goes to jail, girl is pregnant decides to wait) and raising it to a philosophical level. While I'm not sure that Lowery's intent has actually translated onto the screen, it is still a worthy attempt. And so we have the ever present argument of intent versus end product, a debate even more present in the making of indie cinema which often goes off the rails in the attempt to make art.

As all filmmakers know, those who strive towards making cinematic art fail much more than we succeed, more often than not ending up with something that looks awfully pretentious and ridiculously high minded, affecting the audience in exactly the opposite way that we intended. This almost always happens to first time or less experienced directors and this is what I feel has stopped Ain’t Them Bodies Saints from being truly great.

While the highly talented actors say beautiful things (the script is quite gorgeous), we don't actually believe them and that is a bit of a tragedy for Lowery. However, without this kind of struggle, there would be no really risky, truly excellent independent cinema, the great Terrence Mallick (to whom Lowery has been compared) being a case in point. Lately with To The Wonder (2012) and The Tree of Life (2011) Mallick has failed to make our minds soar in the way he used to with Days of Heaven (1978) and The Thin Red Line (1998) – but regardless of this, it is important to remember that both him and Lowery have broken boundaries and experimented in order to be able to finally come to something worthwhile.

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JHOLA

Quick glance at Jhola's synopsis on the film's website and few would be excited to watch it. However, even at a time when 'new-age' Nepali cinema is characterised by glossy packaging and fancy camera tricks, this sorrowful tale depicting the cruel and inhuman practice of Sati in Nepal defies expectations.

Based on author Krishna Dharabasi's story of the same name, the film begins when an old man called Ghanshayam (Sujal Nepal) leaves his bag for a night at the writer's home. Suspicious, the writer checks the contents of the bag only to find an old manuscript which contains 11 short stories. As Dharabasi starts reading, he is transported to Nepal of the 18th century. We are introduced to a young Ghanshayam who lives with his mother Kanchi (Garima Panta) and his alluring father (Debi Bihari Khatri). After her husband passes away, Kanchi's life becomes a nightmare.

Expected to sacrifice herself on the funeral pyre, Kanchi enters almost a daze like state and goes from being a strong-willed, loving mother to a helpless widow. As she prepares herself for the ceremony and Ghanshayam comes to terms with being orphaned, the anguish of both mother and son becomes palpable on screen. While expertly depicting the pain of the protagonists, director Yadav Kumar Bhattarai also explores the tender relationship between a mother and a son, which imbues Jhola with a soul that has been missing in most Nepali movies pre and post the success of Loot.

Perhaps the best two lines in the movie are delivered by the sister-in-law who sums up the audiences' thoughts when she says: 'Why is it that only a woman has to sacrifice her life when a man dies, why can't he do the same? ... And why is it acceptable for a man to marry for the second time?'

Although the Sati system was abolished decades ago, Jhola is still relevant to today's Nepal where, unfortunately, cases of sexual harassment, violence against women, trafficking remain all too common. The film may not be technically sound or perfectly executed, but it succeeds in leaving an impact and inspiring viewers to take a stance.

Somanita Rana
www.jholanepalsfilm.com

Jhola was screened by Zonta, an international organisation working to improve the status of women in Nepal, at QFX Kumari on 2 and 5 December.

Helena's

Helena's Restaurant is something of an institution in Thamel. A darling of the darlings of the once-popular guidebooks backpackers use to navigate the city's hotspots, the restaurant boasts an impressive seven floors and one of the highest guidebooks backpackers use to navigate the city's hotspots, the restaurant boasts an impressive seven floors and one of the highest

Helena's Restaurant is on the left, junction in central Thamel. The main, supermarket-laden

Below a street sign, the Marigold Hotel, a small hotel with a simple facade, is visible. A sign reading 'Marigold Hotel' is attached to the building. The street is bustling with activity, and there are people walking in the street, some carrying bags or backpacks.

Helena's

Helena's is probably best known for its breakfast menu, featuring the usual sets, plus excellent homemade croissants stuffed with ham, eggs, and the like. But the restaurant's menu, like so many of its contemporaries, is stuffed to the brim with food for all times of day and from all over the world.

However, this multicuisine approach is often deeply problematic. While the intent to please crowds from all corners of the planet seems admirable and smart, one has to wonder whether it might be better to streamline: cook one cuisine with flair rather than many with mediocrity. And that, unfortunately, is Helena's downfall. We started with the Hariyali kabab (Rs 200), which, rather than dazzlingly green with fresh mint and coriander, was, well, kind of grey. This Punjabi snack is normally served spicy, but here it was bland, and the topping of a Hariyali kabab (Rs 200), which, rather than dazzlingly green with fresh mint and coriander, was, well, kind of grey. This Punjabi snack is normally served spicy, but here it was bland, and the topping of a

The dish certainly passed muster, but only after we'd diligently scraped the slop to the side of the plate.

We're suckers for 'specials' and the ambiguity their name generates. The Helena's Special (non-veg), Rs 400, gave us so few clues, we just had to try it. What arrived was hard to place, but probably best categorised as quasi-Chinese. Huge chunks of (again tender) chicken saute in a bright-red, garlic-heavy gravy, served with boiled rice and the same vegetables from the cordon bleu.

Helena's really does do a bit of everything and so we couldn't leave without sampling its cakes, which are all baked in house. The chocolate and banana cake and carrot cake (both Rs 150) were served in doorstep portions and while they lacked the moistness we'd hoped for, were a tasty (and generous) way to wrap up what was a rather uneven dinner.

I feel a certain affection for Helena's; the staff are extremely friendly, breakfasts are hard to beat, and offers a different dining atmosphere on every floor. It's also a shame to single it out, as many of Thamel's older joints have been trading off former glories for too long. We'll definitely return to cover more of these stalwarts in future reviews, but knowing the amount of innovation available in newer, single-cuisine venues, this will be done somewhat reluctantly.

How to get there: head left from the main supermarket-laden junction in central Thamel. Helena's Restaurant is on the left, opposite Pilgrim's Book House.

Helena's

Helena's Restaurant is on the left, junction in central Thamel. The main, supermarket-laden
Bringing Obamacare to Nepal

The healthcare needs of the US and Nepal are rarely spoken about in the same breath. But where health insurance is concerned, both countries find themselves in the same boat. Around 30 million Americans are not covered. Similarly, out of 27 million Nepalis, hardly anyone has health insurance.

While patients with critical illness or those involved in serious accidents receive emergency care even without insurance, for long-term ailments like cancer, heart disease, and other chronic care situations, proper insurance is mandatory in the US. An uninsured American in this sense is no different from a common Nepali patient.

Introduced in 2010, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) or ‘Obamacare’ was primarily an attempt to address healthcare issues for the 30 million plus uninsured Americans. The main goals of PPACA were to improve the quality and affordability of health insurance and reduce the uninsured rate by expanding public and private insurance coverage. In order to be successful, the act required tremendous political will by both the Democrats and the Republicans.

However, much like our own polity, the US Congress is fraught with clannish and partisan behaviour and members as well as the general public remain deeply divided over the Affordable Care Act. A group of politicians has even gone as far as saying it will block Obamacare at any cost. Glitches in the computer system when Americans tried to enrol in the program, certainly did not help the current administration.

To outside observers and well-wishers of the US, the implementation of this bill looks like a no-brainer. In comparison to other developed countries, America spends the most on.

The black pearls

To make high-end phones more affordable, Colors Mobile has recently delivered two variants of its Pearl Black devices, the Ks and K2, both of which boast impressive specs. Encased in classy matte black bodies to complement their beautiful ‘One Glass System’ screens, the Pearl Black phones certainly look the part, but can the same be said about their performances?

Measuring just 6.85mm thick, the Ks sports a 4.8 inch AMOLED screen that packs in screen resolution of 540x960 pixels, which equates to an impressive 306 pixels per inch (PPI). The K2, on the other hand, is slightly bulkier at 7.70mm. However, the extra thickness is forgivable, given the stunning full HD (1920x1080 pixels), five inch IPS screen, which equates to a Samsung Galaxy S4 and Sony Xperia Z1-matching 441ppi screen.

Both the K2 and K2 are equipped with the same 1.5 GHz Quadcore processor and ship with 2GB of RAM, which again compares favourably with hot-in-the-market devices like the Galaxy S4 and the Xperia Z1. The beautiful screens, the fast processon, and the 2GB RAMs combine to make devices capable of delivering graphics and memory-intensive videos, games, music, multitasking, applications, etc with ease, all of which look amazing especially on the K2.

Flagship phone camera resolution is currently expected at the eight megapixels (mp) mark and the K2 follows that to a T. Equipped with a 5mp front camera and a 13mp back camera with Flash, the K2 is capable of taking decent pictures and is also capable of recording high-definition videos. The K1, in contrast, although fitted with the same 5mp front camera, boasts a 13mp back camera (same as the K2), which allows for vivid and detailed pictures and full HD video recordings. Both the Pearl Black phones are also stocked with industry-norm features and functions like light, proximity, and G-sensors, Gyroscopes, E-compasses, Bluetooth, GPS, Wi-Fi, and backed up by satisfactory batteries.

The comparatively low storage, with the K2 limited to 16GB and the K2 limited to 32GB, is a major let down and the option to expand storage via MicroSD slots would have been nice. Still the Pearl Blacks are excellent devices and priced at Rs 30,000 and Rs 38,000 respectively, they are very gentle on your wallet.

Yantrick’s verdict: if you are looking for smartphones that look and act the part at half the price of their competitors, then Colors Mobile’s Pearl Black series is the way to go.
Domesticated dogs used to guard the rich countries compromise that 300,000 people were killed in Haiyan. Yet, even the poorest in the poor countries, storms. Yet it is the more devastating is spawning ever carbon into the economies pump countries and Industrialised future has in store news was coming in of a to control global warming, on limiting carbon emissions to revive international negotiations on limiting carbon emissions to control global warming, news was coming in of a devastating super-typhoon in the Philippines. The apocalyptic Typhoon Haiyan focused everyone’s mind on what the future has in store, as the world warms. Industrialised countries and newly-emerging economies pump carbon into the atmosphere, which is spurning ever more devastating storms. Yet it is the poorest in the poor countries who suffer and die. ‘Climate justice’ was the theme in Warsaw, yet even the most heart-rending images of death and destruction on Leyte Island was not enough to make the rich countries compromise on a clause on paying for climate-related loss and damage. All they could muster was a vaguely-worded assurance to ‘look into the mechanisms’ for compensation. The last-minute wording, hammered out after a marathon 30-hour sitting, saved the climate talks from complete collapse and just about kept the process alive. Known by the officious-sounding 16th Conference of Parties (COP) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the meeting failed to come up with the emission reduction commitments necessary to keep global temperatures from rising beyond an average 2°C by 2050, considered by many scientists as the tipping point beyond which climate warming will go out of control.

The Warsaw summit had been dubbed the ‘finance COP’ because it was expected that its delegates would agree on a strategy to channel money from rich to poor countries to help them adapt to the impacts of climate change. In 2009 in Copenhagen, developed nations had promised to raise $100 billion a year after 2020 from $10 billion a year in 2010-12, but did not set targets for 2013-19.

This time, industrialised countries could only must better $100 million for a climate adaptation fund that has almost dried up. That is bad news for coastal populations like the ones which were hit by Haiyan, or villages vulnerable to flash floods caused by glacial lakes in the Himalaya which ‘burst’ because of glaciers melting. They have no option but to adapt with their own meagre resources. Most developing countries were disappointed with the level of compromise they had to agree to in the last few hours and said that they had at least wanted to see a commitment from the rich nations on emission targets. “We are disappointed because despite compromises, the meeting failed to address long-term finance for adaptation,” Nepal’s Prakash Mathema who chairs the Least Developed Countries at the UN Climate Conference told Nepali Times. “Without a mid-term pathway, it will be difficult to see how the promised $20 billion will be managed starting from 2020.”

Although all countries for the first time agreed to make contributions in cutting greenhouse gas emissions to prevent temperature rising above the 2°C average, developed countries like Japan backed from their carbon goals for 2020 because of the shutdown of nuclear power plants after Fukushima and Australia scrapped its carbon tax. Economics seems to have taken precedence over ecology. Nepal, like delegations from other developing nations, argued that it cannot sacrifice economic growth to save the global environment and demanded of the developed world to adapt to the impacts of climate change. Increasingly, however, that is looking like an excuse to not address pollution in its own backyard that may be contributing to the melting of the Himalaya. Emerging economies like China and India have overtaken the rich countries in total greenhouse gas emissions and Nepal’s dependence on fossil fuel is also increasing at an alarming rate (see above box). Emissions cuts from wealthy nations alone aren’t going to be enough to keep global averages within limits. The Warsaw meeting partially succeeded in laying the foundation for a legally binding agreement for the next conference in Paris in 2015 to limit greenhouse gas emissions. There is still a feasible hope, but it was clear in Warsaw that the world is running out of time.
Global warming is causing the Himalayan mountains to melt at an accelerated rate. Melting glaciers and receding snowlines are the most dramatic visible proof of increasing temperature and they are happening before our eyes within a generation. Many glaciers have turned into lakes and there are melt pools where there were once snowfields.

The Kathmandu-based International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) and GlacierWorks have come together to organise the Climate+Change exhibition to mark ICIMOD’s 30th anniversary and to make the Nepali public aware of the effects of climate change on the mountains. The Art Council venue has enormous panoramic photographs of Mt Everest, Khumbu Glacier, Cho Oyu that are nearly two stories high. They depict dramatic loss of ice cover, the retreat of glaciers is starkly visible. The exhibition will be on for five months and also has before and after pictures of images taken in the 1950s. There are stunning images of the mountains, glaciers, snowfields, lakes, and moraines.

The exhibition explores the many facets and drivers of change in mountains, including the accelerated melting of glaciers because of the deposition of soot particles from pollution. There are also profiles of mountain dwellers and those downstream who are responding to new challenges. “Mountains are water towers for billions of people in Asia, so this exhibition will be a great opportunity for everyone to learn about the state of mountains and glaciers,” says Joseph Shea glacier hydrologist at ICIMOD. The exhibition will be especially useful for educational tours for Nepal’s schools and colleges.

Climate+Change Exhibition.
Nepal Art Council Babar Mahal

Dawa Steven Sherpa
Khumjung, Entrepreneur and mountaineer

What Dawa Steven Sherpa saw while climbing Everest became the inspiration behind Eco Everest, an annual expedition to clean up the mess left behind by previous climbers. The son of a Sherpa father and a Belgian mother, Dawa likes to say: “I don’t want the melting snow from the land of my father to drown the land of my mother.”

He says the people of the Khumbu live in constant fear of glacial lake floods. His message to the industrialised nations is: “You created the problem, provide us with guidance and assistance needed to find a solution.”

Pangboche, Yak herder

Pasang Dolma’s brother-in-law sold his share of land and pastures to start a business in Kathmandu. Her husband has climbed Everest four times, but after each mountaineering season, he lives with their family’s yak herd in remote pastures. Pasang Dolma is spending her first year with the herd. She has heard of the Imja Lake upstream. “If Imja bursts, it will be during the monsoon, but we won’t be here then,” she says matter-of-factly. “No, I am not scared.”
In October 2007, I travelled to the north side of Mt Everest carrying with me a black and white photograph taken in 1921 by the renowned British mountaineer, George L Mallory. It showed the ice-encrusted north face of Everest and the Main Rongbuk Glacier, flowing in a sweeping S-shaped curve down a steep-walled valley.

I placed my camera at the exact spot where Mallory had snapped his iconic picture and was stunned by the changes that had swept over the landscape. Parts of the glacier had melted vertically by almost 100 metres and large lakes covered its lower section. At that moment, I grasped the magnitude of the devastation to Everest’s glaciers and decided to document the effects of climate change on the Himalayan landscape with comparative and high-resolution photography.

When viewing the pairs of past and present images in the Climate+Change exhibit one can easily see the changes to the glaciers and those changes have a story: “What happened? What caused it? And, most importantly, what will the future look like?” This story is explained with science, research, and data.

It is my hope that visitors to the Climate+Change exhibit will leave having learned more about their world and the science behind it. And from this newfound knowledge, a few will seek the education and careers empowering them to develop and influence future policies and solutions to mitigate the consequences of living on a warmer planet.

David Breashears is an American climber and film maker who has been raising awareness on the consequences of climate change in the Himalaya. For interview with Breashears, see Nepali Times #657.
Why change the guard?
Santosh Acharya, Nepal, 1 December

Second-placed UML knows it doesn’t have the political stature or legal backing to head the next government. And since the party has privately urged SinghaDarbar to the Nepali Congress, its leaders [Balanath Khanal, Madhav Kumar Nepal, and KP Oli seem to be eyeing Shital Niwas. According to them, if the NC is allowed to keep both offices, it will violate the principle of separation of powers. The UML is also claiming that the mandate of 19 November elections merits change from the top.

Not surprisingly, the office of the president is now being dragged into power-sharing negotiations. But while the gates of Baluwatar have opened up for Sushil Koirala, presidential hopefuls from the UML should not get too excited. Article 36 of the interim constitution stipulates that the president can stay in power until a new constitution is drafted. The Congress is using this clause to negate the UML’s claim to presidency. If President Ram Baran Yadav does not resign of his own accord, the Constituent Assembly can only remove him by accusing him, through a bill, of grave wrongdoing. For this, the UML will require a two-thirds majority. But since smaller parties don’t stand much to gain, they are unlikely to support this move. For his part, Yadav would like the constitution to be completed under his tenure so that he can leave a lasting legacy.

FROM THE NEPALI PRESS

Consensus first, two-thirds second

Interviews with NC President Sushil Koirala and UML leader Madhav Kumar Nepal, Himal Khatabarpani, 1 December

Election results
Sushil Koirala: Because of the failure of the last Constituent Assembly, people thought only a Nepali Congress victory would guarantee a democratic constitution, which would in turn bring peace, stability, and development in the country.

Madhav Kumar Nepal: The results were expected, even natural. Everyone predicted that the UCPN (M) would fail behind because it had lost the trust of common Nepalis after it failed to write the constitution. Instead, people chose the UML’s agenda of multi-identity federalism, ethnic harmony, and nationalism.

Formation of a new government
SK: I don’t want to go into details about forming a new government because the mandate is clear. When the Maoists were the biggest party in the first CA, we never objected to their leadership. Now, the NC will lead the next government.

MKN: The current mandate is for the UML and NC to cooperate. But that does not mean we will sideline the UML and NC to cooperate. But that

Amending the constitution to make consensus government compulsory
SK: During our election campaign, we asked the people to give us a two-thirds majority. We are the largest party in the CA, but don’t have a majority. We can’t go around changing the constitution after the results.

MKN: We must look for consensus, but cannot amend the constitution. Changing the constitution at this point would be like tying ourselves in chains. The NC and UML must be egotistical, while other parties need to look beyond their narrow self-interests.

President, prime minister, CA speaker
SK: We want to emphasise the rule of law. Whatever is written in the constitution must be the basis for future governance. The interim constitution says the president can stay in office until a constitution is drafted, which is why all this talk about amending the constitution for the sake of agreement is unacceptable.

MKN: Both parties must come to a package agreement, primarily on power-sharing for the posts of the president, PM, speaker of the house, and deputy speaker. Is the Nepali constitution within a year. If there are disagreements, we can talk about them on the CA floor.

MKN: We’ve agreed on about 80 to 85 per cent of the material. Federalism and form of governance are the biggest issues that need to be resolved. I believe we can come to an understanding within two or three rounds of talks.

Issues raised by the RPP-N
SK: We became a federal republic state five years ago when our late chairman Girja Prasad Koirala agreed to it. We cannot go back on it.

MKN: We must respect the faith that Nepalis have shown in us. In principle, the state must not have an official religion and must treat every religion as the same. It’s the same with social structure. We cannot regress to untouchability, segregation, and discrimination.

Local elections
SK: Our first priority is the constitution. But Nepal has not had local representatives for a long time and it remains one of our major concerns. If possible, we will have local elections three months after we finish the constitution.

MKN: We must have local elections within April 2014. I have already talked to the election commission about the matter and the officials say it is possible. We must have electronic voting so that irregularities can be minimised. Again all this can only be brought about through consensus.

Accommodating the CPN-M
SK: We tried very hard to bring Mohan Baidya and his party on board for the 19 November elections, but they demanded that we change the government and postpone the polls. Now, we can’t amend the constitution just to get them to participate. Still, we are open to discussions and would like them to contribute to the constitution writing process.

MKN: We must make the CPN-M a part of the CA, whatever it takes. I have repeatedly told CP Gajurel that everyone must be ready to compromise for the greater good of the country.

quoteflow
After a new government is formed, we have no other option than to protect national integrity, democracy and demand the Constituent Assembly be cancelled through protests. - CPN-M Secretary Dev Gurung, Naya Patrika, 4 December

Basu Kshitiz in Annapurna Post, 30 November

基层第一，两分之三第二

与NC主席，Sushil Koirala和UML领导人Madhav Kumar Nepal，Himal Khatabarpani，12月

选举结果
Sushil Koirala: 因为最后一个制宪会议的失败，人们认为只有尼泊尔大会的胜利才能保证民主的宪法，这会带来和平、稳定和发展。

Madhav Kumar Nepal: 结果是意料之内的，也应该是自然的。每个人都预测过，UCPN (M)会失败，因为它失去了与普通尼泊尔人的信任。相反，人们选择了UML的多民族联邦主义、民族和谐和民族主义的议程。

建立新政府
SK: 我不想深入细节去谈论形成新政府，因为结果已经很清楚。当毛派是第一党时，我们从不反对他们的领导。

MKN: 当前的权力赋予是UML和NC的合作。但这并不意味着我们会忽视UML和NC的合作。

修正宪法以建立共识政府
SK: 在我们的竞选活动中，我们问人民给我们一个两三分之二的多数。我们在CA中是第一党，但没有多数。我们不能绕过宪法在结果之后进行修改。

MKN: 我们必须寻找共识，但不能修改宪法。改变宪法在这个时刻将是自相矛盾的。尼泊尔和UML必须是自利的，而其他政党需要超越它们的狭隘利益。

总统、总理和CA发言人
SK: 我们想强调法律的原则。在宪法中写的必须是未来治理的基础。制宪会议的说法是总统可以在办公室中直到宪法被拟定，这是因为所有关于修改宪法以达成共识的讨论是不可接受的。

MKN: 两个政党必须达成一个包罗万象的协议，主要是关于权力分享的职位，如总统、总理、议会议长和副议长。是尼泊尔宪法在一年内。

问题由RPP-N提出
SK: 在五年前，当我们的已故主席，Girja Prasad Koirala同意成为联邦共和国时，我们成为了联邦共和国。我们不能回头。

MKN: 我们必须尊重尼泊尔人对我们的信念。原则是，国家不应该有一个官方的宗教，而且必须对待各种宗教相同。它也适用于社会结构。

地方选举
SK: 我们的首要任务是宪法。但是尼泊尔没有地方代表已经很长时间了，并且它仍然是我们最大的关切。如果可能，我们将有地方选举三个月后我们完成宪法。

MKN: 我们必须在2014年4月前有地方选举。我已经已经和选举委员会讨论过，官员们说这是可能的。我们必须有电子投票，这样不规矩性可以最小化。再次所有这一切只能通过共识带来。

容纳CPN-M
SK: 我们已经非常努力地让Mohan Baidya和他的政党在1911月选举中上车，但他们要求我们改变政府和推迟选举。现在，我们不能修改宪法只是为了让他们参加。

MKN: 我们必须使CPN-M成为CA的一部分，无论需要什么。我多次告诉CP Gajurel，每个人都必须准备好妥协以符合更大的国家利益。nepalitimes.com

为什么改变政府?
Santosh Acharya, Nepal, December

第二位列的UML知道它没有政治地位或法律背书来领导下一届政府。且因为党已私下催促SinghaDarbar到尼泊尔议会，它的领导人（Balath Khanal，Madhav Kumar Nepal，和KP Oli看起来要成为Shital Niwas。根据他们，如果NC被允许保持两个办公室，它将违反原则的分离权力。UML也声称宪法在10月的19日选举中的变化权从上。

出乎意料的是，办公室的总统现在正被卷入权力分享的谈判中。但同时，巴努瓦特的门已经为Sushil Koirala，总统候选人从UML不会太兴奋。文章36中的制宪公约规定，总统可以留在总统直到新宪法被制定。

尼泊尔正在使用这个条款来削弱UML的总统要求。

如果总统Ram Baran Yadav不辞职，制宪会议只能通过指控他，通过法案，由于严重的错误而被解雇。为此，UML将需要两个三分之二。

但小政党没有能受到太多激励，它们可以不支持这个。

因为，Yadav会像宪法一样被完成在它的任期使他能离开一个持久的遗产。

Dalit Daily
"After a new government is formed, we have no other option than to protect national integrity, democracy and demand the Constituent Assembly be cancelled through protests. - CPN-M Secretary Dev Gurung, Naya Patrika, 4 December

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Hon’tle Horrible and Ugly

Astrologers who correctly predicted the election results are now doing such brisk business that appointments are booked into the new year. Nepal’s soothsayer-in-chief, Dr Fire Juice Agnirash, for example not just predicted the defeat of the Mau Baddies but also accurately foretold Chairman Superman’s defeat in Kirtipur. He is also credited with predicting the victories of Lion Brave and Lord Ram, although I didn’t think you’d need an astrologer for that, even the Ass could have predicted it. Emboldened by his spot-on prophecies, Dr Fire Juice has now said that the planetary alignments (which includes the arrival of Comet Ison) favour Jhusil Da as PM, but that he will “resign within a year for health reasons”.

Lion Brave, on the other hand, is said to be doing the rounds of astrophysicists to find one who will actually predict he will be PM for the 4th time. This Fire Juice fellow is good, we should hire him as a weekly columnist for this paper as a political analyst. Pro-Baddie op-ed analysers are still in shock, first they said there was cheating, then they accused the Army and India, after that they said there had been ballot stuffing, and now they have started blaming ‘ignorant’ voters.

The Bracket Baddies are right, there have been massive irregularities during these elections - by their own candidates. In Siraha, Lila Nath Shrestha of the UML was ahead in 11 polling centres, but vote counting was stopped for six hours after PKD lost in Kathmandu. When it resumed, Awesome mysteriously started leading and not a single ballot in favour of Shrestha was counted in boxes from two remaining centres. There were similar goings-on in Gorkha that declared BRB the winner. The NC was also up to tricks: in Dhanusha, the president’s son appears to have distributed cash by the sackloads and Com Amrace won with his eyes closed, as it were, in Sarlahi.

Before elections, the cash Baddies had sent investigation teams across the land to take stock of the party’s chances of victory. The intelligence they brought back was so negative that the delegation couldn’t break the bad news to Chairman Superman, fearing he might bellow the messengers of bad tidings. Which is why PKD had no idea what hit him when he lost in Kirtipore. He should have listened to Comrades Horrible and Ugly who had told him all along that the party was headed to defeat. Com Top Man has said there was cheating in all other constituencies except his own, where he won.

People who have met PKD in the past have always found him charming, a good listener, even though they have come to expect him to bend the truth. But the same people who have met him after his defeat have seen a different side of him, a leader with self-obsessive compulsive disorder. He talks about himself most of the time, as if the party has ceased to exist. And what seems to bother him most is that his crony, Sue Margi, has been secretly driving to meet Jhusil Da in his blue plated Belarus consulate car and being taken up through the back entrance. Commandante Maximus seems to be less worried about the fate of his proletarian revolution and more about his cash stash.

You must have heard about Chief Minister Keel Raj on election day filling out his pink ballot paper and dropping it in the box. Then he waves and proceeds to walk out of the booth. Officials run an after him to say he also has to stamp the blue ballot for the First Past the Post. Apparently Justice Regmi had no idea there were two ballots.

The Ass