

# Climate climax

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.

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

[nepalitimes.com](http://nepalitimes.com)  
Special Nepali Times Multimedia Package

## CLIMATE FOR CHANGE

BY DAVID MOLDEN PAGE 16-17

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GEORGE MALLORY/ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY

**MELTDOWN:** The main Rongbuk glacier near Mount Everest in 1921 (above) and again in 2007.



DAVID BREASHEARS/GLACIERWORKS

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# THE TWO DECADE DETOUR

Much of the talk in the post-election analysis is focused on the political arithmetic of the next Constituent Assembly, or the bargaining that has started on the formation of the new cabinet. There is nothing unusual about this, every mature parliamentary democracy goes through this exercise.

Elsewhere, there are rules of the game that everyone follows. Here, the losing party blackmails everyone else by threatening to boycott the legislature if it isn't given more say in government decision-making. Worse, a faction of the same party that actively tried to sabotage the polls with terrorism wants nominated seats offered on a platter.

And as an added distraction, the power-sharing negotiation has dragged in the office of the president. In order to improve their bargaining positions, the UCPN (M) and RPP-N are in unlikely agreement with the UML to change the president. This has pitted them against the Nepali Congress which is against such a move now.

Pushing the presidency into this debate has an unfortunately familiar ring to it: the tendency of our politicians to get distracted with side issues so they don't have to take the bull by the horns. While they go through the tortuous negotiations for the formation of the new legislative and executive, what gets left by the wayside once more is the urgent need to spur economic growth and local development.

Grassroots development is not possible without local elections and we will deal with that in another editorial next week. But it is the economy on which 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.

Nepali voters don't want politics as usual, in fact they don't want politics, period. They want attention given to the economy. In this, the NC is ideally placed to go back to what it was doing 20 years ago with economic deregulation to attract investors, free up the market, dismantle the cartels, and create employment.



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 politicking 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 avoid the political pitfalls of the past. ‘Status quo’ is not necessarily a bad word as long as lessons are learnt 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 discontentment boils over again, it won't matter who wins elections and gets to power any more. All the parties must look at employment generation and infrastructure as a common minimum platform, and not let politics get in the way.

We know what the problems are with the economy, 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.

## ON THE WEB

www.nepalitimes.com

### BACK TO THE CENTRE

This election has shown the need for electoral reform, as cited in this as well as previous editorials in *Nepali Times* ('Back to the centre', Editorial, #683). Although the poll results may have been unpleasant for some of the parties, it's now all about the future. It would be foolish, however, for the NC and UML to get carried away. A triumphalist response would alienate the Maoists further and exacerbate the current polarisation. Nepal managed to hold a magnificent election and proved doubters wrong. Let's celebrate while the euphoria lasts and before the disappointments of the coming months set in.

Jen

- I agree that the election results are a clear indication of people's disillusionment with the Maoist agenda. However, to take this to mean a rejection of inclusiveness and identity is wrong. Most Nepalis want identity addressed (maybe not necessarily through ethnic federalism); they just didn't trust the Maoists to take the agenda forward. It's time to take a level-headed look at the results and not be swayed by victory and defeat. After all, this is the mandate of only 40 per cent of the population and the NC got perhaps 20 per cent of that vote.

Dane

- Now that the election euphoria has died down, we are back to dirty

politics and the customary bickering. For the sake of the country I pray that our newly elected leaders don't spend the next months fighting over the post of prime minister and president. Otherwise, the Rs 50 billion that we spent on polls will have gone to utter waste. Let Ram Baran Yadav remain in Shital Niwas, let Sushil Koirala finally become the prime minister. First give Nepal a constitution by 2015, then the politicians can fight over positions and money as much as they want.

Karma

### POST MORTEM

Although I vehemently oppose the ethno-federalism agenda due to my personal ideology, I disagree with Muma Ram Khanal's analysis of the recently held elections ('Post mortem of a defeat', #683). It makes no sense to say that the Maoists were defeated in the polls for having championed ethnic federalism, presidential system or controlled judiciary. Khanal's column seems like a vengeful act against his former party and colleagues.

The Maoists lost for three reasons. First, they made no efforts in improving their image, which took a bad hit in the past five years. Second, they neither contributed to the writing of the constitution nor the regeneration of political parties. Lastly, they scared off common Nepalis with their bigoted and outdated communist jargon. However, this defeat also kills

any hopes of having a democratic left in Nepal. The country is once again in the hands of NEOs: neo-liberals, neo-democrats, neo-lefts, neo-rights, and neo-elites.

Nirmal

- There is no need for extensive post-election analysis. The Maoists won in 2008 through intimidation and violence. When such prospects were reduced during the second elections, people voted the way they really wanted and the Maoists lost.

Latate

### GOING LOCAL

While Nepalis have chosen locals over celebrity or 'tourist' candidates this time, it will be really interesting to see how well the winners serve their constituencies in the next five years ('Going local', Dambar Krishna Shrestha, #683). There have been far too many times when the leaders we voted for abandoned us and forgot our needs once they reached powerful posts. While the most pressing responsibility of the new assembly is to draft a new constitution, the CA members cannot ignore local development. Otherwise, the next time round they run for elections, they won't have 'home' support.

Renu Shrestha

- I still don't understand how politicians in Nepal are allowed to run from two different constituencies. It goes against principles of democracy,

not to mention it's a complete waste of money if someone wins from both places and re-elections are needed.

Prem Rai

### PEACE OF MIND

I have great respect for Matrika Devkota ('Peace of mind', Ayesha Shakya, #683). His relentless efforts at raising awareness about mental health in Nepal and helping patients live better lives make him one of the most deserving recipients of the 'Breaking the Chains of Stigma' award. I hope this recognition brings greater understanding and support for mentally disabled members of our society.

Mahesh

- I can only imagine what it must feel like living with mental illness in Nepal. Even in the US, where we have made huge strides in mental health science, there is still such a stigma that few families bring their children or loved ones for examination or counseling. To make the problem worse, state funding for mental health is abysmal, so patients have to spend a lot out of their own pockets for treatment. For those who are poor, it is almost impossible to gain access to services.

Paul B

### LITTLE TIBETS

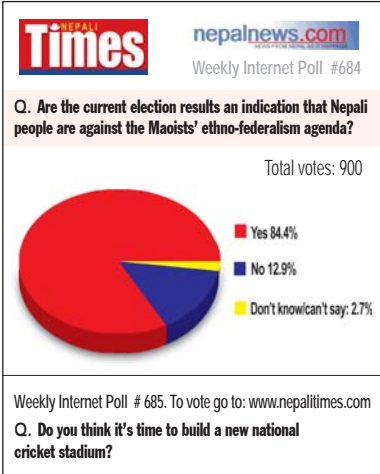
One of the reasons why Tibetan schools in Nepal are struggling to find and retain students is the improved economic condition of the community ('Little Tibets', Tsering Dolker Gurung,

#683). Tibetan parents feel a sense of pride when they send their kids to English-medium schools, something their parents were not able to do and the reason why there was a need for Tibetan schools in the first place. Also second and third generation Tibetans feel a closer affinity towards their birthplace than a land they have never set foot in. So many are not interested in learning their 'mother tongue'.

Sonam Lama

- Life has become difficult for Tibetan refugees in Kathmandu. There is enormous pressure to curb the freedom of movement of Tibetans. They have no choice but to migrate to USA and Canada and as a result, Tibetan schools in Kathmandu are running out of students.

Pasang Thondup





# 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.



BY THE WAY  
Anurag Acharya

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.

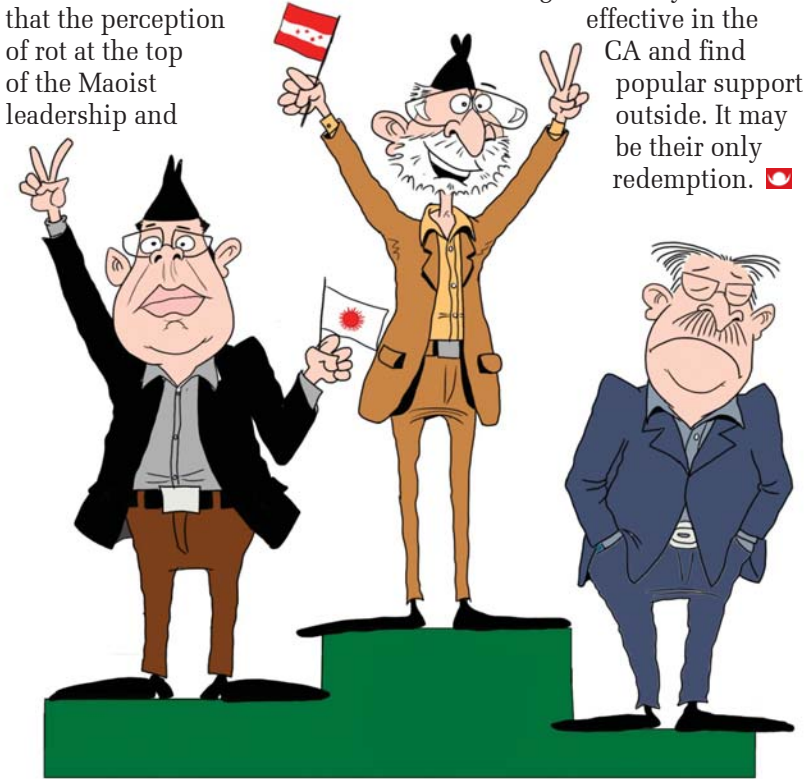
"They will take one look at you and tell whether they will vote for you. If you won last time, but didn't find time to come back and listen to your electorate, you will lose this time," was how a TMPLP PR candidate we met in Sunsari described the public mood before polls. The results proved him right.

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. 



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# Ruby in the rough

“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.



INTERESTING TIMES  
Mallika Aryal

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

A young woman in Nepalganj strives to be a strong role model for others to help them fight the right fight



MALLIKA ARYAL

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.

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ग्राहक दररेट : नागरिक रु. ३८००, रिपब्लिका रु. १७००

हरेक हप्ता  
५ जनालाई

हरेक हप्ता  
१० जनालाई

हरेक  
१५ दिनमा  
१ जनालाई

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नेपालगञ्ज ०८१-५५१२१८ | पोखरा ०६१-५८०३१० | बुटवल ०७१-८३८१७८ | नारायणगढ ०६६-५७१३२० | विराटनगर ०२१-४२१२२४

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# Cities and climate

JEFFREY D SACHS in NEW YORK

Tacloban 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 – pummeled in recent years by climate catastrophes. Many of the world's largest cities, built on seacoasts 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 2050. 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 in 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 assigned to the lowest level of government able 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 SDGs 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, their countries, and the planet. [www.project-syndicate.org](http://www.project-syndicate.org)

## EVEREST BANK BIZ BRIEFS

### NIC Asia wins Bank of the Year



NIC Asia Bank recently won the prestigious 'Bank of the Year 2013- Nepal' award from *The Banker*, a *Financial Times* publication based in the UK. The winner was announced by *The Banker* during its annual award ceremony on 28 November in London. Director Lokmanya Golchha and CEO Sashin Joshi were present to receive the trophy. This is the second time that NIC has been presented with this award. The bank had earlier won in 2007. NIC Asia Bank, which was formed through a merger of NIC Bank and Bank of Asia in June this year, is one of the largest private sector banks in the country.

### Mix up

Hotel Radisson held its annual Christmas cake mixing ceremony on Sunday. The program was headed by General Manager Anil Malik with hotel guests, employees, and media representatives participating in the holiday activity.



### Shaved off

Qatar Airways offered a 25 per cent discount on its fares to celebrate its joining Oneworld, the global airline alliance. Tickets bought during the offer, which lasted until 5 December, can be used for travel from 13 January to 30 June 2014.

### Joyeux time

On Wednesday, Thai Airways celebrated its 46th anniversary in Nepal. The airlines, which has been operating in the country since 1968, flies twice daily to Bangkok.



Officer's Club in Kathmandu. Speaking at the function, Chairman Sunil Kaushal thanked all the investors and customers for their support.

### The masters

Suryansh Chaudhary bagged the Everest Golf challenge title with an accumulated 36 stableford points. Wangchen Dhondup took home the best gross award title while Team India won the team event. The annual event took place at Gokarna Golf Club and was sponsored by Everest Bank.



### Talking Turkey

Travel Turkey conference is scheduled to take place from 5-8 December in the city of Izmir. The meeting will bring together tourism professionals from more than 20 countries under one roof.

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# Behave yourselves

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



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,

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.

Since Nepalis decided 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 unfailingly made it a point to grace their marriage celebrations. The NC and UML did not win on ideology, they just reaped 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 repudiated 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 Nepalis are 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

As 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. They 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.



**NEARING THE END:** Nanda Prasad and Ganga Maya Adhikari on Thursday afternoon on the 50th day of their hunger strike at Bir Hospital, demanding justice for the murder of their son, Krishna, in 2004. They are now refusing intravenous saline.

In June 2004, Krishna Adhikari was dragged 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 last year when Baburam Bhattarai was prime minister and the police forcibly threw them into a mental asylum. Later, the Bhattarai government sent police to load the couple into a jeep and deport them back to Gorkha. In March, the NHRC had recommended that the government put the guilty on trial, give compensation to the couple, and ensure they return home safely. But the Bhattarai administration ignored the directive, arguing that this was an insurgency-related case.

According to the complaint the Adhikaris filed at the District Police Headquarter in Chitwan, Januka Poudel and other Maoist cadres are involved in the murder. Poudel was Hisila Yami's assistant when Bhattarai was prime minister. When the couple came to Kathmandu to seek justice, Bhattarai quashed the investigation. ■

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## EVENTS



**CLIMATE+CHANGE**, an awe-inspiring educational science exhibition about climate change and Nepal's Himalayas. *December to April, Nepal Art Council*

**Tell your story**, make a 1-2 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.uzairsawal.com*

**Tree of life**, an exhibition of the paintings on the Mithila cosmos by SC Suman. *10 December to 6 January, 5.30pm, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babarmahal*

**Degree maila**, watch this humorous play on contemporary Nepali society. *29 November to 15 December, 4.30pm, except Mondays, Mandala Theatre, Anamnagar, 016924269*



**CONVERGENCE**, bring your own photographs and learn from Julian Parker-Burns how you can make them into a montage where the line between photographs and painting is blurred. *Rs 1,200, 8 December, 11am, Image Ark Art Gallery, (01)5006665*

**Telling a Tale, Kitchen Dramas**, world premiere of a play adapted from short stories written, contributed by Nepali women and girls. *6 December, 4.30pm, Theatre Village, Uttar Dhoka,*

**South asian poetry festival**, Free verse under the open sky poets from Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan. *7 December, 1.30pm onwards, Basantapur Darbar Square; 8 December, 1.30pm onwards, Patan Darbar Square*

**Open bazar**, it's never too early for the Yuletide spirit when it comes to shopping; apparels, accessories, home decor and handicrafts. *7 December, 12 to 4pm, Embassy Restaurant, Pani Pokhari, Lajimpat*

**The Last Message**, watch this film documenting the cases of four Nepalis who were disappeared by state security forces and Maoists during the insurgency. *6 December, 2.30 to 4pm, COCAP Hall, Anamnagar, 9849111181/9849982152*

**Live painting**, have your portrait painted by artists Supriya Manandhar, Kamal Gurung, and Dhwoj Gurung as they demonstrate the possibilities of water colour. *6 to 8 December, Park Gallery, Pulchok, (01)5522307*

**Cheep cheep**, home to over 500 species of birds, including 18 globally threatened species, Kathmandu Valley is paradise for birdwatchers. *7 December, 7am, Bajrabarahi Temple, Lalitpur, 9851010391*



**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*

## DINING



**TRISARA**, with dishes like flambeed prawns, crispy chicken, and khao soi, it would be a folly to ignore its aromas. *Lajimpat*

**Chopstix**, savoury Asian food cooked in true Chinese fashion sure to charm and impress. Try the famous drums of heaven. *Kumaripati, (01)5551118*

**Byanjan Grill**, its open patio is a great place to sit, enjoy a book, take in the view, and gorge on delicious cuisine when the hunger kicks in. *Barahi Chok, Lakeside-6, Pokhara, (061)466271*

**Mongolian BBQ**, start your weekends the right way, with traditional music. *Rs 1,099, 7pm onwards, Shangri-la Village Resort, (061)462222 ext. 5055*

**Bubbly Brunch**, the best of the Mediterranean in shawarma and pasta. *Rs 1,100, 11am to 3pm, Shambala Garden and Club Sundhara, Hotel Shangri-la, Lajimpat, (01)4412999 ext. 7520, 7515*

## MUSIC

**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*



**ABELTON LIVE**, an improvisation workshop with acclaimed Italian jazz musician Gianni Denitto. *6 December, 11am onwards, Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory, Jhamsikhel, (01)5013554*

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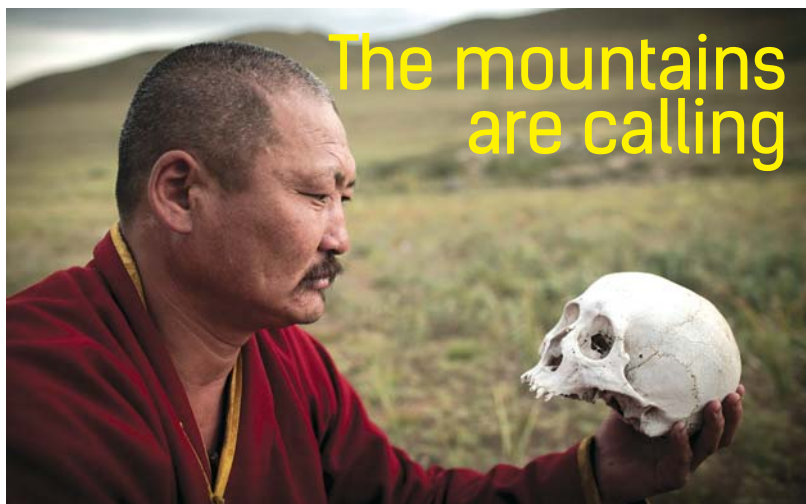
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**Raniban Retreat**, situated at the other end of the Phewa lake and nested inside the Raniban forest and the World Peace Stupa, this retreat has one of the best views of the Annapurna range. Phewa lake, and Pokhara.

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



## 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, satiate it with the hotel's special fare - pit roast wild boar barbecue - 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

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  
(01)4440635, www.kimff.org

## 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	Lalbandi, Sarlahi
14 December	Taulihawa, Kapilbastu
16 December	Gularia, Bardiya
18 December	Lamahi, Dang
20 December	Abu Khairani, Tanahun
22 December	Myagdi, Beni
24 December	Gagan Gaunda, Kaski
29 December	Patan Darbar Square

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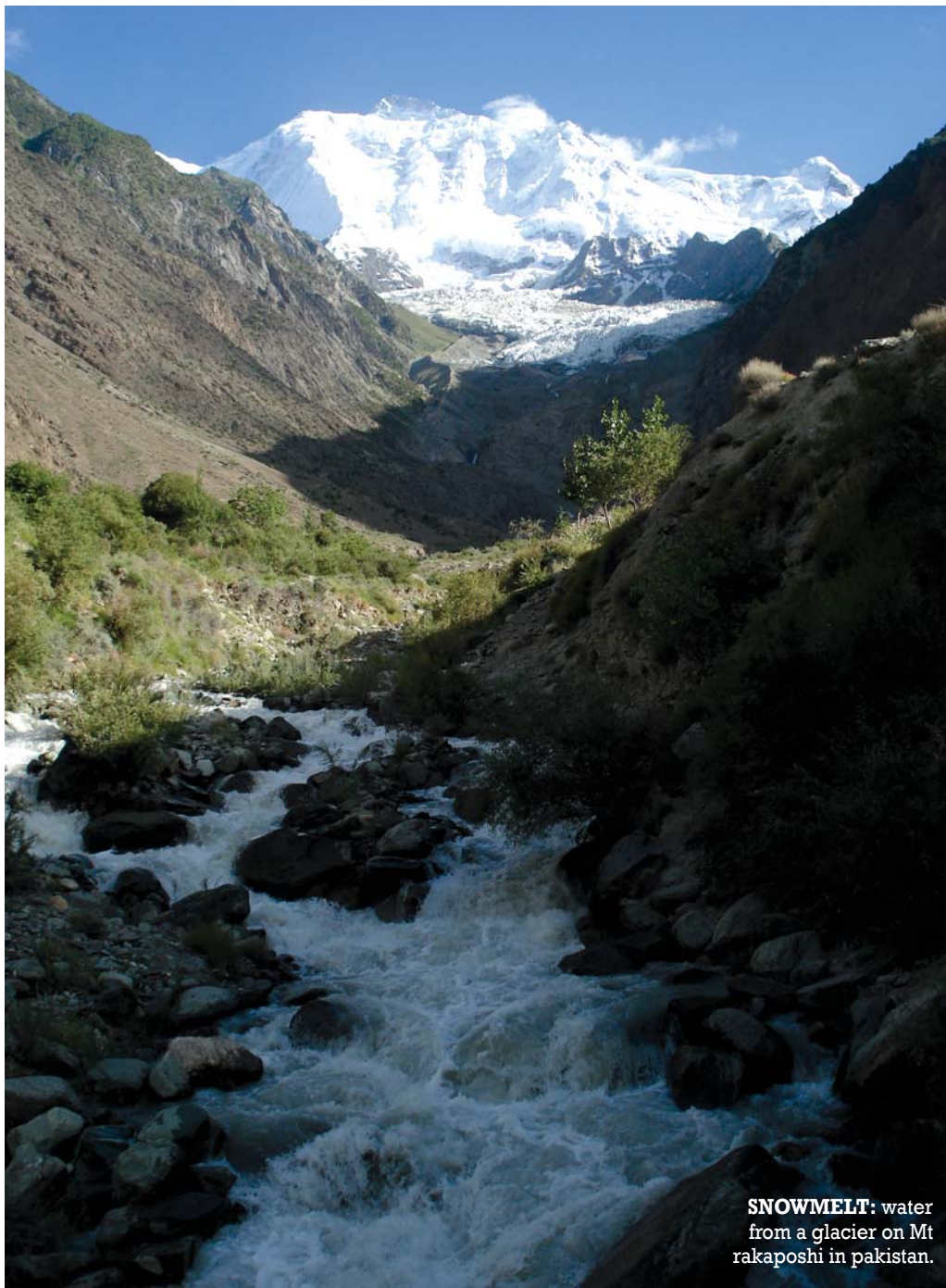
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**Mahindra**  
Rise.





**SNOWMELT:** water from a glacier on Mt rakaposhi in pakistan.

BIRENDRA BAJRACHARYA

# 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

ICIMOD  
30

## Himalayan myth buster

KUNDA DIXIT

Jack Ives doesn't suffer fools and he has encountered many during his colourful career pushing the mountain agenda at the Rio Summit in 1992, through the International Year of Mountains in 2002, right down to the present.

A British-born Canadian, Ives was part of the group of experts that oversaw in 1975 meetings that led to the establishment of the International Centre for Mountain Development (ICIMOD) in Kathmandu. In his 45 years of research in the Himalaya, Pamir, and Yunnan, Ives has relentlessly struggled against sloppy science, alarmist academics and a sensationalist media crying wolf.

Now, Ives has decided to put together a personalised account of the people and mountains he has been acquainted with and the sometimes epic struggle to get the sustainable development of fragile mountain areas of the world recognised by

governments and international organisations.

The book is an autobiographical travelogue and takes frequent detours to tell stories from places like Darjeeling, Lhasa, the Caucasus, Kathmandu or Khumbu. Although at times quixotic, Ives uses a breezy storytelling style to communicate a serious message: don't exaggerate, overdramatise, and spread confusion about what is happening to the mountains.

Among Ives' revealing anecdotes is one about a fracas in 1975 between India and Pakistan over where ICIMOD should be located. India wanted Simla and Pakistan was gunning for Gilgit and since they couldn't agree, Kathmandu got selected.

Getting the fact right is Ives' main mantra, and it is applicable equally to scientists, journalists, policymakers, and donor agencies. Ives has spent a lifetime battling pseudo-science and alarmist mountain myths. The first was in the early 1980s at a conference in Mohonk in Canada where he helped debunk the myth of Himalayan degradation which

had predicted that the mountains would turn into desert and the soil erosion would cause catastrophic floods downstream.

The theory became fashionable after the publication of Erik Eckholm's 1976 book, *Losing Ground*. It was picked up by agencies like the World Bank, which predicted in 1979 that given the rate of deforestation there would be no accessible forests remaining in the Himalaya by 2000. Ives and other researchers went on to prove through empirical research in Kakani and Khumbu in Nepal that far from being washed down to the sea, Himalayan slopes were being carefully manicured and maintained by wise farmers.

However, in the past five years Ives has had to do battle all over again against alarmist science about climate warming and the threat of melting glaciers. In 2007, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) stated that Himalayan glaciers were melting so fast that 'if present rates

When you cry wolf too often about a Himalayan catastrophe, people may tune out





## 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 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



JITENDRA BAJRACHARYA

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 (*below*), scientists warn against raising undue alarm.



BIKRAM RAI

continue, the likelihood of them disappearing by the year 2035 ... is very high'. This doomsday scenario was used by climate deniers to expose a fallacy in science and very nearly scuttled the 2009 Copenhagen Climate Summit.

Ives is not denying that climate warming is leading to permafrost melting, he is just arguing against exaggerating the danger by a sensationalist media or cash-hungry development agencies. 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 of Imja Lake in Khumbu, and the Germans exaggerating the dangers of glacial floods to pull out of the Arun III project in 1994.

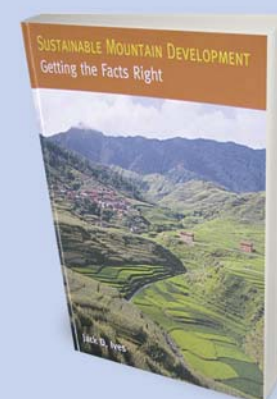
'The danger of glacial lake outbursts is real,' Ives writes, 'but misquotation and gross exaggeration are totally

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 37m 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 ...' 🇳🇵



**Sustainable Mountain Development**  
Getting the Facts Right

Jack D Ives

Himalayan Association for the Advancement of Science, 2013  
Hardcover 294 pages

[nepalitimes.com](http://nepalitimes.com)

Demystifying Himalayan degradation, # 235





# Ain't Them Bodies Saints

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. 🇳🇵

I'm not even that 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



**MUST SEE**  
**Sophia Pande**

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

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**HAPPENINGS**



BIKRAM RAI

**PR CHECK:** Election commissioners announce recipients of the 335 proportional representation (PR) seats in the Constituent Assembly at the EC office in Kantipath on Tuesday.



BIKRAM RAI

**VICTORY RUN:** Fans surround Paras Khadka, captain of the Nepali cricket team, at Tribhuvan International Airport on Sunday. The team returned from UAE after qualifying for the 2014 T20 World Cup in Bangladesh.



DEVAKI BISTA

**FIGHTING AIDS:** UN Resident Coordinator Jamie McGoldrick speaks at an event organised to mark the 26th World AIDS Day at Basantapur on Sunday.



BIKRAM RAI

**LET'S DANCE :** Participants perform a dance routine to celebrate the International Day for People with Disabilities at Bhrikuti Mandap on Tuesday.

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REVIEW

# JHOLA

A 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 glitzy 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 Ghanashyam (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 Ghanashyam who lives with his mother Kanchi (Garima Panta) and his ailing father (Desh Bhakta Khanal). 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 Ghanashyam 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 imbibes *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 enacted, but it succeeds in leaving an impact and inspiring viewers to take a stance.

Sunaina Rana  
www.jholanepalifilm.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 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 rooftop dining areas in the district.

At *Nepali Times*, we've often shied away from reviewing more established restaurants, but considering Helena's popularity among visitors, it deserves to be scrutinised as much as the newer, trendier locations we tend to gravitate towards.

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



PICS: KZ

## Helena's

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 was bland, and the topping of a whole, solitary cashew seemed insufficient.

We had better luck with our second Punjabi offering, daal makhni (Rs 260), which for me

was the standout dish. Rich and creamy as it should be, with a garnish of ghee for good measure, the only thing to complain about was the lack of naan bread on offer that day to scoop it up with. But we couldn't stay in India for the whole evening, although I suspect that this is where Helena's greatest strengths lie.

Moving instead to Europe, the chicken cordon bleu (Rs 440) came with a slightly grainy but otherwise delicious mash and steamed vegetables. The chicken was perfectly cooked: tender and stuffed with cheese and ham. But, to our dismay, it arrived smothered in a hard-to-fathom generic tomato sauce. When you

but probably best categorised as quasi-Chinese. Huge chunks of (again tender) chicken swam 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 doorstop 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.*



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MANDEL NGAN/AFP

# 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



**DHANVANTARI**  
**Buddha Basnyat, MD**

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

health 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

**IT'S OFFICIAL:** US President Barack Obama signs the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act into law during a ceremony at the White House on March 2010.

healthcare and yet it lags far behind in delivering quality and affordable care to its average citizen.

The successful implementation of the Affordable Care Act will not only revolutionise healthcare in the US, but will be one of the most defining moments of Barack Obama's presidency. Some analysts believe that if Obama is able to achieve this feat, it could even overshadow the fact that he is the first black president of the country. Earlier healthcare bills in the US such as Medicaid and Medicare (which only focus exclusively on certain groups such as the elderly) also underwent many tumultuous debates before they became law. Hopefully, Obamacare will follow a similar pattern.

Nepal, like the US, needs a universal healthcare insurance policy. Every day, across hospitals in the country, there are tragic stories of people losing their loved ones through illnesses like heart attack, kidney failure, head injury, and cancer. Even when trained and experienced healthcare professionals and state-of-the-art facilities are available, the cost of treatment is beyond the reach of common citizens. Often, families are forced to sell land and jewelry just to pay the hospital bills.

When the 601 newly elected lawmakers sit down to write a new constitution for Nepal, it would be ideal if they could draft a universal healthcare insurance law into this all important document. Of course, this is easier said than done. The debacle over Obamacare in the US shows just how challenging an attempt at universal health coverage is.

The good news is that the government and health ministry are moving forward in the right direction. If our political leaders are able to ensure good quality, affordable healthcare for all Nepalis, whether rich or poor, they will be remembered for generations. 🇳🇵

**GIZMO by YANTRICK**

## The black pearls

To make high-end phones more affordable, Colors Mobile has recently delivered two variants of its Pearl Black devices, the K1 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?

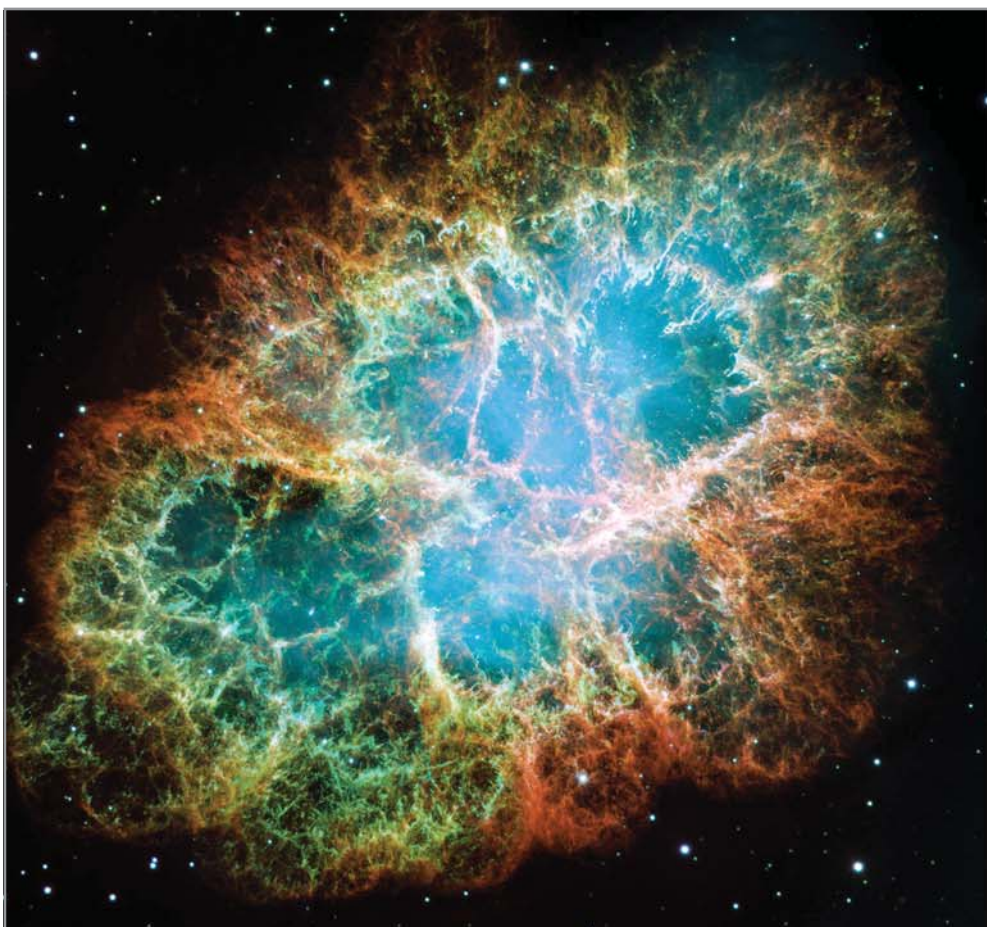
Measuring just 6.85mm thick, the K1 sports a 4.8 inch AMOLED screen that packs in screen resolution of 1280x720 pixels, which equates to an impressive 306 pixels per inch (PPI). The K2, on the other hand, is slightly bulkier at 7.70mm. However, the extra thickness is forgivable, given the stunning full HD (1920x1080 pixels), five inch IPS screen, which equates to a Samsung Galaxy S4 and Sony Xperia Z1-matching 441ppi screen.

Both the K1 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 processors, and the 2GB RAMs combine to make devices capable of delivering graphics and memory-intensive videos, games, music, multi-tasking, applications, etc with ease, all of which look amazing, especially on the K2.

Flagship phone camera resolution is currently expected at the eight mega pixels (mp) mark and the K1 follows that to a 'T.' Equipped with a 5mp front camera and a 8mp back camera with flash, the K1 is capable of taking decent pictures and is also capable of recording high-definition videos. The K2, in contrast, although fitted with the same 5mp front camera, boasts a 13mp back camera (same as the S4), 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, WiFi, and backed up by satisfactory batteries.

The comparatively low storage, with the K1 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.



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UNFCCC

# Climactic change

The recent global climate conference delivered just enough to keep the process moving

BHRIKUTI RAI in WARSAW

When delegates arrived in the Polish capital last month for talks 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 spawning 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 19th 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 muster \$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,

NOT ENOUGH: NGOs walked out of the UN Climate Talks in Warsaw last month to protest the lack of ambition and slow progress at the negotiations.

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 Developing 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 backtracked 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

## Going clean

Nepal's per capita carbon foot print is less than 1 ton per person per year, one of the lowest in the world. In comparison, the US is 17 tons/person/year and Qatar is 55 tons/person/year. Whatever Nepal does is not going to reduce global warming. But we need to switch to renewables, not just to do our bit to save the planet, but to save our economy. Nepal now imports Rs 93 billion worth of petroleum products a year from India, more than its total commodity exports of Rs 74 billion. This import is increasing due to demand for diesel for generators, which make up for the shortfall in electricity. An estimated 550MW of captive power is generated from private generators. Nepal needs to go green not to save the planet, but to save itself.

precedence over ecology.

Nepal, like delegations from other developing nations, argued that it cannot sacrifice economic growth to save the global environment and demanded compensation 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 feeble hope, but it was clear in Warsaw that the world is running out of time. 🇳🇵

nepalitimes.com

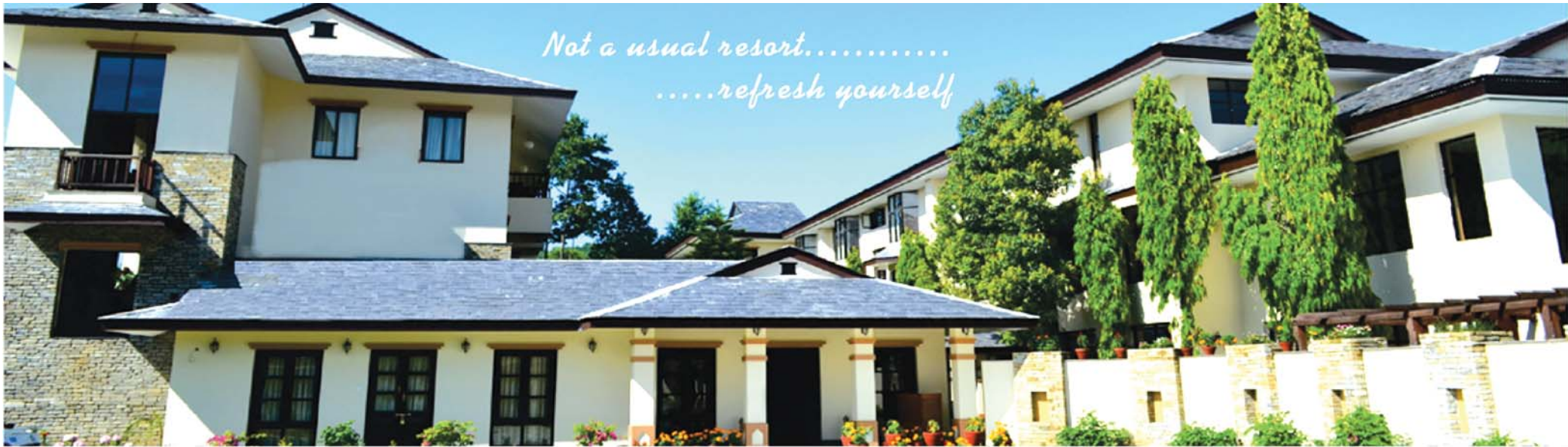
The right climate for change, #582  
Defrosted, #479  
Climate conference

## Future forests

After 20 years of negotiations, an agreement was finally hammered out in Warsaw to reward countries that prevent the destruction of their forests. Countries that have satellite monitoring and can show they protect the rights of forest peoples and biological diversity can now draw from climate funds for carbon they haven't pumped into the atmosphere.

Deforestation eliminates carbon sinks and increases the concentration of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere. The agreement called REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation) is backed by pledges of \$280 million from the US, UK, and Norway and compensates countries that lose revenue from not exploiting their forests.

A quarter of all forests in Nepal are managed and protected by over 17,000 community forest user groups and REDD+ pilot projects have been conducted in Dolakha, Gorkha, and Chitwan. The government is preparing a REDD+ strategy which is expected to outline how Nepal can benefit from this scheme. But in the absence of adequate verification mechanisms, it may be some time yet before user groups get cash in hand from the climate fund.



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# Living through the Himalayan thaw

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*  
*Nepal Art Council Babar Mahal*  
*11 December 2013 - April 2014.*

[nepalitimes.com](http://nepalitimes.com) 


Meltdown, #217  
Climbing in climate change, #657

## PEOPLE IN CHANGE

**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."



**PASANG DOLMA SHERPA**  
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."



PICS: NAYANTARA GURUNG KAKSHAPATI



**CHANGE OF STATE:** The East Rongbuk glacier near Mount Everest in 1921 and again in 2008. Global warming is causing the Himalayan permafrost to melt at an accelerated rate.







GLACIERWORKS

# Working for glaciers

DAVID BREASHEARS

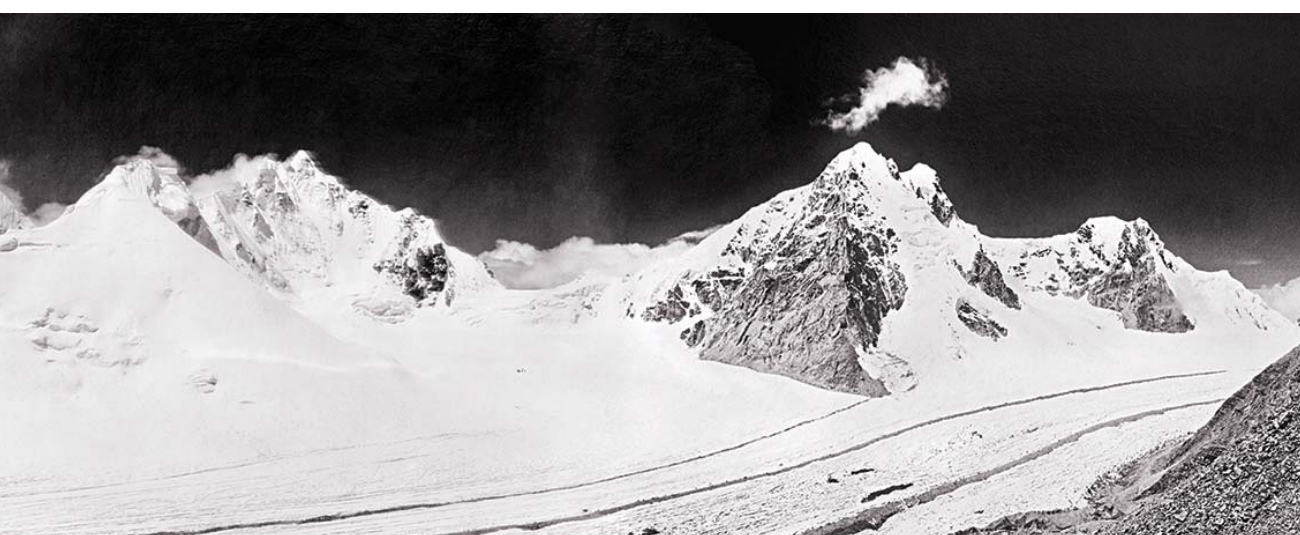
In October 2007, I travelled to the north side of Mt Everest carrying with me a black and white photograph taken in 1921 (*pic, below*) by the renowned British mountaineer, George L. Mallory. It showed the ice-encrusted north face of Everest and the Main Rongbuk Glacier, flowing in a sweeping S-shaped 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



In 1985, the Dig Tsho glacial lake near Thame burst and the flood down the Dudh Kosi killed 12 people and destroyed bridges, trails, and the \$1.5 million hydropower plant in Namche Bajar.

Nare glacial lake located below the southern slope of Mt Ama Dablam. In 1977, the moraine holding the lake failed and caused severe erosion to the downstream area.



E.O. WHEELER/ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY



DAVID BREASHEARS/GLACIERWORKS

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.



DAVID BREASHEARS/GLACIERWORKS



# Consensus first, two-thirds second

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

हिमाल  
खबरपत्रिका

## 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 fall 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

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 not 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 Girija Prasad Koirala agreed to it. We cannot go back now.

**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.

[nepalitimes.com](http://nepalitimes.com)

Read complete interview

## Why change the guard?

Santosh Acharya, *Nepal*, 1 December

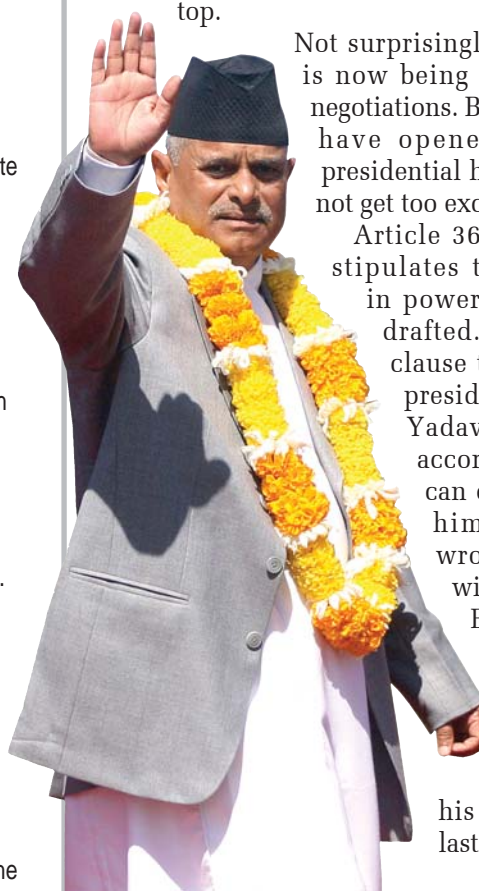
नेपाल

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 ceded Singha Darbar to the Nepali Congress, its leaders Jhalanath 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 Baluwater 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.



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 UCPN (M).

## Consensus building

**SK:** We must try to get everyone's input in the CA. For that we will need a consensus government.

**MKN:** There are a lot of smaller parties and we can't risk forging the wrong kind of alliance this time. Both the NC and UML must remain flexible in their consensus seeking. We might have to accommodate the Baidya Maoists as well as certain issues raised by the RPP-N.

## Amending the constitution to make consensus government compulsory

**SK:** During our election campaign,

Congress trying to hurry the process?

Has it put any serious thought into how it wants to deal with our party? The NC should be well aware of the consequences of making us angry.

## Possibilities of becoming the PM

**SK:** We are a democratic party. It's our responsibility to decide who will be the prime minister. Do you think I will insist upon going to Singha Darbar just because I am party chairman? I don't want to disrespect rules or democratic practice.

**MKN:** This is not about my personal desires. Whatever the country needs, I will do.

## Drafting a new constitution before 2015

**SK:** The only contentious points are federalism and model of governance. We can discuss these over the next six months and then draft the



अन्नपूर्ण पोष्ट Basu Kshitiz in *Annapurna Post*, 30 November

## QUOTE OF THE WEEK



“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’ble 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 Awesome’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 asstrologer 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 anal-yst. 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 behead 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



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