Water torture

Hard on the heels of the landslide disaster on the Bhote Kosi on 2 August that claimed 145 lives, Nepal’s mid-western mountains and plains suffered catastrophic flooding never seen before in the region. A monsoon cloudburst dumped over 500 mm of rain overnight on 14 August, unleashing flash floods in the Surkhet and Dang Valleys, and the Babai and Rapti Rivers washing away settlements, bridges and highways.

Many of the survivors lost family members, their homes and all their possessions. Sauni Tharu, 17, in Bardia escaped with her 14-day baby daughter when the Babai washed away her home. She has been surviving by the East-West Highway in a tent for the past week (pic, above).

Late-planted paddy fields across the mid-West have been destroyed. The government appears to have underestimated the scale of the disaster, with more than 100 killed, hundreds more missing, 30,000 homeless and up to 250,000 people affected. Now disease stalks survivors in the affected region.
RECKLESS FEDERIFICATION

It doesn’t take a Nobel laureate to see that Nepal is lop-sided and top-heavy in favour of dominant caste and ethnicities.

The job isn’t easy because the distance between the various parties on state restructuring and form of governance is as wide as ever. You know when senior politicians start thumping their chests in the media that they are trying to improve their bargaining positions or close-door negotiations. Pushpa Kamal Dahal is characteristically playing to both audiences by warning there will be no constitution if the NC and UML do not go along with his ethnicity-based federal model, and then saying his party was willing to be flexible on that issue.

One of the reasons the last CA lapsed, by the way, was precisely because Baburam Bhattarai abandoned an agreement on an 11-province federal model with mixed system of government that his party itself had proposed. It is now also accepted that for geopolitical reasons our neighbours were not so hot on ethnic enclaves on their borders. This time, there seems to be a broad consensus among the neighbours - and through them, in the international community - that the priority is a constitution that ensures stability. Politicians are also under pressure from public opinion to do it right this time.

This time, things are also diachronically different because the November elections showed that the public mood is against the formation of ethnic bantustans. As Bihari Krishna Shrestha and David Seddon argue in this issue (pages 16-17), inclusion can be addressed without resorting to divisive and impractical federalisation.

To be sure, the monopoly on power by a centralised and self-perpetuating ruling class must be addressed not just as a matter of equity, but also to ensure future peace in this country. It doesn’t take a Nobel laureate to see that Nepal is lop-sided and top-heavy in favour of dominant caste and ethnicities. A new inclusive and democratic constitution isn’t a level that tilted playing field.

Ironically, it is good news that the real reason there hasn’t been faster progress on the constitution is because the political parties are too busy with intra- and inter-party feuds. It means there is reason to hope that they may realise the dangers of reckless federalisation.

As long as we keep ego, ambition and petty politics out of constitution-writing, we should be fine.

N

e months after the second CA was conceived leading to a phantom pregnancy, and six years after a barren first CA, things seem to be finally moving on the draft of the new constitution. We don’t know what is causing this sudden progress, and if it is outside pressure, we don’t want to know.

An informal summit of the top leaders of the three main parties (NC, UML and UCPN-M) that met on 10 August was itself a step forward. In fact, it was the first time since the November elections that the top leaders had even found time to meet to discuss the draft of a new constitution.

And they didn’t just meet over tea and biscuits, they actually agreed to agree, taking ‘decisive action to move forward on the constitution draft based on the decisions of the previous CA’. We are so desperate for good news on the constitutional front that we grasp at straws, and some hailed the meeting as a ‘breakthrough’. That would be overdoing the optimism.

So there now seems to be an effort to create the right political atmosphere to take the document forward. Of the five committees set up to discuss various aspects of the draft, the Dialogue Committee chaired by ideologue of the Maoist party, Baburam Bhattarai, seems to be the most active. That is because the other committees need to have an idea of how far there is a consensus on the points of disagreement before they can sit down. And the Dialogue Committee does what all committees do when they come up with an intractable problem: they set up a sub-committee. Many of the contentious issues are so substantial that they need intervention and agreement at the highest political level.

The CA has been working backwards from its self-imposed deadline of 22 January 2015, and the Dialogue Committee needs to come up with a broad agreement by early September.

The CA itself is characteristically playing to both audiences by warning there will be no constitution if the NC and UML do not go along with his ethnicity-based federal model, and then saying his party was willing to be flexible on that issue.

One of the reasons the last CA lapsed, by the way, was precisely because Baburam Bhattarai abandoned an agreement on an 11-province federal model with mixed system of government that his party itself had proposed. It is now also accepted that for geopolitical reasons our neighbours were not so hot on ethnic enclaves on their borders. This time, there seems to be a broad consensus among the neighbours - and through them, in the international community - that the priority is a constitution that ensures stability. Politicians are also under pressure from public opinion to do it right this time.

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As long as we keep ego, ambition and petty politics out of constitution-writing, we should be fine.
HAVE BOLD TASTE
AND INTENSE CHARACTER

KEEP WALKING
What comes first, crime or politics? Both.

Why would a group of netas of one particular political party go on record for days on end to defend the human rights of a well-known crook, who, the police said, died in an ‘encounter’? And what does the politicians’ support for such crooks say about our future?

To be fair, the netas do have a point: Whatever one thought of the dead crook, he did not deserve to be chased down and shot. An investigation should be launched to bring out the truth behind what really happened in the encounter.

But the public is not buying the politicians’ fury. If you care so much about rights, they ask, where were you when a girl was raped in a bus in Nepalganj recently? Where’s your concern for the Bhote Kosi survivors who are still fending for themselves, three weeks after the landslide?

In any other democratic country, politicians channel public outrage. In Nepal, when politicians channel their outrage, the public is cynical. When politicians are widely seen to have much in common with alleged criminals, they lose touch with the everyday concerns of ordinary Nepalis who have electoral representation but no real political voice. And our leaders want to keep things this way: no regular competitive elections for years, it is structurally difficult to change the way political parties exercise unaccountable power over us.

Meanwhile, the cost of doing party-politics in all the 75 districts is getting costlier and costlier. Every party needs big money to get going. They either raise funds by the tedious means of calling people up, asking for donations and hoping they give it to you without being forced, or by using generally accepted shortcuts to siphon money from the national treasury.

But what if you are a national-level senior politician who has aspirations to lead the government someday? You may exude gravitas, but you need the money too. You quietly outsource all the unsavory aspects of your fund-raising work to supporters who are known criminals. You provide them with protection so that they don’t have to worry about the law enforcement authorities. On the other side of this equation is Nepal’s positive social progress and anemic economic growth: With millions of healthy young people reaching working age (without dying early due to diarrhoea, cholera, etc), and then not finding gainful employment in Nepal, some of them turn to crime to sustain themselves.

Unaccountable politicians who need money for their parties and young men who can loot, rob and extort thus become familiar bedfellows in our colourful political landscape. When one dies, the other feels hurt. How to change this arrangement? There is no easy answer and the ones that come up have a chicken-or-egg problem.

Still, continuous yet strategic campaigns by independent civil society institutions for good governance, and an enabling environment for private sector companies to be born, grow and create jobs and bigger tax base remain two ways through which the state can provide political accountability to all.
The tourism industry is cautiously optimistic about the launch of a new joint venture private international airline, and a new domestic airline in Nepal. Himalaya Airlines is a joint venture between Tibet Airlines of China and Nepali investors that include HIF Aviation Investment and Yeti Air International. At a signing ceremony on Tuesday at the Hyatt Regency, Himalaya Airlines announced it will start operations with Kathmandu to Lhasa and Chengdu flights on 28 October.

The company is acquiring two Airbus 319 Series 2 aircraft and has options for three more Airbus 320s as its network expands to points in India, the Gulf and Hong Kong. The airline said it is also eying direct flights through wide-body aircraft to Europe by next year if demand picks up. "You may ask what a banker is doing investing in an airline," Prithvi Bahadur Pande of HIF Aviation Investment said at the ceremony, "but we have realised the vast untapped potential for tourism and aviation in Nepal." Cheng Yira of Tibet Airlines said his company specialised in ultra-high altitude operations on the Plateau and said it made strong business sense for the tourism development of Tibet to partner with a Nepali company. "The joint venture will build on the age-old trans-Himalaya connection between Nepal and China," he added.

Chinese Ambassador Wu Chun Tai stressed that this was a business-to-business joint venture, adding that it would further enhance Nepal-China cooperation in investment, trade and tourism. "Just as the Himalaya is a monument linking Nepal and China, Himalaya Airlines marks a new monument in economic cooperation between the two countries," he added.

Meanwhile, Sourya Airlines is starting domestic operations with Bombardier CRJ 200 jets that will cut current turboprop flight time to and from Kathmandu on trunk city routes nearly half. Sourya's first 50-seater Bombardier CRJ landed in Kathmandu on Monday and will be connecting Kathmandu and Shahgar, Nepalgar, Bharvaha, Bantunag and Bhadpur. The airline says it is adding another CRJ200 next year. The airline was launched with overseas Nepali investment, and former pilots of Buddha Air and Yeti.

**Domestic jet service**

Venturing Jointly: At the signing ceremony of Himalaya Airlines on 18 August are (from l to r) Vijay Shrestha of Yeti Air International, Chinese Ambassador Wu Chun Tai, Prithvi Bahadur Pande of HIF Aviation and Cheng Yira of Tibet Airlines.

**BIZ BRIEFS**

**Ncell Opera**

In its first partnership in Nepal, Opera Software has joined hands with telecommunications company Ncell. Ncell will now offer a co-branded version of the Opera Mini web browser to its subscribers.

**Reaching out**

Bank of Kathmandu donated Rs 533,000 to Sunkosi landslide victims. The amount was collected from the staff and the organisation’s fund.

**New netbooks**

Colors recently launched a new series of netbook premium tablets—XT751 and XT721. Both the netbooks have WiFi Bluetooth proximity, accelerometer, light sensor, compass sensor, WAP/EDGE/GPS, music player and video player.

**Xcent out**

Laxmi InterContinental, the sole distributor of Hyundai vehicles for Nepal launched its premium compact sedan Hyundai Xcent on 19 August. Ganesh Shrestha, chairman of Laxmi Group, said: “With this launch, we will further enhance our presence in the Nepali Auto Market.”

**Discounted**

Kunal Furnishing is offering upto 60 per cent off on select products as part of its Dashian special offer. This offer is valid for curtians, furnitures, sofa, flooring and other items.
In an unresponsive state

There is a danger resources meant for disaster relief will be spent on photo-ops for CA members in mid-western Nepal

A
t the behest of the UCPN (Maoist) Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal, the CA has been adjourned for a week until Monday so as to allow lawmakers from disaster affected regions to return to their constituencies and help with rescue and relief efforts. From the landslide at Jure, Sindhupalchok earlier in the month to the devastating floods across the mid-western districts of Surkhet, Bardiya, Banke, and Dang this week, August has been marred by tragedies. To make things worse, the state has been painfully slow in providing basic necessities to survivors and ensuring their safety. Even as families grieve the loss of their loved ones, thousands find themselves battling for survival: living on the roadsides in makeshift tents, with little to no food, among growing fear of cholera and other water borne diseases.

For leaders who have insulated themselves from the average citizen, going back to the people who elected them will provide a much needed reality check. However, given our VIP culture, there is a real danger that resources and manpower meant for disaster relief could be channeled towards chaperoning CA members in the districts and the whole exercise might end up being just another photo-op. Also in the name of reaching out to victims in remote villages, senior party leaders might be tempted to charter helicopters at the expense of taxpayers like they did during their election campaigns last year.

With five months remaining before the 22 January deadline to draft a new constitution, there is also a case to be made that the parliamentarians should have stayed in the capital and focused at the task at hand. They could have organised national donation drives from Kathmandu and pressed the government to ease all bureaucratic hurdles so that authorities in the districts can do their jobs smoothly.

Part of the delay in finishing the constitution arises from the fact that our CA and parliament are one and the same. In the absence of locally elected bodies, CA members also have to take on the role of being sole representatives of their constituencies. But much of their misery is self-inflicted. Despite being the second highest-paid government officials after ministers, parliamentarians have wasted precious time trying to arm twist the government into providing Rs 50 million each as constituency grants and bickering over petty perks like personal laptops and internet connection.

In June, the UCPN (M) along with other parties held the assembly hostage for nearly two weeks until their demands were fulfilled. Then the UML’s extended general convention and party elections in July meant many of its parliamentarians simply excused themselves of their CA duties for weeks and the announcement of the budget also had to be delayed. This week, the UML created yet another distraction by embroiling in a meaningless argument over re-endorsing the president and vice president through the CA as stated in its seven-point deal with the NC.

While the CA members are quick to stand up for their rights, fulfilling responsibilities does not come as easily to them. Even nine months after polls, it’s a disgrace that the assembly is still 26 members short because the major parties are undecided on whom to nominate. Lawmakers are shamelessly ignoring the Supreme Court’s order in May to fill the vacant posts within 15 days.

Between three weeks of Dasain-Tihar-Chatth festivities in October and then the distractions of the two-day SAARC summit in Kathmandu in November, there really isn’t much time left. And yet parties are still stuck in ‘deliberation mode’ over pristinal issues of forms of governance, number of states, electoral system, and establishment of a constitutional court. It’s as though they want to stall the public until it’s too late and we have no choice but to accept a document cobbled together through a 12th hour backroom deal like they tried in 2012.

Trishna Rana

![Image](https://via.placeholder.com/150)

LUCKY TO BE ALIVE: Indriya Tharu, 22, of Bardiya tends to her newborn son inside a roadside tent after escaping the flood on 14 August with her family. In Bardiya alone, 21 bodies have been found, 18 are missing and 14,000 people have been displaced.
There have always been extreme weather events in the
Himalaya, but few remember a more erratic monsoon
than this year’s. It started a month late, and with a
whimper. Total precipitation in July was half the normal,
and then in August all hell broke loose. The mountains
of mid-western Nepal got 600mm of rain in 12 hours,
unleashing devastating floods in Dang, Surkhet and
Banke. It is a characteristic of El Nino summers that the
weather becomes unpredictable, we should expect a
combination of deficient and excessive rainfall patterns
towards the tail end of this monsoon season.

KATHMANDU

Home to an ancient urban culture and
an extraordinary concentration of
elaborate monuments and temples,
Kathmandu Valley’s unique Malla-era
architecture is a world heritage. But while
most attention is rightly devoted to this,
more recent buildings often escape the notice
of preservationists.

The newly opened Taragaon Museum
tries to correct that, and is devoted to the
display and documentation of the valley’s
19th and 20th century architectural heritage.
The museum is itself housed in a restored
modernist building built in the 1970s.
Located within the Hyatt Regency Hotel
premises, the building was originally the
Taragaon Hotel until it closed in the 1990s.
It was designed 45 years ago by Austrian
architect Carl Pruscha, who was also involved
in Kathmandu’s urban planning.

The Taragaon complex includes seven
unique arch vaulted brick buildings
separated by brick-paved quadrangles.
Before it was turned into the hotel, the
complex served primarily as a hostel for
foreign visitors, scientists and artists who
were interested in the cultural wealth of the
country and wanted to stay longer in the
valley.

Arun Saraf, of The Saraf Foundation
and owner of the property supported
the museum’s concept to document
Nepali architecture since the 1960s, after
Kathmandu opened up to the outside world.
Pruscha was involved in the design of the
annexe to the museum, and he was helped
by his compatriot, Thomas Schrom who is
currently involved in the restoration of the
Patan Darbar.

Much of the former hotel has been
tastefully adapted as a museum after
extensive restoration, which included
replacing small wooden windows with
big steel-framed ones, changing the brick
flooring, and fixing major leak problems.

Says manager Roshan Mishra: “The
first standout quality of the museum is the
architecture and its distinct ambience.”
And one gets a sense of authentic Nepali
architecture from the exterior, which
deliberately uses red bricks and no cement
plaster, yet the large windows and drum-like
roofing are unmistakably modern.

“External influence of concrete
architecture started to dominate new
developments in the Kathmandu valley,”
says Pruscha, who worked with the National
Planning Commission in the 1970s, “so it
was my concern to remember that brick was
and could further be the principle building
material for the valley.”

The museum focuses primarily on
conserving and documenting the research
undertaken by the wave of expatriate artists,
architects, photographers, and scholars who
have taken to Nepal since the late 1960s. The
result is a remarkably rich collection that may
surprise many, since most of the drawings
and photographs on display are little known,
and were formerly either stored abroad or in
private collections.

Curated by the prolific architectural
historian Niels Gutschow, the collection
is much more than a compendium of
drawings. It tells a story of the history of
documentation and representation of the
valley by foreign eyes, suggesting that
expatriates had an important role to play
in the early documentation of Nepal. The
museum has the digitised version of one of
the very first modern city maps of the Valley
by Erwin Schneider.

Apart from the three buildings that make
up the permanent museum collection, there
is the Budhishativa Gallery with Newari art,
the Pathivara Gallery displaying thangka
paintings and a contemporary art gallery.
“There is no other place that has three
core galleries—all in one place—with such
diversity,” says Mishra. The museum also
has a café and bar with free wi-fi.

9am to 5pm, Sunday to Friday
Free entrance
museumdirect@taragaon.com
www.facebook.com/TheTaragaonMuseum

DEVAKI BISTA

ELVIN L SHRESTHA

ORDINARY IS OUT. AMAZING IS IN.

The Honda Amaze amazes the streets
**EVENTS**

**Jumping Frog**, A mask, puppet and musical play about the true story of a frog. 22 August to 23 September, 5.15pm, Mandala Theatre, Anamnagar, (01)4249761

**Nepa film festival**, support local filmmakers, skip the mall, and come enjoy an open-air film screening every evening for a week. 6 to 12 September, Jorhat Park, Kathmandu

**Flagbearers**, Join hands in attempting to break the Guinness World Record for the 'Largest Human National Flag' by bringing together more than 30,000 participants and breaking the previously held record of 29,957 participants. 23 August, 6 to 9 am, Tudikhel, Kathmandu, (01)4263070, 9813138024

**Art conversation**, Visual Artist Sujan Chitrakar will be talking about Mural Arts. 29 August, 4:30pm, Taragaon Museum, Boudha, (01)4481786

**Teej**, Celebrate Teej and support Bihani Social Venture’s Bazaar with music, food and laughter. At SARE, 23 August, 6 to 7:30 pm, Nepal Garden Restaurant, Pulchowk, 9851103087

**Vo’ye**, Celebrate Indra Jatra with a grand Newari feast. At JSO, 9 September, 5.30pm, godhā, Thamel

**Spot connection**, A conversation with visual artists Sujan Chitrakar and Manish Lal Shrestha on modern and contemporary art. 24 August, 4pm, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babar Mohal Revised

**DIining**

**Chez Caroline**, authentic ambiance, exquisite food, glorious sunshine and more. 9am to 10pm, Babar Mohal Revised, (01)4261014/010

**Backyard**, incredibly reasonable prices and modest and simple food at this no-nonsense restaurant. Jhamarkot

**Little Italy**, go vegetarian at this new Italian food chain and don’t forget to end your meal with the chef’s special, the chocolate bomb. Darbar Marg

**Ghar-e-kabab**, serving the best of north Indian cuisine, with live Sarod recitals on some days. Hotel Annapurna, Darbar Marg

**Degaa Resto Lounge**, for mouth watering Newari and Indian cuisine. Kumaripati

**Fuji Bakery**, tucked in Chakupat this bakery offers homemade goodies like apple pie, pain du chocolat, and banana cake. Chakupat, Lalitpur

**Vo’ye**, 8 degrees, from lemon lassis to spicy pork stews, this is a great place to try continental dishes. Jhamarkot

**Barista Lavazza**, the newest addition to the Valley’s European inspired coffee culture cafes serves excellent mochas and lattes, don’t forget to try their grilled chicken sandwich. Jhamarkot

**Salt & Pepper Restro Lounge**, espressos, mocha, late, frappacino, cocktails, liquor, beer and flavoured shishas, with an outdoor lake-view terrace. Lakeside, Pokhara, (061)463484, 9846210568, www.saltandpeppernepal.com

**Dan Ran**, for the best Japanese food in this part of town. Jhamarkot

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**Social change**, ‘The Ends of Kinship: Depopulation, Education-Driven Outmigration, and Social Change in Mustang’, a talk by Sienna Craig. 25 August, 4.30 pm, Fulbright Commission Auditorium, Gyaneshwor

**Teej**, Celebrate Teej and support Bihani Social Venture’s Bazaar with music, food and laughter. At SARE, 23 August, 6 to 7:30 pm, Nepal Garden Restaurant, Pulchowk, 9851103087

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**Gallerie**, A presentation and discussion with Bina Sarkar about Nepali art history, publication, research and more. 22 August, 5pm, Venodan bank Auditorium, Kamalpasha, (01)5018007

**Anything can happen**, Kushi Bhi Ho Sakta, a play about the journey to stardom, with Anupam Kher. 22 August, 5pm onwards, Army Officers Club, (01)4813400

**Social change**, ‘The Ends of Kinship: Depopulation, Education-Driven Outmigration, and Social Change in Mustang’, a talk by Sienna Craig. 25 August, 4.30 pm, Fulbright Commission Auditorium, Gyaneshwor
Under-ground Gig,
A show where anyone can perform to keep rock alive.
Rs 150, 30 August, 1 to 6 pm, Rhapshody Hall, Ktm.

Rock of Ages,
A series of energetic tributes to rock legends like Van Halen, Nirvana and Tool by bands like The Maze, Newaz and Quinterval.
30 August, 1pm to 6pm, Purple Haze Rock Bar, Thamel.

Starry Night BBQ,
Spend your Friday dinners listening to soulful numbers by Ciney Gurung.
Rs 1,499, Shambala Garden Cafe, Hotel Shangri-la, (01)4411999

In 1950, Swiss geologist Tony Hagen took a panoramic photograph of the Annapurna range from a spot in Pokhara. Four decades later, hotelier Shyam Sundar Pandey decided to build a deluxe hotel in the same area from where Hagen photographed his now iconic shot. And thus, the Shangri-La Village was born.

Take a quick tour of this expansive hotel and it’s clear to see why the owners chose to forgo locations closer to the lake for the one in Gharipatan, a 15-minute drive away from the lakeside. The view of the Annapurnas that became representative of the lake city is unmatched and easily enjoyed from all sides of this beautiful property.

True to its name, the hotel is designed like a village. The hotel’s 61 rooms are spread over a cluster of small cottages, providing both quiet and privacy to guests. Rooms are comfortable with a perfect mix of modern amenities and traditional interior.

For those who don’t want to venture out, the hotel offers a lot of facilities. There is a decent size pool, a spa, and a fitness centre. If you are into yoga, don’t miss out on doing your pranayama in the cabana. An insider’s tip: Get there early, as this one is a guest favourite and tends to get occupied for photoshoot sessions.

Whether it is the personal scroll with your name on it that greets you in your room or the hammocks that come out magically on sunny days, Shangri-La Village like Pokhara in monsoon, was a nice revelation.

Tsering Dolker Gurung
Shangri-La Village is currently offering Monsoon Madness Package 2 nights/3 days for Rs 5555 per person on twin sharing basis Until 3 September, 4412999/4410051

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Ncell, Here for Nepal
www.nccell.com.np
Maya Sherpa and Dawa Yangzom Sherpa are mountain guides. I am from Solu Khumbu. Maya is from Okhaldunga and Dawa is from Dolakha. We became guides because we saw an increasing number of women becoming pilots, engineers, doctors and drivers, but few wanted to become guides in Nepal’s mountains. In our jobs, we have taken dozens of climbers to the top of Yala Peak, Lobuche Peak, Ama Dablam, and Everest among others. It was on one of these expeditions that we heard about Mt K2 in Pakistan, the second highest mountain in the world. It wasn’t just its height, it is also the most dangerous mountain to scale. Out of the 317 people who attempted to climb K2 before us, 80 had died. Somehow, we knew we had to climb it.

So, the ‘First Nepali K2 Women Expedition’ set off with the goal of spreading awareness of climate change and its impact on the mountains. Even more difficult than climbing was the challenge of fund raising. Despite cutting down on expenses, we needed a minimum of Rs 7 million, and fortunately we got our Nepali sponsors.

It was a long, seven-day walk to the Base camp. Unlike Everest Base Camp, K2’s base camp was isolated: no lodges, no crowds. The weather turned bad and we were stuck at Base Camp for a week. On the seventh day, the weather got better and we started going back and forth to Camp 3 to acclimatise.

On the afternoon of 26 July we finally reached the top of K2. We hugged each other and cried and remembered all those who helped our dream come true. We felt like we had conquered the world.

Pemba Sherpa, Lhakpa Sherpa, Ming Dorji Sherpa, Min Gelyu Sherpa were the other Nepalis on our team who kept pushing us to our goal and we are thankful to them.
Diku Tamang always wanted to be a nurse and serve the sick and needy. She trained as an Auxiliary Nurse Midwife, and spent two years in Denmark. Back in Nepal, she worked at a private hospital in Kathmandu but couldn’t bear to see the corruption, and quit. It was then that the 29-year-old Solu Khumbu native found her second calling in life: to be a mountain guide. Diku Tamang first worked at her uncle’s travel company in 2005, taking clients in the Everest region. After learning she was back home, some of her Danish friends contacted Tamang to help organise their Nepal trek.

“Whenever I showed pictures of home to friends in Denmark, they used to tell me they were dying to visit Nepal,” says Tamang.

Now, Tamang (pic, left) is a full-time trekking guide, taking visitors to Solu Khumbu, Langtang, Annapurna, Mustang, and Gosainkunda. Sometimes she even goes off the beaten path and takes her clients to Humla, Jumla, Rara, and the far-West.

“Some of my clients want women guides, so even other trekking companies recommend my name,” says Tamang, who currently works for Destination Nepal. Often it is hotel owners and national park authorities who question her credentials when she takes guests around the country. Nevertheless, she is content to have carved a niche in an industry populated by men.

Rishiram Kattel

THE CLIMB: Scaling the steep and challenging face of K2 with other members of the Nepal team (above), two members of the First Nepali K2 Women Expedition at the summit (far left).
It should have been immediately clear to me that the trailer for the film I saw starring a young, callow Scarlett Johansson who is forced out of circumstance to become a rather extraordinary force of nature was a film by none other than the French director Luc Besson. After all, he has made his name making films that have more or less immortalised Anne Parillaud in *La Femme Nikita* (1990), a 12-year-old Natalie Portman in *Léon: The Professional* (1994), Milla Jovovich in *The Fifth Element* and now Johansson in *Lucy* as female characters who transcend the ordinary.

While *Lucy* is not quite the classic like *La Femme Nikita* and *Léon*, it is still much more riveting than any old Hollywood action flick. Perhaps the secret lies in the fact that Besson made the film as pure self indulgence: he was fascinated by the idea that we may only be using a fraction of our brains (this notion is fairly mythical according to most neurologists today) and decided to make a film that would play out his fascination with the possibilities inherent in this premise.

We meet Lucy, Johansson’s character, just as she is duped by her good-for-nothing boyfriend Richard (Pilou Asbæk) into delivering a briefcase, contents unknown, to a Taiwanese gangster in Taipei. All manner of things must go wrong in order for Lucy to end up ingesting a large quantity of CPH4 – an experimental drug that has the extraordinary capacity to enhance human brain function when taken in large doses.

Throw science out the window as Lucy careens through Taipei and Paris, becoming more and more omniscient as well as scarily stronger, practically telekinetic really, in her search for answers to what she is becoming.

While this film maybe structured as a fairly conventional action thriller, including Lucy dodging the gangsters that initially forced her to carry the CPH4 – Besson is far more interested in the question of what really might happen if humans truly had the capacity to become godlike, and he pursues this question with almost no real regard to maintaining any semblance of a truly cohesive plotline.

Don’t let this put you off though. While Johansson has a few off moments, her onscreen persona is powerful, the visuals captivating, and the pseudo philosophy moving enough to keep you in your seat. It helps that Morgan Freeman and Amr Waked (from the wonderful *Salmon Fishing in the Yemen*) are part of a cast that just about manages to hold this crazy little film together.

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If you are a fan of Luc Besson, you cannot miss *Lucy*. If this is the first time you’ve heard his name – what better way of being introduced to his oeuvre.
A guide to what is left

In Hemanta Mishra’s new guide book to Chitwan, there is a striking aerial view of the Inner Tarai valley, probably taken from a flight to 200,000 tigers, and 500 rhinos in Chitwan alone. As the park got overcrowded, Mishra spearheaded the translocation of tigers and rhinos to other national parks like Bardia. He started the collaboration with the Frankfurt Zoo to set up a breeding centre for the endangered gharial crocodile in 1977. Mishra admits: “My western academic knowledge of forests and ecology was not good enough in Chitwan ... decisions had to be politically palatable to rulers, socially acceptable to Chitwan communities, and economically viable.” This is why Nepal’s Chitwan National Park: A Handbook is a guidebook like no other — your guide to the flora and fauna of Chitwan is the person who is personally responsible for Nepal’s great conservation success story. The book is a must-have for everyone going to Chitwan, serves both as a backgrounder to the history and geography of the place, but also a book that you carry on safari so you can reference what you see from elephant back.

For example that Chitwan is home to 60 per cent of the 860 species of birds found in Nepal, one-third of the butterfly types, 60 kinds of mammals (two of them aquatic), 55 amphibian and reptile species, and 125 types of wild freshwater fish. But this book is not just a listing of flora and fauna, the chapters draw heavily from the personalised accounts of Mishra’s previous books. The Soul of the Rhino and The Boxes of the Tiger. The threats to Chitwan are not over. Poachers thrive in Nepal’s unstable political transition when wildlife smugglers have political protection. The population explosion of the Nepali Tarai puts increasing pressure on Chitwan’s habitat. There is also the threat of the new East-West Railway bifurcating the park. Pollution, overfishing and dam construction on the Narayani threaten the fresh water dolphin, Nepal’s most endangered mammal.

It is to the credit of pioneer conservationists like Hemanta Mishra that unlike in Africa and India, the national parks of Nepal have become models for eco-tourism and sustainable nature protection. And Mishra’s book is a primer on why Chitwan is so important to protect.

Kunda Dixit

Hemanta Mishra Nepal, in a career spanning three decades, was instrumental in saving the endangered gharial crocodile in 1977 before releasing it into the wild.

FIRM GRIP: Hemanta Mishra with a gharial bred in captivity in Chitwan in 1977 before releasing it into the wild.

Koyla Lounge and Bar

Home to dozens of hole-in-the-wall places it may be, but New Road has always been a bit of a stretch for those of us living on the other side of the bridge. But still, we get into packed buses to sample its many delicious and cheap eateries. Whether it is the hot and piping, spicy chicken curry or the piping hot dosa that is a safe bet: Prosciutto Pizza (Rs 340) at Koyla Lounge and Bar, some of them dating back to the Freak Street days. Today they are places only frequented by young students who are on drinking binges while the sun is still high in the sky.

The newly opened Koyla Lounge and Bar is where you go when you need an equidistant place for all your friends to gather, where the food is less important than the company.

How to get there: Walk straight from New Road Gate. Koyla Lounge and Bar is located on the eighth floor of the Kesho Pizza, opposite Ratna Park Paun Bhandar.

Great Food Deserves Carlsberg

That calls for a Carlsberg

By the end of the meal, we knew we would be paying Koyla another visit soon, yes, despite the average offerings. Why not? The location is perfect, and prices are pocket friendly.

Koyla is where you go when you need an equidistant place for all your friends to gather, where the food is less important than the company.

Kunda Dixit

Nepal’s Chitwan National Park: A Handbook

Hemanta R Mishra with Jim Osawa, Vaja Books, Thamel, 2014

208 pages

www.vajabooks.com.np
Vitamin D deficiency

Vitamin D is related to calcium absorption and sunlight is a rich source of vitamin D. In crowded areas of Kathmandu such as Asan and Indrachok where there may not be enough play areas for exposure to sunlight, rickets may develop more easily. The child may develop a pigeon chest, a crooked spine and may become bow legged. Osteomalacia, on the other hand, is the adult form of childhood rickets and is seen usually in women of child-bearing age mostly in the first pregnancy. Similar to rickets, mothers living in areas with poor exposure to sunlight are vulnerable to this condition, but also because of people besides mothers and young children. This is an example of this major recent study published in JAMA (Journal of the Medical Association) led by David Murdoch from New Zealand who is a frequent visitor to Patan Hospital where he is closely working with the paediatric department to help with the treatment of pneumococcal bacterial diseases in young children. JAMA study is a well-conducted trial in New Zealand to see the efficacy of vitamin D in the prevention of upper respiratory tract infection (URTI). Murdoch and his team gave adequate doses of vitamin D to healthy adults to see if this would prevent the problem. Unfortunately, it did not. This study was published in a major journal, and one reason for this publication may be the optimistic outlook of the medical establishment on prevention and treatment of osteomalacia.

For both of these conditions, prevention is possible with adequate exposure to sunshine, and diet which includes fish (a rich source of vitamin D) and vitamin D fortified food (milk) for mothers and young children. Importantly, many elderly people with inadequate amounts of vitamin D have been known to be susceptible to bony fractures. Even to avoid these kinds of fractures, it is best to have enough sun exposure for this vulnerable age group. Taking vitamin D supplements may also be very useful in the elderly age group of people besides mothers and young children as discussed above. Lately, vitamin D is in the news not just because of an ex-prime minister of Nepal reportedly has the condition, but also because some studies have shown it may be important as an adjunctive (add-on) treatment for tuberculosis, and prevention of certain forms of cancer. Even cardiovascular diseases like hypertension may increase with vitamin D insufficiency. However, the importance of the exact physiological role of vitamin D, if any in these non-skeletal diseases has not been clarified with any evidence-informed proof.

But there are many ongoing studies attempting to show the usefulness of vitamin D for other causes besides the prevention and treatment of bony fractures, rickets and osteomalacia. An example of this is the recent major study published in JAMA (Journal of the Medical Association) led by David Murdoch from New Zealand who is a frequent visitor to Patan Hospital where he is closely working with the paediatric department to help with the treatment of pneumococcal bacterial diseases in young children.

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There used to be arranged marriages or love marriages, now there are Facebook weddings

Marriages made in Facebook

At the age of 19, Anu Lama, 19, of a small village in Sindhupalchok went to Kuwait in 2009 to work as a maid. But, she bought a cell phone so she could keep in touch with fellow Nepalis there. Within a few months she started getting calls from a young Nepali man also working in Kuwait. Eventually they fell in love, and got married on return to Nepal. They had never met in person in Kuwait, only talked on the phone.

Marriages in Nepal are going high-tech as boy meets girl on the Internet or by phone. Adolescents, now no longer wait for their parents to match-make, which suits the bride’s family fine because they no longer have to arrange a dower. Studies show the median age of marriage in Nepal has risen from early to mid adolescence.

According to a 2012 study by Plan International, Save the Children and World Vision International, parents in 15 sample districts blamed mobile phones and media as a reason why teenagers are finding their own partners.

“Children have no reservations about eloping with their classmates. School teachers, even principals, are powerless to prevent their brightest students from getting married,” says Raj Kumar Mohan of BHRNE Nepal which works on child marriage and dowries in the eastern Tarai. To avoid complications, both families then sanction the ‘love marriages’.

In Makhuwa, Sindhupalchok, it is also the poor, uneducated, and marginalised youngsters who are more affected by mobile marriages. Parents and village elders try to discourage them, but peer pressure prevails.

Cyberweds: Kumar Acharya and Bandana (left) married after a brief Facebook courtship. Suresh Gurung proposed to Shanti (below) on Valentine’s Day though they had never met face to face.

 Plenty of matches waiting to be made. Facebook also means the end of the geography, it doesn’t matter where you are in the world anymore to matchmake. Even so, it is not always so easy to approach people on Facebook, since friend requests from strangers are often rejected. One may still need help from a family member or a relative.

“My cousin knew Bandana and in this sense he acted like a go-between,” says Kumar. And, just to keep to tradition, Bandana and Kumar also consulted an astrologer to find out if they were suited for each other before getting married.

Suresh Gurung, 24, was also helped by his sister to become Facebook friends with his future wife, Shanti. It was much easier for Suresh since Shanti was an avid Facebook user, and replied to all his messages.

“After looking through her profile, I knew that I want to marry her,” says Suresh who proposed to Shanti on Valentine’s Day (on where else?) Facebook even though he had never met her face-to-face.

Suresh and Shanti describe their match as a “love marriage”, while Kumar and Bandana consider their marriage to be an “arranged marriage”. But both are actually “Facebook marriages”.

Kumar and Bandana giggled and held each other’s hands during a recent meeting, and it was clear they were very much in love. But with matchmaking made easier through social networks, the paradox is that Facebook also makes it easier to break up.

Bandana says she has now prohibited Kumar from spending time on Facebook. “I do not like him talking to other women,” she says with a sly smile. Suresh Gurung, on the other hand, still follows his wife’s activity through Facebook. “When somebody comments on her photos, I always ask who is that guy?” he laughs.

Another negative of social networking sites such as Facebook is the ease at which people can fake identity and use it to harass others. Police on Wednesday arrested Ram Kumar Shyangbo, 30, of Sindhupalchok after receiving a complaint from a woman, who Shyangbo had befriended on Facebook. Shyangbo had been sending her vulgar messages including nude photos and solicited for sex.

With social life in Nepal moving into the virtual world, it looks like the hyper-reality of Facebook is becoming more real than actual people. Kumar and Bandana both admit their partner is quite different in real life.

“In the pictures she looked more innocent,” says Kumar. “And he was very serious on Facebook,” says Bandana. Facebook is a mask, enabling people to live their dreams and put out an idealised version of themselves. But it has allowed Nepalis separated by distances to meet up, and even young men and women living in the same neighbourhood to make the first contact.

After waiting for an answer for three months, 28-year-old Kumar Acharya finally blocked Bandana on Facebook. He had sent her 23 messages a day, having no clue if the girl was interested at all in marrying him.

Bandana did not update her status, and gave no indication if she was interested. But Kumar did not give up his Facebook courtship. He sent her a new friend request, and suddenly the relationship blossomed and the two got married.

“I read all the messages, but did not answer any of them,” Bandana, 24, recalls with a smile. “I was playing hard to get.”

Kumar and Bandana are among a growing number of married couples in Nepal who first met through social networking sites. Kumar’s mother introduced him to various prospective brides, but Facebook gave him the right choice he needed.

Social networking has therefore become the new matchmaker for Nepali youth, and with the number of Facebook users crossing 4 million, there are plenty of matches waiting to be made. Facebook also means the end of the geography, it doesn’t matter where you are in the world anymore to matchmake.

Even so, it is not always so easy to approach people on Facebook, since friend requests from strangers are often rejected. One may still need help from a family member or a relative.

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David Seddon

Federalism for the sake of it

One that Nepal’s political parties have managed to agree that the title of the new Constitution should be, simply, “The Constitution of Nepal” without further elaboration, they may also have gathered the courage and realism to agree that federalism is the wrong response to rightful and legitimate concerns regarding the re-structuring of the state to ensure that democracy expresses the will of the majority of the people and safeguarding the rights of all minority groups. A new, democratic Nepal should hold free and fair elections to a national assembly on a regular basis, probably adopting some form of proportional representation, perhaps combined with first-past-the-post, as in the case of the elections to the first CA. The slate of candidates should be identified in advance by the parties rather than selected after the event, and with candidates standing in only one seat each. Constituencies in the Terai could be re-structured to give stronger representation of Madhesis in the national assembly. It is not at all clear that there should be a second house, but if so this also should be largely elected rather than selected.

BY THE WAY
Anurag Acharya

It may seem like a wasted six years. After all, we did embark on a federal republican course without charting the political and technical path of how to get there. The sole role of the first CA was to bring an armed rebel group into the democratic mainstream. Ultimately, the disagreements over form of governance, electoral system and state restructuring proved too contentious. The divided media stoked public sentiment, threatening communal and ethnic harmony. Those were testing times, but eventually, we grew stronger and matured as a nation. Today, the political parties and dissident groups that were bitterly divided over, say, federalism, are coming together. There are at least two reasons this is happening. First, there seems to be a sobering realisation among major forces that they cannot elbow each other out of this process, and will sooner or later have to negotiate. The Maoists who were the largest party in the first CA tried to hurl-walk the opposition and undermine their role in the constitution drafting. That fuelled differences and paralysed the CA, ultimately leading to its dissolution.

The NC and the UML, who together lead the government and the second CA, don’t want to repeat that mistake. They know, getting the statute passed through the CA is useless if it is disdained or torched by forces inside or outside, who claim a stake in the process.

“We have spent precious time trying to play each other out. It is time for mutual compromise now,” says Mahesh Acharya, who along with party colleague Ram Chandra Poudel, is tasked by the NC to find a breakthrough on contentious issues with other parties. Acharya is keeping his cards close to his chest, and says the parties must refrain from battling it out in the media until they arrive at a workable compromise. Similar sentiments by the Maoist chairman of the Dialogue Committee Baburam Bhattarai is also helpful.

The second reason for the change is that the parties are waking up to a reality that they have been fighting over various models of democracy without realising that the nation is close to developing an inclusive model based on its own unique experience. This may still not be perfect, but rather than sitting at the table with an imported blueprint, the parties must work together to build on this evolving process.

David Seddon

Co-author with Anjan Karki

Growth and Stagnation in the Periphery and the Struggle for Basic Needs in Nepal.
Federal fundamentalism

Question the merits of federalism and you are accused of committing blasphemy.

When Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi was addressing Nepal’s Constituent Assembly-Parliament recently, he must have wondered about its sheer size. His country is 40 times bigger than Nepal, but has only 543 members in its Lok Sabha.

The CA2, like its earlier model, remains a national embarrassment and this pampered and profligate assembly must be terminated as soon as possible. This has become a matter of urgency because the CA2 is stuck in the same rut as CA1 over the issue of federalisation. The CA2, like its earlier model, remains a national embarrassment and this pampered and profligate assembly must be terminated as soon as possible. This has become a matter of urgency because the CA2 is stuck in the same rut as CA1 over the issue of federalisation.

As things stand, Nepal’s progress and people’s prosperity, is the lifeblood of economic geography is taken as an extraordinary value-added only if dealt with in harmony with its unique diversity. For instance, the Chure problem can be created at the spur of the moment, the inclusive government of Nepal did not need to federalise once and for all.

As for the leaders of the Madhosi parties – including those who once called New Delhi “the Mecca and Medina of Nepali politics”, threatened a blockade on Kathmandu at Birganj, kept mum when an Indian diplomat in Birganj exhorted them to “make the Tarai burn”, and lately branded “India’s defeat” – still have to tell their fellow Nepalis how they achieved a peaceful federalisation once and for all.

For instance, the Chure problem can be created at the spur of the moment, the inclusive government of Nepal did not need to federalise once and for all. While the NC and UML can boast of more educated people in their ranks, they too have not written anything objectively on the subject. What we have is only lip service. Therefore, in order to rescue the constitution-making process, this time around, it has become morally imperative for these parties including the Maoists to urgently disavow federalisation once and for all.

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We have proved that grassroots democracy and self-governance work, we don’t need to experiment with something called ‘federalism’.

Bihari K Shrestha

Federal fundamentalism

Question the merits of federalism and you are accused of committing blasphemy.
PERMANENT RESULTS
IN MINUTES
Laser Hair Removal for All Skin Types
Ideal Solution for Permanent Hair Removal by Lumines Light Sheen Diode.

Fake encounter

Shital Tuladhar in Himl Khabarpatrika, 17 August

On 30 August 2011, Shital Tuladhar (pictured) was shot in a police encounter at Thamel’s Sailung Guest House and was assumed dead. He lived and now claims he was framed. His story:

I come from a well-to-do family, we own a hotel in Dharan’s Putali Lane. Six years ago I went to Singapore for holiday and stayed with a friend from Chitwan, Govinda Bahadur Karki Chhetri. He had married a local girl there and was now known as Eric.

We decided to invest in a business: it would start as a restaurant and later become a hotel. He guaranteed to use his connections to get me a permanent residency visa, I was tempted and borrowed Rs 5 million from three people. But six months later my tourist visa ran out and I had to return home. Eric showed no signs of hurrying for my PR, and didn’t even pick up my calls.

Later I learnt from another friend in Singapore that he was in Nepal to take part in the mourning rituals after his father’s death. I called him. On 20 August, he called me back and told me to meet him in Baneswor on the 29th. He was waiting with his brother and four other friends when I went there.

Then we went to Thamel, where I had a shop. He told me he would return Rs 3.5 million the next day. The others went away while he stayed with me. The next day, Eric’s brother called to ask where I wanted the money delivered. We were in Sailung Guest House at the time. Eric said he had a headache, so he suggested going to the room to rest. He was on the phone talking to someone who, I could hear, was talking about money and location.

We were watching when the door was kicked open and a group of seven or eight people entered the room. One of them fired at me. I was hit below my chin on the spine and fell. I was still conscious and could make out the shooters were policemen in civvies led by a sub-inspector. They were going to shoot me again as I lay bleeding on the floor, but thinking I was dead, left me alone.

They tied up Eric and punched him until he looked like he had been roughed up by a kidnapper. They dragged him out and then broke bottles in the room and even smashed the windows. I could hear a policeman talking into a walkie-talkie: “The kidnapper is dead, we’ve rescued the captive.”

Later I was taken to a morgue by a policeman in uniform. The doctors found out I was still alive but bleeding heavily. I lived, but am now a paraplegic.

The police charged me with kidnapping and possession of illegal weapons. The newspapers gave their version: that police fired back in self-defence. The name of the policeman who shot me is Mata Pratap Thapa.

The Kathmandu District Court jailed me for nine years. Two innocent boys, framed by the police, who happened to be in the hotel, are still in jail. While I am making the rounds at the appellate courts, Eric, who planned all this, is in Singapore, running a Korean restaurant in Bugis, Victoria Street.
Reign of terror in Dailekh, Damakant Jayshi

Transitional injustice, Kunda Dixit's blog

See music video of Dekendra Thapa singing Karnali song

Dekendra's grave, #408

22 - 28 AUGUST 2014

Detained because he was wracked by guilt. One of them was Lachhiram Gharti, who was accused of Dekendra's torture and murder. Open and finally arrested four of those who had been kept the investigation. Binod Sharma had kept the investigation. He had been buried alive.

His left leg and right elbow were broken. When the conflict ended in 2006. When they found the body, his mouth was wide open, his left leg and right elbow were broken. He had been buried alive. Fast forward to 2012: police inspector Binod Sharma had kept the investigation. Dekendra's wife Laxmi lobbied hard and got forensic experts to find and exhume his body after he was buried alive. Dekendra Raj Thapa, I don't know where, and told the court recently: "I don't know who killed Dekendra, and the other journalists walked to the Maoist-controlled area to try to persuade them to open it. Instead, they were kidnapped by the rebels, and while the others were released, Dekendra was detained. A month later, eyewitness reports started coming in about the Maoists torturing him by hanging him upside down and beating him until he died. The Maoists put up posters claiming responsibility for killing him. Dekendra's wife Laxmi lobbied hard and got forensic experts to find and exhume his body after he was buried alive. Dekendra couldn't speak anymore, we saw him drag him to Lachhiram Gharti's house," reads Gharti's testimony. However, recently Chandra Baburam Gharti made the following deposition at the District Court: "I was away working in India on that day. "I don't know who killed Dekendra, where or how." Another witness, Amrita Sunukhara, had told the same investigator: "A Maoist named Bhum Bahadur Khadka alias Mukti, Lachhiram and others had kidnapped journalist Dekendra Thapa and kept him in our house. After questioning, they took him towards Dwari, and I later heard that they killed and buried him." But Sunukhari withdrew her statement and told the court recently: "I don't know Dekendra Raj Thapa, I don't know where, when and how his death occurred. I don't know if the accused killed him, the accused should not be punished." Other government witnesses, including Jamuna Thapa, Sahesh Gharti, Man Bahadur Sutparai and Devi Lal Gharti have similarly withdrawn statements, considerably weakening the case against the accused. Another witness Balbir Ramjali had earlier testified that he had seen the accused beating up Dekendra in the school. But now, he has made a statement saying he was in India on that day. "I don't know anything about the incident. I don't know anyone involved. I only found out that Dekendra was killed after the police took me in." Prakash Adhikari is a Dailekh based journalist who has been covering his colleague's torture and murder for the past 10 years. He says: "Maoist leaders had gathered all the witnesses from Naumule, Dwari and Baluwatar in a hotel in the district capital, forcing the accused to retract their statements." Lawyer Bansa Gautam, who has been representing Dekendra, also confirms that witnesses withdrew the cases because of threats. Lawyer Govinda Bandi says the reason witnesses have retracted their testimonies after threats is because of the lack of witness protection laws. He adds: "This makes it difficult to get justice for the families of the victims."
WANTED: Prime Minister (1)

A landlocked, supercalifederalistic Himalayan republic of 56,000 sq miles that is upwardly mobile, will be attaining middle-income status by 2022, and is located in yam-like fashion between two houdlers, has an urgent vacancy for a tall, bright, broadly-conventional educated testotater, fair-skinned vegetarian, DV-eligible Prime Minister to replace an aniling incumbent who is getting a bit long in the tooth.

Caste, age, disabilities, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, marital status, eating habits, incontinence and incompetence no bar.

Prospective candidate should ideally be 80 years or older and have served multiple previous tenures as Primate Minister wherein they should have paid ample lip-service to democracy and plundered the exchequer, sabotaged hydroelectric plants and killed countless poor folk.

Multiple previous tenures as Primate Minister wherein they should have mused and mocked about the constitution, paid ample lip-service to democracy and plundered the exchequer.

EXPERIENCE REQUIRED:

- Should have amassed at least 10 years experience in ribbon-cutting, lamp-lighting, khatas-draping, badge-wearing, bouquet-accepting, speech-giving, with flair, aplomb and a certain panache.
- Must have dissolved parliament, refused to extend the tenure of local bodies, and not held successive VDC, DDC and STD elections for 17 years.
- Must have a long and distinguished career in the kleptocracy, with a Masters in Horse-trading and a PhD in Sycophancy.
- Candidate should also have a demonstrated ability to bring the Constituent Assembly to a standstill for weeks at a stretch if certain frivolous demands are not met, in shutting down the whole country and parts thereof for a cumulative period of 36 days in any given year since 1990 while serving in the opposition.
- Candidate should be of sound mind and body, be in possession of all his/her/its faculties and have at least one wile.
- Should have amassd the war chest of ill-gotten wealth to an amount not exceeding Rs 500 million, must have partaken of kickbacks in at least one airport deal, cleaned out the budget for the Youth Self-Employment Scheme during previous tenure, have a proven knack for pre-paid appointments to NAC, NOC and NIA.
- Applicant must have in-laws and out-laws on standby to take up ministerial berths at short notice.
- Prime Minister aspirant must be in possession of a certificate (fully notarised by at least three referees who are victims of extortion and captains of industry) attesting to candidate’s exceptional fundraising capabilities.
- Candidate must have clandestine links to organised crime and confidence to hob-nob with dons and protect criminals who can provide muscle when street politics so demands.
- Must have a collection of well-preserved skeletons in one’s Cabinet.
- Must have had at least one double-kidney transplant, have a medical certificate to prove vitamin D deficiency, or a terminal malady.

DUTIES INCLUDE:

- Cutting ribbons, lighting lamps, draping khatas, pinning badges, accepting and offering bouquets of imported gladioli.
- Must be able to speak ad nauseum on any subject under the sun and/or moon.
- Have patience to take own sweet time to appoint extra CA members and operate in accordance to the motto: “What, me hurry?”
- Be able to resist pressure to urgently appoint envoys in countries with vacant ambassadorships for three years or more in order to save the country money.
- Build personal rapport with abroad leaders to garner international solidarity for regime tinkering at home.
- Amass frequent flier miles by accepting all junkets great and small by travelling First Class with jumbo entourage in all operators except the national airline.
- Take part in prize-giving ceremonies following martial art contests organised by party’s youth wing.
- Have a proven ability to fall asleep during above proceedings and remain fully unconscious during Cabinet Meetings in order to deny knowledge of any controversial decisions.

SALARY:

Negotiable but has in-built perks, side income in accordance with standard operational procedure, medical and medevac allowance for international trips even in retirement, and adequate opportunities for candidate’s poverty-alleviation.

Apply with astrological profile and poster-size full body photograph showing abdominal contours at Balu Water Main Gate. Mark envelope: ‘Has-been Wannabe’.

FINE PRINT:

GON is an equal opportunities employer. Although women are encouraged to apply, they will do so at their own peril. Asses are required to apply.

The Ass