We’re together

Despite the delay in the UML and Maoists pushing through with party unification, most Nepalis think they will, or should, join up so that development can be kickstarted while controlling inflation and corruption. This was among the responses to the nationwide Himalmedia Public Opinion Survey 2018 conducted last month. But a dispute over whether UML Chair KP Oli should be Prime Minister for a full five-year term, or be he should resign halfway through as Maoist supremo Pushpa Kamal Dahal can form another government is delaying the unification process. To complicate things, Dahal is insisting on leading the unified party if Oli chooses to become PM ahead of him.

Nepal’s two largest communist parties contested parliamentary-provincial elections in an alliance with a common platform that promised to usher in an era of stability and prosperity. Public endorsement of the UML-Maoist victory in elections was also corroborated by the Himalmedia survey results. Only 8% of the 3,033 respondents said the UML and Maoists should not unite, 24% were a bit skeptical whether they would, but 54% were positive about left unity. Of them, 29% said they should unite while 24% were hopeful that they would. However, let alone unification and a stable government, it is not even certain who will be the next PM. Chances are high that the two parties will first form the government, before turning their attention to the planned merger. Oli and Dahal are trying to outmaneuver each other to grab more power. The NC, two Maoist parties and even India are all waiting and watching to see how, or if, the UML-Maoist unification plays out.

When India’s External Affairs Minister Subrahmanya Swaraj arrived in Kathmandu on Thursday for a two-day visit, UML and Maoist leaders were in the middle of a merger meeting which again ended without agreement. Later in the evening, Oli held a reception for Swaraj at the Sheesh bhorey Palace. “Dahal has publicly endorsed Oli as the next PM, but Oli is silent about Dahal’s demand that he be made the unified party’s chair,” explains NC leader Bhimrakha Pradhan Shah. “All is not well between the two, so everyone else is trying to take advantage of it.” Oli knows only too well that the Maoists can team up with the NC and Madhesi parties to keep him out of power, so Shah thinks Oli is trying to get India on his side. He knows he cannot always keep antagonizing India.

However, some analysts say that although New Delhi sees Oli as a pro-Beijing minimalist, the Indian establishment has concluded that he cannot be stopped from becoming the new PM. Two weeks ago, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi called Oli to say “India is willing to work with the new government.”

The reason Swaraj is here, according to some analysts, is to make sure that Oli gets the message that in return India wants loyalty. Oli, who is also the program coordinator of the Nepalese faction of the UML-Maoist Group, said: “As long as the NC welcomes the Maoist victory in the elections, there will be no problem.”

HIMALMEDIA PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY 2018

AS IF THERE IS NO TOMORROW

EDITORIAL PAGE 2


Dilip K. Rai

Editor-in-Chief

Himal Media Group

www.himalmedia.nepal
AS IF THERE IS NO TOMORROW

In the past weeks, Prime Minister Deuba’s cabinet has:

- Reduced the eligible age for old-age allowance from 70 to 65, adding Rs14 billion to the Rs53 billion allocated in the budget for the elderly.
- Piled on another Rs100,000 to housing grants for families affected by the 2015 earthquake even though virtually no one among the 77,705 affected families have so far received the full Rs200,000 promised. This will add another Rs677 billion burden on the budget.
- It will cost another Rs60 billion to bankroll the government’s decision to allow some 22,000 civil servants voluntary retirement.
- The Cabinet meeting last week also increased the subsidies to patients with critical heart, kidney or liver ailments, adding a further Rs1 billion to the bill.

Most caretaker governments in the past have hurriedly employed cadre into civil service positions, appointed heads of public sector companies and handed out cash to near and dear ones.

The Deuba cabinet has broken all national, and possibly even international, records for profusion as it fritters away taxpayers money as if there was no tomorrow.

All this comes even as the economy is in dire straits with revenue from overseas remittance stagnating. Tax revenue has fallen, the trade deficit widened further as Nepal is now importing even fewer electricity from India this year, on top of a tripling of the petroleum import bill in the last five years. The banking sector is facing a liquidity crisis, interest rates are soaring. Previous governments had made sure that Nepal’s macroeconomic indicators were sound, reserves were robust even if the trade gap widened and investment fell, but the populist measures announced by this caretaker government will unleash long-term structural damage to the economy.

It is not even smart politics. The ass media and the public has seen through that: their conclusion is that Deubs is taking revenge for his electoral loss by strangling the UML-Maoists with a bankrupt country. Not that the UML was any different, it also has been spendthrift to the past, and KP Oli actually promised to move more than double the elderly stipend to Rs5,600 which would actually have cost the treasury more than the cut-off age to 65.

This sort of populism is counterproductive, and this proves by the Himalmedia public opinion survey results (page 13-15). In response to a question about whether the elderly should receive a stipend or make their life easier, a majority 60% preferred better facilities for the elderly. In another question about whether farmers should get pensions, or have fertilizer and irrigation, an overwhelming 83% cared about and said no to the new government:

- Don’t want to say 33.3%.
- Better government 20.2%.
- Less medical cost 17.4%.
- Better care in government hospital 8.2%.
- Better public transport 5.1%.
- Don’t want to say 3.3%.

The people reject populism. This caretaker prime minister isn’t as smart.

ELIZABETH HAWLEY

Wards a moving video tribute to Elizabeth Hawley made us feel like we could never forget her. Just like we knew her. We could never forget this American pioneer of what Kathmandu, ‘in its irrepressible and insatiable hunger for Kathmandu Valley which can never be contained by a city, a river, a mountain range or a Himalayan valley’.

No Himal, you will not be contained, but you have always been strongly in favour of stranger and more meaningful local governments. Don’t ever attempt to restrain the vigorous feedback generated by the erstwhile Kathmandu Valley and the results of the middling-farce that is called Office of Prime Minister.

Most visited online page

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

Nepal has a tradition of being strongly in favour of stranger and more meaningful local governments. Don’t ever attempt to restrain the vigorous feedback generated by the erstwhile Kathmandu Valley and the results of the middling-farce that is called Office of Prime Minister.

Most visited online page
DISCOVER MORE OF THE WORLD ON OUR SPECIAL BUSINESS CLASS CABINS WITH FULL FLAT BEDS AND UNLIMITED WIFI

Every detail is designed to make your journey pleasant.
Cleaner air with greener buses

Converting Kathmandu’s public buses to electric can dramatically reduce air pollution

BHUKNAL TULADHAR

Fossil to Electric

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Climate friendly: Yeti Airlines (CO2 emitted in 2018) and UNDP Nepal co-sponsored a campaign to reduce emissions by 10%, to that, the airline is doing its part of its social responsibility.

Yeti’s carbon footprint in 2018 was 19,625 MMT. The airline is committed to reducing its per passenger carbon emission by 10%.

Qatar gets A350-1000

Qatar Airways’ first A350-1000 took its first steps in Doha, as part of a special demonstration tour, showcasing the latest in passenger care and sustainability. Qatar Airways is the first Middle Eastern airline to operate the A350, which is the aircraft exclusive feature to airlines and passengers. The aircraft’s cabin is equipped with full business-class and economy class cabins, and is one of 27 ordered by Qatar Airways.

Super Bowl live

Turkish Airlines passengers can watch the Super Bowl LI in the terminal of Istanbul’s Ataturk Airport.

Turkish Airlines

The National Football League game is all set to start this year, with the Jonosport broadcast starting 4 February. The Airlines also announced the broadcast of a new commercial video starring famous heart surgeon Dr. Oz.

Qatar Airways

Qatar Airways, the official airline of the 2017 AFC Asian Cup, has entered into a lucrative deal with FIFA, to become the official airline of the football tournament.

Branded menswear

Qatar Airways has also entered into a deal with Jaeger-LeCoultre to launch a special edition of the airline’s official watch.

Women in game

The Women’s Soccer Association has organised National Open Women’s Football Championship

Ombudsman

Ombudsman has received a complaint from a passenger who alleged that the airline did not provide proper catering services.

Yeti reduces CO2 footprint

Yeti Airlines has become the first operator in Nepal to perform an energy audit and plan mitigation efforts to reduce its carbon footprint.

As fuel inventory of the company’s aircraft fleet, its 27 vehicles and offices around the country showed that the company generated just over 18,000 tons of CO2 equivalent last year, Yeti now hopes to improve efficiency by replacing its ageing with B767s and B787s, as well as with more modern ATR 72 600s, work with the civil aviation authorities to streamline air routes as well as offer its carbon users.

“A scam in the air that is based on an aviation gasoline, but there are ways to reduce emissions by being more fuel efficient and other measures that will not just make us climate friendly but will also save on costs,” says Yeti Airlines COO Umesh Choudhary Rai.

Yeti has been working with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Nepal to spread awareness about its Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) through deco on its aircraft, a travel hub, bordering passes and on other stationery. UNDP has been signing up the private sector to propagate its SDGs throughout the world and this week signed a similar agreement with China’s Hainan Airlines.

“The key to our climate goals and we are very happy Yeti is building on the partnership with a concrete move towards reducing its carbon footprint,” says Renaud Melet, Nepal Country Director of UNDP. "Nothing is freezing Yeti."

CLIMATE FRIENDLY: Yeti Airlines CEO Umesh Rai and UNDP Nepal Representative Figaro Mayer unveiling the Solar Live on the airline’s new ATR 72 recently. The airline will also need to reduce its carbon emissions by 10%.

To that end, the airline is doing its part of its social responsibility.

Yeti’s carbon footprint in 2018 was 19,625 MMT. The airline is committed to reducing its per passenger carbon emission by 10%.

But that does not mean the company can avoid the impact of an aviation gasoline, but there are ways to reduce emissions by being more fuel efficient and other measures that will not just make us climate friendly but will also save on costs,” says Yeti Airlines CEO Umesh Choudhary Rai.

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DISCOVER
JOHNNIE WALKER
AGED 18 YEARS

Smooth and sophisticated with hints of vanilla, almonds, orange peel and a wisp of subtle smoke.

JOHNNIE WALKER

Global Trading Concern (P) Ltd.
DRINK RESPONSIBLY.
DRINKIQ.com
Elizabeth Hawley, who died in Kathmandu on 26 January 2018 aged 91 years, was an American journalist living in Nepal since 1960, regarded as the undisputed authority on mountaineering in Nepal. She was famed for her decades-long contribution to mountaineering, which was praised by the Himalayan Database of expeditions, a non-profit organization that monitors and records mountaineering activities worldwide.

She is credited with monitoring expeditions and setting standards in the country, competing with 34 others from the communications, mountaineering, and mountaineering expeditions. She was one of the first to record the names of the mountains climbed, and has been formally recognized by the Nepal Alpine Club and the Nepal Mountaineering Association in 2014.

Hawley’s work also included the first female solo climb of Mount Everest, in 1985.

Hawley described Elizabeth Hawley as “a remarkable person... woman of great courage and determination.” She served as Nepal’s Honorary Consul to Nepal for 20 years, until retiring in 2010.

Elizabet first came to Nepal via India for a couple of weeks in February 1955. She was on a two-week mountain tour during which she climbed Mount Everest, and later climbed the Kanchenjunga and Dhaulagiri. She climbed Mount Everest again in 1985.

Elizabeth Hawley’s achievements are many, but her contributions to mountaineering are perhaps the most notable. She is credited with the first female solo climb of Mount Everest, in 1985.

Her contributions to mountaineering include the first solo climb of Mount Everest, in 1985, and the first female solo climb of Mount Everest, in 1985.

Elizabeth Hawley was born in New York City on June 26, 1926, and died in Kathmandu, Nepal, on January 26, 2018, at the age of 91.

She is survived by her husband, John Hawley, and her daughter, Elizabeth Hawley.

Elizabeth Hawley was a trailblazer in the world of mountaineering, and her contributions to the sport will be remembered for generations to come.
Elizabeth Hawley was working at the desk for Fortune magazine when she first came to Nepal in 1959 as part of a world tour. One can only imagine what Kathmandu was like then, an emerald bowl in the lap of the Himalaya. Urban rivers, few cars and buzzing clouds soaring into a deep blue sky.

It came, she saw and she stayed. But on Friday, 20 Jan, at the age of 95, the legendary chronicler of Himalayan climbing left us for good.

It was the Nepali correspondent for Reuters at a time when most of the news with a Kathmandu dateline was about mountaineering, and she was a walking Wikipedia of climbing trivia. Who first climbed Dhaulagiri from the northeast ridge? In spring? How far did the Pole’s British expedition reach on its alpine style ascent of the west face of Makalu in 1955? Did the Karmans really reach the summit of Kangchenjunga? When in doubt, you went to Liz.

We used to say half-seriously that a mountain tour hasn’t officially started until Liz Hawley said so. Many climbers were grilled by Liz in Kathmandu hotel lobbies after returning from the summit. She asked them detailed questions about duration, weather, fellow mountaineers on the peak, and demanded summit photographs—many said they found the interviews more daunting than the climb itself. In the same house in the Bhadra Compounds in Dilli Bazar, where she lived for the past half-century, are her files documenting climbing in Nepal. Liz Hawley’s mountaineering archive has now been digitised and is in the public domain at the Himalayan Database website. It will now be updated after every climbing season by volunteers like German climber Ueli Steck, who are continuing Liz’s work.

Also in her study in Dilli Bazar were files with clippings of Reuters and Time Literatures, as well as detailed briefs she wrote for her boss at Tiger Tops, Tim Edwards, about political goings on in Kathmandu. The Himalayan historian Mixxum Dubram was looking through her shelves one day and realised just how invaluable the files were as a slow-by-slow account of Nepal’s post-1965 history. With Liz Changi, Dubram remembered the Hawley files and brought it out in two hefty volumes as The Nepal Scene, launched three years ago. The books are an invaluable reference tool, filled with facts, dates and fascinating stories of meetings with royal palace officials, ministers, visiting dignitaries and officials, written in Liz’s collaborative way of chronologising Nepal’s candor of power. As a journalist, Liz reported objective facts, but between the lines in her notes one detects a deep commitment to honesty, press freedom and democracy.

In 1962, Liz Hawley found herself in the front of the plane on a flight from Bangkok to Kathmandu with BP Koirala, who was returning after medical treatment. She recalled that meeting in an interview with Testing, Saller Gurung of Annapurna Times in 2013. “I spent the entire flight writing the story for Reuters and kept checking with BP and Girija to make sure I got all my facts correct, and later that evening, I got a call saying BP had died. It was a sad moment, because he was one of the few remarkable men that we have in Nepal, and one political leader who stuck to his beliefs.” The story made it to the front page of the New York Times.

Liz was known for the trademark blue Volkswagen Beetle that she drove herself to press conferences and interviews with mountaineers, until the traffic became too difficult. She was also the chair of The Himalaya Trust, set up by Edmund Hillary after his first ascent of Everest to help Nepal, and especially the Sherpa people. Liz Hawley was my first journalism guru. She was blunt and unable to suffer slipshod. That made her a demanding, yet effective, mentor. I used to stand in for her when she went on extended summer leave in the early ’80s, which gave me my first exposure to the international press, with stories on Nepali politics for Reuters and The Times—ever getting into trouble with the panchayat authorities for some of them.

Liz was inured to people, and told them all if she found them lazy, slow or careless. She never really bothered to learn Nepali all the years here, although she understood some. And for someone who took such detailed notes of details, she never climbed herself and did not like trekking much.

I will visit us one in a profile interview. “I like mountain scenery. I think it’s great, I just don’t need to climb them.”

Nevertheless, the Government of Nepal decided to honour Liz’s contributions to the country by naming a 5,182m mountain near the China border Peak Hawley. 7° Kunda Sherpa

For more on Liz Hawley’s life, read ‘Call Bob’ in Kathmandu: The Elizabeth Hawley Story by latarno McDaid, and watch ‘Keeper of the Mountains’, a documentary of her life.

REMEMBERING MISS HAWLEY

Liz Hawley was a legendary Nepali correspondent for Reuters for half a century. She was known for her in-depth knowledge of Nepal’s history and politics. Her archive has been digitised and is available on the Himalayan Database. She was also the chair of The Himalaya Trust, which she founded with Edmund Hillary to help Nepal. Liz Hawley was my first journalism mentor, and I learned a lot from her.
Nepal's rising middle class, the youth bulge, tourism and new export markets are driving a whopping 35% annual increase in beer production, and breweries are expanding capacity to keep up with demand.

The government collected Rs11,194.679 in excise revenue from beer sales last year (4.33% of total taxes collected) and the year-on-year increase is expected to rise further as Nepalis quaff more and more of new beer brands, and cultivate a taste for locally brewed and imported craft beers.

Consumption is increasing despite a lack of variety in styles of beer. But each market segment is thirsty for more.

"It would say Nepal's beer industry is where America was in the 1970s," says Jim Jones, co-owner of Yeti Tap Room and Beer Garden in Thamel and importer of American and Australian beers. "We had two or three big players that provided very similar beers, so the product offering was limited. All that changed as Americans started brewing craft beer, but what took 25 years in America is happening in Nepal in just a few years."

1975 is the year Nepal introduced its own Star Beer brand, by Nepal Breweries, and during social events like concerts. As tastes get more sophisticated, many urban drinkers are moving to craft beers, while droughts and beer is catching on only in Kathmandu so far because of the short shelf-life of kegs.

As breweries struggle to increase capacity and upgrade factories, they face hurdles importing ingredients like malt and hops. Malt is grain that has been steeped, germinated and dried, and Nepal doesn't yet have a factory to convert grain into malt. Hops are used as a flavouring agent, and have to be imported from Germany and the Czech Republic.

But the thirst seems insatiable, and new companies like Raj Brewery in Bhaktapur are opening up in a market already crowded with a wide array of brands.

Breweries scramble to keep up with demand as Nepalis guzzle more beer than ever before.

Sherpa Craft

Phurba Sherpa's dream was to go to Kathmandu to learn coffee-making. His friends in Lukla joked that he first needed to learn how to stir Nescafe instant coffee in hot water. But one day in 2006, Sherpa hopped on a flight to the capital and took classes at Himalayan Java. He returned to his hometown and introduced the first big espresso machine to the Khumbu Valley.

Fast forward a decade: Sherpa has now moved on from coffee to beer, becoming a pioneer in brewing craft beers in Nepal's traditional lager-dominated industry.

"I was doing well as a barista in Lukla and was sourcing coffee beans from Lamjung, but I frequently heard my customers complain about the quality of beans no matter what I served at my pub," recalls Sherpa.

He ordered brewing equipment from the United States, and started brewing his own beers, filling them up in empty Tuborg and San Miguel bottles. His first lot of 150 bottles was consumed by just one group of tourists waiting for their flights in Lukla; he knew he was on to something.

Sherpa Brewery was established in 2013, but production started only a few months before the April 2015 earthquake. Teething problems, the impact of the earthquake, and then the blockade, delayed plans to expand. Even after he got started, Sherpa concentrated on quality rather than quantity, gaining the trust of restaurant owners and customers through taste.

Confident with success so far, Sherpa is now increasing production as he meets demand and introduces new beers like Khumbu Kuli and Himalayan Red. The expansion is being directed by Nepal's first craft brew master, Ang Tsering Sherpa, who was trained by American brewer, Jordan Frink.

Phurba Sherpa is happy that he has started something that keeps customers happy: "We are really satisfied that Sherpa Brewery has inspired brewers to craft their own varieties to meet the taste of customers in Nepal."
Holding froth

Gorkha Brewery (Carlsberg, Tuborg, Gorkha, San Miguel) 70%

CG Brewery (Nepal Ice, Real Gold and Mustang) 15%

Yeti Brewery (Arna) 10%

Other (Commando, Sherpa, Star Gold, Tenbarg, Everest, etc) 5%

INLAND REVENUE DEPARTMENT

ON TAP in THAMEL

Enter Narayan Chok in Thamel from Tridevi, then take a left at the first alley. A wooden sign, ‘Yeti Tap Room and Beer Garden’ indicates you have arrived at Kathmandu’s newest watering hole.

The venue will be open to full capacity by Nepali New Year in mid-April. It will feature more than 60 varieties of imported and local craft beers, and offer a venue for food, drinks, events and get-togethers aiming to become a beer sub-hub within Kathmandu’s tourist hub.

The garden also comes with a café for specialty coffees, a wide range of teas and plans to create something similar for local and international wines.

But for now, it is mostly beers in all hues and textures: light, amber, dark, Belgian style, pale ale, stout, IPA, Nepal and many more. The man behind the beers is the generically named Jim Jones (picture above, right), who organised the Nepal International Beer Festival 2017 and Australia Day last month. In partnership with Michael Kelly (picture above, left), importer for 130 Lashes beer from Australia.

Having travelled worldwide attending beer festivals for over 25 years, Jones has brought his fount of knowledge of beers to Kathmandu: “It is really exciting because customers in Nepal are not jaded, and are eager to develop a new taste for craft beers,” he says.
GETAWAY

Haabitan Resort
Climb up to Champideli in the morning for a royal view of the Kathmandu Valley, then drive down the route for a relaxed evening. Phobjikha, Kathmandu, (01) 4377337-96

Dhulikel Lodge Resort
Located on a hilltop, the resort offers a magnificent vista of valleys, foothills and mountains to the north. Dhulikel, (01) 491014/494, www.dhulikelhotlodge.com

Park Village Resort
Far away from the madding crowd, yet close to the city, visit Park Village Resort for a perfect getaway. Budhanilkantha, (01) 4358390, parkvill.com

The Famous Farm
Wake up to the sounds of chirping birds and a fresh morning breeze wafting through the lush farm. Kavrepalanchok, (01) 4700426, info@famousfarm.com

Mum’s Garden Resort
Head to Phaktra for a peaceful and comfortable stay designed outfits, surrounded by a lush green garden with great views of Thewa Lake and the Aranmancha range. Lodge side, Phaktra, (01) 4665626, www.mumsgardensresort.com

Shivapuri Heights Cottage
Escape the hustle and bustle of Kathmandu and emerge peace, tranquillity, good food and fresh air. Budhanilkantha, 9684715277

EVENTS

Waste to wealth
A new web portal/digital exhibition in the making value from trash: an open platform for sharing knowledge and encouraging innovation in waste entrepreneurship. 8 February, green logo, 8 Block, Kathmandu Campus, 98647/9708, info@waste2wealth.org

Japanese film festival
The Embassy of Japan in Nepal is organizing the Japanese Film Festival 2018 at Pokhara Chamber of Commerce and Industries Hall. Four Japanese movies with English subtitles will be presented. 9-10 February, Goine Patu, Pokhara, (01) 4445180, cultural.end.nih.go.jp

7th Himalayan festival
A call to outdoor activities from Nepal and around the world to participate in three main sports: trail running, rock climbing and mountain biking. 16-18 February, Trishul Resort, Pokhara, 9861236877, trishulhimalayanfestival.com, registration: https://goo.gl/dvq3yvc

MUSIC

Deep Shrestha live
Singing his evergreen hits like Kati Kumar Rahu Rahu Bhagwa, Gaumard Saye Panhive Gaiya and many more. 2 February, 5:30 pm, Around the Corner, Bansbar, 41309, 9869137197, returnto2016@gmail.com

Parkhali launch
Come watch Audio Ignition launch its album Parkhali, after a long wait, under Tree House Production. 3 February, 6:30 pm onwards, Masich Bar, Jomosolkot, (01) 526592, madhur77@gmail.com

Spectrum exhibition
Visit Spectrum, an exhibition of photography by Laurence Kent Jones on display at the gallery. 6 February-6 March, 10am-7pm, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Roper Mote Khokana, (01) 477288, info@babt.co.np

Witch
An entirely non-verbal drama about love, jealousy and superstition, directed by Peter Duncan Serfari. 27 February (except Thursday), 6pm Tom and Jerry, 3 pm Saturday, Svatman Theatre, Keshto, (01) 4019177

Local mini market
Valentine special! The bi-monthly local mini market is featuring an array of local products, from organic food to ethically-made jewelry. 3 February, 7-9pm, The Local Project at Baste, Kathmandu, 9888510115, tjp@gmail.com

Müller Time
An energetic band with original compositions inspired by Funk, Soul, Gospel, and Jazz. KC Jazz Trio will warm up the stage for Müller Time. Tickets available at Medich. 2 February, 7pm, Makhan Bar, Jomosolkot, 98500 (includes a beer), Details: (01) 5443834, 971509459, info@koly.com

Eating healthy doesn’t mean you have to sacrifice taste.
It’s all about finding the right balance.

AIR QUALITY INDEX

There’s marked weekend dip in Air Quality Index (AQI) in Kathmandu, measured at the Phirtsalekra monitoring station on the side of the city, but only marginally less than morning readings. In the past seven days, only Friday and Saturday have been at a safe level by the World Health Organization. All others are at the red zone. Unless, we also present the graph for 2017 compiled by the US Embassy’s Air Pollution Research Center. As this week’s dip is not enough to last for 11-15 days during the monsoon months when the rains wash down suspended particles above.

https://no-aemassy.buzz/kathmandu-air-quality-monitor/
Devastated houses still awaits rebuilding

Kolpoker Tamang, aged 48, of Godawari Municipality Ward 10, spent two long years in the temporary shelter with his family of five, fighting off the cold winds and debris in mosquitoes. He is glad that his family has moved to the one-room house, constructed on his own land. The temporary shelter is now used as a shelter for the family. Knowing bravely that the house was completed with the 3 lakh rupees material support from Lumbini Support Group for Shelter, “Tuition cost was beyond imagination. My mother in law gave me 20 rupees, sweet and two for this house,” he shares with a smile.

Kale Kanchha Tamang, 82, of Mahabirward 10, has only started building a house after receiving the material support worth 3 lakhs from Lumbini. Sonawati, his daughter-in-law, has taken advantage of the opportunity to build a 2 room house. The family themselves carried and transported the construction material to reduce the cost. Tamang says, “The government’s help should exempt installation. It is not adequate to start the rebuilding process. The sum should have been handed over at full – many houses would have already been completed.”

Ran Bahadur Bhoti, 74 and Bhirkumari, 69 of Janakpurwari Ward 13, have also started building two room house after receiving support from Lumbini. The couple stressed that without Lumbini’s material support, the installation support from the government worth 30 thousand alone would have been impossible. They were also Lucken structured for a house.

Continuously living in dilemma

Kishori Shrestha, 72 of Mahal, Ward 9, in Kathmandu is living in the remaining gold floor of his earthquake house, after clearing all the dust and upper layers. He received the first installment from the government’s aid. He still cannot make up his mind to begin any work to build a new, Mayab Shrestha (64 of Mahal) - Kathmandu lives in the same situation. She is still living in the damaged house with her daughter: “The fifty thousand is not even enough to pay for clearing the rubble. It would have been helpful if the government had delivered all the money to the victims in the first place,” she laments.

Sonia Shrestha (69) of Gyanendreshwar Ward 12 is also living in her old broken house with her wife and a daughter. She is very grateful for living and the income from his daughter is coming partly from work.” Though he has received first installment from the government, he also (in) the same dilemma. She adds, “We know how to build a new house, it is not suitable to be an abandoned house. But the cost of clearing the rubble alone will cost more than double the amount we received from the government.”

Nirmal Devi Shrestha (82) of Godawari Ward 12, Godawari Municipality, herself a disabled woman is living after her only mother Sukhraj and her several younger brothers Jang. His family still lives in a temporary shelter. She has constructed the temporary shelter to keep the Government’s shelter’s house. The family urgently needs a house to live in and very soon, “5 thousand for building a house is today’s market,” saying condition of the government’s intention, “If the government wants people to build their houses, lastly, they should be given full amount and not just installment.”

Some victims, who took the bold decision and started building their houses, after receiving the grant money, have been able to start the construction work by using the funds. Mahantar Khatiwada (70) of Kathmandu Ward 17, Godawari Municipality has been able to complete the construction of his house that he started 13 months ago. He has spent more than eighty thousand rupees only to manage the rubble of his then home. Despite the government’s assistance, he has sold his old house to a Jharna. He used fifty percent of the half built and left deserted.

Adding woes to tragedy

Kalki Bhakta Tamang of Kumbeshwargar Ward 10 in Godawari, has been discerned from continuous relief support. He does not have the documents of the house to acquire the vulnerability card. He has deposited his house as a guarantee in a cooperative to obtain loan. The cooperative has kept the documents of the house. Tamang and his family of nine have nowhere to go and take shelter. They are living in the ruins of the devastated house. He has spent the first phase relief support money to clear up the old ruin and manage space to live in. He wishes to start the construction of the house but without the vulnerability card he faces problem to get further assistance. He says, “It is hard to manage household expenses with meager relief donations. Children are studying but is at their last condition. I want you to imagine how we are going to be able to build a house.”

Malal among 70 of same locality is facing similar problem. Though her house was completely demolished in the quake of 2015, she was completely out from the site of earthquake victimology in same time. She has received the NH 10 thousand rupees and then 15 thousand rupees only. The officers from her ward are well aware of the family situation, however no prompt actions are taken to relieve the problem. Dhruban Tamang, Malal’s daughter in law shares, “We have submitted the government complaint form. We are still waiting to be heard of Tamang’s living in temporary shelter with his son and daughter in law.

Kristina Bahadur Purkeshwar (88) of Mahal Ward 13 has been more civil than others. He has been in the remains of a destroyed house. He gave away his properties to the lawbreaker who later drowned him and left him alone. He neither wants to look after nor any place to own his skin. He does not have good contacts with his four sons after the separation. He has not received any support from the government since the process requires official documents and house documents to provide adequate indemnity to those who also an earthquake victim and a deserving candidate for the assistance. “During my days, I had worked in the rescue and recovered sustained damage. Today I have become homeless,” Purkeshwar shares his grief, “If only I could go some place and support and it would be a house myself I live in.”

According to Lumbini’s NGO, Housing Programme Manager at Lumbini, the earthquake victims are encroaching between the stadium, multiwork farm and especially inadequate fund have been the main cause behind most people’s inability to build a simple house. She shares that many families are compelled to sell their properties and lending as a safeguard for initiation of some construction work.

(With the support of Lumbini Support Group for Shelter)
When Sofia Coppola entered the filmmaking fray in 1999 with The Virgin Suicides, she carried the enormous and difficult mantle of being the daughter of Francis Ford Coppola, one of the greatest filmmakers of our time. Six films later, she has moved beyond pigeonholes, earning her name as a sensitive, original filmmaker with a voice quite unlike any other director working today. Think of what you may, but Lost in Translation (2003), despite accusations of it being nebulous and without substance, is one of the great films about falling in love with an entirely unsuitable person—one that is written and directed with grace, humour, and a touch of the truly offbeat that defines Coppola’s sensibilities.

In 2017, Coppola’s The Beguiled made its debut at the Cannes Film Festival, winning her the coveted prize for “Best Director,” a prize won only once before by a woman at the hallowed film festival, which is also the arbiter of art-house cinema. A remake of a 1971 film by the same name, The Beguiled is a tense, gothic thriller set in the American Civil War, chronicling the story of what happens when a lone, injured soldier from the north gets absorbed into a beautiful but crumbling manor in Virginia that houses a girl’s school where only a few students remain. The soldier, Corporal John McLean (Colin Farrell), is initially viewed with suspicion, but slowly all the women, including the gracious Martha Farnsworth (Nicole Kidman), owner of the house and school, and Edwin Morrow (Kristen Dunst) all begin to soften towards the charming, hard-working soldier who helps them around the garden once he begins to recover.

As the women and girls grow fond of the soldier, tensions rise, people fall in love, or lust, and as with mostthouse situations, the rot starts to manifest. But, unlike other films of the kind, things do not spiral downward into atrocious clichés, guided by Coppola’s unerring touch, and the great Kidman and Dunst, the film reveals hidden character and lets out nuances that might have gone down the drain at the hands of a more drama-oriented director who might have set effect over affect and ruined everything. As a result, The Beguiled becomes a much more interesting film than what one might have imagined, bringing little surprises to a thriller that benefits from the lightness of the stellar ensemble acting by the women.

Colin Farrell does well here as a louche but charming Irish mercenary who falls into the laps of seven women who grow to adore him, but are betrayed by his basic instincts. While I can understand why The Beguiled won Coppola her “Best Director” award, with its subtle directions and absolutely beautiful mise-en-scène, it is not one of her best films, unlike the great Marie Antoinette or the sensitive Somewhere—both of which show her distinctive sensibility which takes her out of the category of being Francis Ford’s daughter and puts her on the same list as Jane Campion and Kathryn Bigelow.

At this time of awards season fervour, watch The Beguiled if you want to support the smaller films that actually make cinema so much more interesting. Watch trailer online nepaltimes.com

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ON PROGRESS: Former crown princess Himani Shah visits the under-construction Bhawan Secondary School in Paknag, Cotcho on Saturday. The eight-classroom school is being built with support from the Himani Trust, chaired by Shah.

BEING AGEIST: Aditya Agrawal (second from left) celebrates the launch of Johnnie Walker 10-year-old blended Scotch whisky with guests at The Address Lounge in Kathmandu last week.

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Losing public trust

In the previous two Himalmedia Public Opinion Surveys of 2013 and 2015, Nepal Congress (NC) had topped the list of political parties that the people trusted the most. However, in the elections in all three tiers of government in 2017, the grand alliance of Nepal’s democratic parties took behind the UML.

In the March 2019 survey, conducted just ahead of the second Constituent Assembly elections, 19% respondents viewed the NC as a party capable of creating a peaceful, prosperous and democratic Nepal — almost double the percentage of respondents who trusted the Maoists (10%). The Maoists had swept the 2013 elections, and were the largest party in the CA. Of the respondents, 13% trusted the UML.

The survey was proven right as the NC went on to emerge as the largest party. In January 2015, the NC was leading the Constitution drafting process and its performance ever better in the popularity chart in a Public Opinion survey conducted that year. Over one-third of the respondents (34%) chose the NC as a party capable of building a peaceful, prosperous and democratic Nepal.

But three years later, the NC has lost most of its credibility and support — proof in not just the local, provincial and parliamentary elections, but also by the latest 2018 Himalmedia Public Opinion Survey conducted in January.

The UML swept local governments in 2014-17 and emerged as the single largest party with 44% of parliamentary seats in elections under the FPTP (directly-elected) and Proportional representation (PR) system. In September 2017, it formed the third coalition government in Nepal under the FPTP system.

The Himalmedia Public Opinion Survey was conducted just one month after the elections. The results corresponded fairly accurately with the election results. Of the 3,671 respondents interviewed, 28% said they didn’t want to do business with the party they voted for. Out of those who opened up, 31% said they voted for the UML while 16% and 9% respondents voted for the NC and the KP (Maoist Centre), respectively.

If the NC had analysed the 2015 Public Opinion Survey, they would have seen that their party president Sher Bahadur Deuba was one of the less popular political personalities with only a 3% approval rate. Deuba went on to topple the KP Oli government by aligning himself with the Maoists, he tried to impugn the fearless Chief Justice Sushila Karki, interfered in the selection of the police chief, did not support the impeachment motion against the tainted Oli of the Kamal Singh Karki in 2016 — and most importantly, he did not oppose the Indian Bhorak. All this came to a cost of losing his party support in that year’s elections, and the Survey too shows that the NC has slumped further.

The UML, under KP Oli, on the other hand, appears to have played its nationalistic card astutely by opposing the biotechno and signing trade and transit deals with China. He supported the impeachment of Kamal Singh Karki, but stood by Sushila Karki when Deuba wanted to throw her out.

He and the UML received the reward for this. With its electoral alliance with the Maoists, the UML now has a near two-third majority in parliament.

The NC’s top leaders do not seem to have learnt their lessons, and instead of introspecting they blame it to the “ganging up” of the UML and Maoists. To be sure, the NC (32%) is neck to neck with the UML (33%) in terms of PR votes — proof that the electorate still likes the NC, despite its last leaders.

The Himalmedia Survey asked respondents the criteria they considered for voting. Only 40% candidates they have still voted for the parties they have always voted for. The concerned proportion of those who said they considered the agenda of the parties (14%), the personal ties and stature of top political leaders (16%) and the agenda of candidates (17%) was 52%.

In general, only 30% of Nepalis see a threat to the country’s sovereignty, while a majority of them (42%) think the threat comes from foreign countries. In all provinces, most people think India is a threat to Nepal’s sovereignty. But Province 6 has the lowest percentage of people who do not consider India as a threat. Even in the plains province bordering India, more than one-third of respondents saw India as a threat to Nepal’s sovereignty — indicating a lingering memory of the blockade. A negligible proportion of respondents (17%) saw China as a threat in six provinces, however, in Province 7 this share soared to 14%.

In Province 6, which is even poorer than Province 2, people agree most with the other provinces on most issues but appear to have more progressive views. Majority of Province 6 residents say they are happy that Dalits and women were elected into municipalities and village councils last year. While in other provinces some said the reservation for women and Dalit candidates was ‘meaningless’, in Province 6 only a negligible proportion thought this way.

On the issue of transitional justice, nearly three-fourth (72%) people of Province 6 think time has not come to be investigated. Much higher than percentages of people who think so in other provinces. People here are also more satisfied with local governments. While 62% people here believe that municipalities and village councils are delivering faster services, this percentage does not exceed 50% in any other provinces.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don’t know/can’t say</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Province 1</td>
<td>36.7%</td>
<td>53.2%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Province 2</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>46.3%</td>
<td>33.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Province 3</td>
<td>84.4%</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Province 4</td>
<td>86.1%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Province 5</td>
<td>59.3%</td>
<td>27.6%</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Province 6</td>
<td>68.4%</td>
<td>22.9%</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Province 7</td>
<td>86.4%</td>
<td>55.3%</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tracking the popularity of the main partisan Himalmedia Public Opinion Surveys in 2013, 2015 and 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>March 2013</th>
<th>January 2015</th>
<th>January 2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NC</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
<td>34.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UML</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maoists</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know/can’t say</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
<td>39.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HIMALMEDIA PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY 2018

Province 2 & 6 anomaly

Province 2 and 6 stand out as Nepal’s poorest states when the National Planning Commission published its Multi-dimensional Poverty index (MPI) report in December. However, the Himalmedia Public Opinion Survey shows they don’t just rank lowest in human development but its inhabitants also think differently from the rest of the country on several important issues like constitution amendment, sovereignty and transitional justice.

In other provinces, only around one-fourth and one-third of Nepalis think the Constitution needs to be amended. But in Province 2, an overwhelming 84% people want the government to amend the charter.

Q. Should the Constitution be amended?

Choice | Yes | No | Don’t know/can’t say

Province 2 | 33.7% | 52.5% | 13.8%
Province 6 | 79.3% | 9.3% | 1.3%
Province 7 | 68.4% | 55.3% | 7.3%
Province 1 | 36.7% | 53.2% | 10.0%
Homing against hope

Meet Nepalis are preoccupied with the state of the economy. Disillusioned with politics, they worry about education, paying rent, inflation and the lack of jobs.

Yet, according to the nationwide 2018 Himalmedia Public Opinion Survey, conducted in February with support from international donors, Nepalis have surprisingly not given up hope for a better future.

They feel that it is possible for politicians to change their ways and perform better. They also believe that things have improved in the past few years and that they will get even better.

Nepalis hope that the three levels of government that have been recently elected will speed up development, generate employment opportunities and usher in an era of political stability. For this, they feel that the Constitution needs to be amended so that all political disputes are resolved.

A majority of the 3,612 respondents selected to proportionately represent Nepal’s demographic and geographical diversity, pinpointed unemployment, lack of development and inflation as their top three worries. Surprisingly, political instability was the main concern of only 10% of interviewees. Unemployment is the most pressing problem for 66% respondents, followed by lack of development (62%) and inflation (34%). The poor state of health and education were listed as the other two main areas of concern.

Cross-tabulated results from the survey show that these concerns were highest in Province 6, Nepal’s poorest province. According to the recent Multiple Poverty Index (MPI) report published by the National Planning Commission, unemployment is the most pressing problem for 84% of respondents in this province, in the remote mid-western hills, followed by lack of development (87%) and inflation (19%).

Unemployment, inflation and lack of development meant that only 38% of Nepalis are able to make a comfortable living. Nearly half the respondents said that barely manage to get by, and 16% said they are unable to take care of their families with their earnings. A majority of people belonging to the lower category of the illiterate, Dalit and high mountain dwellers.

Those who answered that they were unable to make a living were asked supplementary questions about what they planned to do. 57% said they were determined to work harder, 13% would switch their profession, 10% said they would look for jobs for spouses and children. Interestingly, only 8% said they would seek to migrate overseas for work, with an overwhelming majority saying they would look for jobs within Nepal.

After the provincial-parliamentary elections in November-December, Nepal is finally poised to be governed by a durable government; respondents hope that will speed up development and create jobs.

Only 25% of those interviewed were pessimistic, saying things will remain the same despite the elections. More than half said they expect the pace of development to increase and that there will be more jobs.

50% of Nepalis want the new government to focus on roads, education and health, while controlling inflation and corruption were the other two priorities.

During elections last year, the Left Alliance repeatedly said that there was no need for another political revolution since there had been a substantial change in the state structure. It said elections would mark the end of the prolonged transition to a federal democratic republic and that Nepal would enter a new era of stability and prosperity.

The fact that most Nepalis want the new government to focus on the economy and development suggests that they agree with this election platform. But they also believe there are political disputes that still need to be sorted out by amending the Constitution.

Even after participating in the election under the new Constitution, Madhesi parties insist on the need to amend the charter. Survey results show that 84% of respondents in Province 2 think the Constitution needs to be amended, as do 49% in Province 5. But some people are still not sure. 14% of respondents say they do not know if the Constitution needs to be amended.
No to populism

Last week, outgoing Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba got the Cabinet to pass a slew of populist measures, including lowering the minimum age for the elderly allowance and increasing the reconstruction grants for earthquake survivors.

The Ministry of Finance now needs to allocate an additional Rs4 billion because of the increase in the number of elderly who are eligible for allowances. Deuba was actually only maintaining something the UML itself had promised during the election campaign — to increase the elderly allowance to Rs5,000 from Rs2,000 per month if it came to power. The UML proposal would have cost more than reducing the threshold age for the elderly.

The NC is clearly aiming to beat the UML in the next elections. However, analysts say that could be counterproductive because the results of the 2018 Hillmedia Opinion Poll Survey show that people nationwide have a dim view of such expansive populism. (See Editorial, page 2)

Nearly two-thirds of the 3,612 respondents prefer a better living environment for elderly people, with 41% in support of elderly allowances. Some 57% of respondents in the age group 60 and above naturally wanted more allowances while only a third of younger respondents aged 18-25 wanted the increase.

Since the three big parties in Nepal have shown, in the past that they will throw money at populist measures at election time, the survey results could be an important lesson that spending may not necessarily translate into more support. After last year’s local elections, some mayors and village chiefs had arbitrarily increased social security allowances, but the survey shows that people want municipalities and village councils to efficiently deliver government services rather than increasing such allowances.

Only 6% of respondents wanted their municipalities/village councils to increase social security allowances. More than 60% respondents preferred fast and hassle-free service delivery, development and employment schemes.

Some political leaders had promised pensions for farmers if they came to power, but it is unclear to another survey question, 83% of respondents said they did not approve and would much rather have the government provide irrigation facilities and fertilisers for farmers. Rather than delay out payments for medical treatment, respondents want the government to ensure better, cheaper health care.

No amnesty for war crimes

Last week, the government issued an ordinance to extend the terms of both the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the Commission of Investigation on Enforced Disappeared Persons (CEDDP) by six months. But 90% of the 3,617 Nepalis surveyed in the Himalmaled Opinion Poll had little trust in the two bodies and predicted that the two transitional justice bodies will not be able to complete their jobs even with their extended terms.

Two weeks ago, when the government was preparing to pass the ordinance on the commissions, 71 senators had hunkered across 37 districts to ask various questions. Among them: ‘Will the TRC and the CEDDP complete their jobs in the extended term?’

Only 27% of respondents replied ‘yes’. Respondents were also asked how conflict-era atrocities should be dealt with: as many as 88% said these cases must be investigated, 71% said perpetrators must be tried in regular courts and 9% said international law must be followed. Only 20% of respondents supported compensation and amnesty, while 8% were for forgiving and moving on.

Interestingly, the percentage of respondents demanding investigations into war-time atrocities hovered between 30-45% in all provinces except Province 6, which has the districts most affected by the conflict and some of the highest numbers of disappearances. Here, as many as 72% of those surveyed demand that wartime atrocities be investigated.

Q. Will the two transitional justice bodies complete their investigations into conflict-era cases in the extended period?

Methodology

Himalmaled, publisher of Nepal Times and Nepal Khilalpurak, in partnership with various development agencies, has been conducting Public Opinion Surveys almost annually since 2004. This year’s Survey was supported by International IDEA.

FACTS Nepal was involved in data collection, and data was analysed by statistician Sreejana Karki.

This year’s Survey was conducted from 21 to 23 January. There were 3,617 respondents from 37 districts, who answered 43 pre-tested questions delivered by 71 enumerators. Enumerators were pre-trained to study whether the questions would be clear to the respondents or not.

In order to accurately represent the country’s geographical and demographic diversity, respondents were selected through probability and non-probability sampling methods. The 2011 census report was used as the basis for determining the sample size of each district.

The survey results have been cross tabulated with province-wise results and disaggregated by age, gender, profession and region. The complete and detailed set of responses will be paired online in English and Nepali.

Q. How will the new government run the country?

Q. What should be done if municipalities and village councils cannot fulfill their constitutional duties?

Q. A huge number of women and Dalits have been elected to municipal and village councils. How do you see it?

Q. How should conflict-era cases be dealt with?

Development will be expedited 42.8%
More jobs will be created 15.6%
Political stability 10.4%
Nothing will support 20.5%
It will get worse 7.7%
Don’t want to say 7.9%
Nothing better to do

Now that we are in a Federal Democratic Republic, we cannot rely on the way we were. We have to do things completely differently. This country needs a paradigm shift.

The Nepali Congress are on the right track, opening up new business opportunities on the sidelines. But they are engaged in the noble profession of searching for pockets of poison, to be ascertained. For the NCP, taking a cue from Camorra City’s declaration last week, but remaking it, is good for the economy, by opening Nepal’s first laudanum to wash down — and they can start by throwing the nine sitting chiefs by the fast river Banka. The Maoists will soon show they are no longer engaged in steadfastness, but in blood donation by opening readymade kiosks to draw the blood of the proletariat for transfusions at medical colleges.

In the spirit of inclusiveness and gender balance, we also need to take the opportunity to be politically correct about place names. The kid attention has been drawn to the fact, that there is a small basin in the world Himalaya Mountains, Lake Manasarovar, Mansu and Manaslu. As a recognition to the contributions made by women to Nepal’s rural development, we should start referring to the world’s greatest mountain range and other mountains as Vasiniya, Venturina, and Tadhi (holiest lake at Pekchowar). Nepal must be immediately changed to Shresthula.

There have been feeble attempts in our own country to join the rune to rename towns after deceased national figures. But, it is customary to ground it to Lali because we run out of original illustrious personalities. We shouldn’t see this done, but there are still thousands of famous people who are still live and hearty and thousands of towns out there waiting to be renamed. Now we have a carmaker, grundig, that seems to have a lot of time on its hands. This is an excellent opportunity for us to have Nothing Better to Do National Commission to put forth the following suggestions which will be approved during the first sitting of the new Parliament.

Old Name — New Name

Kantipur — Hillipur
Mugling — Mangling
Khaptadha — Ginger-mag
Syange — Priyek
Rupakot — Pravakot
Sunkhediupur — Sunkhediupur

Why stop at one? Our presenters still only have numerical. Kathmandu has a list of unimagined names of streets and neighborhoods that have to be straightened out to date.

Old Name — New Name

Chandpath Shekath
Jawalakot Jawaatok
Kusundal — Kusunkul
Tiben Tibenpat
Shhaspat — Shhaspat
Dhulikot — Dhulikot
Pulchowk — Pulchowk
Bandipur — Bandipur
Karmi Path

We should be smarter.

### Legends of the pure lager

170 years ago we declared that Carlsberg would be made to uncompromising quality standards through a rigorous and exacting process. And that’s how, 170 years later, simple statements become legendary tales.