

HIMALAYAN ARABICA COFFEE

Quality Coffee & Sustainable Pricing

Local and Fresh Roasted Coffee

SCAN TO BUY ONLINE

WhatsApp

98510 23082

fb/himalayanArabica



INDOOR INTERIORS FURNITURE

Our Services:

All kinds of Wooden & Metal Furniture, Aluminum, Partition/Doors/Windows, House Painting, Flooring & Furnishing and Decoration & Renovation



9851086032 (Netra Prasad Ghimire)

Buddha Nagar, Kathmandu

Tel: 4780869, 4784347, Email: netrapd.ghimire@gmail.com

eScan

Anti-Virus

#1 in the World



TOTAL PROTECTION for Computers, Mobiles & Tablets

An ISO 27001 Certified Company

Contact no.: 01-4330980

www.escanav.com

KANTIPUR KITCHEN EQUIPMENT PVT. LTD.



A COMPLETE HOSPITALITY SOLUTION

Factory/Showroom: Nagarjun-4, Sitapaila Kathmandu, Nepal | Tel: 01-5383781/01-5302305 Email: nepalkitchen@yahoo.com

HEALTH AT HOME

your health partner

Nepal's first home based service providing quality health care solution

Our Care Services



DOCTOR VISITS  
TELE CONSULTATION  
CAREGIVERS



MEDICAL EQUIPMENTS  
PHYSIOTHERAPY  
MEDICAL TRAVEL & APPOINTMENTS



LAB'S  
NURSES

https://healthathome.com.np | 977-9818360166

A new nationwide opinion poll quantifies widespread public disillusionment with the political leadership in Kathmandu, but shows that people have formed a generally favourable impression of local governments in the past three years.

Of those polled, nearly 47% said they did not trust Prime Minister K P Oli, with the same level of distrust for Chief Ministers, MPs and federal ministers. There was even more distrust of the leaders of political parties: 60%.

When asked which was the political party most likely to work for democracy in Nepal, a full 62% said they did not know or did not want to say-- an opinion that has been reflected in previous Himalmedia Public Opinion polls.

### Devolution for development

EDITORIAL PAGE 2

This survey was conducted by Sharecast Initiative Nepal between 21 February to 3 March, just ahead of the 7 March Supreme Court decision that dismantled the Nepal Communist Party (NCP) into the previous UML and Maoist Centre.

Asked which is the most reliable party to strengthen democracy in Nepal, the Nepali Congress scored the highest with 13.4%. The Oli faction of the NCP came second with 9.6%, and the Dahal-Nepal faction mustered only 4.1%. The JSP and RPP got less than 2%.

This result correlated with responses to another question about which party represented the interests of the people most. Here, too, the NC was slightly ahead (30%) of the CPN (Oli) 28%, CPN (Nepal-Dahal) had 11%, and the JSP 5%. Now that the NCP is divided between the UML and Maoists, the support will be scattered.

Surprisingly, the NC was ahead (17%) of the JSP (only 5%)

## NATIONAL PULSE

Do any of Nepal's political parties represent the interests of you and your family?

Don't Know/Can't say (DKCS)

| Response | Percentage |
|----------|------------|
| Yes      | 16.4%      |
| No       | 76.1%      |
| DKCS     | 7.5%       |

Do you agree with the following statement? 'Democracy is the best form of governance for Nepal's long-term development'.

No, I don't agree 12.1% DKCS 12.8%

| Response          | Percentage |
|-------------------|------------|
| Yes, I agree      | 75.1%      |
| No, I don't agree | 12.1%      |
| DKCS              | 12.8%      |

Should Nepal be a Hindu nation or remain a secular state?

| Response                      | Percentage |
|-------------------------------|------------|
| Current secular state is okay | 40.3%      |
| Nepal should be a Hindu state | 51.7%      |
| DKCS                          | 8.1%       |

| Province   | NC  | CPN (KP Oli) | CPN (PKD/MKN) | JSP | Don't Know/Can't Say |
|------------|-----|--------------|---------------|-----|----------------------|
| Far-West   | 37% | 20%          | 11%           | 5%  | .4%                  |
| Karnali    | 32% | 13%          | 12%           | 10% | .6%                  |
| Gandaki    | 53% | 11%          | 11%           | .7% | .7%                  |
| Bagmati    | 59% | 9%           | 9%            | 3%  | 2%                   |
| Province 1 | 53% | 17%          | 10%           | 2%  | .3%                  |
| Province 2 | 36% | 17%          | 5%            | 4%  | 5%                   |
| Lumbini    | 9%  | 8%           | 1%            | .6% |                      |

Which is the most reliable political party to strengthen democracy in Nepal? (Nationwide average)

| Party             | Percentage |
|-------------------|------------|
| NC                | 13.4%      |
| NCP (KP Oli)      | 9.6%       |
| NCP (Dahal-Nepal) | 4.1%       |
| Janata            | 1.3%       |
| RPP               | 0.7%       |
| Janamo            | 0.2%       |
| Sajha Bi          | 0.2%       |
| Other             | 8.2%       |
| Don't Know        | 49.9%      |
| Don't             | 12.3%      |

in its own heartland of Province 2. Support for the NC is highest among the Tarai caste (19%)

Meanwhile, the Oli vote bank seems to be among the Hill Dalit (7%).

However, mayors and ward chairs leave a more favourable impression. When asked which tier of government played the

most significant role in improving living standards, an average of half the respondents across all seven provinces said it was local governments. Significantly, the approval of local government was lowest (33%) in Province 2.

The survey studied 5,082 households across the country,

with 80% of the municipalities represented. Gender, age, profession, education level were proportionally represented in the sampling.

More survey results page 4



GET IT ON Google play

Download on the App Store

download happiness

Watch Nepali Movies, Hollywood Movies, Reality Shows, Short Movies, Web Series & 70 TV Channels Anywhere Anytime On



# Devolution for development

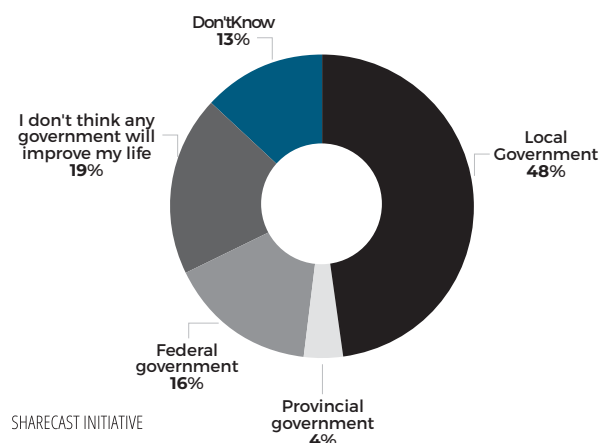
One afternoon last month in Ramaroshan Rural Municipality of Achham district, 45-year-old mother of five, Sarada Bista, was lopping fodder for the family livestock near her home.

Suddenly, she lost her footing, fell off the tree and rolled down the steep slope. When she regained consciousness, she could not move. Her leg was broken, and she had gashes all over her body.

Bista yelled for help, but a neighbour thought there was a ghost in the forest and did not respond. Hours later, rescuers finally arrived and she was taken to the hospital at Bayalpata a three-hour drive away.

There, orthopaedic surgeon Mandeep Pathak got a digital x-ray of her broken left femur, and operated on the leg to rejoin the shaft bone. She was moved to a ward and when we saw her a few days later, was recovering well (pictured, below right).

**Which tier of government has played the most significant role in lifting your living standard in the last 3 years?**



KUNDA DIXIT

**In a remote part of Nepal, local elected leaders are delivering basic services. Their voters seem to have noticed.**

People frequently fall off trees and cliffs in Nepal, mainly women. And there has been a rise in highway accidents with serious trauma patients. Yet, most government hospitals in rural Nepal are not equipped for even the simplest surgeries, or caesarian sections.

Sarada Bista was treated for free at Bayalpata Hospital which is run by the non-profit Nyaya Health Nepal. Her family would have not been able to afford to take her to a hospital in the city if the facility had not been there. The hospital has treated nearly 1 million patients from Achham and six surrounding districts in the past ten years, saved thousands of people with fractures or complicated pregnancies. By offering free treatment it has also prevented many families from certain destitution. "This is an example of what health care in Nepal should be," says the mayor of Sanfebagar Rural Municipality Kul Bahadur Kunwar, who himself had surgery at the hospital when he broke his arm four years ago. "We have to keep it going through our own budget, and implement an insurance scheme

that will make it sustainable."

In the past three years after Nepal's first elections to three tiers of government under the new Constitution, there has been much cynicism about federalism. Indeed, there are municipalities where corrupt contractors got elected as mayors, some became chief ministers and could not care less about the welfare of their constituents because of factional infighting within in their party.

However, there are places like Sanfebagar where elected local leaders are familiar with local needs and challenges, and feel accountable to inhabitants. These municipalities do not make it to the news because there are no major scandals, health and education have improved, and despite the pandemic development is happening.

In Dhangadi, the Chief Minister of Far-Western Province Trilochan Bhatta has not let the split in the NCP affect his effort to ensure

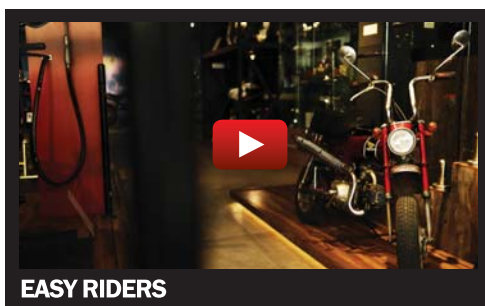
affordable and accessible health care to the a region, long neglected by Kathmandu.

"It is our responsibility now, and we understand our own region better than anyone else from outside," Bhatta said. The people of Far-Western Province seem to noticed this new engagement

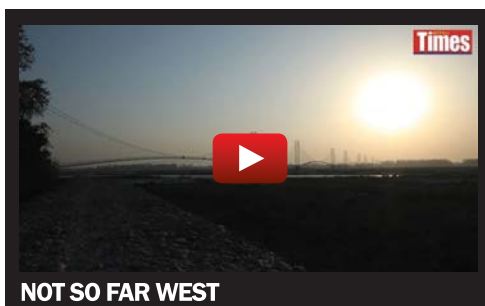
of their leaders in the past three years. The results of a nationwide public opinion survey conducted by Sharecast Initiative Nepal that is featured in this issue (page 1,4) show that although most Nepalis are disillusioned with Kathmandu, most are happy with the devolution of political power and resources to local councils.

Asked if they are satisfied with the performance of the local municipality or ward, half the respondents in Far-Western Province said 'yes'. In response to a question about which tier of government was performing best, 63% said it was the local municipality. Only 17% thought the federal government was doing its job well. In Bayalpata and dozens of hospitals across the country, there is proof that elected local leaders are using political devolution to deliver development and provide services.

## ONLINE PACKAGES



Meet Saurabh Jyoti as he talks about his obsession with motorcycles and superheroes, which inspired him to open the SJ Moto gallery in Kathmandu. Jyoti shows us his favourite bikes, and the ones that have nostalgic value from his childhood. Story: page 6-7.



Join Kanak Mani Dixit on his *Saglo Samaj* coverage of Far-Western Province to hear about the big changes happening there with better connectivity to India and the rest of Nepal. Listen to local activists and businessmen who say federalism has helped, but the province needs to address the grievances of the indigenous Tharu community. Report: page 14-15.



Watch the video accompanying a new installment of Anjana Rajbhandari's column *Life Time* in which she talks about how it is important to educate boys about the way they should treat other genders, so we can ensure the safety of women. Column: page 12.

### YOUNG NEPALI POETS

Making big waves and big changes for poetry and women who write ('Young Nepalis in search of poetic license', Pratibha Tuladhar and Sahina Shrestha, #1053). I am proud to know Deepa Bohora!

**Emily Hastings-Speck**

● Impressive. Good education teaches people to think and express themselves well.

**Stichting Chimding**

### VACCINES IN NEPAL

Nepal is killing Scott Morrison at the job race (1.6 million vaccinated...), Sonia Awale, #1053). He would hate that.

**Gayle Murphy**

● Europe is being very careful because cases of thrombosis have been reported in old people and young, too. It is wise to pause and to enquire further, especially because these vaccines are experimental. AstraZeneca vaccine has not yet been approved for use in the USA. By the way, there's vigilance on all types of Covid vaccines because they are (except for one of them) all new generations/experimental.

**Greenera Green**

● In Europe they made a very unthoughtful decision. AstraZeneca is safe.

**Stephen Kocher**

### WHEN WILL CHINESE TOURISTS RETURN?

Maybe when everyone is vaccinated ('When will Chinese tourists return?', Christopher Tan, #1051)? Not many Europeans or Americans are willing to travel internationally right now. I'm assuming it's the same for Chinese.

**Margaret Kerr**

● Nepal should be open for Chinese tourists. Asia for Asians.

**Shree Nayan**

### PANDEMIC ISN'T OVER

Indians have been legally coming in for months without a need for quarantine. ('It's not over yet', editorial, #1053).

**Karma Phuntsok**

### FIREFLIES

My childhood was star studded with those fireflies we used to look at nighttime ('The fading light of Nepal's fireflies', Sonia Awale, #1053).

**Usha Gewali**

● We had plenty around my home but disappeared since last couple of years.

**Kiran Karanjit**

● Those fond childhood memories of numerous fireflies at our front and back yard during summer... Alas, it's an extinct sight now.

**Mrinal Rai**

**Times.com**

## WHAT'S TRENDING



### Young Nepali poets in search of poetic license

by Pratibha Tuladhar and Sahina Shrestha

On the occasion of World Poetry Day on 21 March, *Nepali Times* caught up with young Nepali poets to talk about their inspiration and journey. Go to our YouTube channel to hear their poetry.

**f Most reached and shared on Facebook**

### Nepal's cycles of revolution

by Saglo Samaj

Saglo Samaj talks to civil society members, legislators and journalists to answer the question: Why is Nepal in a state of perpetual revolution? Full story on [www.nepalitimes.com](http://www.nepalitimes.com).

**t Most popular on Twitter**



### The fading light of Nepal's fireflies

by Sonia Awale

The bugs that were once ubiquitous in gardens, jungles, riverbanks, streets and playgrounds in Nepal have all but disappeared. Where did they all go? Read the story to find out.

**66 Most commented**

### When will Chinese tourists return to Nepal?

by Christopher Tan

Beijing has continued its ban on outbound tour groups, and this limits Nepal's ability to attract tourists from China, with or without vaccine passports. Read the analysis only on *Nepali Times*.

**Most visited online page**

## QUOTE TWEETS



**Nepali Times** @NepaliTimes

Why is #Nepal in a state of perpetual revolution? Why do leaders who have suffered and sacrificed so much for the cause of democracy let the country and people down as soon as they come to power?



**Sam** @climbingsam

Very interesting article. Here's your answer: 'But the universal truth is that as soon as people achieve any authority, they will become greedy and selfish in their quest for power' - sort this and remove corruption things might change for the better!



**Sankalpa Bhattarai** @Sankalpa\_007

There are no leaders in Nepal. Those who are famed as leaders by media are infact brokers. For decades, they are trading Nepal's peace and prosperity for their personal benefits as per the foreign guidances.



**Nepali Times** @NepaliTimes

Despite doubts, #Nepal sticks with #AstraZeneca jabs The suspension of the #Oxford vaccine in Europe may mean there will be more for countries like #Nepal. @SoniaAwale reports.



**Arun Shrestha** @iamarunshrestha

Shouldn't we also have conducted/conduct clinical studies about vaccine effectiveness, possible side effects, and other factors?



**Gaurinathralal** @Gaurinathralal2

Benefits heavily outweigh the risks as scientific communities say elsewhere. So to me it smells as usual: European rivalry. After all drug is a major source of profit making business.



**Nepali Times** @NepaliTimes

#editorial The new surge of Covid-19 in India is a warning that Nepalis should not be letting their guard down.



**Gunjan Dixit** @GunjanDixit

Continuing to wear masks, maintaining social distance and avoiding huge crowds must still be followed. It's not over yet!



**Nepali Times** @NepaliTimes

Fireflies that were once ubiquitous in Nepal have all but disappeared. Where did they all go?



**YashB** @drpantop

The best part of the evenings while I was small were the fireflies.



**Suyog Upadhyaya** @ursuyog

Have always wondered where the fireflies are now.



**MrMick** @MrMick2021

Normally, it would be easy to blame tourists, perhaps, but over the last year with minimal travel occurring?? Strange.

## 20 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here's a much needed break from daily shenanigans of Nepal's perpetually squabbling political leaders. Look back to the week 20 years ago when Hemlata Rai for *Nepali Times* wrote about the upcoming 2001 census and how for the first time the population survey would highlight women's status and their contribution to the national economy.

Nepal's first federalism-era census, slated for 8-22 June later this year, promises to incorporate latest data analytics tool and techniques (more on this on page 14-15) for tabulation. The Rs4.5 billion price tag census will also include a community survey, one of the first in the world, to assess availability of government services, natural resources, and disaster preparedness. The population is expected to cross 30 million.

Excerpts from the report on issue #35 23-29 March 2001:

The upcoming national census promises to bring women to the forefront of national statistics. And this number crunching will help planners adopt more specifically targeted policies to address women's needs in development projects and programmes. Development activists who work in gender-related areas hope that accurate statistics on women will also mean more realistic allocation of funds for their development and welfare.

Census 2001 is the first time Nepal's national survey will shed light on women's status and their contribution to the national economy through what development experts like to call "gender disaggregated



data". Pakistan and India revised their most recent census questionnaires to accommodate data on women's economic activities. Bangladesh's census this year focused on another area traditionally seen as gender-specific, birth control and infant mortality. What makes Nepal's census questionnaire unique compared with that of her neighbours' is that it includes questions that will hopefully provide answers about a woman's status within her family, in addition to her undocumented and generally uncounted economic activities.

Another important revision made to the questionnaire is the collection of data about the cause of death. It is currently estimated that 539 of every 100,000 women die during childbirth. The census will help determine more accurately the maternal mortality rate, and also perhaps help in estimating how many deaths are due to unsafe abortions. The health sector also hopes to figure out the number of undiagnosed, unregistered AIDS deaths.

Donors and NGOs working for the empowerment of women will also now have a chance to review and redesign intervention strategies. The census will focus on assessing the achievements of informal education interventions in the empowerment of women. Unlike previous censuses, Census 2001 will also count "absent women"-previous censuses assumed that female family members do not migrate abroad.

From the archives of *Nepali Times* of the past 20 years, site search: [www.nepalitimes.com](http://www.nepalitimes.com)

**Times**

Nepali Times on Facebook  
Follow @nepalitimes on Twitter  
Follow @nepalitimes on Instagram

Publisher and Editor: Kunda Dixit

Audience Engagement: Sahina Shrestha, Associate Editor: Sonia Awale, Layout: Kiran Maharjan

Published by Himalmedia Pvt Ltd | Patan Dhoka, Lalitpur | GPO Box 7251 Kathmandu

editors@nepalitimes.com | [www.nepalitimes.com](http://www.nepalitimes.com) | [www.himalmedia.com](http://www.himalmedia.com)

Tel: 01-5005601-08 Fax: +977-1-5005518





A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER 

# TIME TO MEET AGAIN: LONDON

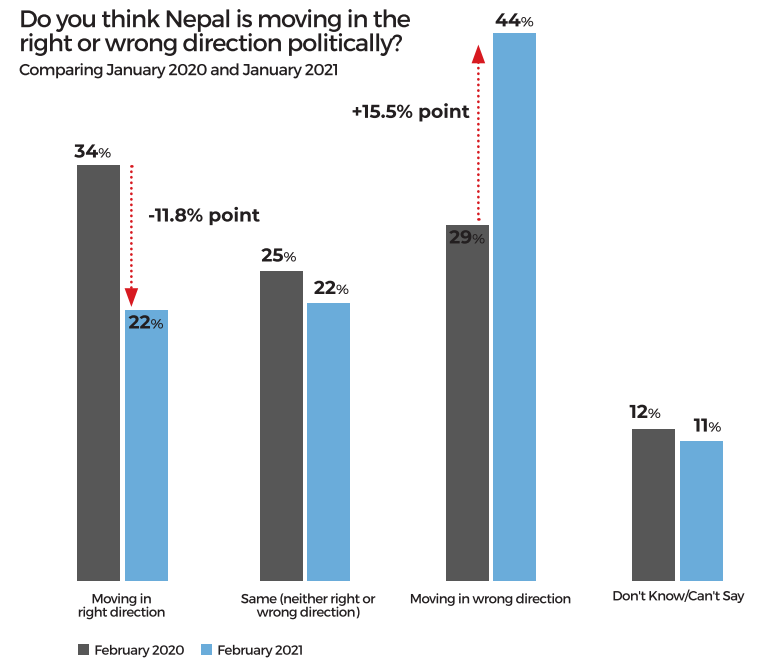
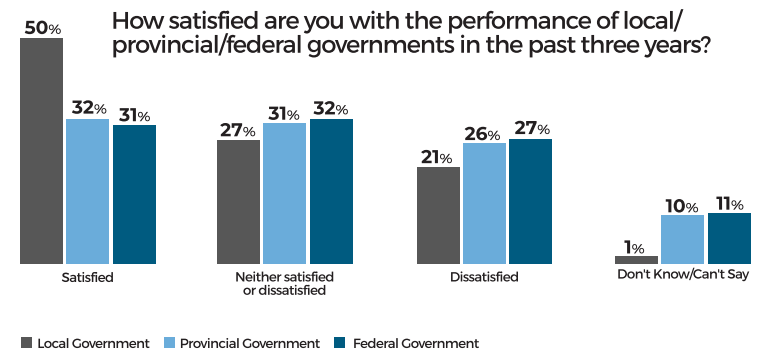
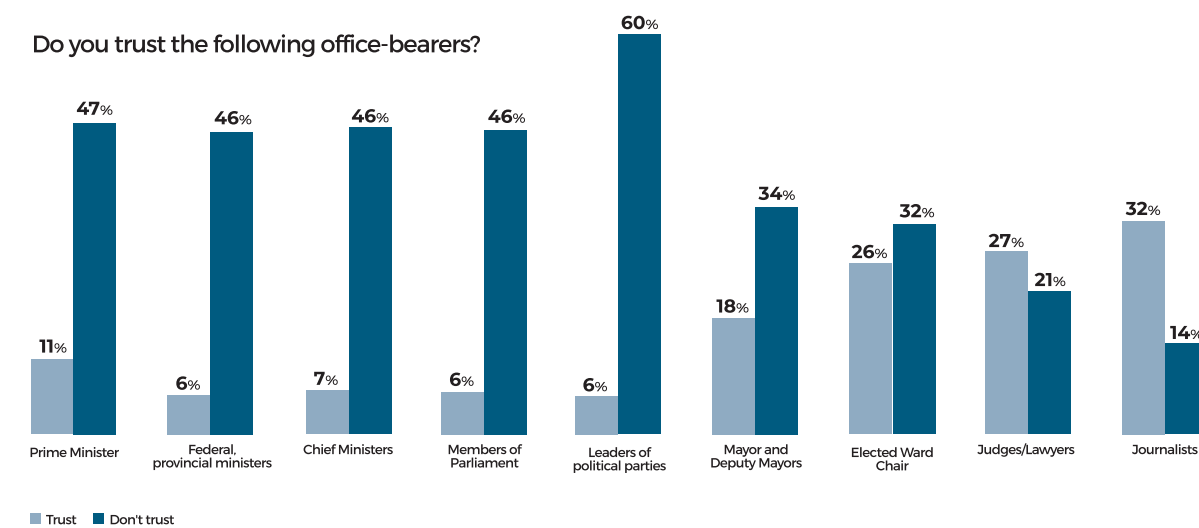
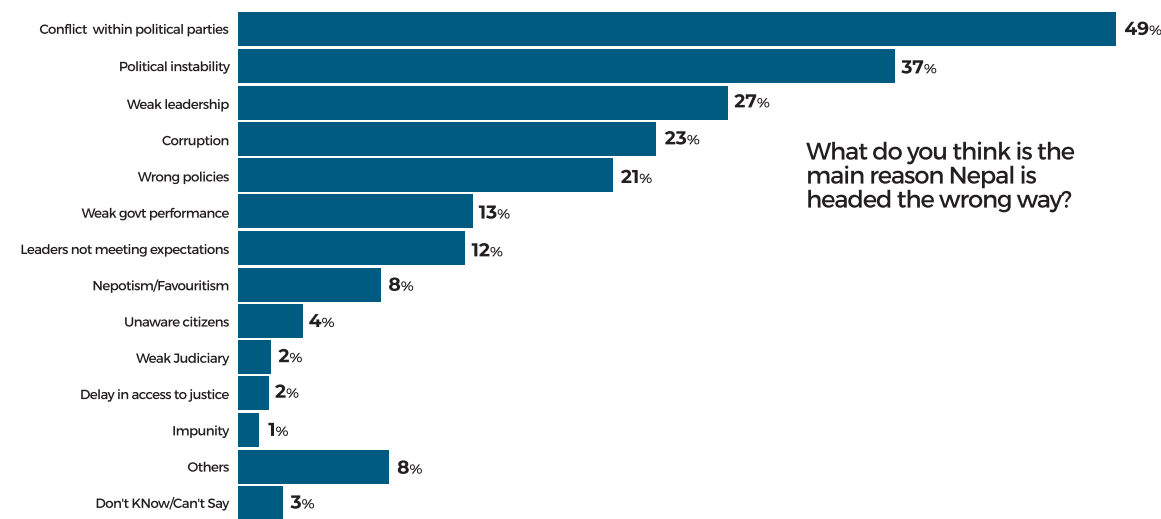
Have a healthy journey with all precautions taken down to the smallest detail for your in-flight safety.



TURKISH AIRLINES

ENGLAND





# In a state of disillusionment

A public opinion survey shows disenchantment for the centre, but hope in local leaders

Factional in-fighting within the Nepal Communist Party (NCP) for the better part of the past three years seem to have dashed the hopes of Nepalis for a stable government that would look after their welfare.

Despite a two-thirds majority in the 2017 election, a survey shows most people think NCP has squandered its mandate, and let them down. The Sharecast Initiative Nepal, 2021 public opinion survey shows widespread disenchantment with the way the country is headed politically. More than 44% of the 5,082 households surveyed across the country felt Nepal was going in the wrong direction with the sense of hopelessness highest in Karnali Province (54%).

Nearly half of all 5,082 respondents said they do not trust the prime minister, chief ministers, ministers in the federal and provincial governments.

In fact, the disillusionment is so great that 63% of those surveyed said they were not even interested

in politics anymore. The more educated the respondents, the more disgusted they seemed to be. Respondents in the Tarai (70%) said they were put off by politics and were not interested.

Hill Brahmins and Newas seem to be most pessimistic about how things are going, with Tarai and Hill Janjati, less bothered. This cross-checked well with responses to another question about how interested people were in politics. Nearly 71% of Hill Janjati and 65% of Tarai Janjati said they were not interested. Both Janjati groups were also the ones that most felt the country had lost its way.

Most people were not as impressed with provincial governments, with the approval rating at 32%, and only 30% felt the federal government in Kathmandu was doing a good job. Lumbini Province seemed to get a consistently high approval, both at the local and provincial level.

Not surprisingly, the federal government got the worst marks

(30% approval) for performance in the past three years in all seven provinces.

The most striking result from the survey is that more than 76% said none of the political parties represented their interests. The main concern of most of those surveyed were jobs, poverty and inflation, and the parties were deemed incapable of addressing them.

It is obvious that while the concern of most Nepalis is economic, they think the political leadership has failed to deliver.

The Sharecast survey also tracked the response to the question about whether the country was moving in the right direction by comparing data for January 2020 with January 2021. In effect, this was useful in gauging how important Nepalis felt the 20 December dissolution of their Lower House by Prime Minister Oli was.

While nearly 34% felt the country was going the right way in 2020, only 22% felt the same way a year later. And while 29% thought

the country was headed in the wrong direction last year, more than 44% felt that way this January.

Nepal's perpetually warring politicians should realise, if they have not already, that the people blame them squarely for the political disarray. In responses to a question about why the country was moving in the wrong direction, 50% blamed it squarely on the power struggle within and between political parties. The multiple choice question also cited political instability, weak leadership and corruption.

Among their key concerns, none of those surveyed in their response to another question cited politics. Their top worries were: unemployment, poverty, shortages, inflation, health and education. It seemed as if, even though people know that governance failure is the reason for these problems, few have any faith in the current crop of political leaders to correct it.

However, the trust in the judiciary and the Election

Commission does not seem to have been dented despite recent events. More than 44% still trusted the justice system and 40% felt the Election Commission could still conduct free and fair elections.

Himalmedia public opinion polls in past years showed average 60% support for a Hindu state. This figure has dropped in the Sharecast survey this year to 52%, pointing to a distrust of the concept of 'secularism' in the Constitution. Support for Hindu state is highest in Province 2 (nearly 70%).

Despite everything Nepal's politicians have done to let the people and country down, most Nepalis still believe that democracy is the best form of government for Nepal's development. Three-fourths of those polled thought so, and only a third of those in the sample group felt democracy and federalism were under threat at present.

Asked who was to blame for democracy being at risk, they mostly blamed 'the government', NCP (Oli) and NCP (Dahal-Nepal). 🇳🇵

## PRABHA BANK

### Pokhara Airport takes off

Work has finally begun to slice off a hill blocking the runway at Pokhara's new international airport. With the cabinet on Monday approving the flattening of the top of Rithepani Hill by 40m, as well as the felling of 600 trees, we are looking at December 2021 for the completion of the project.



One last hurdle for the new airport project is the landfill site populated with vultures that needs to be moved. The project was first planned in 1970, but had been delayed by decades of turf battles, local opposition and lack of political will, construction of the \$216 million facility that can handle 800,000 passengers a year is currently getting finishing touches.

Most of the work on the terminal building, runway,

apron, taxiway and hangar have been finished. Although the Chinese contractor Sinomach was supposed to hand over the airport in December last year, the pandemic further delayed the project by a year.

Tourism in Pokhara has collapsed due to the pandemic, but businesses here hope that the airport will be a catalyst for the revival of the economy of Central Nepal in 2022.

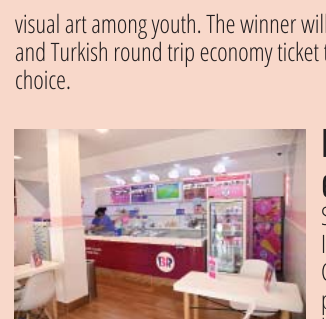
### Nepal Invests launched

CDC Group, the UK's development finance institution, FMO, the Dutch development bank and Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) have launched Nepal Invests, a platform to drive increased investment into the country and its recovery from Covid-19 pandemic.

"Nepal Invests will support the economic recovery from Covid-19 in multiple ways; partnering to address business environment challenges, exploring innovative ways to finance SMEs and increasing the skills and capacity of local investment professionals," says Swiss ambassador Elisabeth von Capeller. "These measures are designed to better prepare Nepal's market for increased investment from development finance institutions, frontier players, and intermediate vehicles in order to support the medium-term economic recovery."

### Turkish promotes visual art

Turkish Airlines in collaboration with Glocal Pvt. Ltd is supporting a themed art competition 'Flying with Turkish Airlines: Dream Destination' at Skill Week to promote reflective and critical thinking through



visual art among youth. The winner will bag Rs10,000 prize and Turkish round trip economy ticket to their destination of choice.

### Baskin Robbins expands

Sun International Inc. Pvt of the Jyoti Group behind the popular ice-cream brand Baskin Robbins in Nepal has expanded its service with over 16 retail outlets across 11 cities across the country.

### Sipradi's auto electrician training

Sipradi trading is seeking candidates for its six-month long free auto electrician training. Nepalis aged 18-25 with

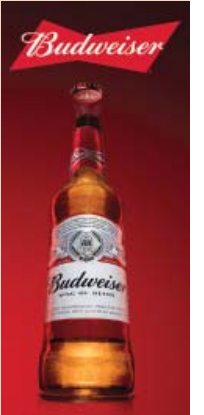


best trainees will be prioritised for openings at Sipradi's workshops.

automobile TSLC or SEE graduated with automobile Level 1 from the Council For Technical Education and Vocational Training can apply within 31 March. The

### Budweiser in Nepal

Anheuser-Busch InBev (AB InBev) has launched American-style lager Budweiser in Nepal, fortifying the brewer's presence in South Asia and adding to its presence in over 150 countries.



### Hyatt WOW Women

Hyatt Regency Kathmandu recently organised the fourth edition of Women Achievers Award with honours in categories such as Arts, Leadership, Entrepreneurship, Social Activism, Service, Inspiring Woman of the Year 2020, among others. Muskan Khatun was recognised as the "Inspiring Woman of the Year 2021".



# Peak performance

Kalpana Maharjan turns a near-death event into a life worth living



KALPANA MAHARJAN FACEBOOK

## ● Tulsi Rauniyar

In November of 2014, Kalpana Maharjan was trudging up to the base camp of Mera Peak at an altitude of 5,250m, when she started experiencing splitting headaches and dizziness.

Days later, she woke up in a hospital in Kathmandu to realise she had been in the state of coma induced by acute mountain sickness for a week.

Anyone else might have given up going up to the mountains after that, but not Maharjan. She did not just return, but went on to become the only female journalist to have made it to the top of Mt Everest from both the north and south sides.

At age 33 she climbed Mt Everest with four other Nepali women journalists on 23 May 2018, and repeated the feat on the same day exactly a year later from the Chinese side.

The mother of an 8-year-old says her success in going back on the mountains after the near-death experience was rooted in her belief that it is through challenges and tragedies that the human spirit learns to rise.

"It is not necessary for every girl to climb Everest to prove herself," Maharjan says, "I decided to climb Everest as the most challenging dream I could set for myself. This was the only way I could reclaim my voice."

Not content with meeting the challenge of climbing the world's highest mountain once, the Newa woman from Lalitpur decided to do it again from a different route. She says she has also learnt her lesson about being realistic about one's goals, and to be prepared for the hardships with training and fitness.

"Determination is important, but you must also know your limits and the risks involved," she cautions, "you need to know what to expect on the mountains and believe in teamwork. Just because you are with Sherpa guides who have summited Everest 10 times, it does not mean there will be no trouble on the mountains."

She is now turning her own experience into training for other aspiring Nepali climbers, with do's and don't's while in the Himalaya. She shares her knowledge about the gear to carry, the types of diet, and the importance of acclimatisation.

Maharjan has launched Experience Outdoors Nepal to visit schools and colleges, talking to young outdoor enthusiasts about hiking and mountaineering.

She says it is not necessary to climb Mt Everest to be in the wilderness, the pleasures of hiking can also be experienced in simple treks along Nepal's forested mid-mountains. For those in Kathmandu,



Kalpana Maharjan on the summit of Mt Everest from the Nepal side on 23 May 2018, and from the north side on 23 May 2019.

Maharjan being felicitated by the Lalitpur Metropolitan city.

she is promoting trekking trails in southern Lalitpur that are both accessible and adventurous.

"There are many unexplored routes that have a lot of potential. You can see the panorama of the mountains as you walk through rhododendron forests and get a glimpse of the real Nepal," she explains.

These 'Hike with Kalpana' short treks are collaborations with rural municipalities that provide a glimpse of the cultural diversity of the Tamang-Newa villages of Lalitpur as well as the Himalayan panorama to the north. The hikes are popular among city dwellers who had been cooped up for long with the Covid-19 lockdowns.

After climbing Annapurna I in 1950, the first ever ascent of a 8,000m peak, French mountaineer Maurice Herzog ends his book about the climb with the words: 'There are other Annapurnas in the lives of men.'

Kalpana Maharjan's 'next Annapurna' is a campaign to end child marriage. Despite improvements, underage girls are still being marriage off by their parents in Nepal, and there has been an increase after the pandemic. She has been traveling the country, delivering lectures, using the celebrity status she has received through her climbs to put a spotlight on the issue.

Maharjan believes that child marriage should be tackled through education. She says: "I made up my mind on top of Mt Everest to start a campaign against young girls being forced to marry, and the best way to do this is to encourage female literacy and enrollment." 🇳🇵





# Kathmandu's new motorbike museum

A first of its kind motorcycle gallery in Nepal is an ode to the two-wheeler work horses



MONIKA DEUPALA

## Spring returns to Nepal's mountaineering

Climbers return to Nepal's peaks after 1 year since the pandemic halted Himalayan expeditions

A year to the day after Nepal went into its first Covid-19 lockdown on 23 March 2020, climbers are back at Mt Everest Base Camp as high altitude guides start fixing ropes and ladders up the Khumbu Icefall.

The Department of Tourism says nearly 300 foreign climbers are expected to attempt climbing Everest this year, and the numbers are high because of pent-up demand as well as the Chinese side of the world's highest mountain being closed indefinitely.

Many mountaineers had cancelled their plans after Europe went into a second coronavirus wave, and with Nepal requiring a 7-day hotel quarantine on arrival in Kathmandu. However, the government's decision on Sunday to waive quarantine for tourists with vaccine passes means the numbers might go up.

In 2019, there were 381 foreign climbers on Mt Everest, and many of them bunched up during a two-day weather window on 22 May, creating a traffic jam below the summit. Because of the bad publicity, Nepal revised its rules and required those attempting Everest to have climbed at least one Himalayan peak above 6,500m high.

The re-opening of Mt Everest and other mountains in Nepal this climbing season has finally provided a ray of hope to hundreds of thousands of lodge owners, porters, cooks and expedition employees who have been without income for a year. Even so, the fear that the second wave hitting India may come to Nepal like last year has prompted the government to issue public warnings about masking up and avoiding crowds.

There are altogether 30 expeditions



KARMA TENZING

attempting Mt Everest, and some of them including a 15-member team from the Bahrain Royal Guard have already completed their quarantines and established Base Camp on the Khumbu Icefall.

"The climbers are moving in all kinds of supplies, from food, tents, gear to stacks of oxygen cylinders to Base Camp," says Mingma Sherpa of Himalayan Trail Blazers, an expedition support company.

Mira Acharya, the head of the Mountaineering Division at the Department of Tourism told *Nepali Times* that all climbers have been asked to strictly follow safety and health protocols. She added: "We have

opened up this spring only after ensuring that all back-up support is in place for health and safety of climbers and support staff as well as search and rescue and other security measures."

However, the government's announcement last week that climbers would not be allowed to post on social media photographs of themselves on the mountains without permission has made Nepal the laughing stock of the world for coming up with yet another absurd and un-enforceable rule.

"It should be the crowds of amateurs who should be stopped, not taking pictures of them. This is censorship," said one

mountaineer who did not want to be named.

Acharya from the Mountaineering Division, however, clarified: "There has been a great deal of negative coverage about Everest ... this is an attempt to prevent that. This rule is applicable to expeditions on other mountains as well."

Despite the predictable bungling, Nepal's mountains are still a great draw, and the fact that there are so many other expeditions on mountains besides Mt Everest proves the point. There are climbers this season on other eight thousanders like Lhotse, Dhaulagiri, Annapurna and Manaslu, as well as Ama Dablam, Nuptse and other lesser peaks.


With the onset of March, there has been a surge in applications for climbing permits and flight bookings. "Tourism businesses are hoping that the economy that has been suspended since the beginning of the pandemic will pick up now," said Dipendra Karna of Buddha Airlines, which has seen a healthy growth in domestic traffic.

Bahrain's Royal Guard was the only foreign expedition to receive a special permit to climb Manaslu during the pandemic.

The team has returned to scale Mount Everest in April-May, and according to the team's Instagram, all members of the Bahraini Everest team were vaccinated before flying in.

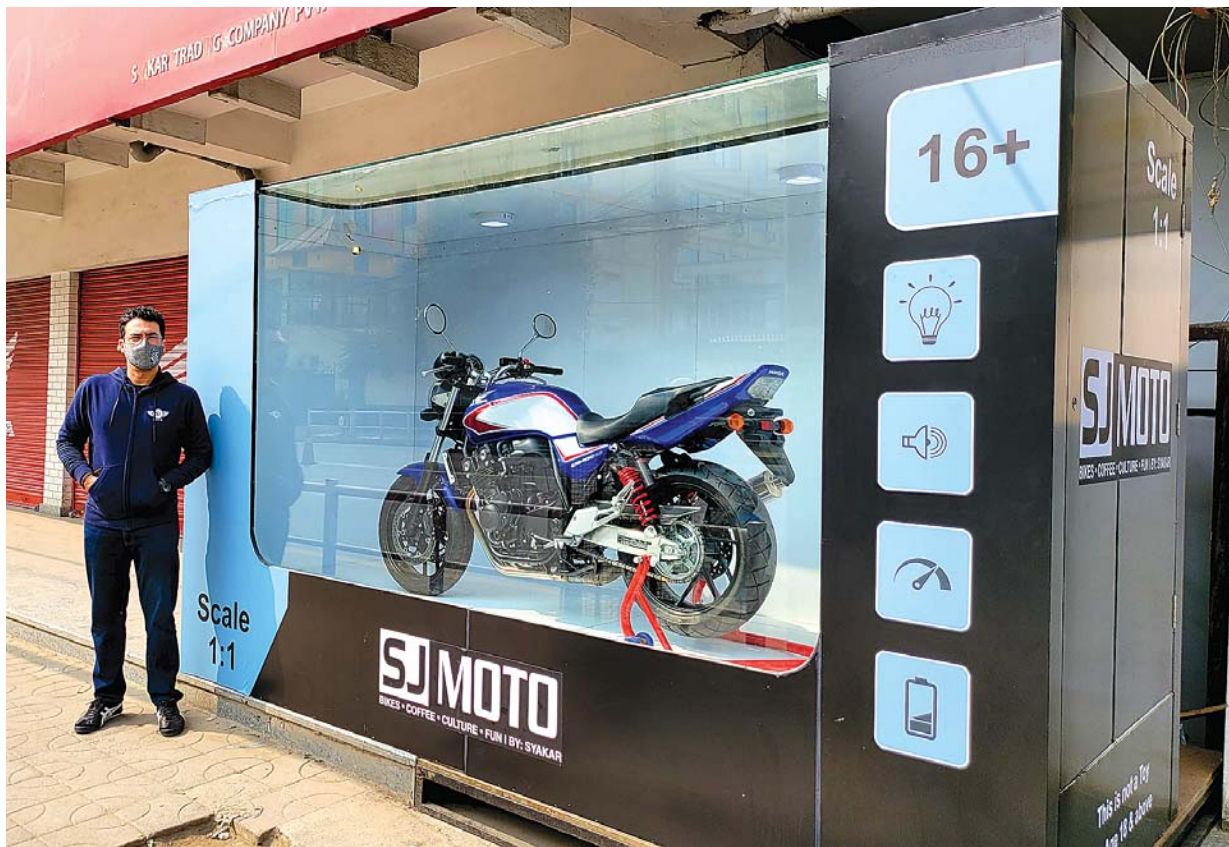
On Everest, Kami Rita Sherpa hopes to make his 25th Everest summit this spring, while Lukas Furtenbach of California-based guiding company, Furtenbach Adventures is assisting 22 climbers in five teams, two of them on Everest.

Three Nepali women, Maya Sherpa, Poornima Shrestha and Sharmila Syangtyan will be climbing Annapurna I from the north side.

Meanwhile, Slovak climber Peter Hamor and Romanians Horia Colibasanu and Marius Ganu are gearing up for Dhaulagiri, and another attempt to complete their 2019 route along the formidable northwest ridge of the world's seventh highest mountain. Also on Dhaulagiri northwest ridge is Carla Perez from the US. 

Tulsi Ranjaniyar





KUNDA DIXIT

### ● Sonia Awale

Saurabh Jyoti has had a lifelong infatuation with motorcycles, and a hobby collecting superhero figures. At age 47 he has decided to combine these two interests at Nepal's first motorcycle museum with a caped crusader theme.

Scion of a family that has been the authorised distributor for Honda motorcycles in Nepal, he grew up with bikes as much as he did with his siblings.

This bond is reflected in his latest venture, a personal passion project: a first-of-its-kind motorcycle gallery in Kathmandu called SJ Moto that pays tribute to the transportation of choice of most Nepalis.

At age 16, Saurabh Jyoti was so fascinated by a Honda NX250 Dominator in the Syakar showroom that he could not take his eyes off the blue Japanese dual-purpose bike.

"I had my nose stuck to the showroom window for a week. My parents refused to buy it but my grandfather gifted it to me," he recalls. This kick-started Jyoti's obsession with motorcycle, and he has not look back since (not even in the rear-view mirror).

After coming back to Nepal from Bangalore, he used to visit garages for old rundown machines and restore them. Over the years, he had a sizeable collection of vintage as well as superbikes, which were all sitting in a warehouse until he decided to put them all in a museum.

SJ Moto is divided into a blue retail corner which has reconditioned as well as some of the latest superbikes from Ducati to Hayabusa that are for sale and can cost up to Rs6 million. The display-only red corner has classic bikes that Jyoti collected over the last 25 years.

A 1969 Honda Dac 70cc holds a special place in Jyoti's heart and at the gallery. "My Dad used to ride this to Padma Kanya to see my mother," he recalls. "But while I was in college, he sold it to one of the engineers. I bought the bike back and restored it."

His other nostalgic favourite is an Indian Rajdoot, a two-stroke Yamaha motorcycle that he rode during his time in Bangalore. "This is my pride and joy, I regretted



MONIKA DEUPALA

selling it before coming back to Nepal. Since then I always wanted to buy it but couldn't find it anywhere," he recounts.

After a lot of inquiries, Jyoti located a Rajdoot in a garage in Pokhara and immediately flew to cargo it back to Kathmandu. He ordered spare parts from Ludhiana, and restored the bike to perfect running condition.

The Honda CBR1100 is Jyoti's pet superbike, but the more expensive two-wheelers are not popular in Nepal, selling only a dozen a year.

"Because we do not have a proper mass transit system in the country, motorcycles serve as the main mode of transport, and they are better suited for the poor road conditions," Jyoti says.

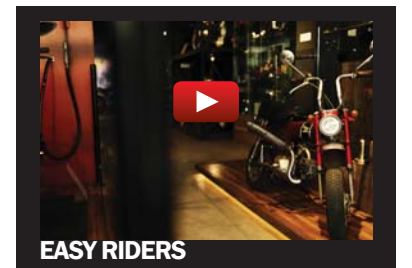
The gallery's motorcycle displays are interspersed with superhero themes from Jyoti's collection: Black Panther helmets, a bike painted in Spiderman web, even a life-size Deadpool figure, Transformer autobots and characters, Ironman's heart and Batmobiles.

The gallery's cafe is also comic character-inspired: Wonder chocolate and Superman muffins. There are also Newa delicacies like lakha mari and hawa mari, and the coffee is an exquisite blend of Nepali beans.

"SJ Moto is a free gallery where I share my enjoyment of bikes, a happy place to inspire people to dream big while maintaining the inner child. The only thing mandatory here is a mask and a smile," says Jyoti with a wide smile.

Next in line for SJ Moto is to be an authorised Marvel and DC merchandise and collectables distributor. SJ Moto will change its displays every month and include unique bikes from other enthusiasts, like a soon-to-be-added vintage German NSU Fox.

Meanwhile, Jyoti is on his mission to complete bike rides to Nepal's remotest areas with his wife. Some of them can be quite hairy, like a near vertical section on the Manang trail. Next on his bucket list are Lo Manthang and Rara. 🇳🇵



EASY RIDERS

Meet Saurabh Jyoti as he talks about his obsession with motorcycles and superheroes which inspired him to open the SJ Moto gallery in Kathmandu. Jyoti shows us his favourite bikes, and the ones that have nostalgic value from his childhood.

Reach your customers every day  
in the new year, and build your brand

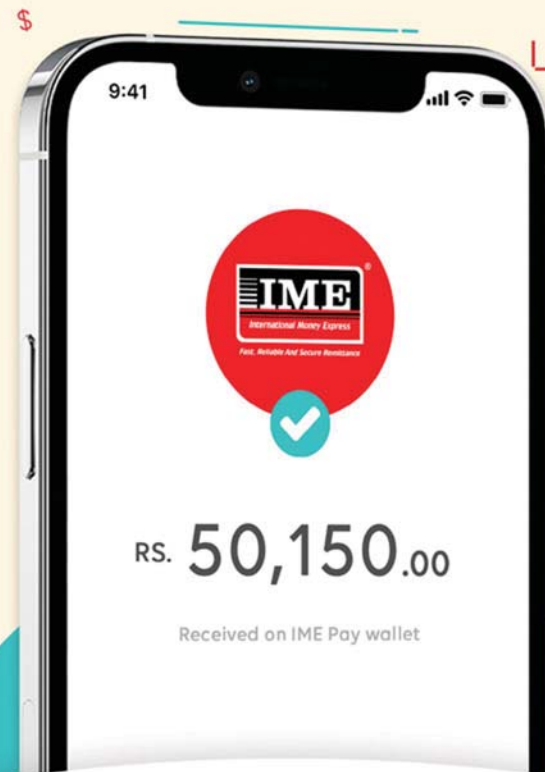
# 2078 Calendar

For customised  
calendar design and printing  
Contact us.



यूनाइटेड मल्टि प्रिन्टर्स प्रा.लि. | United Multi Printers Pvt. Ltd.  
Hattiban, Lalitpur-23, Nepal ☎ 01-5250017, 01-5250018  
info@unitedmultiprinters.com www.unitedmultiprinters.com

विदेशबाट पठाएको रकम  
सजिलै **IME Pay App** मा  
प्राप्त गर्नुहोस्।



IME Complex, Panipokhari, Kathmandu, Nepal  
+977 1 4217600, 4430600 / 4425800 (Fax)  
facebook.com/imeremit  
info@imeremit.com.np  
www.imeremit.com.np

Toll Free :  
16600 151515  
(For NTC users only)







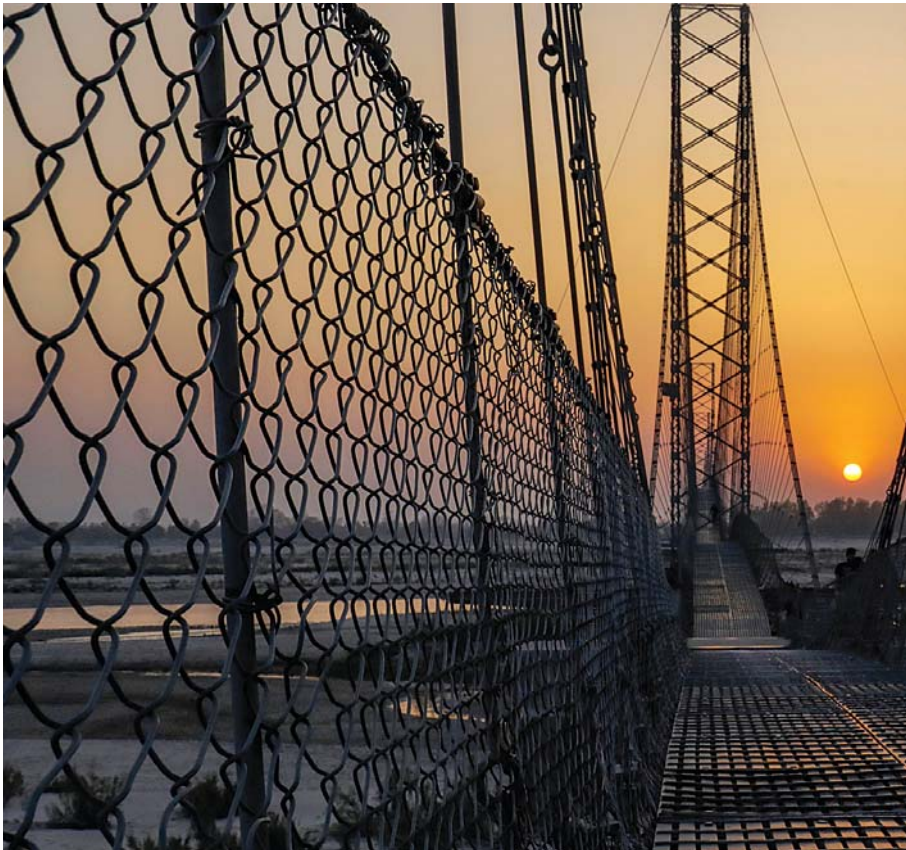
# The sun rises in Nepal's

The far-west has been neglected by the rest of Nepal for centuries, but it is brimming with potential for socio-economic transformation. The reason it has always been seen as a periphery by Kathmandu has been its remoteness. It is a five hour drive to New Delhi from Dhangadi, but it takes at least 12 hours to get to Kathmandu. The devolution of political power under Nepal's federal Constitution, and new connectivity are rapidly changing the face of the Far-Western Province and opened up possibilities for the province to not just catch up with the rest of the country, but even overtake it. The region is filled with natural and human resources. Federalism has enabled local municipalities and provincial government of these nine district to use their own resources for self-determined development priorities. A new bridge over the Mahakali River is under construction and will soon replace the old single lane Tanakpur Barrage as the economic lifeline for the Far-Western Province by joining it with the north Indian states of Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Haryana and New Delhi. There is a new dry port under construction. The bridge will not just help

transform far-west Nepal, but the rest of the country as well, when it is finished in two years. Perhaps then, this region cannot be referred to as 'backward' or 'under-developed' anymore. "In terms of connectivity, this bridge will be a game-changer," journalist Surendra Phuyal tells the *Saglo Samaj* tv magazine. He points to how the inauguration of the Karnali Bridge also similarly joined the far-west to the rest of the Nepal 27 years ago. Before that, people from far-western Nepal had to travel through India to go to other parts of Nepal. While the Karnali Bridge immediately brought the far-west closer to the rest of Nepal, the new Mahakali Bridge will bring the increasingly affluent industrial and agricultural regions of north India closer to Nepal, allowing the easier flow of people and trade. This means Nepal will now be much more accessible to the 200 million people in India who live within a 5 hour driving distance from Dhangadi or Mahendranagar. Many of them are young Indians looking for new unspoilt destinations to go on holidays or pilgrimage. Many are tired of the overcrowded hill stations of Nanital, Ranikhet, Mussourie in India. Better connectivity can therefore have an immediate impact on

tourism if the facilities and infrastructure on the Nepal side can be improved. This in turn, will bring tourism income to the rural far-west reducing the push-factor driving its people to migrate out. Many of the destinations in the far-west and adjacent Karnali are pristine wilderness areas: Khaptad and Rara National Parks, Badimalika, Api Saipal Conservation Area. These are all scenic unspoilt wilderness areas with their own religious significance that can be a draw for Indian as well as domestic Nepali tourists. In addition, there are the Sukla Phanta Wildlife Reserve and the Bardia and Banke National Park in Karnali Province. Says nature guide Kum Thakur at Sukla Phanta: "This area is famous the world over for the Barasinghe swamp deer, tiger, rhino and rich birdlife. Despite Sukla Phanta's smaller size compared to other national parks in Nepal, the reserve's mix of wetland, jungle and vast grasslands give it a higher density of wildlife." North India's most prosperous areas near Delhi are within a few hours of driving distance. Increasingly affluent, upwardly mobile people there are looking for new unspoilt destinations. Bed Upreti, an airline captain with Air India, who has set up the

Better connectivity and a sense of structure brings hope to



# Holy hike

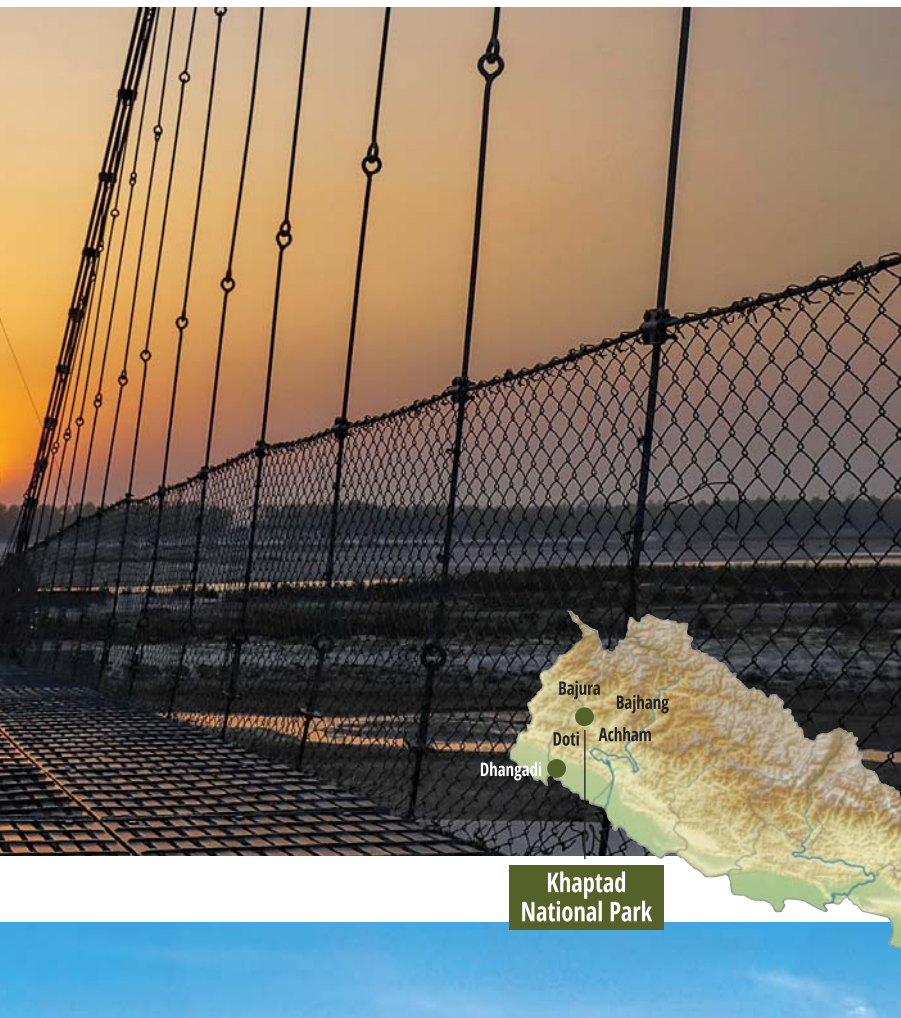
● **Bharat Bandhu Thapa**

With the spread of the road network, and airfields coming back into operation, pilgrimage spots like Khaptad are not as remote as they used to be. Even for people from Kathmandu, this sacred plateau made famous by the Hindu saint Khaptad Baba is now easily accessible, and there are tour groups selling packages that include air fares, hotel stay, meals and tented camps. Located in Far-Western Province and touching the districts of Doti, Bajhang, Bajura and Achham, the undulating alpine meadows at 3,200m are snowbound three months in a year. It used to be difficult to get to Khaptad, and only local herders and those with helicopters ventured here, like King Birendra who flew here regularly to meet his guru, the Baba. The holy man himself was an authority in ayurveda and treated patients from the surrounding districts. These days, you do



# s Far West

## e of identity under a new federal to Far-Western Province



Mahendranagar Museum says: “I see huge untapped potential for tourism if the far-west is promoted adequately as a destination. For this, we have to reduce the distance by improving connectivity to the destinations like Khaptad. Whenever I fly over Far-Western Nepal, I feel like it is a gold mine for tourism.”

Meanwhile, federalism has brought new hope that the Far-Western Province can benefit from devolution, and not have to depend on faraway Kathmandu for everything (*see Editorial, page 2*).

“We used to have to go to Kathmandu for the movement, now with the province, we can solve our own problems,” says Yagyaraj Chaudhari, a Tharu social activist.

Chaudhari says there is residual tension in Far-Western Province between the indigenous Tharu community of the plains and the mountain settlers. It goes back to the history of trans-location of villagers from the mountain districts to the Tarai during the reign of King Mahendra in the 1960s. This has been exacerbated by instance of violence like the massacre of policemen in Tikapur six years ago, and the continued imprisonment of Tharu leader and MP, Resham Chaudhari.

“There is simmering anger among the Tharu because of this, and it is also fed by their under-representation in proportion to the population in government jobs,” says Chaudhari. “Inclusion will

address the discrimination, but also help uplift living standards of the Tharu people. Road are important, but even more important is affordable health care and education for our people.”

With Province 2, the Far-West is possibly the only other province with a distinct identity. For the people of this far-flung region that identity stems from the common sense of neglect by the rest of the country. “What unites the people of Far-Western Province both in the mountains and the plains is that there has been no development here,” says businessman and media entrepreneur Gopal Hamal. “It is our economic weakness that united us, it fostered a sense of solidarity.”

He says the priority is to address the injustice that the Tharu have suffered and to address their grievances. He says, “Earlier, it was the settlers from the mountains who mistreated the Tharu, and took their land. Now, despite the Constitution, it is the state that is the oppressor. We have to solve this before it takes an explosive turn.”

Although this is not the kind of ethnic identity that the Madhesi community of Province 2 feel, the people of the Far-West share the feeling of being abandoned by the central government for so long.

Says Hemraj Panta, who was chief of Kailali Campus and a rector at Sudur Paschim University: “Culturally, the Khas identity and the Tharu identity in the plains give us a distinctness, but perhaps the Far-West has more of a cohesiveness compared to other provinces.”

Most interviewees in Mahendranagar and Dhangadi agree that domestic tourism and visitors from India can be a catalyst for economic growth for the Far-Western Province. Just as the neighbouring Indian state of Uttarakhand has the *Char Dham Yatra* pilgrimage tourism, the province can also promote its shrines and pilgrimage spots that are common to Hindus in Nepal and India. One attraction could be sight-seeing flights from Dhangadi airport for Indian tourists to see Mansarovar and Mt Kailash from the air, or even Dhaulagiri, Annapurna and Mt Everest. “If one local government promotes one destination, one district identifies one attraction, and the province promotes itself as *Sundar Sudur Paschim*, we can lift the rural economy,” says Hamal. “The youth will then have jobs and this will reverse outmigration.” 🇳🇵



Join Kanak Mani Dixit on his *Saglo Samaj* coverage of Far-Western Province to hear about the big changes happening there, with better connectivity to India and the rest of Nepal. Listen to local activists and businessmen who say federalism has helped, but the province needs to address the grievances of the indigenous Tharu community.



PHOTOS: BHARAT BANDHU THAPA

# e to the sacred Khaptad Plateau



not have to be a king to take a helicopter to Khaptad. Chopper companies offer charters from Doti, Sanfebagar, or even Dhangadi.

However, to mix hiking pleasure with a pilgrimage to Khaptad's holy Triveni

Dham, there is nothing like a group trek. This involves taking a 1.5 hour flight from Kathmandu to Dhangadi and then a 20 minute hop to Dipayal airfield by the banks of the West Seti River.

From the hot and humid valley it is a one hour drive straight up to the historic fort town of Silgadi for a night halt at one of the homestays there. In the evening, the devout can seek blessings at the Shaileswari Temple.

The next morning it is a 1.5 hour jeep ride to the entrance of the Khaptad National Park in Jhigrana from where it is a steep but pleasant forest walk. Fit trekkers will take about eight hours, but it is advisable to break the journey for the night halfway at Bichpani where there are basic lodges.

The following day it is a four hour walk through thick forests alive with birds to Ghodadaun from where there are spectacular views of Mt Api and Mt Saipal in Nepal and Trishul and other mountains of the Indian Himalaya (*photo, above*). Nearby is the tranquil Khaptad Daha with mirror-like reflection of the forests.

Further up the trail is the ashram of Khaptad Swami (*pictured left*), who died in 1996 some believe, at the age of 130. Devotees still come to pray at a statue of the spiritual

saint at his hermitage. The Swami believed that the tranquility of Khaptad was the ideal place for yoga, and many of the trekkers who come here combine yoga classes with their hikes.

For those who are more interested in the pilgrimage aspect, there are side trips to the Bhageswar shrine in Dipayal and the sacred Baijanath Temple in Achham, three hours' drive away, where Ravana is believed to have cut off one of his ten heads to please Shiva.

The group can fly back to Dhangadi from Dipayal or Sanfebagar to catch the last evening flight to Kathmandu. Those who want to combine a wildlife safari can visit Sukla Phanta Wildlife Reserve before heading back to Kathmandu, which is 12 hour drive away if you do not want to fly.

Buddha Holidays is offering a promotion package of Rs39,999 if there are eight or more passengers. 🇳🇵

Buddha Holidays: <https://holidays.buddhaair.com/>  
+977 98513334000



## EVENTS

**Royal Holi Fiesta**

Such is the occasion: Holi celebrates the victory of good over evil and heralds the arrival of spring. Get showered with coloured powders thrown and get drenched to the bone, dancing and snacking on traditional food.

28 March, 11am, Royal Empire Boutique Hotel

**Greek Food Night**

First of its kind event in Nepal with a variety of traditional Greek Cuisines. This event is being held a day after Greek National Day in association with the Greek Consulate of Nepal.

26 March, 5pm, Chimes Restaurant

**Le Sherpa market**

Support local businesses. Shop for fresh fruit and vegetables, cheese, bread, meat products, honey, and much more.

Saturdays, 8am-12:30pm, Le Sherpa

**Kholo 2.0**

A seven-month-long exhibition, Tulikaa's Kholo 2.0 – A Cycle Of Life, will be the longest exhibition in Nepal displaying artworks of 28 upcoming, established, and legendary Nepali artists in seven different genres of Nepali art.

12 February - 27 August, Van Gogh Gallery, Dhokaima Cafe

**Katha Ghera**

Join artists and theatre enthusiasts to celebrate #worldtheatreday with a special #playbacktheatre evening with Katha Ghera Productions and enjoy the line-up of some of their best plays.

27 March, Kausi theatre

**Made in Nepal**

Join one of the biggest Made in Nepal Carnivals happening in Kathmandu with stalls, food, music, culture shows, products launch, service launch, vendors meet, award show and meet with many speakers.

3 April, 8am, Ananda Pashupati

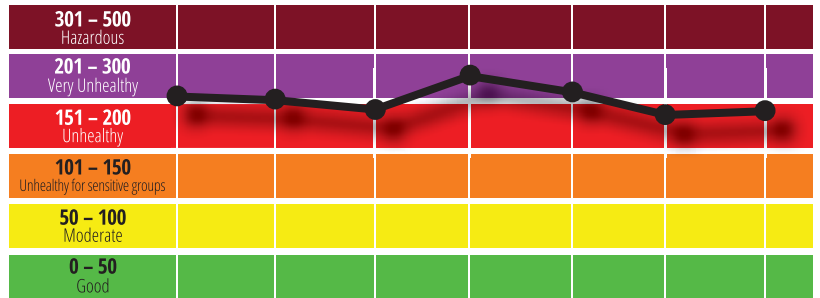


No respite from this prolonged dry spell for the Tarai and mid-mountains. No substantial westerly front in sight, so the weekend looks mostly dry. This means the forest fires in Chitwan, Parsa and Nawalparasi will continue to smoulder, bringing smoke haze over central and eastern Nepal. However, the high valleys may get some passing storms with drizzles and flurries. But the temperature is climbing as might be expected, with summer-like weather.

| FRIDAY     | SATURDAY   | SUNDAY     |
|------------|------------|------------|
| 27°<br>10° | 27°<br>11° | 25°<br>12° |

## AIR QUALITY INDEX

KATHMANDU, 19 - 25 March



Wildfires in Chitwan, Parsa and Nawalparasi shrouded Kathmandu in haze and pollution earlier this week. At one point, the daily average Air Quality Index (AQI) soared to 421, more than 10 times higher than the threshold set by the WHO for safe breathing – the worst so far this year. But the situation is unlikely to improve much as we are heading to a mostly dry weekend. This points to continued forest fires in the national parks with prevailing winds blowing smoke haze over central and eastern Nepal, combined with wind-blown sand from the deserts. Mask up for all this dust, the coronavirus and air pollution.

## ONLINE ARCHIVES

**Madan Puraskar Pustakalaya**

Browse through Nepali archived content collection, including manuscripts, newsletters, sketches, and photographs on the Madan Puraskar Pustakalaya database.

**Digital Archaeology Foundation**

Look at historic photographs from Kathmandu, Patan, and Bhaktapur Darbar squares, and watch 3D reconstructed videos of temples around Nepal. Visit the Digital Archaeology Foundation website for more details.

**Oversimplified**

On OverSimplified, history is not as contrived as it seems. Head on to YouTube and watch historical events, both widely known and unknown, explain them with depth and humour. Start from the detailed breakdown of World War I.

**MoNA exhibitions**

Go to the Museum of Nepali Art website to watch two 360° virtual art exhibitions: Tangential stress 2020, a contemporary exhibition featuring 19 prominent artists and their work under lockdown and Inception, a Nepali artistic collection of masterpieces by some of Nepal's best traditional artists.

**Metamorphosis**

Tshering Sherpa's Metamorphosis, Herron School of Art+Design's first exhibition, focusing on contemporary international art and artists, borrows imagery from classical Tibetan Buddhist iconography to investigate the dichotomy, found where sacred and secular traditions and world cultures collide.

## DINING

**Yellow Pomelo**

Located in Jhamsikhel, Yellow Pomelo promises good food and good time. The specials that they provide here are their Royal Yellow Pomelo Burger, Buffalo Wings and Club Sandwich.

981-3289975

**Deli Akuj**

Deli Akuj has you covered when it comes to your indulgences of quality food and interiors. From a plethora of coffee choices and international delicacies, choose what fits the mood and season.

986-0913902

**Kung Fu Noodles**

Noodle lovers, summon! A small Chinese restaurant with a wide variety of noodles and soup, extremely fragrant and toasted with sesame oil. Some of their ingredients go back to China.

985-1172950

**La Casita**

Being in La Casita, you can enjoy one of the best views of Boudha, with the mountains peeking from behind the hills. Their tapas is most liked by visitors.

01-4915645

**The Vesper House**

Every serving at The Vesper House reflects the Italian lifestyle, simple, vibrant, yet subtle and aesthetically presented. They are popularly known for their continental cuisines and fine wines.

01-5548179

## OUR PICK



Mira Nair's 2016 biographical drama Queen of Katwe revolves around Phiona Mutesi, a girl living in a slum in Uganda's capital and how an introduction to the world of chess brings an opportunity to escape from a life of poverty. The feature film adapted from an ESPN magazine article and book by Tim Crothers stars David Oyelowo, Lupita Nyong'o and Madina Nalwanga.



YOU HAVE HIGH STANDARDS.  
SO DO WE!





# Playing with symmetry and shadow

A photographic exhibition that compels us to look beyond the visual world



Sravasti Ghosh Dastidar's photographic exhibition 'Soul in Shades' at Siddhartha Art Gallery was pushed back by one year because of the Covid-19 pandemic. It is finally being inaugurated on 26 March, just as Nepal's health authorities are once again on high alert for the second wave coming from India.

Dastidar (*above*) is originally from Kolkata, and is well-travelled, having lived in Mumbai, Colombo, Manila and Brunei. She has curated her own photography from all her globe-trotting for this week-long exhibition that reaches the viewer with powerful dreamlike images.

The photographs use stark black and white to play with symmetry and shadow that force us to see soaring human-made structures and nature's grandeur in new light.

Dastidar's command of the craft shows in the deft way that she turns everyday objects into striking visuals that force the viewer to do a double take. The wraith-like image of a trapeze artists in a circus in St Petersburg (Undaunted), masks

peering out of a shop window (Watching), a canoe floating on a winter morning in Chitwan (Mist 2), or of a lonely person in the slanting beams of a public building in Hong Kong (Hope) – the photographs give us a new way of contemplating objects that we take for granted.

"Her compositions reveal her fascination with texture, the play of light and shadow, the incongruous geometry of shapes, architecture and angles," says Siddhartha Art Gallery's Sangeeta Thapa. "In many of her works we see the loneliness of people in urban settings."

Indeed, some of the photographs are of solitary individuals – negotiating a subway, out on a boat, or that one person in a crowd ascending an escalator. The power of these images forces us not just to look, but ponder the border between reality and imagination.

'Soul in Shades' will be exhibited till 2 March at Siddhartha and will give visitors in Kathmandu a chance to savour images through which Dastidar takes us on a journey of the soul. We visit different parts of the world, a world that is now compartmentalised by the pandemic, and see how even in teeming crowds we are individuals with unique minds, bodies – and souls.

It is hard to say whether photography is a hobby or a full time passion for Dastidar, who is founding partner of Copytous Media and a SEO-based Content Writing and Research Specialist. 'Stories in Reflection' is a series of her blank greeting cards that can be found on Instagram and on her Facebook page – Sravasti's Words & Images, crafted into signature greeting cards.

"In a world becoming increasingly digital, I hope that the

cards will help us to touch each other's lives in a way we have almost forgotten," says Dastidar. "A personalised handwritten note is always more special and connects us in a deeper way."



Photography started as a hobby and graduated to a passion. Her travels added further to this obsession with photography. Sravasti's photographs and articles have been featured in leading Sri Lankan magazines. She has a Masters in English Literature from Calcutta University and a Bachelors in Education.

Fellow photographer from Kolkata, Mala Mukherjee says of Dastidar's photography: "I am

pleasantly surprised by the freshness of her work, the neatness of the compositions, and the variety and novelty of the subjects she selects."

Viewers in Kathmandu will get to enjoy these perspectives at 'Soul in Shades'.

*Soul in Shades*  
Exhibition of Photographs by  
Sravasti Ghosh Dastidar  
26 March – 2 April  
Siddhartha Art Gallery, Baber Mahal Revisited

अब इन्टरनेट अनुभव हुन्छ अझ उत्कृष्ट

# 5G+

DUAL BAND ROUTER को साथमा

20 Mbps

@ JUST RS. 1100\* PER MONTH

30 + FULL HD PACKAGE Mbps

@ JUST RS. 1208\* PER MONTH

High Speed Internet

Smooth Gaming

Quality Video Streaming

Seamless Connection

बालबालिका माथि हुने हिंसा, दुर्व्यवहार, शोषण भएको, जोखिमपूर्ण अवस्थामा रहेको वा बालअधिकारको उल्लंघन भएको छ भने बाल हेल्पलाइनको पैसा नलान्ने

फोन: नं. १०९८ मा खबर गरौं ।



नेपाल सरकार

सञ्चार तथा सूचना प्रविधि मन्त्रालय

सूचना तथा प्रसारण विभाग

CONTACT DETAILS FOR SALES & SUPPORT

HEAD OFFICE • Baluwatar: 01-4235888, 9801235888

Email: consumer.sales@subisu.net.np, support@subisu.net.np

Website: www.subisu.net.np

FOR SMS BOOKING: Type Your Name<Space> Location and send SMS to 9801116552

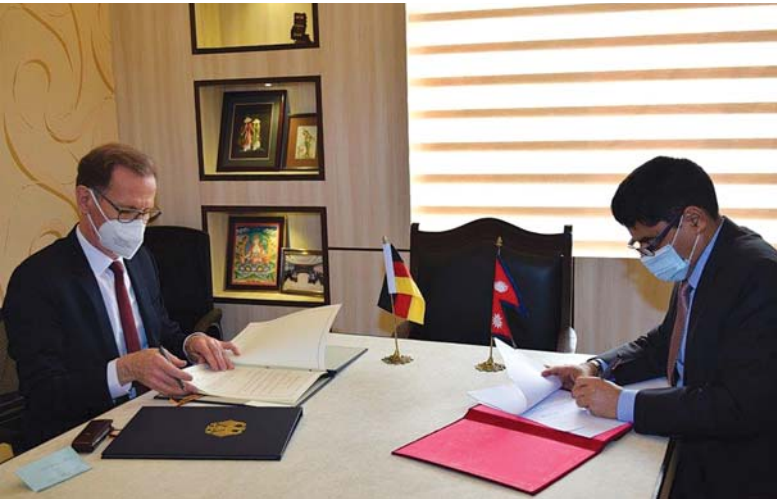




**WOMEN AT THE TOP:** President Bidya Devi Bhandari with Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in Dhaka during her state visit to Bangladesh this week.



**UNITED WE STAND:** UN Resident Coordinator, Sara Beysolow Nyanti and PM K P Oli discuss LDC graduation and SDGs in Baluwater on Monday.



**DEAL SEALED:** German Ambassador Roland Schaefer signs grant assistance on Tuesday in Kathmandu worth €10 million to expand grid-connected solar infrastructure in Nepal.



**CLEAN KILN:** British ambassador, Nicola Pollitt visits an improved brick kiln in Champi, Lalitpur on Tuesday.



**CHEERS:** Anheuser-Busch InBev's Kartikeya Sharma (right), Raj B Shah and Sashin Joshi of Jawalakhel Group of Industries launched Budweiser beer in Kathmandu last week.

# Educating your sons will protect your daughters

What we can do to change the way women live in constant fear for their physical safety

The #MeToo movement started in 2006 with activist and sexual harassment survivor Tarana Burke speaking out on the social media platform, MySpace. Since then, it has become a huge social movement against sexual harassment and sexual abuse, with people publicly speaking out about similar experiences.



**LIFE TIME**  
Anjana Rajbhandary

Then in 2017, #MeToo became a viral hashtag when celebrities started sharing experiences about the sexual misconduct of Hollywood producer, Harvey Weinstein. It encouraged people all over the world to speak out against sexism, harassment, and discrimination. The kidnapping and murder of Sarah Everard in London on 3 March, has led to a global movement

to feel safe and protected when men continue getting away after committing such acts? How can the country keep its daughters safe? Many women experience daily sexual harassment in public and it is the women who feel more embarrassed than the perpetrators who do not seem to feel any shame and remorse regarding their behavior. And it is the women who are ashamed to come forward and speak up because of the stigma attached. It is the men who commit the shameful act, and it is the women who pay for it, as we have also seen in Bhatta's case. In many societies, victim-blaming is the immediate reaction. Speaking up about sexual harassment is important, so we can fight against all forms of violence against everyone. Despite having laws against gender-based violence in Nepal, very few cases are reported in the excuse of protecting the family's name and honour.

Men, women and people of all genders need to be trained and educated about what is sexual harassment and how they can be helped if they experience it. Every day thousands, if not more, of people, are victims of sexual harassment. Girls and women are at the highest risk of sexual assault, but it does not mean that boys and men cannot be victims either. Sexual violence can have long-term effects on people, and it is likely that they might have suicidal and depressive thoughts after the incident. Victims and survivors of sexual violence are likely to experience post-traumatic stress disorder, contemplate or attempt suicide or abuse substances. Victims and survivors of sexual violence experience problems in school or work and it can negatively affect their relationships with their family and friends. To end all sexual violence, the



regarding the safety of women in public. Sarah was walking home at 9PM, in a well-lit neighborhood wearing bright clothing and sneakers while speaking to her boyfriend on the phone, taking every safety precaution a woman could take. However, she did not make it home. On 12 March, her remains were found and a police officer, Wayne Couzens was arrested and charged with kidnapping and murder. Women across the UK and the world are enraged by the incident caused by a law enforcement officer who is supposed to protect. How can women feel safe if police are committing such acts? Incidents of this nature have given rise to a social movement because of the rage and frustration. How can the government and law enforcement keep women safe from the violence committed by men? The brutal rape and murder of 13-year-old Nirmala Pant is an example of how higher up officials can influence justice from being served as the perpetrators continue to walk freely. The recent rape and murder of 17-year-old Bhagirathi Bhatta is another example of how women continue to get the short end of the stick and pay for the inhumane acts committed by men. How is it possible for women

The victims and survivors often end up dealing with a lifetime of stigma if they choose to report such crimes. There is no guarantee of safety and protection once someone speaks up, which is one of the main reasons women silently suffer. Women who have experienced sexual abuse and harassment experience lifelong depression and anxiety. Experience of harassment at work for women, is often stalked by male bosses threatening the security of their jobs. Most women are not even aware of their own rights, which puts them at a disadvantage and education is the first step to address such issues. Keshav Sthapit, former mayor of Kathmandu, was accused of sexually harassing a female reporter from My Republica daily, and another female employee at Kathmandu municipality. Although he eventually stepped down for other reasons, he was able to dismiss the allegations at that time. Many women grow up internalising sexist behavior as a part of their lives and continue to silently suffer and tolerate all forms of harassment because they are vulnerable. Also, the potential threat to their family is another concern that keeps them from speaking up. How can we encourage women to

first step is to educate sons so that every family can have a serious conversation with them to tell them how to treat other genders. It should begin at home. There needs to be stricter punishments for perpetrators so women can feel safer in their neighborhoods and in public. Girls and women practice safety more than men do, but we need to create an environment where they can feel safe and stop living in fear of the worst. If you have never had a conversation with the men in your life, talk to them. It is important to have this conversation so we can put an end to gender-based violence. Educate your sons, so your daughters can feel safe. 🇳🇵



**LIFE TIME**

Watch the video accompanying a new installment of Anjana Rajbhandari's column *Life Time* in which she talks about how it is important to educate boys about the way they should treat other genders, to ensure the safety of women.





ROSE SCHWIEZT

● Rose Schwietz in Nawalparasi

When a woman carries herself around in the streets or even at her workplace or her home, she is constantly hounded by the anxiety of protecting herself. The fear for safety has been heightened with the series of cases of rape reported over the years, not to mention impunity of the assailants.

Actors' Studio's performance of *Rapemachine* offered a final sobering note at Fine Print Fever Literature Festival at the Unnati Cultural Village last week.

Directed by Suraj Malla, the play is stirred by the rape and murder of Nirmala Panta. It begins with three women in white kurta onstage,

gazing silently outward. Suddenly, three men appear from the audience, stalk through the crowd, and shine flashlights at their faces.

The women begin a movement sequence representing youth, learning, and beauty, presenting a repeat of their innocence, over and over. Ranjana Bhattarai plays hopscotch, Hena Nagarkoti practices her alphabet, while Anu Dahal admires herself in a mirror.

The men join the sequence, bringing actions of machinery, brute force, and vice: Suraj Malla operates a large vehicle. Pranav KC digs piles of dirt, and Aashish Shrestha blows cigarette smoke at the audience. This codified mirror of society recycles itself until someone discovers an abandoned shoe –evidence of an assault.

The individual characters become a village chorus and shout in unison: “छेदे छेदे लुगा लाएछि यस्तै हुन्छ, यस्तै हुन्छ”, this is what happens when you wear short skirts. Accusations abound, but mirroring a real society, everyone returns to their individual cyclical actions—we protest, investigate, and accuse, then we return to ‘normal’.

*Rapemachine* pushes this idea further. When the performers settle into their repetitive actions, another piece of clothing is found. Another. And another. Each time, the onstage society reacts with accusations, and each time they attempt to return to normal. The repetitive actions lull the audience into uncomfortable resignation: What can be done when the cycle seems bound to repeat itself indefinitely?

# New setting for Nepali society, literature and art



Actors' Studio's performance of *Rapemachine* added a sobering note at the Fine Print Fever Literature Festival last week

Rather than offer solutions, *Rapemachine* emphasises that lack of action leads to continued devolvment. The male characters become a team of senseless monsters, cleverly staging violence that represents rape and murder to the audience. Effective use of items like *tika* vermillion powder, lollipops, and confetti, create a sense of affinity and loss we experience when reading about Nirmala's case. Although it is clearly symbolic, watching the violence unfold leaves the audience in pin-drop, the silence speaking volumes about the impact.

What the performance lacks in solutions, it makes up for in conversation opportunities. The performers' intensity and vulnerability – particularly the women's – leaves the audience in shock, stirring them

towards dialogue. With sexual violence and victim-blaming in every corner of our world, these artistic conversations continue to be necessary.

The Fine Print Fever Literature Festival held 12-13 March in Nawalparasi also featured conversations around books, with Amar Neupane, Asim Sagar, and politics with the likes of Gagan Thapa, Rabindra Mishra.

Unnati Cultural Village is a Chaudhary Foundation initiative and is designed and inspired by Tharu architecture, motifs, and sketches. The venue is also home to a Craft Museum and an artifact museum called Sampada Art Gallery, Rangmanch Amphitheatre, an open-air performance space and Atelier, artist studio spaces. 🇳🇵

UPTO

50%

OFF\*

SAIA

AMARONE

BELLAVISTA

GAJA

BRUNO PAILLARD

POLLADOR

FRAMINGHAM

THE VESPER HOUSE P. LTD

HOTLINE : 9801230014 / 01- 5409240

@Vesperfinewines

@vesper\_house

Celebrate this

HOLI

with

Vesper Fine Wines

Offers on 30+ labels.

SHOP ONLINE !

www.vesperhouse.com

\* Offer Valid till 31st March





# Everybody

Nepal's 2021 census in June is set to be its most inclusive and ambitious yet

● **Shristi Karki**

As Nepal prepares for the 12th National Population and Household Census, there is much happening behind the scenes before thousands of enumerators fan out across the country knocking door-to-door.

Scheduled for 8-22 June, this is the first census under a federal system, and the most inclusive and ambitious since the first count was done in 1911.

Since the census happening once every 10 years, those involved are usually new and need extensive training. The Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) has devised three levels of training at the central, provincial and local levels.

Three program sessions were completed as part of the central-level training in early March, during which 200 officials were brought up to speed to operate as provincial and district officers. They will be deployed in 87 census offices across Nepal.

The officers and their assistants will in turn train the instructors, enumerators and census supervisors, passing on skills on how to approach, interact with, and interview people and fill out the questionnaire.

To improve the process of data collection, the CBS has also changed the method of

collating information this time around. Instead of just assigning government school teachers for data collection as was the practice in the past, an open call for applications for enumerators and census supervisors was made.

"We had been having discussions for a long time about the need to mobilise educated young Nepalis around the country to help with data collection," says Tirtha Raj Chaulagain, information officer at the CBS. "More than 120,000 people have responded to our request to apply, and there is bound to be a lot more applicants because there is still time until the application deadline."

The CBS now faces the task of vetting applicants and selecting 39,000 enumerators and 8,000 census supervisors. Those who have completed high school are eligible to apply for 'enumerator' while those with a bachelor's degree can apply to become 'census supervisors'. The age limit caps off at 40 for male applicants and 45 for female applicants.

The data collection itself is set to be more comprehensive and detailed, with the use of three separate questionnaires.

"Nepal will have the longest census questionnaire out of any other country in the world that conducts a census," says Chaulagain. "Census questionnaires elsewhere in the world generally

## A century of census

Although official accounts document the first Nepal census in 1911, there have been claims and accounts of Jang Bahadur Rana conducting a headcount after returning from the UK in 1850.

In fact, Volume 1 of the 2014 Population Monograph of Nepal published by the National Planning Commission and the Central Bureau of Statistics mentions head-counts, counting households, stone taps, *paatis*, and temples at various points in history before and during the prime ministership of Bhimsen Thapa from 1806 to 1837.

The first official census of Nepal, however, was conducted in 1911 following an *Istihar* announcement published in 1910 by Chandra Sumsher Rana's government.

"Nepal's administration was very much influenced by British colonial power, and so the census was conducted as much as an attempt to follow in their footsteps as it was to identify Nepal's able-bodied, working population in order to find out the number of youths who could be conscripted into the British Indian Army amid a looming political crisis in Europe," says researcher Sanjay Sharma.

The results of the 1911 census put Nepal's population at a little over 5.64 million, with most Nepalis living in the mid-mountains. That number would decrease by almost 65,000 people to 5.57 million in the 1920 census, with the decrease attributed to a significant loss of Nepali lives in World War I, the 1917 influenza epidemic, as well as out-migration. The 1930 census showed a further decrease to 5.53 million, but this could also be due to counting inaccuracies.

In his 2014 book, *One Hundred Years of Census-Taking*, statistician Tunga Shiromani Bastola writes, "The absence of a large number of young males from the country and the death of a large number of them during the war might have lowered the fertility and growth of population in the Hill region."

Indeed, Nepal's mid-mountains had lost

much of its population after the war, with some ethnic communities like the Gurung, Magar, Rai and Limbu which were preferred by the British as Nepal's 'martial races' suffering more significant losses than others.

"Data about ethnicity was not included in earlier censuses, so it isn't quite possible to say exactly which ethnic communities were most affected. But colonial British policy was to hire the Gurung and Magar people from the western hills and the Rai and Limbu people from eastern Nepal, so these communities might have been affected disproportionately to other Nepalis," explains Sharma. "Moreover, some battalions were also comprised of Chhetri, so it can be assumed that these five ethnic communities were the most affected by the war."

The 1920 census thus also included data of injured and disabled Nepalis in an attempt to quantify the impact of the First World War. Since the war in Europe had ended by then, however, the 1920 census was also aimed at preparing an inventory of slaves by sex in Nepal, called *Kamara-Kamari*, a system that was abolished in 1925.

The population would further decrease by 41,000 according to the results of the 1930 census, with a sharp decline in the population of Kathmandu valley. The reason for the decrease has been attributed to undercounting at a time when young Nepalis feared the census was being conducted for the purpose of conscription as tensions rose between Nepal and Tibet, and war looked imminent. The population would bounce back by the next census in 1941, showing an increase for the first time since Nepal began conducting censuses.

After the 1950 revolution that led to the fall of the Rana autocracy, and much of the work related to the census was abandoned in the wake of Nepal's newly democratic

political climate. The census, therefore, began after a gap of more than 10 years in 1952, ending in 1954.

This count also marked the first modern census in Nepal's history, what Bastola has characterises in his book, as 'an endeavour to collect internationally comparable data'.

Around 17,000 enumerators were deployed across Nepal to collect demographic data. Language and religion were also added to the questionnaire for the first time in 1952.

Ten years later, the 1961 census was the first one conducted by Nepal's Central Bureau of Statistics which was established in 1959. The results took four-and-a-half years to be published, and established the tradition of a decennial census in Nepal.

Nepal was now in the Panchayat era, and the 1971 census marked a huge technological leap with the advent of an electronic data processing system with early computers. Meanwhile, the 1981 census introduced a 'Post-enumeration quality check survey' (PES) in an attempt to check the accuracy of the data.

Journalist Mohan Mainali worked as an assistant census supervisor in Taplejung during the 1981 census, having just completed his SLC exams at age 17. During three weeks in March 1981, he and an assistant travelled across two village Panchayats in Taplejung to conduct the Household Schedule. The Assistant Supervisor would conduct the household schedule while enumerators would conduct the individual schedule.

"The questionnaires we had to carry were long and heavy," Mainali recalled. "It would sometimes take more than an hour to travel just from one household to another, since there were no roads connecting villages back then. There also was the possibility of rain, so we also had to protect the questionnaires."


Mainali describes the cultural climate at

the time that posed challenges in conducting an accurate household count. "The men would be away from most households, and we would need to interview the women. Since the head of the households were men, we would ask the women for their husbands' names, but they would be reluctant to utter the name of their spouses, such was the tradition in rural Nepal," he says. "This and other factors prevented us from getting accurate counts."

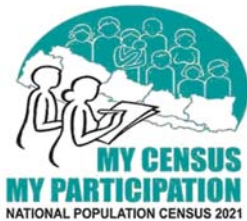
Mainali also remembers how personal motivations affected data collection. "An enumerator would earn 20 paisa for data collected on each individual and often, they would over-count and exaggerate data to earn more money," Mainali told *Nepali Times*. "There were significant discrepancies between the population data collected in the household schedule and the individual schedule, which resulted in us having to redo the individual questionnaires."

The 1991 census, the last census of the 20th century, identified 60 castes and ethnic groups for the first time and employed school teachers as enumerators for the first time, as well. The 2001 census was conducted amidst a period of political turmoil in the aftermath of the Royal Palace massacre and the middle of an armed insurgency. It used a combined data collection method of complete and sample enumeration and adopted multimedia platforms for result dissemination.

"The 2011 census ... included census publicity in local languages, maximum involvement of female interviewers, and the involvement of enumerators from different caste and ethnic groups," writes Bastola in his book.

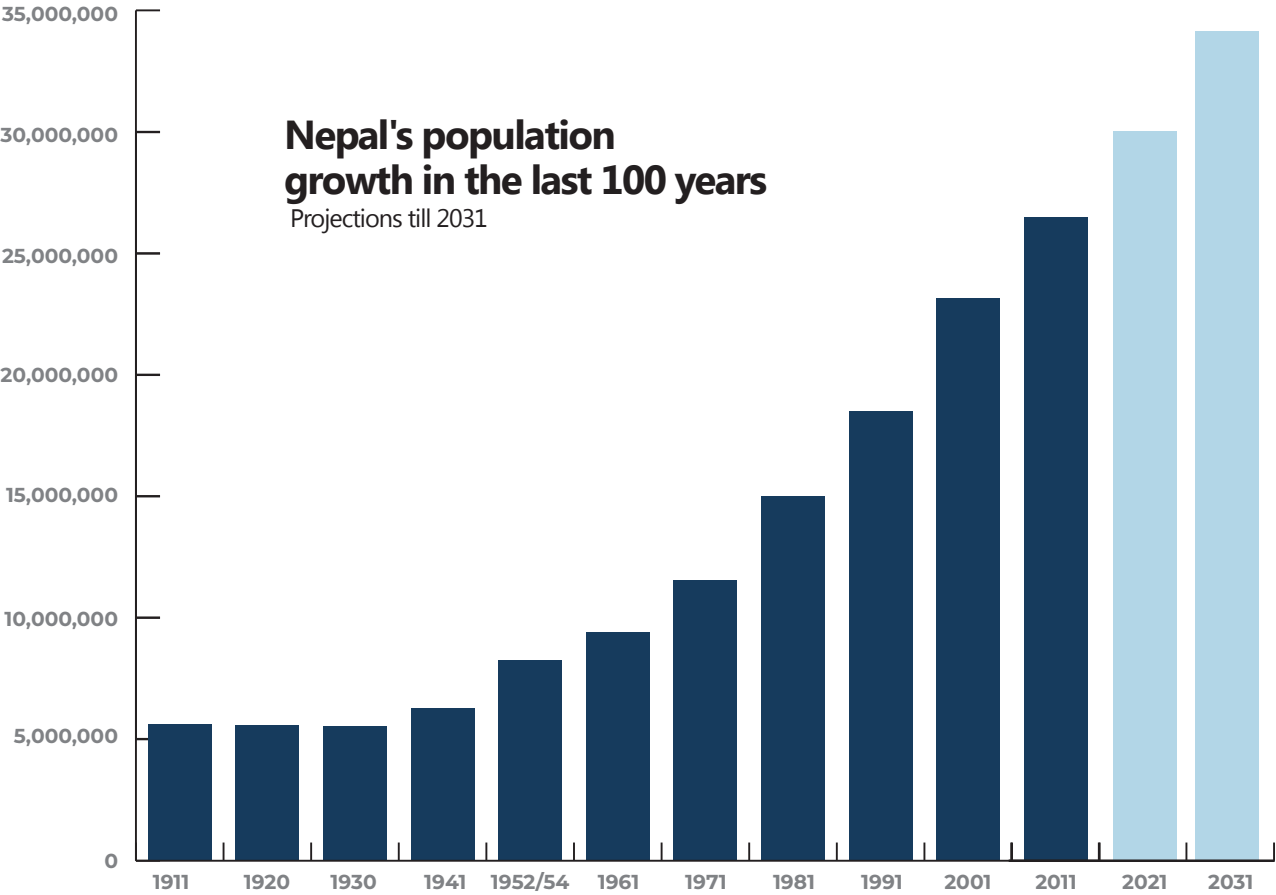
By this time, Nepal's population had surpassed the 26 million mark, a 370% increase in a century. A century after the first census, therefore, Nepal's 2011 census served as numeric and demographic documentation of Nepal's historic political and socio-cultural changes. 

**Shristi Karki**





# counts in Nepal



have 20 questions on average. Ours will have 55.”

The first pilot survey of House and Household Listing will be completed in May, which will collect household and livestock data. For gender identity, the option for ‘Other’ was introduced for the first time in the last census in 2011. Officials say they are preparing to

note that survey provides space for individual conversations and safe space for gender minorities.

The second phase will begin after the responses of the first one has been analysed. This will allow time for the CBS to conduct an entirely different survey depending on the data that they receive.

The main questionnaire will

have 55 questions related to family resources, property ownership and income. Other details related to language, religion, ethnic identity, educational background and disability will also be part of this section. The main questionnaire will have 8 questions related to head count of family members living and working overseas.

Two new parameters have been added to the main questionnaire, one being ancestral language, and another a question about whether children under 5 years of age in any given household have birth certificates or not.

The third part of the census will be the Community Questionnaire, the first of its kind used in a national census. Information from every ward in the country, ranging from the demographic structure of each community to its access to government services, development infrastructure, national resources, and disaster preparedness will go into this.

Among all the firsts happening this time, another one of them is the documentation of the existing infrastructure. Count of buildings, along with information indicating their use and purpose is a part of the questionnaire. There are questions that will help differentiate between villages and cities, eventually contributing to mapping the degree of urbanisation of each ward.

The census will also make a more prominent use of technology in the data collection process this time around. Enumerators deployed within Kathmandu Valley will use electronic tablets to collect data, while paper-based questionnaires will be used in the rest of the country. Nepal’s diplomatic missions around the world will participate in an e-census by responding online.

Scholars and population experts note that this year’s census is going to be the most inclusive and

accurate census in Nepal’s history.

“Not only are the questionnaires themselves more inclusive of Nepal’s diverse communities, but the operational modality itself has changed. The members of civil society and other concerned organisations will be able to directly participate in the data collection process,” says Yogendra B Gurung, PhD, who teaches at the Tribhuvan University.

CBS has also adopted the motto, ‘My Census, My Participation’, to reflect the level of interaction this census is expected to engage the citizens in.

“Potential enumerators and supervisors will be selected based on which communities they belong to and what languages they speak because that makes a big difference in their ability to interact with a diverse range of people across different communities,” explains Tirtha Raj Chaulagain.

The census results are expected to reflect the country’s changing socio-political and demographic landscape more accurately. The study is expected to provide more accurate data on the increasing urban-rural divide.

“All levels of our government and our civil society have felt the need and are waiting for new data, as old data and statistics are outdated and of little use under the federal system,” says Gurung.

“With the data collection parameters becoming so comprehensive, there can be no doubt about the quality of the results, provided that the data is managed in an efficient manner.”

TATA MOTORS

Connecting Aspirations

TATA

NEW

FOREVER

A WHOLE NEW WORLD OF POWERFUL & ADVANCED CARS FROM TATA MOTORS

NEXON

With Electric Sunroof

TIGOR

New Powerful BS6 Engines with AMT

ALTROZ

India's Safest Hatchback

TIAGO

New Powerful BS6 Engines with AMT

H5

With Automatic Transmission and Panoramic Sunroof

SAFETY IS NEW FOREVER

GLOBAL NCAP

★★★★★

Safest Range with 5-Star and 4-Star Rated Cars

DRIVING PLEASURE IS NEW FOREVER

Multi-drive Modes

Automatic Transmission

Powerful BS6 Engines

DESIGN IS NEW FOREVER

Panoramic Sunroof

BS6 ENGINE

SIPRADI TRADING PVT. LTD., An ISO 9001:2015 Certified Company, Thapathali 01-4250610, 4222150,4222152.

SIPRADI





**LIVING THE Ruslan VODKA MOMENT**

**Ruslan VODKA**  
Triple Distilled  
FOR OUTSTANDING SMOOTHNESS

**PREMIUM QUALITY**  
100% PURE VODKA

70° PROOF | 750 ML

ENJOY WITH RUSLAN RESPONSIBLY

## Happy-go-lucky Nepal

No matter how bad things get, Nepalis don't waste time worrying about it, we laugh heartily as our raft hurtles towards the rapids. That is because we know the situation is soon going to get much worse, so we may as well enjoy ourselves while things are still relatively better.

Which is why it was no surprise that The World Happiness Report 2021 released by the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network last week ranked Nepal 87 out of 149 countries on the Gross National Happiness Index. Don't laugh, we're serious.

This is five points higher than the previous survey in 2018, and Nepal has now been declared the happiest country in South Asia, ahead of even Bhutan which is ruled by King Jigme the Glad. That bit of surprising good news should make us all even more happier still.

And since the UN has now officially certified us as a people who are becoming happier and happier every year, this calls for a three-day national holiday. While we are at it, as a matter of scientific inquiry, the Ass carefully explores the possible reasons why Nepalis continue to be so cheerful these days:

- ☺ We have a prime minister who is a first-class clown, and keeps everyone entertained.
- ☺ When Nepalis see that their glass is half-full, they don't wallow in sorrow. They just toss it down neat.
- ☺ Nepal has the highest per capita holidays in the calendar of any country in the world. We celebrate five new year days, and being a secular republic there are holy days for every major religion, and this Sunday is Holi Day. With

government offices closed so often, there is less chance of being given the run-around at the Land Transport Office, which adds to our sense of contentment.

☺ Let's face it, we'd be really miserable if we stopped being miserable. Thank goodness we have an incompetent grovelment, intermittent electricity, and unbreathable air. So what if our roads have potholes, they're paved with good intentions.

☺ We never do today what can be done the day after tomorrow.

☺ Nepal is a very transparent country. Nothing is secret here. In fact, it is no secret that secret talks are going on in secret at a secret venue even as we speak between the JSP and the Oligarchy to form the next grabberment. So, we are all secretly happy.

☺ Nepalis always see a light at the end of the tunnel, even if it is a locomotive headed our way.

☺ Happily, there are still Nepalis who are happy to just sit around and complain about how much happier we could be.

☺ Nepal's space program is taking off. Our young scientists just tested the country's first rocket last week. It crashed. But we are still grinning our heads off.

☺ The reason Nepalis are in unnaturally high spirits is probably because alcohol consumption per head is growing at a phenomenal rate. Just look at the ads. GONE has gone and banned selfies on Mt Everest. This is because we are not content to be happy ourselves, we make the whole world laugh.

☺ But we won't rest on our laurels, Nepalis will try to catch up and be as joyous as the Finns by setting up a National Happiness Commission.

☺ Headline we'd like to see: 'Nepal Happy with Oli'.



The Ass

**vianet** | अब सबै connected

१ वर्षको नयाँ subscription लिन मन छ तर बजेट अलि कम छ?

**vianet**

**EMI**

**Easy Monthly Internet**

अब भायानेट EMI अफर अन्तर्गत पाउनुहोस् १ वर्षको इन्टरनेट सहित जडान खर्च र डिभाइसहरुको मूल्य सजिलै EMI मा तिर्ने सुविधा !

सबै कर र शुल्क सहित १२ महिना अवधिको EMI **रु.१२५६** मात्र

30 Mbps इन्टरनेट for 1 year

**viaTV** for 1 year

Fiber WiFi Device + Installation

**SET TOP BOX**

For more information

☎ 01-5970444, 9801046410

✉ sales@vianet.com.np | 🌐 www.vianet.com.np | 📱 vianetnepal | 📷 vianetfth

Now available in Kathmandu, Lalitpur, Bhaktapur, Banepa, Birgunj, Butwal, Bhairahawa, Biratnagar, Chitwan, Hetauda, Pokhara, Lekhnath, Dadeldhura, Dhangadhi, Tandi, Itahari, Inaruwa, Dharan, Damak, Birtamode, Kritipur, Panauti, Nepalgunj & Kohalpur.