



# Election climate in Nepal

Just before local elections in May, a survey of young Nepalis of voting age showed that 75% felt that the impact of global climate breakdown on the Himalaya should be a political priority for candidates.



**GUEST EDITORIAL**  
Shilshila Acharya

That survey by our Avni Centre for Sustainability has relevance for federal and provincial elections also because more than half the voters are in the 18-40 age group. However, many in that cluster are among the 4 million Nepalis working and living abroad and are not able to vote.

Still, past surveys have shown that environmental issues like air pollution, solid waste management and the climate crisis top the list of main concerns of younger Nepalis. And despite the main leaders of the main parties being senior citizens, 90% of the candidates are below 60, and an unprecedented 41% are under 40 years, and 10% are below 30.

Candidates who understand the concerns of young voters will be the ones whose political futures will be secure. Repeatedly-elected politicians who have mined our rivers to destruction, illegally quarried mountains and logged forests, and plundered Nepal's natural resources can be swept away by these elections. Their political future is threatened by a future generation of Nepali votes. Nepal's politicians must regard the climate crisis not just as a problem, but an opportunity. Similarly, voters must also use the chance that comes every five years to reward candidates who are most likely to act on helping Nepalis cope with climate change.

We need to vote in leaders who understand not just the environmental aspects of climate breakdown, but also the economic and political roots that determine fossil fuel use and consumption patterns.

Scientists have warned that we just have 5-8 years to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to avoid the worst impacts of the climate emergency. The politicians we elect on 20 November will be in office for another five years, by which time things will have got much worse. At COP27 that ends this week in Egypt, world leaders will have to implement pledges they made in the 2015 Paris Agreement to limit global average temperature

rise to only 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. Global warming has already crossed the 1.1°C threshold. At the rate emissions are rising, it looks like global average temperatures will be at least 2.8°C warmer by the end of this century – driving many species to extinction and melting two-thirds of what is left of Himalayan glaciers.

Climate denialism is not as widespread in Nepal as some other countries. But there is lack of awareness or better access to alternatives to fossil fuels. There is also a tendency to use the climate crisis as an excuse to beg for money to tackle it, even when there are a lot of low-hanging fruits that Nepal can pick to reduce its carbon footprint.

While we blame industrialised nations for historical emissions, they are watching Nepal's actions like haphazard road-building that has affected drainage and unleashed landslides, mining of rivers and

mountains, destruction of watersheds, over-extraction of groundwater, rampant dumping of waste into rivers and forests, and open garbage burning. That is the real 'loss and damage' that Nepal should address first. At last year's COP26 in Glasgow, Prime Minister Deuba pledged that

Nepal would be 'carbon neutral' by 2045. But as soon as he returned to Kathmandu, he actively backed a white elephant airport project that was being heard in the Supreme Court and that would have destroyed a large swathe of Tarai native forest. We say

one thing, we do another. Nepalis will benefit from decarbonisation: by reducing air pollution and dependence on petroleum imports. Protecting forests, greening cities, promoting organic agriculture, conserving groundwater, cleaning up rivers and soil, will ultimately benefit Nepalis and improve their quality of life.

Environment-friendly, green and sustainable policies will mend the economy and safeguard society. Nepal can be a model for meeting carbon negative goals, but for that we need to rapidly replace fossil fuels with hydro, solar and wind energy and prevent further forest destruction.

That will be our contribution to help the global effort to address the climate emergency, but the immediate benefits will be enjoyed by this and future generations of Nepalis.

*Shilshila Acharya is with the Avni Centre for Sustainability, a non-profit and Avni Ventures, a waste management company based in Kathmandu.*



NEPALI TIMES ARCHIVE/AMIT MACHAMASI

**Nepal needs to see climate crisis not just as a problem, but an opportunity.**

## 20 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

### Bad air gets worse

*Kathmandu residents breathe the dirtiest and deadliest air in the world, reducing their average lifespan by nearly five years. It is worse this time of year with smoke from north India adding to the capital's own pollution.*

*There are solutions, but there is no sense of urgency either among the people or the government. Vehicle emission tests for example are a green ticket to pollute what with many buying it over the counter.*

*But even far back as 2002, people were overriding emission tests. But at that time, there were only 200,000 vehicles in Kathmandu, there are now over 1.5 million.*

*Excerpts of the report published 20 years ago this week on issue #119 15-21 November 2002:*

If you've been blaming the pollution and the gas guzzling of your vehicle on Nepal's infamous adulterated fuel, maybe it's time to look under your hood instead. Motor vehicle mechanics in Nepal love to hold forth on the ills of adulteration. They're right, to an extent, and vehicular pollution is indeed one of the main contributors to the Kathmandu Valley's polluted air, but what most vehicle-owners don't realise is just how important the state of

### The mechanics of clean air



Don't toy with your car engine. You'll save money but also get respite from Kathmandu Valley's horrible air.

their engine is. That's the message that the Vehicle Anti Pollution Program (VAPP), and the Tribhuvan University Department of Mechanical Engineering are trying to spread.

Almost 30% of the 136,000 vehicles tested between June 1996 - May 2000 failed the tailpipe emission tests. In a recent random monitoring of tailpipe emissions by the Valley Traffic Police in Pulchok 38 of the 47 vehicles checked flunked the test. Kathmandu has at least 200,000 vehicles on the roads everyday. You do the math.

The Ministry of Population and Environment (MOPE) started insisting on EURO-1 certification for all cars imported after January 2000 to reduce air pollution in the Valley. But that hasn't been strictly enforced, and neither have other pollution-control regulations been implemented, such as taking all vehicles older than 20 years off the street. This means that, even though the brick kilns on the outskirts of the city have been shut down, the Valley's air remains pretty vile.

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

## ONLINE PACKAGES



HIGH PLACES

In this edition of *Nepali Times* Studio, Himalayan geographer Alton C. Byers talks about his latest research findings from the Kangchenjunga area which has seen a dramatic receding of its snowlines as well as how people in the high mountains of Nepal are adapting with local solutions. Subscribe to our Youtube channel and watch video.

### CLIMATE CRISIS

I personally know several of those cases ('Climate migration is already happening', Nicole McCloskey, nepalitimes.com). I did my best to persuade the local administration to facilitate land swap and provided data and evidence for the basis of climate refugee status.

**Harikrishna Shrestha**

- The consequences of climate change on people are grim ('How the climate crisis adds to child marriage in Nepal', Sonam Lama, nepalitimes.com) — particularly girls and women who are already struggling with poverty and discrimination.

**David Seddon**

- We should start with the disgraceful caste system and successive governments who appear not to do a thing to help these families who marry girls early.

**Christine MacDonald**

- Ang Rita and the people of Khumbu are an inspiration, but the message needs to get out to all the hill and Tarai dwellers fast ('Walking the talk on climate', Sonia Awale, #1135). We need action and education. We understand our nature better than anyone.

**3PHASEBEATS**

- I planted 200 trees above the Thangme Gompa. The Sherpas in Khumbu are doing a great job.

**Jamyang Wangmo**

### ASHOK BANSKOTA

So wonderful to know that the great Ashok Banskota (A life devoted to healing) was inspired by the story-telling skills of the Scottish doctor turned novelist, the self-effacing AJ Cronin. Indeed, the library at St Xavier's School in Godavari in the 1960s had a magical corner of unforgettable Cronin's books that transformed many lives.

**Buddha Basnyat**

- Good ol' Trichandra Campus, now a crumbling ruin. Uncared by humans, overtaken by unkraut.

**Satis Shroff**

### FIFA WORKERS

It is about time that we feel sorry not only for those deceased workers but also for our labour-selling economy ('Labour rights legacy of the FIFA World Cup', Meenakshi Ganguly and Mohana Ansari, nepalitimes.com). Countries must cooperate against greedy employers in the Middle-East.

**Gyurme Sherpa**

### PUTALI BAJE

I first met Colin Smith in 1978, and he enthusiastically shared his knowledge on butterflies and was very inspiring for a young collector ('A life devoted to Nepal's butterflies', Anil Rai, nepalitimes.com). Colin also devoted a lot of time to teach at rural schools.

**Ben-Erik Ness**

### ZEBRA-CROSSING

There is also a strong need for traffic lights, both for vehicles and pedestrians.

**Naresh Phuyal**

- As if pedestrians are aware of proper usage and drivers aware of traffic rules.

**Rk Pradhan**

- Drivers do not care if you are on a crossing.

**Slow Trekking**

- Thermoplastic paints should be redone after every 6-8 months. It doesn't last long due to dust particles and pollution.

**Samyak Paudel**

### SARAHANA SHRESTHA

True grit and perseverance ('Nepali-origin American wins US state election', #1135). Sarahana Shrestha inspires me.

**Sanjeevani Yonzon**

### DOTI EARTHQUAKE

Now I understand why I woke up here in Delhi. Building shaking a bit more than normal. It was strange. A car was passing by, maybe a truck, but it seemed shaking a bit more than it should.

**Guilherme Samel**

- This is very sad, so many people without a home and shelter.

**Groe and Bloei Alphen**

### TRICHANDRA CAMPUS

This is what happens when politics is enmeshed with education and our erstwhile leaders are to blame for this ('Tri-Chandra's run down state is a microcosm of Nepal', Sahina Shrestha, nepalitimes.com).

**Rajiv Desraj Shrestha**

- Good ol' Trichandra Campus, now a crumbling ruin. Uncared by humans, overtaken by unkraut.

**Satis Shroff**

**Times.com**

## WHAT'S TRENDING



### Walking the talk on climate

by *Sonia Awale*  
The 'One Day, One tree' campaign spearheaded by Ang Rita Sherpa of the non-profit The Partners Nepal is reforesting parts of Khumbu after careful study of the ecology of each location. Read about how the rest of Nepal can learn from the Khumbu on ways to cope with climate breakdown only on nepalitimes.com

**f Most reached and shared on Facebook**



### It's sink or swim for the Himalaya

by *Kunda Dixit*  
Accelerated melting of Himalayan glaciers have created hundreds of new lakes along the mountains. Because they are dammed by fragile moraines, these are in danger of bursting. Read the review of Governing the 'Water Tower of Asia' on our website.

**t Most popular on Twitter**



### Labour rights and FIFA World Cup

by *Meenakshi Ganguly and Mohana Ansari*  
Over the past 12 years, millions of migrant workers have toiled to make the 2022 World Cup possible. However, these workers have always been at the margins, and the authorities have been less than responsive to their abusive work conditions. Migrant workers who built Qatar's World Cup infrastructure deserve and need compensation. Join the discussion online.

**“” Most commented**

### A life devoted to healing

*Nepali Times*  
Even at age 74, much-awarded surgeon Ashok Banskota is more at home in his clinic or operating theatre, but is now devoting more time mentoring a new crop of surgeons and health workers, and trying to inculcate in them the same sense of commitment to public service that has motivated him all his life. More on the surgeon on page 5.

**🔥 Most visited online page**

## QUOTE TWEETS

**Nepali Times @NepaliTimes**  
The plaster has fallen off the façade and a tree grows out of the bare exposed bricks. Weeds, dust and rubble cover what used to be a centre of learning. Tri-Chandra Campus, the oldest college in Nepal is crumbling.

**yumeko @rubyswrl**  
So sad, my parents went to this college, I remember being a little girl walking around the campus with my mom.

**Nepali Times @NepaliTimes**  
Nepal is not a 'small' country, it is just small compared to its giant neighbours. When it became the oldest nation state in South Asia two-and-half centuries ago, there were only 22 other countries in the world

**Forester @kuenvmgt504**  
Nepal is small in everything except the Himalayas! The nice side is that all our problems are small and the solutions are small and doable than elsewhere in the world



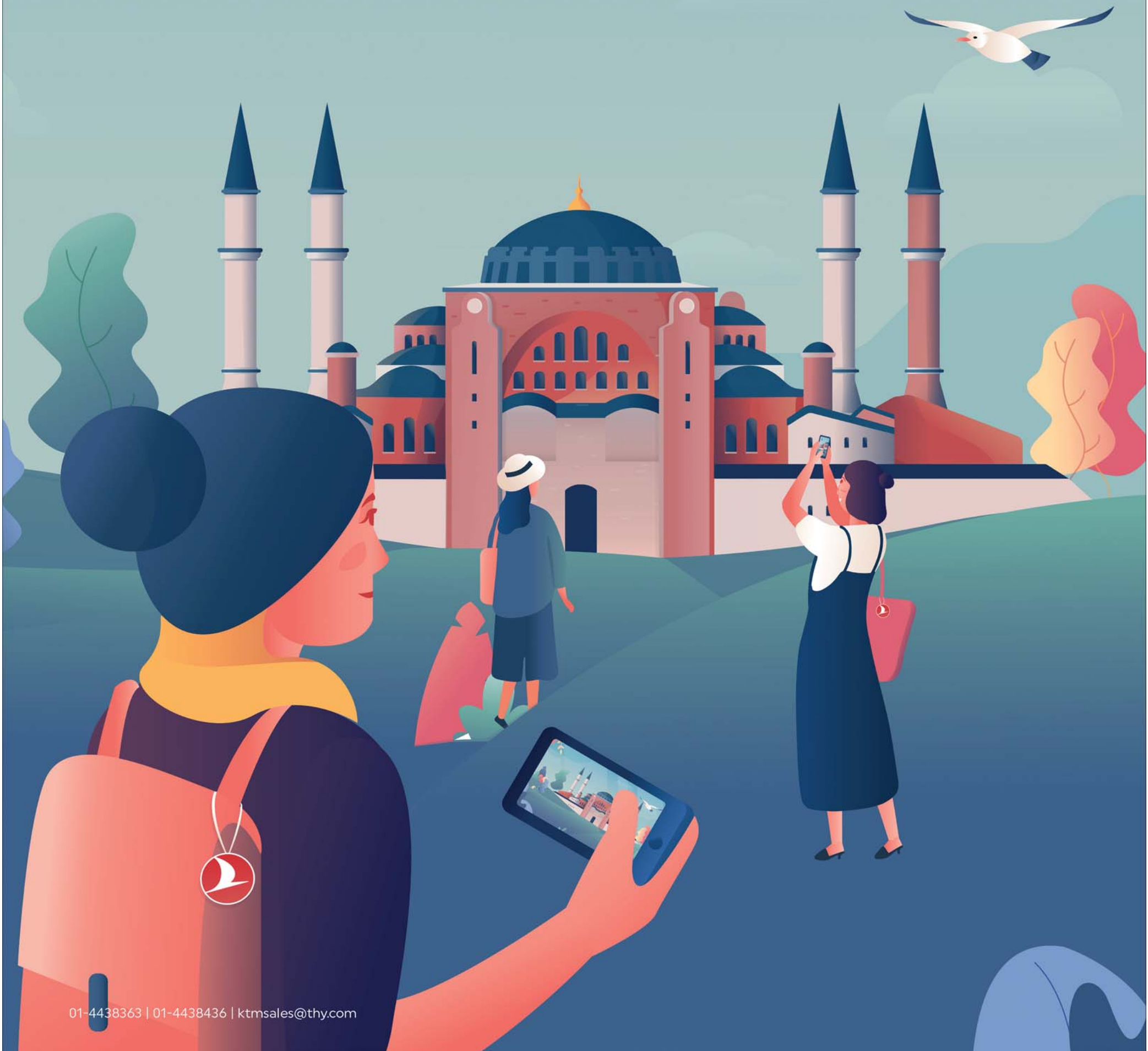




# touristanbul

## LIVE IN THE MOMENT EXPLORE ISTANBUL DURING YOUR LAYOVER

Free touristanbul service in Istanbul for international transfer passengers who have 6-24 hours of layover time at Istanbul Airport



01-4438363 | 01-4438436 | ktmsales@thy.com





# The good doctor

Medicine meets spiritualism in this award-winning memoir by David R Shlim

● Lisa Choegyal

My first home in Kathmandu was a glass A-frame house nestled in a lychee and mango orchard, sheltered by a magnificent old fig tree in Bansbari. It was rented from Prem who lived with his young family in the same garden, rice fields stretching beyond the back wall with distant views of the northern hills. It was tiny, with seating on floor cushions and the bedroom a mattress on the mezzanine accessed by a precarious circular staircase, but that did not preclude large parties on the lawn and jolly meals around a polished table in the cramped dining alcove.

As Dr David Shlim recounts in his memoir, *A Gentle Rain of Compassion*, it was here at dinner one evening that his life was profoundly changed by meeting Jane, a leggy blond Canadian who worked for us at Tiger Tops. This chance encounter led to a series of events (spoiler alert) that broke his pattern of ricocheting romances and obsessive despair which, in the mysterious way of this magical Valley, eventually catapulted him out of his misery and onto the healing path of spiritual awakening.

That evening would lead to the transformation of David's life through his discovery of Tibetan Buddhism, personal tuition by reincarnate lamas and an enduring friendship with Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche, whom he met when offering free healthcare in his Boudha monastery. But this journey towards enlightenment, compellingly written with David's signature self-deprecating humour, encapsulates much, much more. In the words of Jon Krakauer, author of *Into Thin Air*: 'Dr. Shlim's story is candid, wise, fascinating, funny, tragic, astonishing, hopeful, and wonderfully entertaining.'

Today David is world renowned as a specialist physician in travel medicine and has pioneered the bringing together of Buddhist philosophical practice with modern medical theory. Based in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, he has lectured around the world on travel medicine topics and spends his time coaching caregivers to apply compassion in their daily interactions with patients, teaching Buddhism,



and directing the Medicine and Compassion Project. Collaboration with Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche and others resulted in the first-ever book that provided authentic Tibetan Buddhist insights into altruism and compassion for Western medical professionals, *Medicine and Compassion*, published in 2004. Monk philanthropist Matthieu Ricard (who David's son is named after) writes: 'Uniting his medical vocation with the essence of Buddhism ... led to his teaching physicians around the world on how to bring back compassion at the heart of their profession and day to day activities.'

Dr Shlim, as he is known locally, was a popular guest and a well-known fixture in 1980s' Kathmandu. Adept at tolerating local conditions, both personal and medical, he first worked in Nepal in 1979 as the volunteer doctor posted in the Pheriche aid post high in the eastern Himalaya (pictured above), lured away from his lacklustre life and flailing medical career in the US by the peerless mountain doctor and climber, Dr Peter Hackett.

Returning as director of CIWEC, Nepal's first international clinic with which he remains associated, Dr Shlim was a lifesaver, literally. Prior to CIWEC's establishment in 1982 with Canadian assistance, we all relied on the Shanta Bhawan Hospital in a former Rana palace, run by the dedicated and hard-working missionaries. I would regularly invite David down to Chitwan and Bardia for the reassurance of his gentle medical expertise when we had celebrity guests such as Henry Kissinger, Ringo Starr and Robert Redford in our care.

In a unique position to study medical conditions afflicting travellers, including diarrhoea, tropical diseases and travellers'

depression, the research that David led during his 15 years in Nepal made CIWEC the most famous travel clinic in the world. In addition, he served ten years as medical director of the Himalayan Rescue Association and became president of the International Society of Travel Medicine, an organisation with 4,000 members in 100 countries. In 1998 Dr David Shlim was recognised by the Prime Minister of Nepal for his lifetime contribution to Himalayan rescue and mountain medicine.

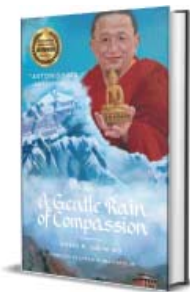
It was to CIWEC that Beck Weathers and Makalu Gau were brought after the epic 1996 high altitude flight by Madhan KC above the Everest icefall, at that time the highest ever helicopter rescue. I coordinated the rescue operation, manning the phones in Kathmandu with Rob Hall's team at basecamp, the American Embassy and Adventure Consultants in Christchurch. Having been left for dead above Camp II after the storm, we held the phone to Beck Weathers' ear as he called his wife from David's consulting room to tell her that he was still alive, tears streaming down his face, his

frostbitten nose treated and both hands bandaged by Dr Shlim.

David is a good storyteller as this page-turner attests, and inevitably was at the centre of expat life in those early self-reliant days, with all their dramas, disasters, accidents and adventures. A sober physician by day, David let off steam as a rock and roll singer by night. The Fear of Heights band had us dancing late into the night, a precursor for another twist in his eclectic career as tour doctor travelling the world with the Rolling Stones for three years - David had originally met Mick Jagger and his family in 1990 at my house in Kathmandu. As Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche writes in the Foreword: 'Dr. Shlim's life was filled with many challenges and many successes, both medically and personally. He tells these stories very well.' Particularly remarkable is the way he shares the step by step progression of a Jewish American doctor's skepticism that evolved from a growing spiritual awareness into a deep connection with Tibetan Buddhism.

But this unputdownable book is about more than medical sagas and spiritual exploration, on which David clearly left his mark in Nepal and vise versa, gripping as they are. The narrative gallops along, featuring romances, travel and personal trauma, sweeping us through the delights and deprivations of Kathmandu life in the 1980s and the stark reality of Sherpa living in the high Khumbu with little health support. We follow David through the unsatisfactory dead ends of his early years in the US, settling into the beguiling rhythms of life in Nepal, then returning to the American Tetons having found the other Jane - another beautiful Canadian lady chanced upon in Kathmandu with whom he has shared his extraordinary life and two children.

Recently released in the US and Kathmandu, it is fitting that *A Gentle Rain of Compassion* was selected as the best autobiography/memoir by International Book Awards 2022 - a great boost for Dr Shlim, and nice recognition for Nepal as the most rewarding of adventure and spiritual destinations. 🇳🇵



*A Gentle Rain of Compassion*  
by Dr David R Shlim  
Di Angelo Publications USA  
2022  
Distributed in Nepal by  
Vajra Books  
362 pages  
\$19.99

 **prabhu BANK**

## Buddha in Pokhara

Buddha Air has announced that it plans to operate regular flights to New Delhi, Varanasi and Dehradun from Pokhara after the new international airport there becomes operational next year. The actual flights, however, will first need the airport to be finished, and route permission and airport slots to be given by Indian civil aviation authorities.

Pokhara airport was completed four years behind schedule, but it still needs to cut the top of a hill on approach, relocate a landfill site, and conduct calibration flights. An Aero Thai Beech KingAir is in Nepal inspecting other airports, and will test the VOR and ILS of Pokhara later this month.



## Nabil-Sipradi

Sipradi Trading, the official dealers of Tata Motors in Nepal and Nabil Bank have agreed on loans to customers buying Tata's electric vehicles. The bank will provide up to 80% loan for EVs sold by Tata at a 12.99% interest rate for up to 7 years. Tata Motors offers the Tata Nexon EV and Tata Tigor EV in Nepal.

## Nepal Airlines at GBIA

After being forced by CAAN to conduct flights from Bhairawa's new airport, Nepal Airlines has said it will fly the Kuala Lumpur route from December. CAAN had earlier grounded



the airline's Delhi flight, inconveniencing hundreds of passengers, as punishment for not including Bhairawa on its flight schedule. Himalaya Airlines is already operating GBIA-Kuala Lumpur flights as is Kuwait's Jazeera. However, other international airlines have flatly refused to fly to Bhairawa, citing inadequate infrastructure and poor traffic prospects.

## Bussewa offer

Bussewa has announced a special offer for voters who are returning home to cast their votes in the 20 November elections. Three winners will receive attractive gifts from the bus service. The candidates for whom the winners cast votes will also receive prizes.

## Ncell poll pack

Ncell has introduced various data and voice packs for its customers for the upcoming parliamentary and provincial elections. Customers can choose daily, weekly or monthly packs from the existing products.

## Global IME BOK

Global IME Bank Ltd and Bank of Kathmandu have signed an MoU to merge. Previously, both the banks had approved the share swap ratio of 1:1 based on the evaluation



of movable and fixed assets, liabilities and transactions. Global IME BOK Limited, will now become the largest commercial bank in Nepal with a total capital of Rs57 billion. Ratnaraj Bajracharya, CEO of Global IME will head the new bank.



## Shiva puja

Indian Embassy's Swami Vivekananda Cultural Center and the Pashupati Area Development Trust organised Shiva Puja at the Pashupatinath complex this week. The hour-long event featured classical dances including Kumari Nritya, Bharatnatyam and Ardhhanarishwar for 200 guests.

## WorldLink milestone

Internet service provider WorldLink, Nepal's leading internet service provider has reached 700,000 households. The company achieved the milestone five and a half years after reaching its first 100,000 households in 2017.

## Khukri ISO

Nepal Distilleries, the producer of Khukri Rum, has received the ISO9001:2015 certificate from DNV (UKAS), an accredited certification body that measures quality of product and processes.



# Saving mothers and babies, district by district

Nepal needs to slash maternal deaths by 3 times in eight years to meet the UN's target

Thirty years ago, an average of 900 mothers out of every 100,000 died at childbirth in Nepal. By 2016, this figure had fallen to 239 maternal deaths. This noteworthy progress in maternal and child health over the past 30 years has been a success story of the government working with international partners. However, in the past five years, progress in maternal and child survival has flatlined. At least 2,000 new mothers still die in Nepal every year, mostly because they cannot reach hospitals in time, or because health posts are poorly staffed and equipped. At this rate, it will be difficult for Nepal to reach the maternal mortality ratio in the UN's Sustainable Development Goal of 70:100,000 in the next seven years. In fact, the country already missed its 2020 target of reducing maternal mortality to 116. Health experts say this calls for a reinvigorated government health campaign, and a new kind of involvement of outside agencies. The challenges in reducing mother-baby death rate are many: a chronic shortage of skilled birth attendants, difficulty in diagnosing and treating complicated pregnancies in time, understaffed and underfunded government facilities, especially in remote areas. The US-based non-profit One Heart Worldwide has been working in rural Nepal for the past 11 years on a new template of building capacity at far-flung government health posts to improve maternal and neonatal healthcare services. One Heart's formula is to assess the maternal-child health situation in a district, develop a customised strategy, support rural birthing centres with skilled birth attendants, deploy trained community health workers, and equip delivery rooms. The organisation works with local elected politicians, getting municipalities to bear a part of the cost, and every year it hands over four districts to local governments to own and run, then moving on to the next four districts. "This allows local governments to take ownership of health facilities," says Surya Bhatta of One Heart Worldwide. Bhatta returned to Nepal after



graduating from Dartmouth College in the US, and feels passionately about his work because his own mother was married at 11, and nearly died delivering her first baby at 16. Since 2010, One Heart has helped upgrade 2,600 health facilities in 282 municipalities in 28 districts and reached nearly 370,000 pregnancies. Last week, the

organisation signed an agreement with the Ministry of Health and Population to apply its cooperation model in birthing centres in Karnali and Madhes Province. "Although Nepal's overall maternal-child health statistics have improved in the past 30 years, those two provinces have been lagging behind. This is why we signed the agreement to work in Madhes and

Karnali Provinces for the next five years," says One Heart Worldwide CEO David Murphy, who visited Nepal last week. One Heart was started in 1997 by American obstetric nurse Arlene Samen who first set up a community-based health care delivery model in Tibet before moving to Nepal in 2010. It has since worked in Baglung, Dhading, Sindhupalchok, Khotang, Bhojpur, Tehrathum, Panchthar and Taplejung — handing over the facilities to local municipalities. It is working in Dolpo, Rukum West, Salyan, Myagdi, Parbat, Nuwakot, Kavre, Dolakha, Udaypur, Rautahat and Sarlahi. One Heart has chosen Karnali and Madhes Provinces because of the high maternal mortality ratio and neonatal deaths there. For example, the total fertility rates in the two provinces are 2.7, while Bagmati and Gandaki are below replacement level. Institutional deliveries in Karnali and Madhes are also at 63%, while it is nearly 90% in Bagmati and Gandaki. "Everything is below average

in those two provinces, health outcomes, inequality, poverty, institutional deliveries," says Bhatta. But One Heart has found that simple interventions like training nurses in resuscitation of new-born babies, or preventing infections can bring down neo-natal deaths dramatically. Nepal's average neonatal death ratio has fallen to 16 for 1,000 live births, but is stagnating and there is a glaring imbalance between rich and poor families. Bhatta admits that the two provinces will be "very challenging" to work in, given scattered settlements in the mountainous Karnali and the densely-populated plains of Madhes Province. For example, its birthing centre in Laxmipur of Sarlahi handles 1,000 deliveries a year, many times more than even the district hospital in Dunai of Dolpo. Says Bhatta: "Nepal faces so many challenges, and every little contribution you make makes a huge difference. That is why a partnership like One Heart is so fulfilling." 🇳🇵

# Gear up for FIFA World Cup





ADIDAS Flagship Stores:

DurbarMarg: 01-4241802 | NewRoad: 01-5360356 | Jawalakhet: 01-5424971





# CUP OF THE WORLD

The sporting world's biggest event kicks off in Qatar the day Nepal goes to the federal and provincial polls on 20 November



## THE BEAUTIFUL GAME

Why has Nepal's national team never made it anywhere close to the sporting world's biggest tournament?

● Swapnil KC

Volleyball may be emerging as Nepal's national game, and cricket may have fans, but football is the most sought-after sport in the country. And in the run-up to the FIFA World Cup in Qatar happening next month, there has been a surge of people kicking the ball around on school grounds and community fields across Nepal.

Nepali football has never peaked on the international stage, nor does it have a stable club platform and tournaments nationally. And our chance of making it to the sporting world's biggest tournament is slim. Some would even say nil. But that does not dull the enthusiasm of Nepalis for the beautiful game.

The Rana elite first started playing football in 1921 in the expansive grounds of their palaces. And the credit for introducing the sport to the public goes to Nara Shmsher Rana, who was later president of the All Nepal Football Association (ANFA).

ANFA itself was founded in 1951, when a Nepal national team was also formed. Before this, several clubs were formed and they played in domestic tournaments including the



**GOAL!** Nepal's national team celebrates a goal against Sri Lanka to defeat it 6-0 to reach the semi-final of the SAFF Women's Championship 2022.

Ram Janaki Cup and the Tribhuvan Challenge Shield. In 1963, the national team played its first international away game in what was then East Pakistan at the Aga Khan Gold Cup, now renamed AFC Champions League. By 1970, Nepal was a member of FIFA and two years later joined the Asian Football Confederation (AFC). On 13 October 1972, it made its international debut with a match against China, which it lost 2-6.

Since then, Nepalis have lost count of how many more international games the national team lost. But it did win some, and there was relative progress until the turn of the century. Football then went into decline during the conflict years, and has been seeing





Although 'sudden death' could have another meaning given abuse of migrant workers, the world is getting ready for the FIFA World Cup 2022 to finally kick off in Qatar.

The opening game on 20 November in fact coincides with the day of Nepal’s federal and provincial elections. The event is also special to Nepalis because thousands of its migrant workers helped build the eight stadiums, metro and other facilities for the world’s biggest sports event.

The World Cup will be watched by millions in Nepal and there is usually an increase in sales of flatscreens with sports enthusiasts planning get-togethers around the game. The market is already cashing in with special offers for LED TV, routers and internet packages. But viewers in Nepal will also need an additional subscription on top of regular TV subscription charges to watch the matches.

Media Hub, an advertising agency, has bought exclusive rights to the games from Viacom India and the former has added a subscription cost to World Cup matches. This means viewers have to pay Rs565 including the VAT to access the games with the Supreme Court which issued an interim order against collecting additional fees just to watch the games having now backtracked.

Unlike in the past, Nepalis cannot watch the matches on Indian channels like Sports Star, 10 Sports and Neo as foreign TV channels broadcasting the World Cup won’t be aired in Nepal. They can, however, watch the games

live on Himalaya TV HD which is set to broadcast the matches on IPTVs (Internet Protocol Television) through Worldlink and Vianet Communications.

For the first time in history, the World Cup is being held in winter because of the heat of the Qatar summer, which means the games are squeezed into one month with 32 national teams competing. Host Qatar kicks off the tournament with an opening match against Ecuador. The two are joined by Senegal and Netherlands in Group A.

One-time winner England, Iran, USA and Wales make up Group B whereas old fan favourite Argentina is with Saudi Arabia, Mexico and Poland in Group C. Another favourite France is in Group D along with Australia, Denmark and Tunisia.

In Group E, former winners Spain and Germany are lumped together with Costa Rica and Asian powerhouse Japan. Belgium, Canada, Morocco and Croatia headline Group F while five-time winner Brazil, Serbia, Switzerland and Cameroon make up Group G. Portugal, Ghana, Uruguay and Korea round out the last Group H.

Group stage matches take place from 20 November to 2 December. The round of 16 will have ended by 6 December making way for quarter-finals from 9-10 December and semi-finals between 13-14 December. The third place playoff will be on 17 December with the World Cup 2022 concluding with the final on 18 December which is Qatar’s National Day but also International Migrants Day. 🇶🇪

But despite limited resources and training compared to men, the women’s football team has shown much potential having made it to the finals of SAFF in 2010, 2012, 2014, 2019 and 2022. It also made it to the finals of the South Asian Games. More importantly, the team moved up 22 places in the FIFA ranking since 2010.

The fact that sport was never a political priority even after the insurgency was over meant there was never enough money for the game or exposure for the players which has continued to this day. The budget allocated for the Ministry for Youth and Sports this fiscal year is for building stadiums and sports centres, not necessarily for football.

“The government hasn’t announced the budget separately for football, so technically the budget allocated for the sport is zero,” laments Meghraj KC who coaches Nepal’s Under-20 team.

Last year, ANFA was allocated Rs856 million but most of it was funded by FIFA which has time and again requested countries to get local financing to develop the game.

This has discouraged even national-level footballers from continuing to play, and many have left for greener pastures abroad.

Despite the lack of infrastructure and training, Nepali players have shown what they can do given proper encouragement. Most have talent but not enough exposure.

So when will Nepal make it to the World Cup? At this rate, not in our lifetime. We will have to contend ourselves in the coming weeks rooting for other teams in stadiums built by our workers in Qatar. 🇶🇪



NEPALI TIMES ARCHIVE

a comeback in recent years. Nepal’s biggest stadium Dasrath Rangasala built in 1956 has been witness to much of the country’s football history including the tragic death in 1988 of 93 spectators in a stampede during a thunderstorm at a Tribhuvan Challenge Shield match.

The national team’s biggest achievement so far is reaching the final at the SAFF championship in 2021 before it lost to India 3-0. It was the winner of the first-ever AFC Solidarity Cup held in 2016 where it defeated Macau 1-0. But perhaps it is best remembered for the 2019 South Asian Games held in Kathmandu where Nepal defeated Bhutan 2-1 to win the gold for the fourth time (pictured above). Of the 211 national associations worldwide, Nepal’s FIFA ranking is 175 for men and 103 for women’s teams which says all that needs to be said for the state of the sport in the country.



# TIMETABLE

in NST

<b>Qatar vs Ecuador</b>	9:45PM	20 November
<b>Senegal vs Netherlands</b>	9:45PM	21 November
<b>England vs Iran</b>	6:45PM	21 November
<b>USA vs Wales</b>	12:45AM	21 November
<b>France vs Australia</b>	12:45AM	22 November
<b>Denmark vs Tunisia</b>	6:45PM	22 November
<b>Mexico vs Poland</b>	9:45PM	22 November
<b>Argentina vs Saudi Arabia</b>	3:45PM	22 November
<b>Belgium vs Canada</b>	12:45AM	23 November
<b>Spain vs Costa Rica</b>	9:45PM	23 November
<b>Germany vs Japan</b>	6:45PM	23 November
<b>Morocco vs Croatia</b>	3:45PM	23 November
<b>Switzerland vs Cameroon</b>	3:45PM	24 November
<b>Uruguay vs South Korea</b>	6:45PM	24 November
<b>Portugal vs Ghana</b>	9:45PM	24 November
<b>Brazil vs Serbia</b>	12:45AM	24 November
<b>Wales vs Iran</b>	3:45PM	25 November
<b>Qatar vs Senegal</b>	6:45PM	25 November
<b>Netherlands vs Ecuador</b>	9:45PM	25 November
<b>England vs USA</b>	12:45AM	25 November
<b>Tunisia vs Australia</b>	3:45PM	26 November
<b>Poland vs Saudi Arabia</b>	6:45PM	26 November
<b>France vs Denmark</b>	9:45PM	26 November
<b>Argentina vs Mexico</b>	12:45AM	26 November
<b>Japan vs Costa Rica</b>	3:45PM	27 November
<b>Belgium vs Morocco</b>	6:45PM	27 November
<b>Croatia vs Canada</b>	9:45PM	27 November
<b>Spain vs Germany</b>	12:45AM	27 November
<b>Cameroon vs Serbia</b>	3:45PM	28 November
<b>South Korea vs Ghana</b>	6:45PM	28 November
<b>Brazil vs Switzerland</b>	9:45PM	28 November
<b>Portugal vs Uruguay</b>	12:45AM	28 November
<b>Wales vs England</b>	12:45AM	29 November
<b>Iran vs USA</b>	12:45AM	29 November
<b>Ecuador vs Senegal</b>	8:45PM	29 November
<b>Netherlands vs Qatar</b>	8:45PM	29 November
<b>Australia vs Denmark</b>	8:45PM	30 November
<b>Tunisia vs France</b>	8:45PM	30 November
<b>Poland vs Argentina</b>	12:45PM	30 November
<b>Saudi Arabia vs Mexico</b>	12:45PM	30 November
<b>Croatia vs Belgium</b>	8:45PM	1 December
<b>Canada vs Morocco</b>	8:45PM	1 December
<b>Japan vs Spain</b>	12:45AM	1 December
<b>Costa Rica vs Germany</b>	12:45AM	1 December
<b>Ghana vs Uruguay</b>	8:45PM	2 December
<b>South Korea vs Portugal</b>	8:45PM	2 December
<b>Serbia vs Switzerland</b>	12:45AM	2 December
<b>Cameroon vs Brazil</b>	12:45AM	2 December



EVENTS



Japanese Gift Wrapping

Learn Japanese and Korean techniques of elegant and beautiful gift wrapping from The Vesture. 19 November, 2.45pm-5.15pm, Online Class <https://www.facebook.com/events/1179238992618347>

Election Day

Cast your vote for the federal and provincial elections this Sunday. While many Nepalis are travelling to their home town to exercise their rights, villagers in Sindhupalchok have collectively decided to boycott the polls. Read election coverage on pages 1, 9, 10 and 11. 20 November

Le Sherpa Market

Shop local at the Saturday Le Sherpa Market and buy baked goods, meals, handicrafts and clothes. 30 July, 8am-12.30pm, Le Sherpa, Maharajgunj

Traditional Stone Art

The traditional stone art exhibition ‘Eternity’ by artist Chandra Shyam Dangol explores the process of sculpting unique to the Valley. 18-28 November, 10am-7pm, Dalai-la art space, Thamel



Ranjana lipi

Master the ancient Newa lipi Ranjana in a specially curated calligraphy class. Call for more details. 19 November, 1pm onwards, Nepal LipiGuthi, 9841464215

DINING



Dhokaima Banewor

Patan's popular Dhokaima Cafe has now opened an outlet also in Banewor, offering coffee, snacks and a range of bakery products that it is famous for: including cakes, croissant, bagel and brown bread loaves all shipped in early morning. Dhokaima Café, (01) 5522113

MUSIC

Music Room

Learn to play a new instrument with musicians and educators at the Music Room started by Jazzmandu. Call for more details. Bhatbhateni, Naxal, 9818856982



Aditya Narayan Jha

Get ready for a live performance by Aditya Narayan Jha. Book tables now. 26 November, 6pm onwards, Club Fahrenheit, Thamel, 9841726830

Sick Fest

Head over to listen to group of bands from India and Nepal at the Sick Fest. Buy tickets now. 12 November, 8pm onwards, Beers N' Cheers, Jawalakhel



Axix Band

Enjoy your Friday night with Axix Band with the opening act by Jhilkey and the company. Call for more details. 2 December, 6pm onwards, Club Fahrenheit, Thamel

A pinch of jazz

This one of for the Jazz lovers. Enjoy jazz beats and tunes with delicious food at Hyatt Place. 18 November, 7pm onwards, Zing Sky Bar & Lounge, Hyatt Place, Soalteemode

About Town

GETAWAY



Kasara Resort

Immerse yourself in the lush greenery in the heart of Chitwan's National Park. With activities for everyone, from cycling to wildlife viewing, Kasara Resort is a fantastic getaway for families. Patihani, Chitwan National Park, Chitwan, (01)4437571

Hotel Baha

This traditionally-built hotel is located at the centre of Bhaktapur, surrounded by centuries of culture and heritage. Explore the uniqueness of Bhaktapur as you enjoy the peaceful ambience of the hotel. Bhaktapur, (01)6616810

Dom Himalaya

Dom Himalaya Hotel offers a space for visitors to indulge in traditional Nepali cuisine, relax with Tibetan singing bowls, and bask in the vibrancy of Thamel. Thamel, (01)4263554

Namo Buddha Resort

Constructed in traditional Newa style and surrounded by greenery, the resort is an oasis of peace and tranquility, offering spectacular views of the Himalayas on clear days. Namobuddha, Phulbari, 9851106802



The Pavilions Himalayas

This resort has Nepal's first lakeside tented luxury eco-villas that offer every amenity for everyone. The hotel spa also has some of the best treatments that guarantee rest and relaxation. Chisapani, Pokhara, (975) 600 8117

Bawarchi

Try the mouth-watering Kolkata Katti Rolls and other fusion Indian dishes at Bawarchi. Jawalakhel, (01) 5526244



Taza

The restaurant brings that special Middle-Eastern flare to Kathmandu with its all Syrian items. Shawarma, falafel, hummus, kebab — everything is fresh and finger licking good. Jhamsikhel, 9860960177

WEEKEND WEATHER

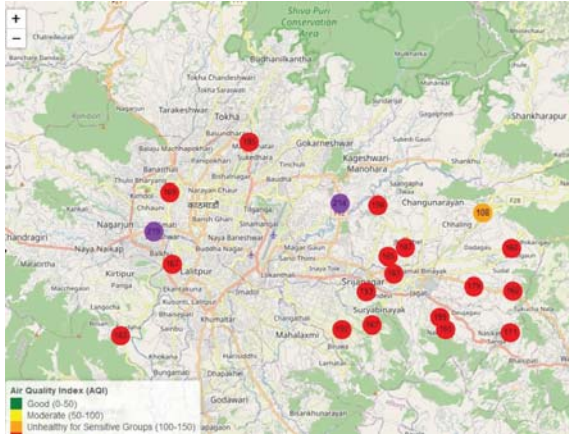


Hazy and Clear

No major westerly disturbance on the horizon for the weekend. Which means sunny, but hazy days, ahead. Kathmandu Valley's winter morning fog has now been replaced by smog. Sunlight will be filtered by pollution, bringing down the maximum temperature to the low 20s, and cloudless nights could send the mercury down to 7°C on the Valley rim. Afternoons in Kathmandu will be breezy with strong winds at higher altitudes.

FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
 21° 8°	 23° 8°	 23° 7°

AIR QUALITY INDEX



Kathmandu Valley's winter inversion is concentrating pollutants at ground level, raising the Air Quality Index to Code Red Very Unhealthy in most places and even the Code Purple Hazardous around Bhaktapur (pictured). Besides the Valley's own pollution, the smoke from crop fires in India has been pushed up to the mountains in the past week. The pollution levels are slightly better in the afternoons, but restrict outdoor activities and mask up when out.

OUR PICK

If you love a wildly cerebral show that will keep you up at night pondering over the many questions of life, 1899 is just for you. Created by the duo behind the hit German-language DARK, this feverish, polyphonic show is European TV at its most ambitious, quite literally. Envisioned as a counterpoint to Brexit and waves of exclusionary nationalism, 1899 is a multi-language period mystery-horror that follows a group of European migrants traveling from London on a steamship to start new lives in New York, who then get caught in a mysterious, nightmarish riddle when they encounter another migrant ship adrift on the open sea. Stars Emily Beecham, Aneurin Barnard, Andreas Pietschmann, Miguel Bernardeau, Anton Lesser and Isabella Wei.



दूषित पानीका कारण हुने रोगप्रति सजग रहौं

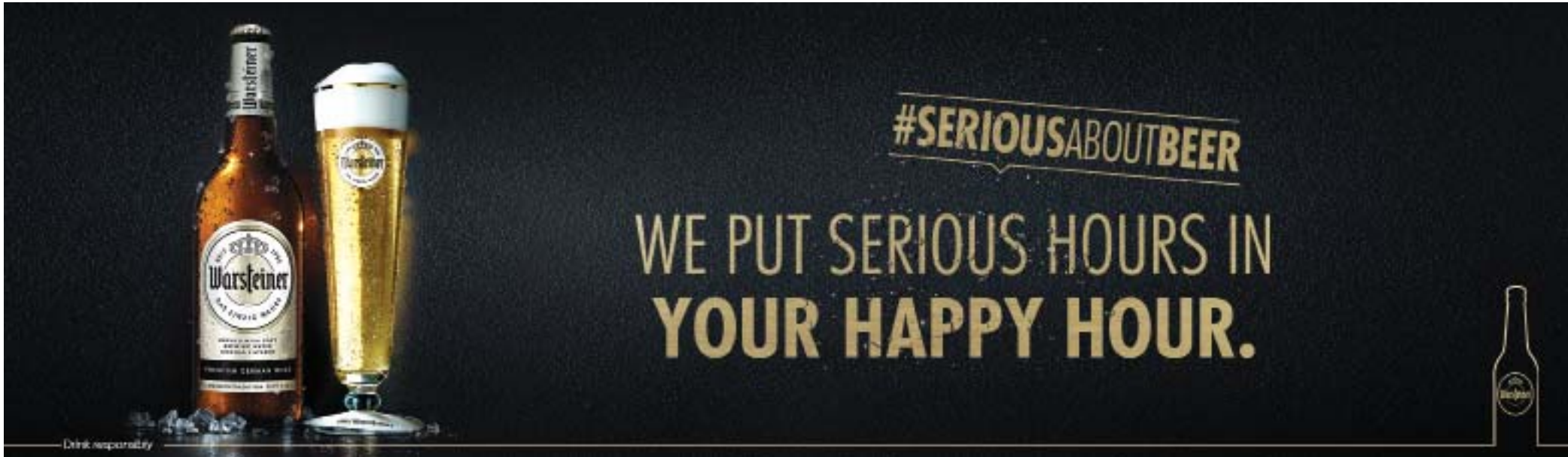
फोहोर पानीले झाडापखाला, हैजा, टाइफाइड, आउँ, जन्डिस जस्ता रोगहरू लाग्न सक्छन् ।

त्यसैले;

- खोला, धारा वा मूलको पानी सीधै नपिऔं ।
- पानी उमालेर वा शुद्धीकरण गरेर मात्र पिऔं ।
- पानीलाई पीयूष, अक्वाट्याब्स वा अन्य क्लोरिनजन्य कुराहरू हालेर शुद्धीकरण गरौं ।
- पिउने पानीलाई सफा भाँडामा छोपेर राखौं र सफा भाँडाले पानी झिक्ने गरौं ।



नेपाल सरकार  
विज्ञापन बोर्ड





# Voters cynical about electoral alliances

Party ties for the 20 November polls confuse and divide citizens across the Inner Tarai and Madhes Province

● **Namrata Sharma**  
in Hetauda

As Nepal enters the last lap in federal and provincial races, candidates and their cadres seem more excited than voters. Across the Inner Tarai here and in the plains bordering India, voters are disillusioned and indifferent about the polls.

First off, most people we talked to said they did not want to vote for the same old candidates they elected five years ago, and have been around for the past two decades. Moreover, there is confusion about which candidate is representing which party, and who is loyal to whom, because the coalition is made up of parties with diametrically opposing ideologies.

With such unholy alliances, Hetuuda's UML voters are now being asked to cast ballots in favour of a candidate battling for a return of the Hindu monarchy. Nepali Congress (NC) supporters have been told to vote for Maoist candidates, some of whom tortured and killed people during the conflict.

Voters have given up trying to fathom why political parties and candidates who fought and suffered for the establishment of a secular, federal Nepal now cross over to those want to scrap those provisions. Individuals contesting the elections as independents because they did not get party tickets have muddied the waters even more.

Except for die-hard party supporters, the electorate understands that the elections are not about principles or resolving everyday problems any more, but propelling the same old leaders back to power.

"The NC is likely to get a good number of seats in Madhes Province, but independents have a strong chance in some constituencies," predicts Govinda Devkota of *Narayani Samudayik FM* in Birganj, who thinks the JSP partnership with the NC could garner 10-12 seats with the UML-LSP alliance and Unified Socialists trailing.

The dominant trend is that Madhes-based parties like the JSP and LSP have lost their lustre, and the established national parties like the NC, UML and Maoists now hold sway over the Madhes vote through



NEPALI TIMES ARCHIVE

their alliances (*see page 1*). Still, among younger voters there is visible discontent against both Madhes-based parties and the national parties, and they are fed up of electing the same underperforming and corrupt leaders again and again.

"During the Madhes Movement (of 2015) many people here were killed but their sacrifice got us nothing. Only the leaders and political parties are reaping the benefits all in the name of Madhes," says Munna Saraaf, a youth activist and actor in Birganj.

Saraaf has been travelling to Ilam, Kohalpur and several other places performing on stage to raise awareness about voting the right candidates to power, and is also vocal about extravagant campaign



spending which could make the Madhes a hotbed for corruption.

"There are no new educational organisations, employment opportunities, projects or industries where the youth can be involved productively. It was

better during the king's time. But we must change that and cast our votes for competent candidates," he adds.

The coveted Parsa constituency has Pradeep Yadav, the former minister from JSP contesting against the governing coalition's Laxman Lal Karna of LSP, and the rebel independent candidate who defected from the NC, Ajay Dwivedi.

"Pradeep Yadav won five years ago but his voters are not happy

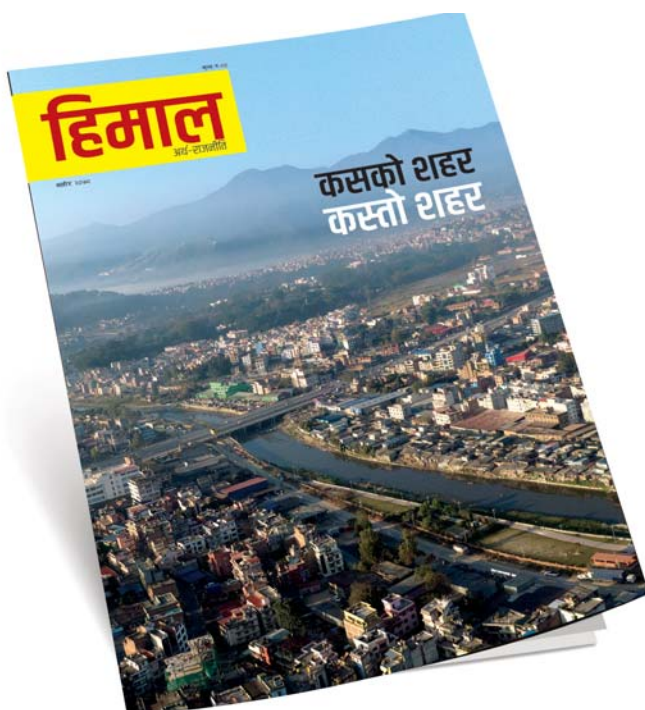
with his performance. Karna, does not have the leadership qualities. Therefore voters may end up supporting the independent Dwivedi," says Gobinda Devkota.

The participation of women candidates is even less in the Tarai than the already low national average (*page 10-11*). In Parsa district, only Karima Begum who is contesting as an independent and the JSP's Salma Khatun have a significant presence. "The others are neither heard nor seen," says Sushma Sharma a reporter with *Prateek Daily* in Birganj.

But the 2022 Nepal election is defined by electoral coalitions regardless of party ideology or dogma. Anjali Thapa, president of Press Center Makwanpur in Hetauda says: "The campaigning methods and the agenda in this year's election are very different. Both the ruling coalition and the

opposition have formed alliances to win." For example, Kamal Thapa of the RPP-N is contesting under the UML's 'Sun' symbol. Pitted against him is Mahalaxmi Upadhyaya (Dina) from the governing coalition who is expected to gather votes from both the Maoists, NC and the US. Even so, some NC supporters who do not agree with the alliance with the Maoists could go over to Kamal Thapa's side, while other UML dissidents may not support a candidate they regard as an oppressor of the people.

All this points to a mixed outcome which could lead to further instability and horse-trading post elections. At the end of the day, all most voters want are competent and honest leaders who provide jobs, better infrastructure and affordable education and medical facilities. They could not care less about alliances. 🇳🇵



अब  
मासिक हिमाल  
१ मंसीरदेखि बजारमा ।



हिमालमिडिया प्रा. लि.  
पाटनढोका, ललितपुर



# Dejected voters reject polls

Fed up with empty assurances and wild promises, villagers decide to collectively boycott Sunday's elections

● **Anita Betwal**  
in Sindhupalchok

Chinimaya Lama, 30, cannot walk up the slope to fetch water for her livestock. Her lower abdomen hurts and she has difficulty sitting down. At home she looks after her husband and five children.

She went to a health post six months ago, but the staff there did not even have painkillers. Lama has a uterine problem and cannot afford to go to a city hospital to have it treated.

Every few years at election time, political leaders campaigning house-to-house come by to the village of Syaule promising to upgrade its health post. This year, too, the candidates have trooped in, but residents of this scenic village with 52 households have heard it all before.

Lama's neighbours Pemsang, Rammaya, Dilmaya and Kanchi Tamang all have uterine problems like her, caused by multiple pregnancies, hard work in the fields and poor nutrition. None of them have access to diagnosis or treatment.



ANITA BETWAL

“Candidates asking for votes would have got a much better response if they had also come up with health camps for women and brought medicines for us,” adds Lama, bundling grass for her cows.

As in other parts of rural Nepal, there is little excitement about the 20 November elections in Syaule, which is a 4 hour drive northeast of Kathmandu. There is a look of quiet dejection and much grimacing, when residents are asked if they will vote.

“From before I was born, we have faced lack of water, proper medical care and joblessness. When these candidates come asking for votes, I just get furious,” says Wakab Tamang, 80, scowling through his wrinkles.

Syaule villagers have therefore collectively decided to boycott the 20 November elections. Says



## Depending on independents

Urban voters are disenchanted with traditional politics, but established parties still hold sway in districts

● **Shristi Karki**

KP Oli of the opposition UML was on the campaign trail in Syangja last week where he directly urged security officials to monitor what he claimed was voting restriction by the Nepali Congress (NC).

“You are not soldiers of the coalition,” Oli told them.

Five days later, the former prime minister who has had a double kidney transplant was at a Kathmandu nightclub at midnight, launching a campaign rap song as youngsters cheered.

The UML has bought targeted advertising on YouTube for Nepali users about its manifesto backing sanitary pad allowances for female students.

In the cities the UML is trying to woo the youth and women voters away from popular independent candidates, while in the districts it confronts the ruling coalition.

Nepal's political aspirants from across and beyond party lines have boots-on-the-ground to draw voters to the polls before campaigning has to stop at midnight on 17 November.

The performance of independent candidates in major cities in May's local elections not only encouraged young Nepalis to stand for Sunday's parliamentary and provincial polls, but also forced mainstream parties to hold on to their bases while appealing to younger and first-time voters.

Less than 9% out of the total candidates during the local election ran as independents in May. Of the independent candidates, 385 (3%) were elected to office. They included seven mayors from four major cities, six rural municipality chairs,

### GENDER IMBALANCE

Half the 17.98 million voters on 20 November are women, but only 9% of the candidates for direct ballots are female.

Breakdown of Candidates Fielded by Selected Parties			
Party	Male	Female	Total
UML	130	11	141
RPP	132	8	140
Rastriya Swatantra Party	119	12	131
Nepal Majdur Kisan Party	97	12	109
NC	86	5	91
Mongol National Organisation	78	10	88
JSP Nepal	72	7	79
Hamro Nepal Party	58	4	62
RPP Nepal	52	6	58
Rastriya Janamukti Party	48	8	56

SOURCE: ELECTION COMMISSION

as well as two deputy mayors and deputy chairs each.

Similarly, 136 independent candidates were elected ward chairs and 117 ward members, while 60 female ward members and 55 Dalit women ward members assumed office.

One of these local units is Bardibas municipality of Mahottari, which elected mayor Pralad Kumar Chhetri, deputy mayor Tara Devi, as well as four ward chiefs — all independents.

But some constituencies where independents were elected into office in May have not capitalised on the momentum.

In Okhaldhunga, where independent Gyanendra Rumdali was elected chair of

the Manebhanjyang Rural Municipality, there are no independent candidates running for Parliament, and only one for the Provincial Assembly.

In Dolpa, where independents Karma Chhoibel Gurung and Pemba Wangchen Gurung were elected chair and vice chair of Dolpo Buddha Rural Municipality and Shey Phoksundo Rural Municipality — there is only one independent run for Parliament this time.

Manang, where independent Chhiring Gurung was elected chairperson of Manang Ngisyang Rural Municipality, has only one independent candidate in federal polls. In fact, Manang actually has more registered voters (6,779) than its population in the 2021 census (5,645) because of outmigration — a phenomenon in other mid-mountain districts as well.

The number of independent candidates has gone up in this election because so many are standing from cities. Of the 2,412 candidates contesting federal polls in direct ballots, 867 (36%) are independents — either first-time or rebel candidates refused tickets by their parties.

In Syangja-1, incumbent MP Narayan Prasad Marasini of the UML is up against the NC's Raju Thapa for the third time. While Marasini beat Thapa to Parliament during the 2017 polls, Thapa won the seat during the 2013 Constituent Assembly elections. The two will have a serious contender in Bodhraj Regmi from Rabi Lamichhane's Independent Party along with eight other candidates, among which is 70-year old independent Lok Bahadur Damai.

In Syangja-2, there is intense competition between incumbent Padma Kumari Aryal of the UML and her main challenger Dhanraj Gurung of the coalition, but 36-year-old

environmentalist Sagar Dhakal is also pulling crowds as an independent contestant.

But despite Dhakal proclaiming, “Political parties as we know them are dead”, this does not seem to be entirely the case for his and other constituencies across rural Nepal.

Indeed, voters in Syangja-1 constituency remained unaware of the independent candidate, confusing his name and election symbol with other independent candidates.

Similarly, voters also remain wary of independent aspirants who have left mainstream parties in protest for being refused election tickets.

‘Running as an independent is a purely opportunistic move taken after he was denied a ticket from his party,’ commented a voter on Facebook in reference to Syangja's Provincial Assembly candidate Durga Datta Bhushal, an independent who was with the UML.

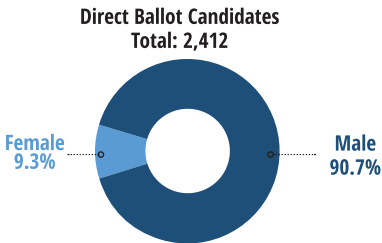
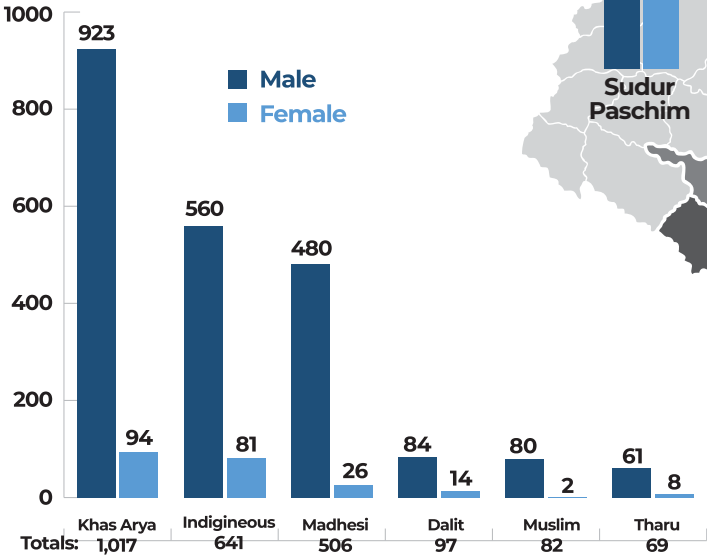
Independent Daulath Kulung was elected chair of Bhojpur's Salpasilichho Rural Municipality in May's local election, narrowly defeating his NC rival. This time, three independents will run for Parliament while one more is running for the Provincial Assembly in the district.

Kulung sees his election win and post-election activities as different from elected officials like Balen Shah and Harka Sampang. “My agenda is different from that of elected leaders from cities like Kathmandu,” he tells *Nepali Times* over the phone. “Local elections are very different from federal polls. Just because some independents won in local elections doesn't mean it will be easy for them across Nepal in this election.” 🇳🇵



Breakdown of Candidates by Ethnicity and Gender

Direct Ballot Candidates  
Total: 2,412



Chinimaya Lama: “I would rather go to my daily job and earn a few hundred rupees to buy food for my children instead of wasting my time voting for leaders who do nothing for us.”

Residents of the adjacent village of Sanghachok have also decided not to vote. Mishri Lama, too, has faced water scarcity for three generations.

“They tell us we will get water but it is only because the election is here and they want our votes,” says Lama. “They act as if we are family at election time, and then abandon us. No, we are not voting.”

Springs going dry due to over-extraction and climate change is a problem across Nepal’s mid-mountains, but is especially acute in ridge-top settlements like Syaule and Sanghachok.

Dhan Bahadur Tamang spent thousands of rupees to fit a tap a few years ago, only to find that the spring had gone dry. No politician came to help. “I won’t even open the door for these candidates when they come by, I’m sick of them,” he adds.

Last year’s monsoon floods

destroyed the main road from Chautara, and there has been an effort to repair the landslides which children have to make a dangerous traverse every day on their way to school and back.

“For me the word politician is synonymous with inaction,” says Mishri Lama.

Pema Rinchi Sherpa had actively campaigned in the 2017 election for Mohan Bahadur Basnet who is now contesting from Sindhupalchok-2, but after repeatedly being denied a meeting with the man to discuss road and water issues, he has learned his lesson.

“I won’t be voting for these leaders who just want power in Kathmandu,” he says. Basnet is contesting again from the

governing coalition against Sher Bahadur Tamang of the opposition UML.

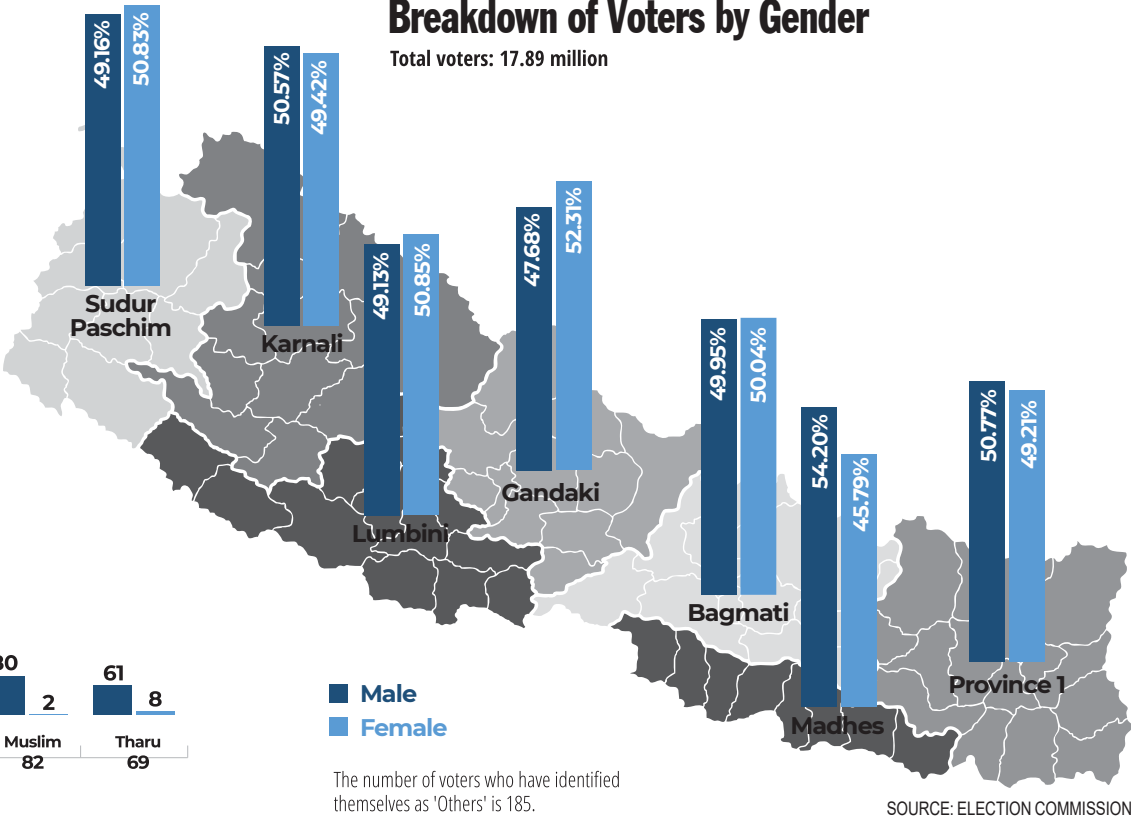
In the village of Dumre between Sun Kosi and Indrawati rivers, many residents do not have land ownership rights despite having lived here for generations owing to a random border division three decades ago.

People here have homes in Sindhupalchok but many got their citizenship from Kavre. Two brothers from the same family have to go to different constituencies in different districts to cast their votes.

“We have been living here from the time of our forefathers but we have fallen between the cracks,” says Khadga Bahadur Pahari. “It does not matter how

Breakdown of Voters by Gender

Total voters: 17.89 million



The number of voters who have identified themselves as 'Others' is 185.

SOURCE: ELECTION COMMISSION

many times we voted in the past, no one has ever heard us. So we won’t vote at all this time.”

Dumre is home to 60 Majhi fisher families who have lost their livelihoods because of an illegal sand and boulder mining operation owned by a businessman with political patronage. They too are not going to bother voting this time.

Masali Majhi cannot fish anymore, and has lost her income because of the ‘crusher’ operation. She says: “What is the point of voting for these people who do not care for us?”

Ward chair Roshan Giri was elected in the local polls in May, and Sunday’s elections are for federal and provincial assemblies. UML candidate Sher Bahadur Tamang says he will resolve the fishing crisis by building a reservoir on the Sun Kosi and stopping illegal sand mining.

But these promises do not impress many locals who are boycotting the polls. They may not know all the candidates, but they know they have not performed in the past. They are punishing their inaction by exercising their right not to vote.

By doing this, they are also rejecting younger candidates and independent hopefuls. Locals do not seem to be very impressed with the choice of alternative candidates either, or much informed.

The governing coalition’s Mohan Basnet says he will amend the law if required if he wins the election. He says: “I will help the fisher people if I am elected. They should give me one more chance.”

But at least in these villages of Sindhupalchok it looks like the residents feel they have already given the candidates one too many chances. 🇳🇵

TATA MOTORS

Connecting Aspirations

EVOLVE TO

ELECTRIC

PRESENTING THE NEW

TIGOR EV

POWERED BY

ZIPTRON

Advanced Electric Drive Experience

SAFE AND RELIABLE

Waterproof IP67 rated battery pack and motor

8-year battery and motor warranty\*

Driven and proven for over 35 mts. 7 kms.

ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY

Liquid-cooled lithium-ion battery pack

60+ minutes fast charging time

UNMATCHED PERFORMANCE

0-60 km/h in under 6" seconds

Instant torque at 0 rpm

Permanent Magnet Synchronous Motor

Price starts at NRs. 31,49,000/-

GLOBAL NCAP

★★★★ 4 STAR RATING

SIPRADI TRADING PVT. LTD., An ISO 9001:2015 and ISO 45001:2018 Certified Company

Thapathali 01-4230610, 4222190, 4222152

For inquiry, give us a call at 9802333964

SIPRADI

SIPRADI TRADING PVT. LTD., An ISO 9001:2015 and ISO 45001:2018 Certified Company  
Thapathali 01-4230610, 4222190, 4222152  
For inquiry, give us a call at 9802333964

**SIPRADI**







 43" Yasuda Smart TV (Rs. 45,000)	 NETV 1 Year Subscription (Rs. 3,600)	 NETV Set-Top Box (Rs. 4,500)
 1 Year 200 Mbps Internet (Rs. 12,600)	 NOKIA Mesh Router Beacon 1.1 (Rs. 7,000)	 Dual Band Router (Rs. 5,000)

Rs. 77,700\*

Rs. 38,488\*

32" Yasuda Bezel Less LED TV package also available @ 

Rs. 58,700\*

Rs. 25,900/-\*

ISP Partner: WORLDLINK

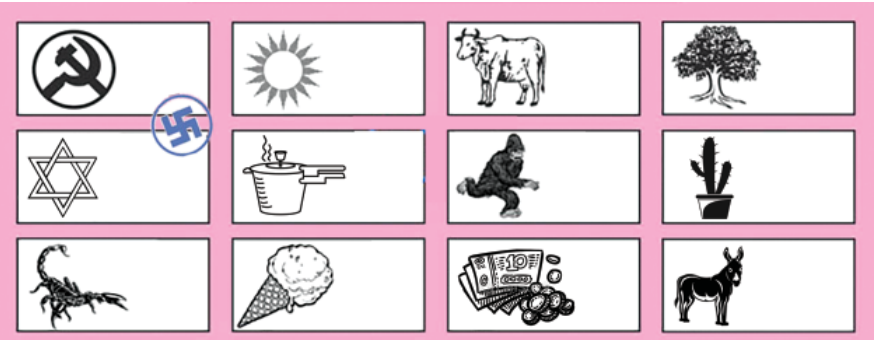
9801523052

nettv.com.np

EMI Available

अभिलेख

khalti



## Symbolic elections

Don't be an ass. Get out and vote, even if it is for a serial politician who has been given the chance to ruin this country several times over for the past 25 years. After all, we have to prove the astrologers right and have PM Dubya back on the saddle for his sixth innings.

So, stamp your swastika on the Star of David, hammer and sickle, rhinoceros or umbrella. These election symbols were designed for a time when Nepalis could not read or write, and the Election Commission believes that Nepalis are still functionally illiterate.

Election symbols are meant for people so they don't vote for the wrong party. The **Commgress** has a Hammer, or Sickle, or both. And just to be different, the **Congmunists** have kept the Tree, which has been the NC's symbol since BP's election in 1959. But it may be time to change it to a Cactus.

The most recognisable election symbols have been monopolised by the 5-Party Cartel, so the Sun, Moon, Tree, Cow are taken. Smaller parties have had to make-do with the Ox, Water Buffalo, Yak and Uncastrated He-goat. But there just are not

enough symbols to go around for the plethora of parties in the fray.

And this is where The Ass, in the national interest, springs to the rescue. Our ballot papers should enlarge the pool of election symbols reflecting the country's flora, fauna and sauna, and the Nepali love for biodiversity and diversity visas.

We should be inclusive and not discriminate against certain species. Political parties must set an example by inducting the Scorpion. And if a Yak is ok, why not a Yeti? (See *Virtual Reality ballot paper above*)

Various spheres of national life can also be represented on the ballot paper. Since corruption plays such an important role in lubricating Nepal's political mechanisms, the Cash symbol will be up for grabs for the party that offers the biggest bribe for it. The party that waged an underground armed struggle for ten years can fall back on the pressure cooker bomb.

Memorise these symbols. It will determine Nepal's future. May the best Jack Ass win.



The Ass

  
TOYOTA

# SURKHET

*We're here with you.*



## OM SHREE ARCHANA BABA MOTORS

 Birendranagar 4, Surkhet

 **November 25**

 9802585784, 9858052384, 083-525666