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SELFROLE: Indian Minister of External Affairs Sushma Swaraj arrives at Kathmandu airport on Thursday afternoon even as the UML and Maoists were trying hard to forge unity.

GOPEN RA

welcome their initiative. If India respects Nepal as a sovereign country, the incoming prime minister will not have problems with New Delhi." 

Om Astha Rai

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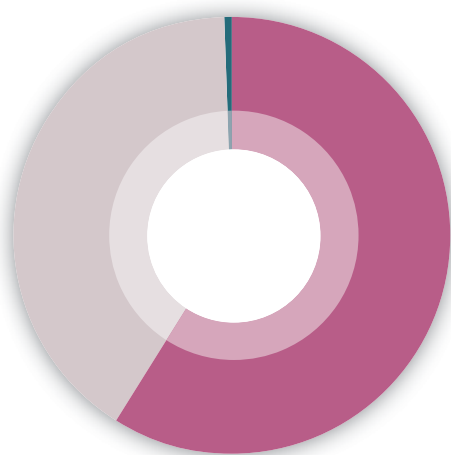

OFFICIAL AIRLINE PARTNER

AS IF THERE IS NO TOMORROW

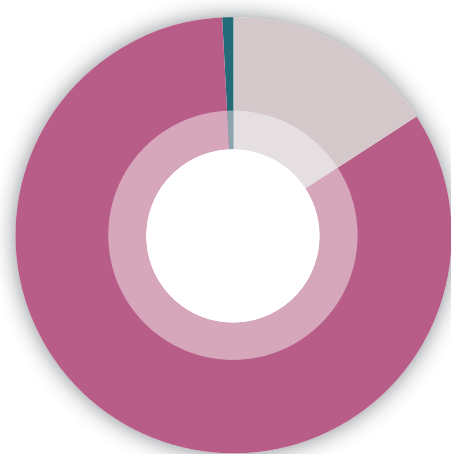
During more innocent times in Nepali history 25 years ago, the media used to write about corruption in high places. After some of the exposes, parliament committees summoned officials involved in graft, the government formed commissions of inquiry, and heads rolled. Today, corruption is so endemic that it doesn't raise eyebrows anymore, and the general public has started regarding it as a given.

The misdeeds of the lame duck coalition led by Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba could be more accurately described as 'plunder' or 'loot'. Calling it 'corruption' would be too polite. It is open season on the treasury for the caretaker government as it grabs the opportunity presented by procedural delays for power can be handed over to a new government.

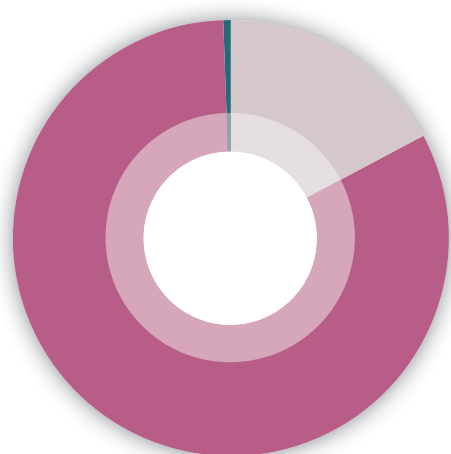
Q. Should stipends for the elderly be increased, or should their lives be made easier?



Q. Should farmers get pensions, or irrigation/fertiliser facilities?



Q. Should the state bear medical costs, or ensure better health care in government hospitals?



In the past weeks, Prime Minister Deub's cabinet has:

- Reduced the eligible age for old-age allowance from 70 to 65, adding Rs14 billion to the Rs35 billion allocated in the budget for the elderly.
- Piled on another Rs100,000 to housing grants for families of survivors of the 2015 earthquake even though virtually no one among the 776,705 affected families have so far received the full Rs300,000 promised. This will add another Rs77 billion burden on the budget.
- It will cost another Rs60 billion to bankroll the government's decision to allow some 22,000 civil servants voluntary retirement.
- The Cabinet meeting last week also increased the subsidies to patients with critical heart, kidney or liver ailments, adding a further Rs 2 billion to the exchequer.
- The outgoing government lavished Rs2 billion to the Nepal Army in the first six months of this fiscal year to buy new helicopters.
- The NC-led coalition distributed miscellaneous cash grants worth Rs400 million even though the budget line has only allocated Rs240 million
- It has declared 'martyrs' all those killed in the Madi bus bomb in 2005 and other conflict victims, allowing their relatives to receive Rs1 million each in compensation.
- It increased the positions in the police force to accommodate party faithfuls.

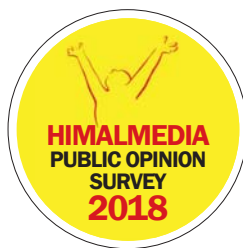
Most caretaker governments in the past have hurriedly employed cadre into civil service positions, appointed heads of public sector companies and handed out cash to near and dear ones. However, the Deuba cabinet has broken all national, and possibly even international, records for profligacy as it fritters away taxpayers money as if there was no tomorrow.

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

It is not even smart politics. The ass media and the public has seen through this: their conclusion is that Deuba is taking revenge for his electoral loss by straddling the UML-Maoists with a bankrupt country. Not that the UML was any different, it has also been spendthrift in the past, and K P Oli actually promised to more than double the elderly stipend to Rs5,000 which would actually have cost the treasury more than reducing the cutoff age to 65.

This sort of populism is counterproductive, and this proven by the Himalmedia public opinion survey results (page 13-15). In response to a question about whether the elderly should receive a stipend or make their life easier, a majority 60% preferred better facilities for the elderly. In another question about whether farmers should get pensions, or have fertiliser and irrigation, an overwhelming 83% rejected handouts. Asked which they preferred: subsidy for medical treatment or better health care, 82% nationwide said they wanted better hospitals.

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



ONLINE PACKAGES



BOTTOMS UP

As the demand for beer grows, the Nepali beer industry introduces ideas new to Nepal, including a unique tap room and beer garden bar in Thamel which aims to become an oasis for beer. Join us as we meet the owner Jim Jones and unravel the story behind the venture and the tastes of different beers on offer. Story: Page 8-9



ELIZABETH HAWLEY

Watch a moving video tribute to Elizabeth Hawley made by Tom Kelly which introduces readers who did not know this legendary keeper of the mountains to her strong conviction and commitment to documenting the annals of Himalayan mountaineering in Nepal. The short film gives us a glimpse into the personality of this journalist who came to Kathmandu in 1959, and stayed till the end of her life.

NO POPULAR SUPPORT

Federalism or whatever other changes, without a referendum are just political and/or geopolitical maneuvers, so it cannot really have any popular support for long term sustainability ('What federalism?', Om Astha Rai, #894).

K K Sharma

FRYING PAN TO FIRE

There are several factors that are most likely to militate against the proper functioning of our federalisation enterprise, particularly the local bodies ('Great expectations', Editorial, ##894). Firstly, their current number is only 753 which is only about one-fifth the number of erstwhile VDCs. This means each elected representative is going to be at least five times more distant from citizens. Secondly, the constitution provides for exclusive jurisdiction over 22 different state functions. But the sheer lack of professional capabilities in the country is going to severely hinder the proper implementation of those functions. Thirdly, an autonomous body must appoint its own employees. Any dependence on the centrally-seconded officials would severely dilute and compromise the autonomy, because the continued loyalty and sense of accountability to their central employers are sure to disrupt even the well-meaning initiatives of the local bodies. Finally, local bodies spent millions to get elected. So, if the former VDC members were epitomes of corruption all indications are that it is only going to get worse under the present arrangement. So, all said and done, this new arrangement would amount to the proverbial jumping from the frying pan to the fire.

Bihari Shrestha

AWAKENING

I think we should lock our Prime Ministers (past and present) inside the toilets at TIA for 24 hours ('Kathmando-doo', Backside, #893). Maybe the fumes they inhale will wake them up. After all, the toilets are a reflection of the kind of leaders Nepal has produced.

Bharat Basnyat

WHAT'S TRENDING



The boy gods of Kathmandu

by Sahina Shrestha

Many readers were surprised last week to discover through Nepali Times that Kathmandu not only has Living Goddesses, but also the living manifestations of Ganesh and Bhairab. Our exclusive coverage of the boy gods of Kathmandu was one of the most popular recent stories. Go online for a video with a sneak peek into the lives of Living Gods at home, school and play.



Most reached and shared on Facebook

From Liz Hawley in Kathmandu

by Kunda Dixit

'Liz Hawley was my first journalism guru, she was blunt and was unable to suffer sloppiness. That made her a demanding, yet effective, mentor,' wrote Kunda Dixit in this moving tribute to Elizabeth Hawley, the undisputed authority on mountaineering in Nepal, who passed away last week aged 95. Her absence is acutely felt by everyone who knew her. See pages 6-7.



Most popular on Twitter

Saving the earth with earth bricks

by Sonia Awale

Eco-friendly Earth Bricks that are helping earthquake survivors rebuild homes have an important lesson for Kathmandu Valley which can use the technology to clean up its air, build cheaper and stronger houses. Go online to read the most visited story of the week (5,000 page views) and watch rural entrepreneurs in Nuwakot make Earth Bricks.



Most visited online page

Great expectations

Editorial

'Nepalis may be disillusioned, but they have always been strongly in favour of stronger and more resourceful local governments.' Visit our website to read the vigorous feedback generated by the editorial that analysed the results of the Himalmedia Public Opinion Survey. More survey results in this issue on pages 2, 13-15.



Most commented

QUOTE TWEETS



Kunda Dixit @kundadixit
In Memory of Elizabeth Hawley @Reuters Nepal correspondent and archivist of Himalayan mountaineering who died in Kathmandu today at age 95. @nepalitimes obituary with video tribute here: <http://bit.ly/2ncCLoG>



Tseten Norkyel @norkyel
I knew Miss Hawley personally. Though Miss Elizabeth Hawley is no more she is the shining knight of the Himalayas!



Nepali Times @nepalitimes
Foreign aid has made capable Nepalis second-class citizens in their own country, writes Anil Chitrakar in his column 1/2 Full<http://bit.ly/2ndy0L6> #ForeignAid #Nepal

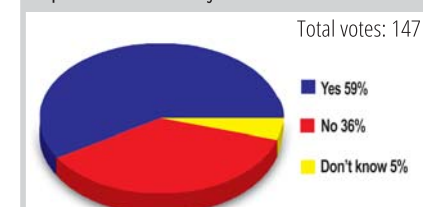


pramadapoudel @pramadapoudel
Don't think so rather we are being more passive, lack of creativity and dependent. Our country is falling.



Weekly Internet Poll #895

Q. Do you agree with the decision to reduce the age requirement for the elderly allowance from 70 to 65?



Weekly Internet Poll #896
To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. Is the slow transition to the elected government making you pessimistic about the future?



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A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER 

Cleaner air with greener buses

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

BHUSHAN TULADHAR

Many in Kathmandu fondly remember the green trolley buses that used to ply the 13 km Tripureswor-Suryabinayak route for nearly three decades.

They were clean, comfortable, convenient and way ahead of their time when introduced in 1975. Poor management caused the Chinese-built service to be scrapped, and all that remains are the rusting hulks of the buses in the Baneswor terminal.

But although Kathmandu’s iconic trolley buses are gone, and their electric poles uprooted, efforts have resumed to restore electric public transport. The government started looking at the possibility of battery-powered buses during the 2015 Blockade. Government officials visited China, while Chinese bus manufacturers and a European company specialising in converting diesel buses to electric came to Kathmandu to explore possibilities of working with Sajha Yatayat bus cooperative.

The stumbling block was the high upfront cost.

But with improvements in lithium ion technology and the price of storage batteries plummeting, electric buses are no longer looking unaffordable. Sajha Yatayat, is working with the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI) an

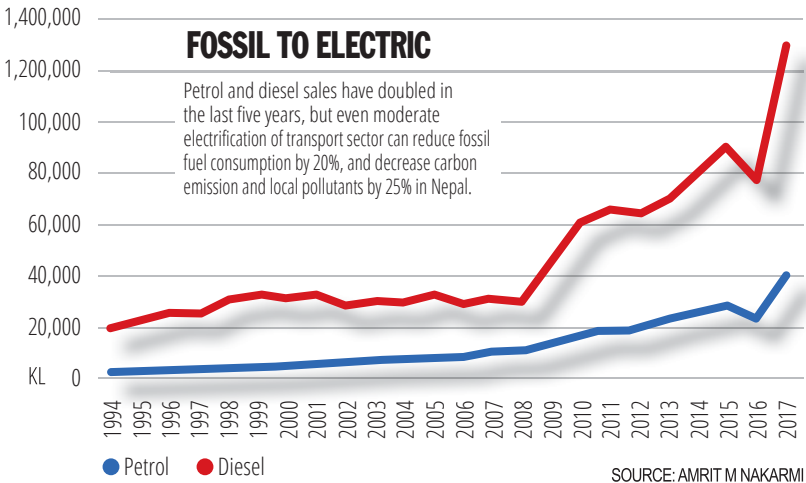
inter-governmental organisation headquartered in South Korea, to prepare a pre-feasibility study of electric buses in Kathmandu.

Early findings show that although electric buses are expensive compared to the normal diesel ones, the operation and maintenance costs are significantly lower. If socio-economic and environmental benefits are factored into the equation, the total life cycle cost of electric buses is less than that for diesel ones. For example, the initial cost of a BYD Auto K-7 e-bus is about Rs20 million, but a similar sized diesel bus would cost only Rs3 million. However, fuel costs for the e-bus may be only about 10% and maintenance costs half of that for a diesel bus.

The study indicates that several full-size electric buses are viable for Sajha Yatayat’s intra-city routes, including those made by Ashok Leyland in India and China’s BYD Auto. The plans will be discussed at a workshop titled ‘Moving Forward with Electric Mobility in Nepal’ to be held on 6 February at the Himalaya Hotel.

The total number of registered vehicles in Nepal is growing at an alarming 14% per year since 1990 – mostly of two-wheelers, which now make up 80% of all vehicles. The share of buses, however, had fallen from 11% of total vehicles in 1990 to only 3% by 2015.

There are over 46,000 diesel buses in Nepal, with almost a quarter of them registered



in Bagmati Zone that includes Kathmandu Valley. Because they are old or poorly maintained, each full-size bus emits 40kg of particulate matter into the air making Kathmandu one of the most polluted cities in the world. Nepal’s annual greenhouse gas

emissions from surface transport was 716 kilotons in 1995, and this had risen to 3,170 kilotons by 2013. Nepal’s carbon footprint is still small, but grew 22% between 2007-13. Petroleum imports constitute 60% of imports, and rose three-fold in the last five years. An estimated

9,942 Nepalis die prematurely every year due to outdoor air pollution, according to World Health Organization.

Even moderate levels of electrification of the transport sector can reduce Nepal’s fuel consumption by up to 20%, and decrease greenhouse gas emission and local pollutants by 25% over upcoming decades. The government has put in place a range of policies, including fiscal incentives, to stimulate electrification of public transportation.

Kathmandu already has small electric public vehicles such as the Safa Tempos introduced 20 years ago, and an increasing number of private e-cars. The next challenge is buses. As all existing buses run on diesel, converting bus fleets to electric can be a game changer for improving Kathmandu’s air.

Schenzen in China has converted its entire fleet of 16,359 public buses to electric and many cities are following this lead. While Kathmandu still has a long way to go, Sajha Yatayat and GGGI’s partnership may be a first step in this direction. More importantly, it may continue the pioneering achievement of trolley buses over 40 years ago and bring a breath of fresh air to Kathmandu. 🇳🇵



Bhushan Tuladhar is with Sajha Yatayat.

Yeti reduces CO₂ footprint



CLIMATE FRIENDLY: Yeti Airlines CEO Umesh Rai and UNDP Nepal Representative Renaud Meyer unveiling the SDG livery on the airline’s new ATR 72 recently. The aircraft will allow Yeti to reduce its carbon emission by 15%.

to do this, the airline is doing it as part of its social responsibility.”

Yeti’s carbon footprint increased in 2017, but with the induction of two ATR 72 500s which are 15% more fuel efficient, it hopes to reduce its CO₂ per passenger by up to 11% this year. The airline hopes phase out all its Jetsream 41s in the next five years.

Rai says he hopes other domestic airlines will also join in improving efficiency,

and work with the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal (CAAN) to reduce long holding times for aircraft due to congestion at Kathmandu airport. Other measures include pilots reducing the rate of climb, and to using the entire length of runway for landings and takeoffs.

Cutting back long holding patterns would save more aviation fuel and reduce carbon emissions than fuel efficiency, and CAAN is being urged to move smaller domestic aircraft to a new STOL airfield outside Kathmandu.

CAAN Director General Sanjiv Gautam says after the much-delayed airport upgrade is finished by 2019, aircraft movements will be smoother. A new radar system that goes into operation this week will also reduce separation between aircraft and reduce holding times.

climate friendly but will also save on costs,” says Yeti Airlines CEO Umesh Chandra Rai.

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

“The SDGs also have climate goals and we are very happy Yeti is building on the partnership with a concrete move towards reducing its carbon footprint,” says Renaud Meyer Nepal Country Director of UNDP. “Nothing is forcing Yeti

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

An fuel inventory of the company’s eight aircraft fleet, its 27 vehicles and offices around the country showed that the company generated just over 18,000 tons of CO₂ equivalent last year. Yeti now hopes to increase efficiency by replacing its ageing with BAe Jetstream 41s with more modern ATR 72 500s, work with the civil aviation authorities to streamline air routes as well as offset its carbon use.

“As an airline we burn a lot of aviation gasoline, but there are ways to reduce emissions by being more fuel efficient and other measures that will not just make us

prabhu BANK BIZ BRIEFS

Qatar gets A350-1000
Qatar’s Airbus A350-1000 had its first stop in Doha, as a part of a special demonstration tour, showcasing the aircraft’s exclusive features to airlines and passengers. The test aircraft is equipped with fully functional business and economy class cabins, and one of 37 ordered by Qatar Airways.

Super Bowl live
Turkish Airlines passengers can watch the Super Bowl LII, the final game of

TURKISH AIRLINES
the National Football League live on all flights with Internet connection starting 4 February. The Airlines also announced the broadcast of a new commercial video starring famous heart surgeon Dr Oz.

Branded menswear
Louis Philippe, a premium menswear brand, has set an outlet in Labim Mall catering to a growing apparel market

in Nepal for fashionable, elegant, and quality clothing range.

Samsung Next
Samsung has launched Galaxy J7 Nxt 32GB equipped with a 5.5inch HD AMOLED screen, Android Nougat, 13MP rear camera, 5MP front camera and 3000mAh removable battery. Priced at Rs21,990 the phone is available in silver, gold and black..

Women in game
Shivam New Diamond Academy has organised National Open Women

Volleyball competition, played in league-cum-knockout format, on 4-6 February. Sponsored by Shivam Cement winning teams will get a total cash prize worth Rs364,000.

prabhu BANK



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Elizabeth Hawley, who died in Kathmandu on 26 January 2018 aged 94 years, was an American journalist living in Nepal since 1960, regarded as the undisputed authority on mountaineering in Nepal. She was famed worldwide as a ‘one-woman mountaineering institution’ because of her systematic compilation of a detailed Himalayan database of expeditions, still maintained today by her team of volunteers and published by the American Alpine Club.



Respected for her astute political antennae, and famously formidable, Miss Hawley represented Time Life, and later Reuters, since 1960 as Nepal correspondent. She is credited with mentoring reporters and setting journalistic standards in this country, competing to file stories from the communications-challenged Nepal of the 1960s. She worked with pioneer adventure tourism operators, Tiger Tops, from its inception in 1965 with John Copeman, until she retired as AV Jim Edward’s trusted adviser in 2007.

She managed the Himalayan Trust for Sir Edmund Hillary since it started in the mid-1960s, dispensing funds to build hospitals, schools, bridges, forest nurseries and scholarships for the people of the Everest region. Generations of Sherpas remember being overawed by the rigour of Miss Hawley’s interviews, and quake at the memory of her cross-examinations when collecting their scholarship funds.

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

Elizabeth first came to Nepal via India for a couple of weeks in February 1959. She was on a two-year round the world trip that took her to Eastern Europe, the Middle East and South Asia. Bored with her job as researcher-reporter with Fortune magazine in New York, she had cashed her savings to travel as long as they lasted. Nepal had been on her mind since reading a 1955 New York Times article about the first tourists who visited the kingdom.

Because of her media contacts, the Time Life Delhi bureau chief asked her to report on Nepal’s politics. It was an interesting time: as one of only four

foreign journalists, she was present when King Mahendra handed over the first parliamentary constitution, which paved the way for democracy in Nepal.

Fascinated by Nepal’s politics and the idea of an isolated country emerging into the modern 20th century, she returned in 1960 and never left, living in the same Dilli Bazar apartment, with the same blue Volkswagen Beetle, and generations of faithful retainers.

A diminutive figure of slight build with a keen look, Elizabeth was bemused at the universal attention she received. Her Himalayan Database expedition records, published by Richard Salisbury and the American Alpine Club, are trusted by mountaineers, newswires, scholars, and climbing publications worldwide. She was one of only 25 honorary members of the Alpine Club of London, and has been formally recognised by the New Zealand Alpine Club and the Nepal Mountaineering Association. In 2004, she received the Queen’s Service Medal for Public Services for her work as New Zealand honorary consul and executive officer of Sir the Himalayan Trust. She was awarded the King Albert I Memorial Foundation medal, and was the first recipient of the Sagarmatha National Award from the Government of Nepal.

Elizabeth’s career in the collection of mountaineering data started by accident: “I’ve never climbed a mountain, or even done much trekking,” she would say. As part of her Reuters’ job, she began to report on mountaineering activities and in those pioneering days of first ascents and mountain exploration, there was strong media interest in Himalayan expeditions. She relied heavily on the knowledge of mountaineer Col Jimmy Roberts, founder of Mountain Travel.

Since 1963 she had met every expedition to the Nepal Himalaya, both before and after their ascents, including those who climbed from Tibet. Her records contain detailed information about more than 20,000 ascents of about 460 Nepali peaks, including those that border China and India. Over the course of some 7,000 expedition interviews, her research work has sparked and resolved controversies. Elizabeth saw the Nepal mountaineering scene transformed from an exclusive club to a mainstream obsession.

She did not suffer fools gladly. Though some mountaineers were intimidated by her interrogations — sometimes jokingly referred to as an expedition’s ‘second summit’, serious alpinists greatly admired



LISA CHOEGYAL

Elizabeth Hawley

her. “If I need information about climbing 8,000-metre peaks, I used to go to her,” recalls Italian climbing legend Reinhold Messner (*pictured above with Liz*). Nepali trek operator and environmentalist Dawa Steven Sherpa underlines the point: “Although it’s the authorities that should have been doing this, they’re not as strict or accurate as Miss Hawley. One of her biggest contributions is keeping mountaineers honest.”

Elizabeth applied her trademark scrupulous precision to summarising political and development events in Nepal in her monthly diary, published in 2015 in two volumes as The Nepal Scene: Chronicles of Elizabeth Hawley 1988-2007. They stand as a faithful and unique historical record of the extraordinary changes that took place in Nepal over nearly two decades.

Her enviable journalistic sources were based on long friendships with the political, panchayat and Rana elite. She had the confidence of a wide range of prominent

Nepalis, and shared a hairdresser with the queen. Educated as a historian, Elizabeth regarded herself as a reporter not a writer, stringently documenting Nepal’s political and mountaineering facts with minimal opinion or analysis — although there is no disguising her liberal bent and her admiration for the force of democracy.

Former American Ambassador Peter Bodde said she was one of Nepal’s “living treasures... her contribution to the depth of knowledge and understanding between Nepal and the US was immense.”

Elizabeth Hawley’s achievements have featured in many books and articles about Nepal. Her biography by Bernadette McDonald, I’ll Call You in Kathmandu, was published in 2005, then updated and reprinted as Keeper of the Mountains. In 2013, to mark the 60th anniversary of the first ascent of Everest, Elizabeth was featured in the award-winning US television documentary of the same

name, produced by Allison Otto. On screen in Keeper of the Mountains, her straightforward manner and fearless modesty made her something of a cult classic. In 2014, the Nepal government named a 6,182m peak in honour of her contribution to mountaineering. Elizabeth was not impressed: “I thought it was just a joke. Mountains should not be named after people.”

Miss Elizabeth Hawley is the last of the first generation of foreigners who made their life in Nepal, single and determinedly independent. She is survived by her nephew Michael Hawley Leonard, and has bequeathed her library and records to the American Alpine Club. As both a successful woman in a man’s world and a highly visible foreigner recording Nepal’s history, we are all in her debt. She defied the conventions of her time, and determined to live life on her own terms and in her own incomparable style. 🇳🇵



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COLIN MONTEATH

1923–2018

Elizabeth Hawley was working at the desk for *Fortune* magazine when she first came to Nepal in 1959 as part of a world tour. One can only imagine what Kathmandu was like then: an emerald bowl in the lap of the Himalaya. Clean rivers, few cars and dazzling clouds soaring into a deep blue sky.

Liz came, she saw and she stayed. But on Friday, 26 Jan, at the age of 95, this legendary chronicler of Himalayan climbing left us for good.

Liz was the Nepal correspondent for Reuters at a time when most of the news with a Kathmandu dateline was about mountaineering, and she was a walking Wikipedia of climbing trivia. Who first climbed Dhaulagiri from the northeast ridge in spring? How far did the Polish-British expedition reach on its alpine-style ascent of the west face of Makalu in 1980? Did the Koreans really reach the summit of Kangchenjunga? When in doubt, you went to Liz.

We used to say half-seriously that a mountaineer hasn't officially summited a Himalayan peak until Liz Hawley said so. Many climbers were grilled by Liz in Kathmandu hotel lobbies after returning from the summit. She asked them detailed questions about

duration, weather, fellow mountaineers on the peak, and demanded summit photographs – many said they found the interviews more daunting than the climb itself.

In the same house in the Bhandari compound in Dilli Bazar, where she lived for the past half-century, are her files documenting climbing in Nepal. Liz Hawley's mountaineering archive has now been digitised and is in the public domain at the Himalayan Database website. It will now be updated after every climbing season by volunteers like German climber Billi Bierling, who are continuing Liz's work.

Also in her study in Dilli Bazar were files with clippings of Reuters and *Time Life* stories, as well as detailed briefs she wrote for her boss at Tiger Tops, Jim Edwards, about political goings on in Kathmandu. The Himalayan historian Mikel Dunham was looking through her shelves one day and realised just how invaluable the files were as a blow-by-blow account of Nepal's post-1960 history. With Lisa Choegyal, Dunham transcribed The Hawley Files and brought it out in two hefty volumes as *The Nepal Scene*, launched three years ago.

The books are an invaluable reference tool, filled with facts, dates and fascinating descriptions of

meetings with royal palace officials, ministers, visiting dignitaries and analysis, written in Liz's distinctive wry tone of shenanigans in Nepal's corridors of power. As a journalist, Liz reported objective facts, but between the lines in her notes one detects a deep commitment to honesty, press freedom and democracy.

In 1982, Liz Hawley found herself in the front of the plane on a flight from Bangkok to Kathmandu with BP Koirala, who was returning after medical treatment. She recalled that meeting in an interview with Tsering Dolker Gurung of *Nepali Times* in 2013: "I spent the entire flight writing the story for Reuters and kept checking with BP and Giriya to make sure I got all my facts correct, and later that evening, I got a call saying BP had died. It was a sad moment, because he was one of the few remarkable men that we have in Nepal, and one political leader who stuck to his beliefs." The story made it to the front page of the *New York Times*.

Liz was known for the trademark blue Volkswagen Beetle that she drove herself to press conferences and interviews with mountaineers, until the traffic became too difficult. She was also the Chair of The Himalayan Trust, set up by Edmund Hillary after his first ascent of Mt Everest to help Nepal, and especially the Sherpa people.

Liz Hawley was my first journalism guru. She was blunt and unable to suffer sloppiness. That made her a demanding, yet effective, mentor. I used to stand in for her when she went on extended summer leave in the early 1980s, which gave me my first exposure to the international press, with stories on Nepali politics for Reuters and *Time* — even getting into trouble with the panchayat authorities for some of them.

Liz was impatient with people, and told them off

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

Liz told us once in a profile interview: "I like mountain scenery, I think it's great, I just don't need to climb them."

Nevertheless, the Government of Nepal decided to honour Liz's contributions to the country by naming a 6,182m mountain near the China border Peak Hawley. 🇳🇵

Kunda Dixit

For more on Liz Hawley's life, read *I'll Call You in Kathmandu: The Elizabeth Hawley Story*, by Bernadette McDonald, and watch *Keeper of the Mountains*, a documentary of her life.



Watch the short film that will introduce readers to the legendary keeper of the mountains and give glimpse into the personality of this journalist who came to Kathmandu in 1959, and stayed till the end of her life.

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Thirsty for more

SIKUMA RAI

Nepal's rising middle class, the youth bulge, tourism and new export markets are driving a whopping 35% annual increase in beer production, and breweries are expanding capacity to keep up with demand.

The government collected Rs11,194,257 in excise revenue from beer sales last year (4.33% of total taxes collected) and the year-on-year increase is expected to rise further as Nepalis quaff more and more of new beer brands, and cultivate a taste for locally brewed and imported craft beers.

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

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

1972 is the year Nepal introduced its own Star Beer brand, by Nepal Breweries,

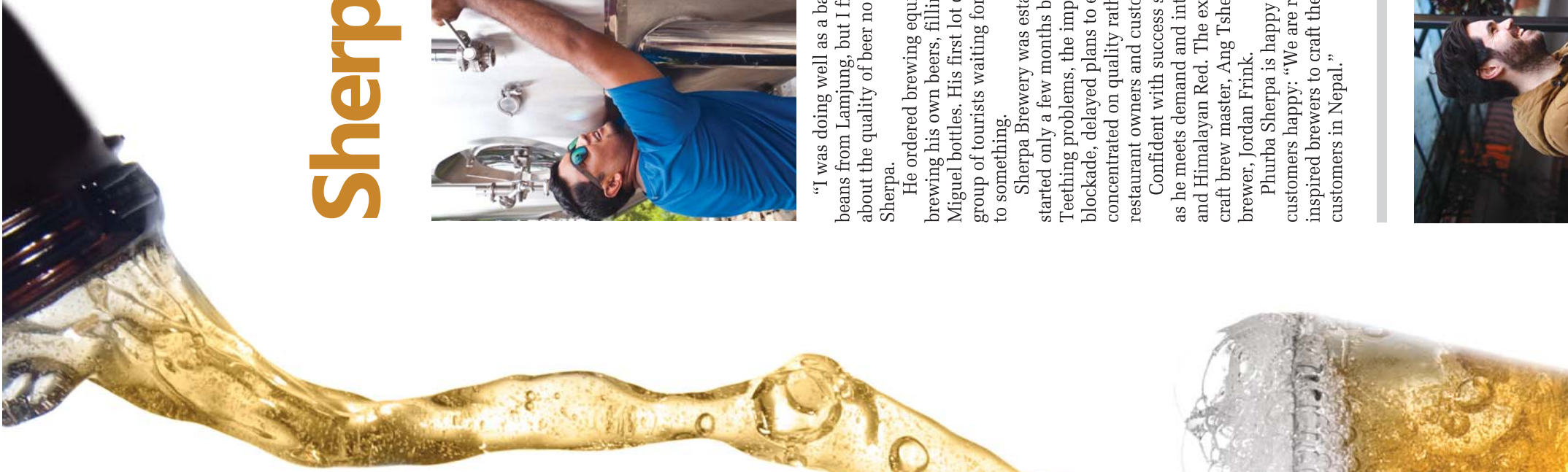
and during social events like concerts. As tastes get more sophisticated, many urban drinkers are moving to craft beers, while draught beer is catching on only in Kathmandu so far because of the short shelf-life of kegs.

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

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

BOTTOMS UP

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



Sherpa Craft



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

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

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

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

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

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

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





Meet Jim Jones who has established one-of-a-kind bar and beer garden in the vicinity of Thamel, observing the emerging thirst for local and international beer in Nepal. In the video, he tells some beer-tales and explains the tastes of his favourite Colorado beers.

[nepalitimes.com](https://www.nepalitimes.com)



ON TAP in THAMEL

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

The venue will be open to full capacity by Nepali New Year in mid-April. It will feature more than 60 varieties of imported and local craft beers, and offer a venue for food, drinks, events and getaways aiming to become a beer sub-hub within Kathmandu's tourist hub. The garden also comes with a café for specialty coffee, a wide range of teas and plans to create something similar for local and international wines.

But for now, it is mostly beers in all hues and textures: light, amber, dark, Belgian style, pale ale, stouts, IPAs, Nepali and many more. The man behind the brews is the generically named Jim Jones (*picture above, right*), who organised the Nepal International Beer Festival 2017 and Australia Day last month, in partnership with Michael Kelly (*picture above, left*), importer for 150 Lashes beer from Australia.

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



Holding froth

Gorkha Brewery

(Carlsberg, Tuborg, Gorkha, San Miguel)

CG Brewery

(Nepal Ice, Real Gold and Mustang)

Yeti Brewery

(Alma)

Other

(Commando, Sherpa, Star Gold, Tensberg, Everest, etc)



INLAND REVENUE DEPARTMENT

(previously known as United Brewery). Today, nine breweries are at work, eight producing English-style lagers of both local and international brands.

Sherpa Brewery broke the trend in 2015 with the first Nepali craft beer, Khumbu Kölsch (*see box*) and now produces the Sherpa brand in cans. Himalayan Brewery and Mt Everest Brewery have got into the draught beer segment with Kathmandu and Everest brands.

Demand for bottled and can beers is growing exponentially as Nepalis switch from traditional home-brewed alcoholic drinks. Proof of this is the amount of beer consumed at party venues, pubs and bars,



GOPEN RAI



EVENTS



Waste to wealth

A weekly meet up of individuals interested in creating value from trash; an open platform for sharing knowledge and encouraging innovation in waste entrepreneurship.
8 February, Ignition Lab, E-block, Thapathali Campus, 9808779708, info@theignitionlab.org



Education USA fair

USA university fair for those who need information about studying in the USA and admission and visa requirements.
3 February, 10am-4:30pm, Hotel Yak and Yeti, Darbar Marg, (01) 4414598, Registration: <http://www.usefnepal.org/registration>

Japanese film festival

The Embassy of Japan in Nepal is organising the Japanese Film Festival 2018 at Pokhara Chamber of Commerce and Industries Hall. Four Japanese movies with English subtitles will be presented.
9-10 February, Gaira Patan, Pokhara, (01)4426680, cultural-emb@km.mofa.go.jp



7th Himalayan festival

A call out to outdoor athletes from Nepal and around the world to participate in three main sports: trail running, rock climbing and mountain biking.
16-18 February, Hattiban Resort, Pharping, 9851236987, hello@himalyanoutdoorfestival.com, Registration: <https://goo.gl/h6unqA>

Spectrum exhibition

Visit Spectrum, an exhibition of photographs by Laurence Kent Jones on display at the gallery.
6 February- 6 March, 11am-5pm, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Baber Mahal Revisited, (01) 4218048, sthapa@mos.co.np

Witch

An entirely non-verbal drama about love, jealousy and superstition, directed by Peter Duncan Seifarh.
2-10 February (except Thursday), 5pm (1pm and 5 pm on Saturday), Sarwanam Theatre, Kalikasthan, (01) 4011027



Local mini market

Valentine special of the bi-monthly local mini market, featuring an array of local products, from organic food to ethically-made jewelry.
3 February, 11am-3pm, The Local Project at Evoke, Jhamsikhel, 9808110115, tlnepal@gmail.com

BBC world questions

A debate on Nepal's political and economic future, featuring Baburam Bhattarai, Pradeep Gyawali, CK Lal and Subina Shrestha.
6 February, 4pm-7pm, Hotel Himalaya, Kupondole, (01) 4237700, Registration: britishcouncil.org.np

MUSIC



Deep Shrestha live

Singing his evergreen hits like Kati Kumzor Rahecha Bhagya, Gaunma Sayad Pahiroya Ki and many more.
2 February, 5:30-9pm, Around the Corner, Bansbari, Rs1,200, 9861631197, atc.restaurant2016@gmail.com

Parkhai launch

Come watch Audio Ignition launch its album *Parkhai*, after a long wait, under Tree House Production.
3 February, 6pm onwards, Moskh Bar, Jhamsikhel, (01) 5528362, mokshlive@hotmail.com



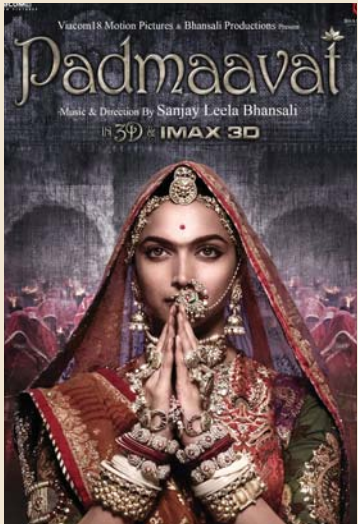
Tribute to Bob

Reggae night at the Barrel by Footloose band, featuring a tribute to Bob Marley, the king of reggae.
2 February, 5pm onwards, The Barrel Bar and Grill, Boudha, (01) 4485303

Müller Time

An energetic band with original compositions inspired by Funk, Soul, Gospel, and Jazz. KJC Jazz Trio will warm up the stage for Müller Time. Tickets available at Moksh.
2 February, 7-10pm, Moksh Bar, Jhamsikhel, Rs500 (includes a beer), Details: (01) 5543554, 9813556945, info@katjazz.com.np

OUR PICK



Now showing in Kathmandu

The period piece set in medieval Rajasthan is based on an epic poem Padmavat by Malik Muhammad Jayshi and narrates the story of Queen Padmaavati, happily married to a noble Rajput King until a power-hungry Sultan forms an obsessive love for her and wages war against the Kingdom of Mewar.

DINING



Olive Garden

Enjoy Italian dishes at this specialty restaurant that has revised its menu to feature soup, salad, pasta, pizza, main course and dinner.
6:30-10:30pm, Radisson Hotel Kathmandu, Lazimpat, Reservations: (01) 4411818, sales@radkat.com.np

Capital Grill Restaurant & Bar

Tantalise your taste buds with the best thakali khana set in town, known as Jimbu Thakali.
Tangal, (01) 4437674

Hankook Sarang

This restaurant serves incredible Korean delicacies, including superlative steamed rice to anchor meals fit for kings.
Thamel, (01) 4256615, info@hankooksarang.com

Café Swotha

An intimate setting in the heart of Patan, with an atmosphere of sophisticated, romantic warmth.
Patan, (01) 5551184, info@traditionalhomes.com.np



Rox Restaurant

For a special Valentine themed, four-course Italian menu to dine with your loved one.
14 February, 6:30-10pm, Hyatt Regency, Boudha, Rs4,000, (01) 5171234, mohini.shrestha@hyatt.com

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GETAWAY



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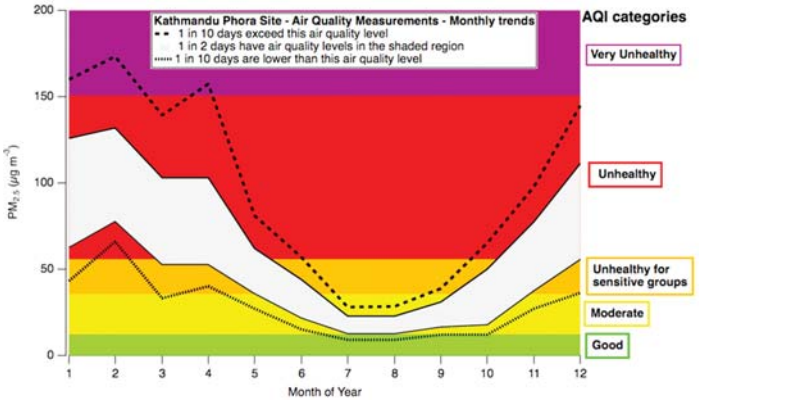
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Lake Side, Pokhara, (061)463468, www.mumsgardenresort.com

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Budhanilkantha, 9841371927

AIR QUALITY INDEX



There is marked weekend dip in Air Quality Index (AQI) in Kathmandu, measured at the Phora Darbar monitoring station in the middle of the city, but only marginally less than during weekdays. In the past seven days, only Friday and Saturday have air quality in the 'Unhealthy' band while they stayed in the 'Very Unhealthy' through the rest of the week. Above, we also present the graph for 2017 compiled by the US Embassy's AQI Fellow Peter De Carlo of Drexel University. It shows that AQI dips to its lowest level for 1 in 10 days during the monsoon months when the rains wash down suspended particles (above).
<https://np.usembassy.gov/embassy/air-quality-monitor/>

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Devastated houses still awaits rebuilding



Kalpna Tamang aged 48 of Godawari Municipality Ward -10 spent two long years in the temporary shelter with her family of four, fighting off the cold winters and drenching monsoons. She is glad that her family has moved to the one room house, constructed on their own land. The temporary shelter is now used as a kitchen for the family. Tamang proudly shares that the house was completed with the 3 lakhs worth material support from Lumanti Support Group for Shelter. "Labor cost was beyond imagination. My mother in law and I gave our blood, sweat and tears for this house", she shares with a smile.

Kale Kanchaa Tamang, 82 of Khasimara Ward-10, has only started building a house after receiving the material support worth 3 lakhs from Lumanti. Sannaani, his daughter in law, has taken loan from the cooperative to add some support to build 2 roomed house. The family themselves carried and transported the construction materials to reduce the cost. Sannaani says, "The government's fifty thousand rupees installment is not adequate to start the rebuilding process. The sum should have been handed over at full – many houses would have already been completed."

Ram Bahadur Bogati, 74 and Dhankumari, 69 of Jharuwaraasi Ward- 13, have also started building two room house after

receiving support from Lumanti. The couple stressed that without Lumanti's material support, the installment support from the government worth 50 thousand alone would have been insufficient to build any structures for a house.

Continuously living in dilemma

Contrastingly living in dilemma
Kanchhai Shahi 73 of Kohiy Ward-20 in Kathmandu is living in the remaining ground floor of his earthquake hit house after clearing off the devastated two upper layers. He has received the first installment from the government however he still cannot muster courage to begin any work to build a new. Maiya Shahi 66 of Hyumat Ward -12 Kathmandu faces the same situation. She is still living in her damaged house with her daughter. "The fifty thousand is not even enough to pay for clearing the rubbles. It would have been helpful if the government have handed over all the money to the victims at once", she shares her dismay.

Saanu Shahi 69 of Gunakamdev Ward – 12 is also living in his old broken house with his wife and a daughter. He sells vegetables for living and the income from his daughter is covering family's other expenses. Though he has also received first installment from the government, he is also caught in the same dilemma. Shahi says, "We know we have to build a new

house, it is not safe to live in a damaged house. But the cost of clearing the rubble alone will cost us more than double the amount we received from the government."

Naninanda Gwala 58 of Gwaanani Ward-12, Godawari Municipality, herself a disabled woman is looking after her step mother Sunkeshari and her paralyzed younger brother Saroj. The family still lives in a temporary shelter. She has constructed the temporary shelter to keep the Guthi's deities in her shelter. The family desperately needs a house to live in and very soon. "Fifty thousand for building a house in today's market," Gwala questions the government's intention. "If the government wants people to build their houses fast, then they should be given full amount and not in the installments."

Some victims, who took the bold decision and started building their houses after receiving the grant money, have to abandon their efforts due to inadequacy of fund. Manbahadur Maharjan 70, of Kusiko Ward -12 of Godawari Municipality has not been able to complete the construction of his house that he started 11 months ago. He has spent more than eighty thousand rupees only to manage the rubbles of his three storey earthquake affected house. He has sold his old house in Jhwarasi. He used fifty percent



of the fund that he has received from selling the house to manage the money for the remaining construction work and remaining 50 percent has to be given to his son. Despite using the old bricks and frames of windows and doors, so far he has already spent 8 lakhs. He says, "The government's full installment would have been a great support. I would have managed some loans on that amount and completed my house."

Likewise, Jiwan Maharjan 56 of Pukusi Ward-12 has not yet been able to finish the construction work he started after receiving the first installment. His family of five has been taking shelter in Ward office building. His one room house is

half built and left deserted.

Adding woes to tragedy

Harka Bahadur Tamang of Khasimara Ward-10 in Godawari, has been discarded from continued relief support. He does not have the documents of his house required to acquire the vulnerability card. He has deposited his house as a guarantee in a cooperative to obtain loan. The cooperative has kept the documents of the house. Tamang and his family of nine have nowhere to go and take shelter so they are living in the ruins of the devastated house. He has spent the first phase relief support money to cleaning up the old ruins to manage space to live in. He wishes to start the construction of the house but without the vulnerability card he faces problem in getting further assistance. He says, "It is hard to manage household expenses with meager labor earnings. Children are still small to be of any help. In such condition I cannot imagine how we are going to be able to build a house."

Mailit among 70 of same locality is facing similar problem. Though her house was completely destroyed in the quake 2015, she was completely left out from the list of earthquake victims, due to some error. She has received the first 10 thousand rupees and then 15 thousand rupees only. The officers from her ward are well aware of the family situation, however no prominent actions are taken to resolve their problem. Dilkumari Tamang, Maili's daughter in law shares, "We have submitted the grievance and complain form. We are still waiting to be heard of." Tamang is living in a temporary shelter with her son and daughter in law.

Krishna Bahadur Purkuti age 88 of Arubot Ward – 13 faces far more crisis than others. He lives in the remains of a destroyed house. He gave away all his properties to the last wife who later divorced him and left him penniless. He has neither anyone to look after nor any place to cover his skin. He does not have good contacts with his four sons after the separation. He has not received any support from the government since the process require official documents and house documents to provide adequate evidence that he is also an earthquake victim and a deserving candidate for the assistance. “During my days, I had worked as the mason and constructed several houses. Today I have become homeless”, Purkuti shares his grief. “If only I could get some grant money and support, I would build a house myself to live in.”

According to Lumanti Joshi, Housing Programme Manager at Lumanti, the earthquake victims are entrapped between the inflation, insufficient work force and especially inadequate fund have been the main cause behind most people's inability to build a simple house. She shares that many families are compelled to sell their properties and lands only to arrange fund for initiation of the construction work.

(In partnership with Lumanti Support Group for Shelter)

advertising



The Beguiled

When Sofia Coppola entered the filmmaking fray in 1999 with *The Virgin Suicides* she carried the enormous and difficult mantle of being the daughter of Francis Ford Coppola, one of the greatest filmmakers of



MUST SEE
Sophia Pande

our time. Six films later, she has moved beyond pigeonholes, earning her name as a sensitive, original filmmaker with a voice quite unlike any other director working today.

Think of it what you may, but *Lost in Translation* (2003), despite accusations of it being nebulous and without substance, is one of the great films about falling in love with an entirely unsuitable person – one that is written and directed with grace, humour, and a touch of the truly offbeat that defines Coppola's sensibilities.

In 2017, Coppola's *The Beguiled* made its debut at the Cannes Film Festival, winning her the coveted prize for "Best Director", a prize won only once before by a woman at the hallowed film festival which is the arbiter of art-house cinema.

A remake of a 1971 film by the same name, *The Beguiled* is a tense, gothic thriller set in the American Civil War, chronicling the story of what happens when a lone, injured soldier from the north gets absorbed into a beautiful but crumbling mansion in Virginia that houses a girl's school where only a few students remain.

The soldier, Corporal John McBurney (Colin Farrell), is initially viewed with suspicion, but slowly all the women, including the gracious Martha Farnsworth (Nicole Kidman), owner of the house and school, and Edwina Morrow (Kirsten Dunst) all begin to soften towards the charming, hard-working soldier who helps them around the garden once he begins to recover.

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

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

At this time of awards season fervour, watch *The Beguiled* if you want to support the smaller films that actually make cinema so much more interesting. 🇳🇵



Watch trailer online

nepalitimes.com

HAPPENINGS



GOPEN RAI

COURT DIARIES: Surendra Bhandari (second from left), one of the advocates who defended activist Govinda KC (left) in a contempt of court case, files a complaint at Kathmandu Valley Police Range in Teku on Wednesday, accusing Chief Justice Gopal Parajuli of threatening to kill him.



RSS

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



JOHNNIE WALKER

BEING AGEIST: Aditya Agrawal (second from left) celebrates the launch of Johnnie Walker 18-year-old blended Scotch whisky with guests at The Address Lounge in Kalikasthan last week.

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Losing public trust

In the previous two Himalmedia Public Opinion Surveys of 2013 and 2015, Nepali Congress (NC) had topped the list of political parties that the people trusted the most. However in the elections to all three tiers of government in 2017, the grand old party of Nepal's democracy trailed far behind the UML.

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

The Survey was proven right as the NC went on to emerge as the largest party.

In January 2015, the NC was leading the Constitution drafting process and it performed even better in the popularity chart in a Public Opinion survey conducted that year. Over one third of the respondents (34%) chose the NC as a party capable of building a peaceful, prosperous and democratic Nepal.

But three years later, the NC has lost

most of its credibility and support — proven in not just the local, provincial and parliamentary elections, but also by the latest 2018 Himalmedia Public Opinion Survey conducted in January.

The UML swept local governments in mid-2017 and emerged as the single largest party with 44% of parliamentary seats in elections under the FPTP (directly-elected) and Proportional Representation (PR) systems in November-December 2017. Relegated to the third position in the FPTP system, the NC recovered some lost ground with 22% parliamentary seats thanks to PR votes.

The Maoists secured third position with 19% parliamentary seats, despite faring better than the NC under the FPTP system.

The Himalmedia Public Opinion Survey was conducted just one month after the elections. The results

corresponded fairly accurately with the elections results. Of the 3,612 respondents interviewed, 28% said they didn't want to disclose which party they voted for. But of those who opened up, 31% said they voted for the UML while 16% and 9% respondents voted for the NC and the CPN (Maoist-Centre) respectively.

If the NC had analysed the 2015 Public Opinion Survey, they would have seen that their party president Sher Bahadur Deuba was one of the less popular political personalities with only a 3% approval

rate. Deuba went on to topple the KP Oli government by aligning himself with the Maoists, he tried to impeach the fearless Chief Justice Sushila Koirala, interfered in the selection of the police chief, did not support the impeachment motion against the tainted CIAA chief Lokman Singh Karki in 2016 — and most importantly, he did not oppose the Indian Blockade. All this came to him at a cost of losing his party support in that year's elections, and the Survey too shows that the NC has shrunk further.

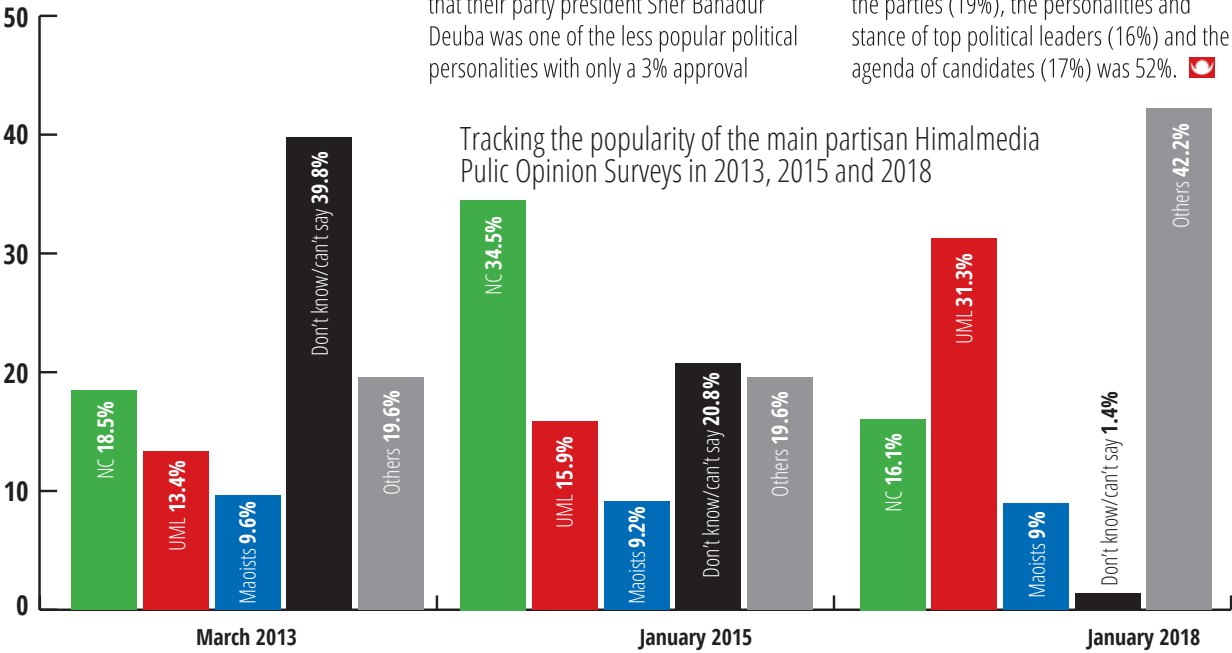
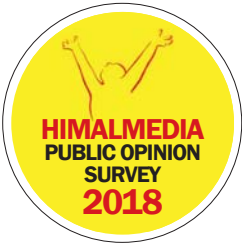
The UML Chair KP Oli, on the other hand, appears to have played his nationalism card astutely by opposing the blockade and signing trade and transit deals with China. He supported the impeachment of Lokman Singh Karki, but stood by Sushila Karki when Deuba wanted to hound her out.

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

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

The Himalmedia Survey asked respondents the criteria they considered for voting. Only 40% said they voted for the parties they have always voted for.

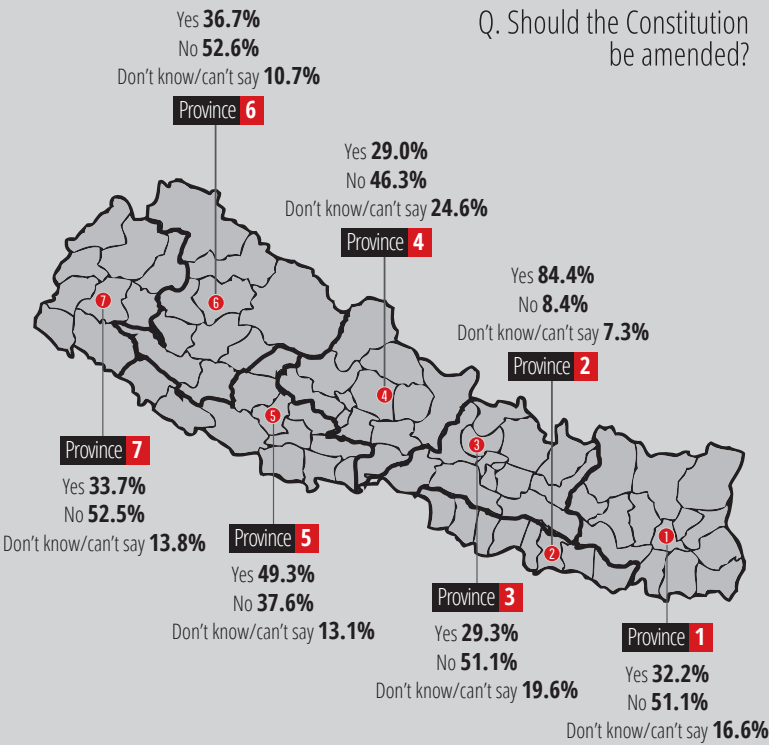
The combined proportion of those who said they considered the agenda of the parties (19%), the personalities and stance of top political leaders (16%) and the agenda of candidates (17%) was 52%. 🇳🇵



Province 2 & 6 anomaly

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

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

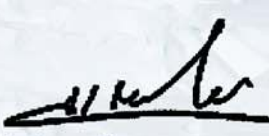



In general, only 30% of Nepalis see a threat to the country's sovereignty, while a majority of them (40%) think the threat comes from foreign countries. In all provinces, most people think India is a threat to Nepal's sovereignty, but Province 2 has the lowest percentage of people who do not consider India as a threat. But even in the plains province bordering India, more than one-third of respondents saw India as a threat to Nepal's sovereignty — indicating a lingering memory of the Blockade. A negligible proportion of respondents (1-2%) saw China as a threat in six provinces, however in Province 2 this score soared to 14%.

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

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

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By Nepal's First Breweries

Hoping against hope



PUBLIC PULSE: An enumerator interviews a respondent in Ilam in mid-January.

OM ASTHA RAI

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

Yet, according to the nationwide 2018 Himalmedia Public Opinion Survey conducted this month with support from International IDEA, Nepalis have surprisingly not given up hope for a better future.

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

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

A majority of the 3,612 respondents selected to proportionately represent Nepal's demographic and geographical diversity, pinpointed unemployment,

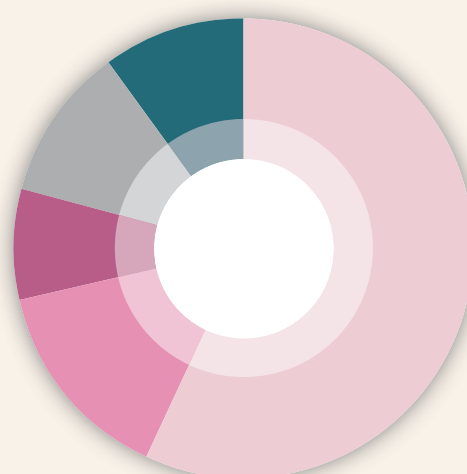
lack of development and inflation as their top three worries. Surprisingly, political instability was the main concern of only 10% of interviewees. Unemployment is the most pressing problem for 66% respondents, followed by lack of development (62%) and inflation (34%). The poor state of health and education were listed as the other two main areas of concern.

Cross-tabulated results from the survey show that these concerns were highest in Province 6, Nepal's poorest province according to the recent Multiple Poverty Index (MPI) report published by the National Planning Commission. Unemployment is the most pressing problem for 84% of respondents in this province in the remote mid-western hills, followed by lack of development (67%) and inflation (39%).

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

Those who answered that they were unable to make a living were asked supplementary questions about what they planned to do: 57% said they were determined to work harder, 15% would switch their profession, 10% said they would look for jobs

Q. What are you thinking to improve your livelihood?



- Work harder **57.1%**
- Switch profession **14.5%**
- Go for overseas employment **7.8%**
- Find job for spouse/children **10.7%**
- Don't want to say **10%**

for spouses and children. Interestingly, only 8% said they would seek to migrate overseas for work, with an overwhelming majority saying they would look for jobs within Nepal.

After the provincial-parliamentary elections in November-December, Nepal is finally poised to be governed by a durable

government: respondents hope that will speed up development and create jobs.

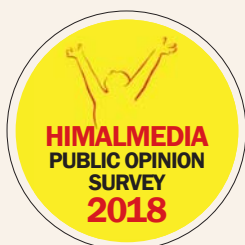
Only 20% of those interviewed were pessimistic, saying things will remain the same despite the elections. More than half said they expect the pace of development to increase and that there will be more jobs.

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

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

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

Even after participating in the election under the new Constitution, Madhesi parties insist on the need to amend the charter. Survey results show that 84% of respondents in Province 2 think the Constitution needs to be amended, as do 49% in Province 5. But some people are still not sure: 14% of respondents say they do not know if the Constitution needs to be amended. 🇳🇵





ROHIT CHANDRA BHATTARAI

No to populism

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

The Ministry of Finance now needs to allocate an additional Rs16 billion because of the increase in the number of elderly who are eligible for allowances. Deuba was actually only emulating something the UML itself had promised during the election campaign — to increase the elderly allowance to Rs5,000 from Rs2,000 per month if it came to power. The UML proposal would have cost more than reducing the threshold age for the elderly.

The NC is clearly aiming to beat the UML in the next elections. However, analysts say this could be counter-productive because the results of the 2018 Himalmedia Opinion Poll Survey show that people nationwide have a dim view of such expensive populism. (*see Editorial, page 2*)

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

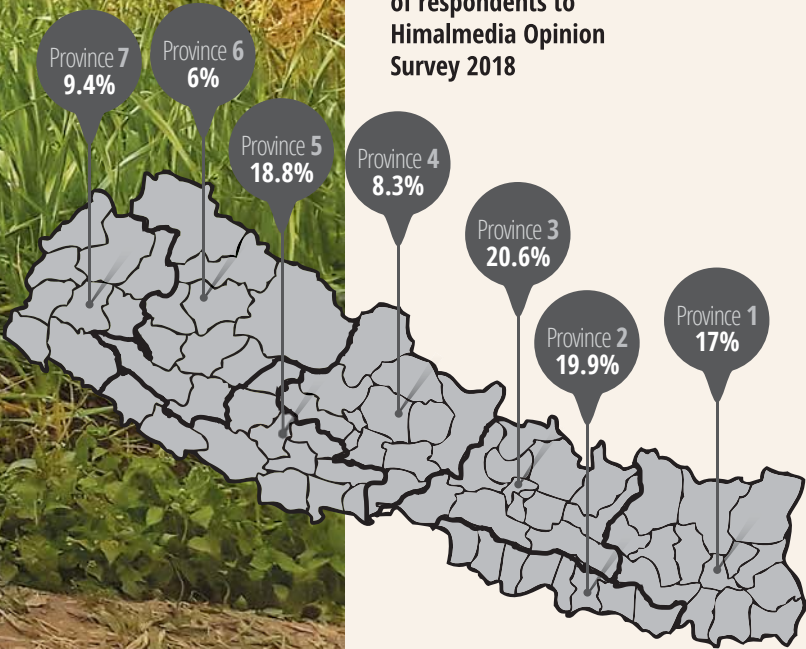
aged 18-25 wanted the increase.

Since the three big parties in Nepal have shown in the past that they will throw money at populist measures at election time, the survey results could be an important lesson that spending may not necessarily translate into more support.

After last year's local elections, some mayors and village chiefs had arbitrarily increased social security allowances, but the survey shows that people want municipalities and village councils to efficiently deliver government services rather than increasing such allowances. Only 8% of respondents wanted their municipalities/village councils to increase social security allowances. More than 90% respondents preferred faster and hassle-free service delivery, development and employment schemes.

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

Province-wise percentages of respondents to Himalmedia Opinion Survey 2018



Methodology

Himalmedia, publisher of *Nepali Times* and *Himal Khabarpatrika*, in partnership with various development agencies, has been conducting Public Opinion surveys almost annually since 2004. This year's Survey was supported by International IDEA.

FACTS Nepal was involved in data collection, and data was analysed by statistician Balkrishna Khadka.

This year's Survey was conducted 8-21 January. There were 3,612 respondents from 37 districts, who answered 43 pre-tested questions delivered by 71 enumerators.

Enumerators were pre-trained to study whether the questions would be clear to the respondents or not.

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

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

No amnesty for war crimes

Last week, the government issued an ordinance to extend the terms of both the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the Commission of Investigation on Enforced Disappeared Persons (CIEDP) by one year.

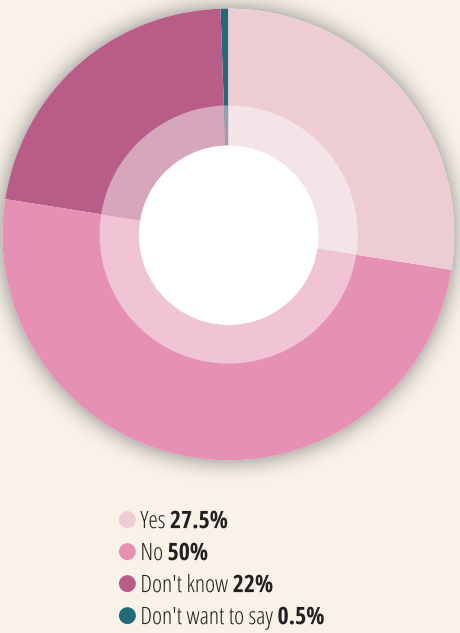
But 50% of the 3,612 Nepalis surveyed in the Himalmedia poll had little trust in the two bodies and predicted that the two transitional justice bodies will not be able to complete their jobs even with their extended tenures.

Two weeks ago, when the government was preparing to pass the ordinance on the commissions, 71 enumerators had fanned out across 37 districts to ask various questions. Among them: 'Will the TRC and the CIEDP complete their jobs in the extended period?'

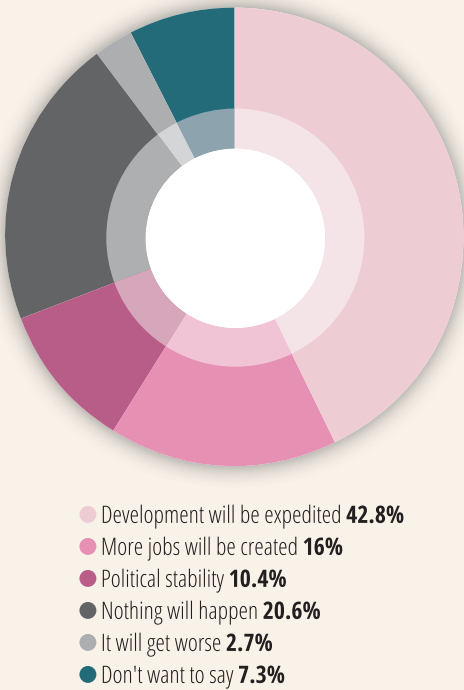
Only 27% of respondents replied 'yes'. Respondents were also asked how conflict-era atrocities should be dealt with: as many as 38% said these cases must be investigated, 17% said perpetrators must be tried in regular courts and 9% said international law must be followed. Only 20% of respondents supported compensation and amnesty, while 8% were for forgiving and moving on.

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

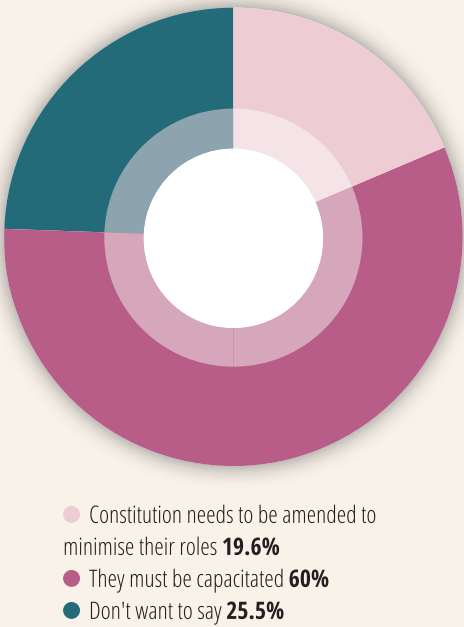
Q. Will the two transitional justice bodies complete their investigations into conflict-era cases in the extended period?



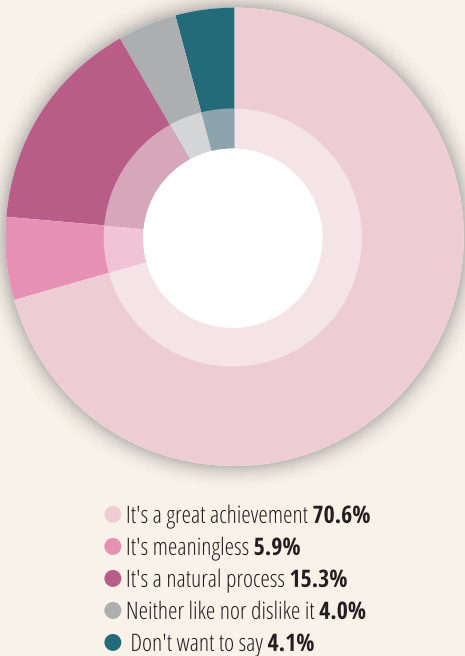
Q. How will the new government run the country?



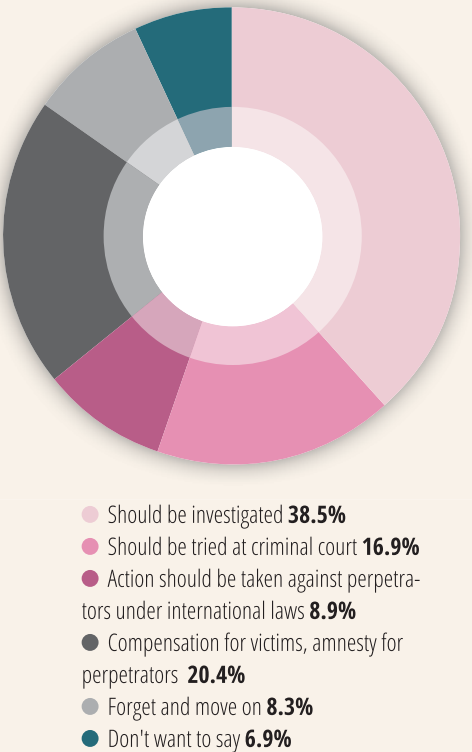
Q. What should be done if municipalities and village councils cannot fulfill all their constitutional duties?



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



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





ELEVATE
YOUR EXPECTATIONS

CHARRED OAK BARRELS
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INTENSE CHARACTER

Nothing better to do

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

The Nepali Kangressis are on the right track, opening up shoe-shine businesses on the sidewalks to show that they are engaged in the noble profession of overcharging to polish shoes of passersby. Not be outdone, the UML can take a cue from Comrade Oily's declaration last week that money laundering is good for the economy, by opening Nepal's first laundromat to wash cash — and they can start by thawing the nine billions frozen by the Rastrabadi Bank. The Maobadi can show they are no longer engaged in bloodshed, but in blood donation by opening roadside kiosks to draw the blood of the proletariat for transfusions at medical colleges they own.

In the spirit of inclusiveness and gender balance, we also need to take this opportunity to be politically correct about place names. The Ass' attention has been drawn to the fact that there is a male-bias in the words Himalayan Mountains, Lake Mansarovar, Manaslu and Manakamana. As a recognition to the contributions made by women to Nepal's national development, we should start referring to the world's greatest mountain range and other mountains as Heralaya, Womanaslu, and Tibet's holiest lake as Person Sarovar. Hetauda must be immediately changed to Shetauda.

There have been half-hearted attempts in our own country in the past to rename towns after deceased national figures, but this campaign soon ground to a halt because we ran out of expired illustrious personages.

We shouldn't let this deter us, there are still thousands of famous people who are still hale and hearty and thousands of towns out there waiting to be renamed. Also we have a caretaker grovelment that seems to have a lot of time on its hands. The All-Nepal Renaming Towns Because We Have Nothing Better to Do National Commission has put forth the following suggestions which will be approved during the first sitting of the new Parliament or through a street agitation, whichever comes first:

Old Name	- New Name
Khumjung	- Hillaryganj
Mugling	- Mugging
Kakarbhitta	- Gingernagar
Surkhet	- Phuket
Rampur	- Rambahadurpur

Why stop at towns? Our provinces still only have numerals. Kathmandu has a lot of unimaginative names of streets and neighbourhoods that have to be brought up to date:

Old Name	- New Name
Chakra Path	- Prachanda Path
Bhedasing	- Prakash Man Singh
Jawalakhel	- Jawaharlalkhel
Kopundole	- Coupon Toll
Taksar	- Taskar
Bhaisepati	- Rangopati
Bhaktapur	- ChimniBhattapur
Pradarsani Marg	- Exhibitionist Road
Bagmati	- Plastic Bag Mati
Kanti Path	- Shining Path



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Legends of the
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