The winner.

Pandey adds that US voters, he said, have repeatedly shown that very wrongdoings. Even if Joe Biden managed to successfully convince the establishment is strong and he has Trumpist disenchantment with the media has been relentlessly investigating Donald Trump’s wrongdoing. Even if Joe Biden wins, the results have shown that Trump dynasty. It is high time that the US looks up to the United States as a beacon of democracy with proper separation of powers and moral authority to guide other countries on matters of electoral politics,” says Nischal Pandey, director of the Centre for South Asian Studies in Kathmandu. “Despite his poor handling of the pandemic and several erroneous decisions, President Trump has shown that his policies were admired by a substantial chunk of the population.” Indeed, the US election results so far prove how little facts matter even in a democracy in which the media has been relentlessly investigating Donald Trump’s wrongdoings. Even if Joe Biden wins, the results have shown that Trump dynasty. It is high time that the US introspects the shortcomings of how its elections are conducted because its democracy instead of becoming an element of its soft power is becoming a travesty of sorts to test live all over the world.”

For many Nepalis there is a strong sense of irony about an America that has been supporting human rights, inclusion and democracy in the country’s post-conflict transition. Many remember former US president Jimmy Carter’s multiple visits to observe elections here. It seems the services of his Carter Centre are now required more in his own home state of Georgia where the race is neck-to-neck, and there is deep disagreement about counting methods.

Amnesty’s turmoil over the past four years and this messy election are a lesson in how to dismantle a functioning democracy in a few easy steps. This is an important warning for Nepal and countries in the region which are grappling with making their own electoral systems free and fair, and deliver accountability.

Foreign policy experts say that the chaos that has followed this election is more reminiscent of the banana republics to which America used to lecture about freedom, democracy and human rights.

America has projected hard power through its global military might, but also its value system through technology and US cultural products. But four years of Trump has cost America this moral high ground globally. “The US is divided like never before. This will have far-reaching consequences for the rest of the world and for South Asia that looks up to the United States as a beacon of democracy with proper separation of powers and moral authority to guide other countries on matters of electoral politics,” says Nischal Pandey, director of the Centre for South Asian Studies in Kathmandu. “Despite his poor handling of the pandemic and several erroneous decisions, President Trump has shown that his policies were admired by a substantial chunk of the population.”

Indeed, the US election results so far prove how little facts matter even in a democracy in which the media has been relentlessly investigating Donald Trump’s wrongdoings. Even if Joe Biden wins, the results have shown that Trump dynasty. It is high time that the US introspects the shortcomings of how its elections are conducted because its democracy instead of becoming an element of its soft power is becoming a travesty of sorts to test live all over the world.”

For many Nepalis there is a strong sense of irony about an America that has been supporting human rights, inclusion and democracy in the country’s post-conflict transition. Many remember former US president Jimmy Carter’s multiple visits to observe elections here. It seems the services of his Carter Centre are now required more in his own home state of Georgia where the race is neck-to-neck, and there is deep disagreement about counting methods.

A possible Biden victory may also be good news to those applying for H-1B visas who were barred from entry into America by Trump in June, which would affect up to 50,000 Indian professionals, and some Nepalis. A US court subsequently overturned the decision last month. Trump also banned the US Diversity Visa (DV) lottery, and interviews for 2021 winners were suspended, citing Covid-19. Applications, however, have reopened for 2022.

Many undocumented Nepalis in the US were also affected by Trump trying to end the Temporary Protected Status (TPS). On Wednesday, even as Americans were voting, the United States formally left the Paris Climate Agreement signed in 2015 – three years after Donald Trump announced he would be quitting. In the past four years, Trump has delayed action on the climate emergency, and overturned other environmental legislation, appointed an oil lobbyist to head the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Four more years of Trump would unleash so much damage to the planet, environmentalists say, that it would take decades to undo. Nepal’s Himalayan mountains, which are already melting rapidly, will bear the direct impact of accelerated climate heating — endangering the water supply to millions of people living downstream in India and Bangladesh as well.

Geopolitically, the only difference for Nepal between Trump or Biden would be that at least Biden knows where Nepal is, and will not pronounce it “Nipple”. Neither president is going to stomach China extending its military, economic and political clout in Asia – even though Biden’s approach may be less aggressive.

Last week, in New Delhi, American and Indian foreign and defence officials signed a Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) pact seen by many as a military alliance aimed at containing China. A Biden presidency would likely give continuity to this strategic alliance that has caught Asian countries like Nepal in a bind. Biden will also likely stay the course on the Indo-Pacific strategy and QUAD naval exercises in the Indian Ocean this week.

“It appears that Biden will largely follow the Trump approach to China and therefore to the Indo-Pacific in as much as this is a structural feature of current international politics and therefore has garnered bipartisan support in the United States,” says Bishanka Koirala of the Nepal Institute of International and Strategic Studies. “Under a Biden administration, the US can be expected to play an increasing role as an off-shore balancer in Asia.”

For Nepal, a Biden administration may place a greater emphasis on development and programs such as the MCC (Millennium Challenge Corporation) infrastructure project as a counter to China’s BRI (Belt Road Initiative). Koirala adds that Biden may have a more general foreign policy objective to ensure that Nepal is stable politically and that it retains its independent identity.”

Kunda Dixit

The US is divided like never before. This will have far-reaching consequences for the rest of the world and for South Asia that looks up to the United States as a beacon of democracy with proper separation of powers and moral authority to guide other countries on matters of electoral politics,” says Nischal Pandey, director of the Centre for South Asian Studies in Kathmandu. “Despite his poor handling of the pandemic and several erroneous decisions, President Trump has shown that his policies were admired by a substantial chunk of the population.”

Indeed, the US election results so far prove how little facts matter even in a democracy in which the media has been relentlessly investigating Donald Trump’s wrongdoings. Even if Joe Biden wins, the results have shown that Trump dynasty. It is high time that the US introspects the shortcomings of how its elections are conducted because its democracy instead of becoming an element of its soft power is becoming a travesty of sorts to test live all over the world.”

For many Nepalis there is a strong sense of irony about an America that has been supporting human rights, inclusion and democracy in the country’s post-conflict transition. Many remember former US president Jimmy Carter’s multiple visits to observe elections here. It seems the services of his Carter Centre are now required more in his own home state of Georgia where the race is neck-to-neck, and there is deep disagreement about counting methods.

A possible Biden victory may also be good news to those applying for H-1B visas who were barred from entry into America by Trump in June, which would affect up to 50,000 Indian professionals, and some Nepalis. A US court subsequently overturned the decision last month. Trump also banned the US Diversity Visa (DV) lottery, and interviews for 2021 winners were suspended, citing Covid-19. Applications, however, have reopened for 2022.

Many undocumented Nepalis in the US were also affected by Trump trying to end the Temporary Protected Status (TPS). On Wednesday, even as Americans were voting, the United States formally left the Paris Climate Agreement signed in 2015 – three years after Donald Trump announced he would be quitting. In the past four years, Trump has delayed action on the climate emergency, and overturned other environmental legislation, appointed an oil lobbyist to head the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Four more years of Trump would unleash so much damage to the planet, environmentalists say, that it would take decades to undo. Nepal’s Himalayan mountains, which are already melting rapidly, will bear the direct impact of accelerated climate heating — endangering the water supply to millions of people living downstream in India and Bangladesh as well.

Geopolitically, the only difference for Nepal between Trump or Biden would be that at least Biden knows where Nepal is, and will not pronounce it “Nipple”. Neither president is going to stomach China extending its military, economic and political clout in Asia – even though Biden’s approach may be less aggressive.

Last week, in New Delhi, American and Indian foreign and defence officials signed a Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) pact seen by many as a military alliance aimed at containing China. A Biden presidency would likely give continuity to this strategic alliance that has caught Asian countries like Nepal in a bind. Biden will also likely stay the course on the Indo-Pacific strategy and QUAD naval exercises in the Indian Ocean this week.

“It appears that Biden will largely follow the Trump approach to China and therefore to the Indo-Pacific in as much as this is a structural feature of current international politics and therefore has garnered bipartisan support in the United States,” says Bishanka Koirala of the Nepal Institute of International and Strategic Studies. “Under a Biden administration, the US can be expected to play an increasing role as an off-shore balancer in Asia.”

For Nepal, a Biden administration may place a greater emphasis on development and programs such as the MCC (Millennium Challenge Corporation) infrastructure project as a counter to China’s BRI (Belt Road Initiative). Koirala adds that Biden may have a more general foreign policy objective to ensure that Nepal is stable politically and that it retains its independent identity.”

Kunda Dixit

The US is divided like never before. This will have far-reaching consequences for the rest of the world and for South Asia that looks up to the United States as a beacon of democracy with proper separation of powers and moral authority to guide other countries on matters of electoral politics,” says Nischal Pandey, director of the Centre for South Asian Studies in Kathmandu. “Despite his poor handling of the pandemic and several erroneous decisions, President Trump has shown that his policies were admired by a substantial chunk of the population.”

Indeed, the US election results so far prove how little facts matter even in a democracy in which the media has been relentlessly investigating Donald Trump’s wrongdoings. Even if Joe Biden wins, the results have shown that Trump dynasty. It is high time that the US introspects the shortcomings of how its elections are conducted because its democracy instead of becoming an element of its soft power is becoming a travesty of sorts to test live all over the world.”

For many Nepalis there is a strong sense of irony about an America that has been supporting human rights, inclusion and democracy in the country’s post-conflict transition. Many remember former US president Jimmy Carter’s multiple visits to observe elections here. It seems the services of his Carter Centre are now required more in his own home state of Georgia where the race is neck-to-neck, and there is deep disagreement about counting methods.

A possible Biden victory may also be good news to those applying for H-1B visas who were barred from entry into America by Trump in June, which would affect up to 50,000 Indian professionals, and some Nepalis. A US court subsequently overturned the decision last month. Trump also banned the US Diversity Visa (DV) lottery, and interviews for 2021 winners were suspended, citing Covid-19. Applications, however, have reopened for 2022.
Koirala and Deuba are now rosy, but the ground reality is different. By

Last year. July-September compared to the same months

The Nepal Labour Survey of 2018 shows there are 7 million people employed in Nepal, and of those two-thirds are in the informal sector. We have no idea what has become of them. We can only guess that maybe no one has noticed they are no figures. You can only solve a problem if you know there is a problem.

Pre-pandemic figures show 17% of the population living below the poverty level. But just a guess is a guesstimate. There are no surveys to show how many people from which sectors lost their incomes. We have a WHO Covid-19 tests and treatment, the government is telling citizens most at risk to find for themselves. A 2014 Population and Health Survey showed that half of Nepal’s population suffered from food insecurity, with 10% of families facing chronic food shortages. Eight months into the pandemic, aside from sample surveys by WFP and UNICEF, we don’t know for sure the scale of the nutrition crisis.

Without these statistics, the already inadequate relief targetted for the most vulnerable will be tricked by those politically connected. Which is what is happening. In the past eight years, the government has not been able to identify the poorest families. 

Prime Minister Oli is preoccupied with a perpetual power struggle with his party nemesis Pushpa Kamal Dahal, relies on the minority status of the Cabinet to use paralyzing power struggle that is threatening to split the NCP today. The current Left-Centre coalition has been battered for the worst part of two decades. The leftist opposition has smelt blood – not even to try and revive the stalled talks with the Communist Party. Deuba in his Pokhara address made it known that his party would not have been an option for the most of the time.

Some economists estimate that one-third of Nepalis have now been pushed below the poverty line. But that is a guesstimate. There are no surveys to show how many people from which sectors lost their incomes. We have no idea what has become of them. We can only guess that maybe no one has noticed they are no figures. You can only solve a problem if you know there is a problem.

Pre-pandemic figures show 17% of the population living below the poverty level. But just a guess is a guesstimate. There are no surveys to show how many people from which sectors lost their incomes. We have no idea what has become of them. We can only guess that maybe no one has noticed they are no figures. You can only solve a problem if you know there is a problem.

Let’s take a look at Bardia National Park which has become a hub for wildlife and safari tourism. It is one of the top five national parks in the world and has a unique landscape with diverse flora and fauna. The park is home to numerous species of birds, mammals, and reptiles, including endangered species like the snow leopards.

The Covid-19 Crisis Management Center (CCMC), the government’s body responsible for managing the pandemic, has been criticized for its lack of transparency and effectiveness. The public is outraged, blames the government for playing politics with the problem. The government has been accused of covering up the extent of the pandemic and not doing enough to control the spread of the virus.

Nepal’s macroeconomic policy looks rosy, but the ground reality is different. Nepalis long for economic growth and prosperity. The government claims that the economy is doing splendidly. The GDP growth rate for the current fiscal year is projected to be 3.5%, which is higher than the previous year.

From the archives of Nepal Times of the past 25 years, six search: www.nepaltimes.com

The Covid-19 crisis has caused a significant impact on Nepal’s economy. The tourism industry, which is one of the country’s major sources of income, has been severely affected. The closure of borders and restrictions on travel have resulted in a decline in the number of tourists.

Since conclusions can be subjective,

- There have been reports of a decrease in the country’s remittances, which are a major source of income for many families in Nepal. The Ministry of Health’s statistics show that since March 2020, remittances have declined by 30%.

- The government has launched several relief packages to help the most affected sectors, such as tourism, agriculture, and manufacturing. However, many of these packages have been criticized for being inadequate or poorly targeted.

- The pandemic has also led to a decline in the country’s exports, particularly in the textile and garment sector.

- The closure of borders has also affected the country’s import and export trade, leading to a significant increase in the country’s trade deficit.

- The pandemic has also led to a decline in the country’s foreign investment, which has been crucial for the country’s economic growth.

- The government has also launched several economic stimulus packages to help the country recover from the pandemic. However, many of these packages have been criticized for being inadequate or poorly targeted.

- The pandemic has also led to a decline in the country’s stock market, which has had a significant impact on the country’s economy.

- The pandemic has also led to a decline in the country’s electricity demand, which has been crucial for the country’s economy.

- The government has also launched several economic stimulus packages to help the country recover from the pandemic. However, many of these packages have been criticized for being inadequate or poorly targeted.

- The pandemic has also led to a decline in the country’s stock market, which has had a significant impact on the country’s economy.

- The government has also launched several economic stimulus packages to help the country recover from the pandemic. However, many of these packages have been criticized for being inadequate or poorly targeted.

- The pandemic has also led to a decline in the country’s electricity demand, which has been crucial for the country’s economy.

- The government has also launched several economic stimulus packages to help the country recover from the pandemic. However, many of these packages have been criticized for being inadequate or poorly targeted.

- The pandemic has also led to a decline in the country’s stock market, which has had a significant impact on the country’s economy.

- The government has also launched several economic stimulus packages to help the country recover from the pandemic. However, many of these packages have been criticized for being inadequate or poorly targeted.
Nepal’s sky can be this clean every day

The pandemic has shown air pollution can be reduced, we just have to do it without the socio-economic cost.

Our ATR-72 broke through the thick smog at about 3,000m after takeoff from Kathmandu. An ocean of grey-brown pollution blanketed the ‘Tarai, and stretched right across to the southern horizon. Out of the right-hand window, the Annapurnas rose above the carpet of smog, with Mt Machapuchare appearing like a black pyramid devoid of snow.’ That paragraph is from my column in this paper from January 1991.

Even until February 2020, we believed it would take a miracle to get rid of the appalling pollution that blanketed the Indo-Gangetic plains. But it happened. NASA released satellite data from March 2017, 2019 and compared them to those in March 2020. The NO2 concentration over Lahore, New Delhi, Kanchi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Dhaka had reduced by between 28-56% on average. After Nepal went into lockdown in March, Kathmandu’s air cleared dramatically. This newspaper printed pictures of Mt Everest visible from Kathmandu Valley, residents in Jalandhar in the Punjab plains saw the Bhabulalhar range of Himachal Pradesh, and Kangchenjunga was visible from Kathmandu. An ocean of grey-brown pollution blanketed from Kathmandu. An ocean of grey-brown pollution blanketed from Kathmandu. An ocean of grey-brown pollution blanketed from Kathmandu. An ocean of grey-brown pollution blanketed from Kathmandu. An ocean of grey-brown pollution blanketed from Kathmandu.

This week, a sudden change in wind direction swept away thick smoke from crop residue-burning and other industrial and vehicular pollution that had enveloped the Ganga plains most of October. It was like a Dussera from 50 years ago, with crystal clear skies and one end of Nepal visible from the other. The Nepali social web was full of photos of Mt Makalu visible from Rajpur, of Mt Manaslu from Nawalparasi, and Mt Everest from Kirtipur. However, the lower concentration of particulate matter and pollutant gases in the air were not outcomes of effective implementation of environment-friendly public policy or innovation. So were they a result of voluntary changes in societal behaviour. They came about because of social containment measures to stem the spread of the novel coronavirus.

Strict lockdowns forced vehicles off the roads for months, industries and the service sector shut down, reducing sources of most pollution. But this came at enormous cost for economies worldwide. Millions of jobs and livelihoods across South Asia were lost. Migrant labourers, domestic helpers, cleaners, drivers, guards, the construction and factories, crop harvesting, brick kilns – all trudged back to their villages in the biggest movement of people in the Subcontinent since Partition in 1947.

Over the past decades, our countries have invested billions on social safety nets, in food security, safe drinking water supply, primary health care. Yet, at a time of greatest need, those most affected by the emergency had no access to food, water, medical care. The plight of migrants during the pandemic reflect a deeply divided socio-political landscape and failure of governance.

It is a warning that we must transit to more frugal ways of living, minimising our environmental footprints, and engendering both structural and behavioural changes for a greener, healthier, and more inclusive future. Before the lockdown, pollution levels exceeded permissible levels, and mitigation received only lip service. There was a stark dichotomy between public concern about the health impact of pollution and state intervention to address it. The main reasons were procedural lapses, inadequate regulation and poor policy implementation. In short, the failure of politics to improve governance. The crisis has shown that there must be more accountability.

Increased investments in clean energy sources guided by creation of new jobs, mitigation of air pollution and balancing the natural ecosystems should be cornerstones of the new order. Action to stem air pollution will not just remove a persistent urban hazard, but also reduce the spread of Covid-19 into the natural environment. Studies have shown that dirty air worsens pre-existing medical conditions, and can also elevate coronavirus risk.

The good news is the sources of air pollution are broadly known: vehicular and aircraft emissions, dust from roads, excavation, debris of demolished buildings, construction sites, brick kilns, setting fire to crop residue burning, open burning of plastic and solid waste, inefficient hospital incinerators, industries, crushers and mixers, asphalt plants and metal and automobile repair units, poor fuel quality and shoddy pollution test of vehicles.

Each can and must be tackled systematically at source. Honest efforts are needed to overcome procedural lapses, make regulation effective, and enforce compliance to policies. In 2018, long before the pandemic hit, the mayors of Katmandu Valley got together to express a collective commitment to curb air pollution.

The pandemic lockdowns have shown us it can be done, we just have to find a way to do it without the socio-economic cost.

The benefits will be enormous – for public health of hundreds of millions of people, reduction of the region’s huge carbon footprint, and even in slowing down the melting of Himalayan glaciers because of the deposition of soot particles.

Many years from now, when Covid-19 becomes just another flu and these mitigation efforts start yielding results, looking out of an aircraft window on a winter morning flight westbound from Kathmandu, we may finally be able to see the Ganga plains and the foothills of the Annapurna from the air, just like we did during the lockdown.
Nepal building a highway to Everest
New road linking Lukla to rest of the country will transform region, not all of it for the better

Surendra Phuyal
in Solukhumbu

Excavators are clawing through sheer cliff faces, rocks tumble down to the Dudh Kosi below, and once in a while the sound of dynamite echoes in the gorge.

A new road linking the town of Chaurikharka just below Lukla to the rest of the country is due to open by December 2022, and work is going on despite the pandemic.

Although the road will not enter the Sagarmatha National Park which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, it will make trekking and climbing in the Everest region more accessible. And it will turn Lukla airfield largely redundant, while locals fear an erosion of the region’s Sherpa culture, architecture and lifestyle.

On the Chinese side of Mt Everest, there is a highway from Lhasa right up to North Base Camp below the Rongbuk Glacier at 5,200m. Since 2016, it has become vital to transport goods and people for expeditions to the world’s highest mountain from the north.

The Khumbu is already linked through a 277km highway to Phaplu of Solukhumbu district, which is a two-day trek below Lukla. Work started on the 77km road linking Phaplu to Chaurikharka six years ago, but progress has been slow due to difficult terrain, delays due to the 2015 earthquake and blockade, and lack of money.

This means that for at least the next two years, trekkers, climbers and local people will either have to trek from the nearest roadhead near Phaplu or Jiri-Shivalaya-Bamti Bhunder in Sankhuwasabha district, as so many do, take a 30-minute flight to Lukla from Kathmandu.

Like all infrastructure projects in Nepal, completion of this road is delayed. Khumbu municipality has run out of money for the remaining 24km dirt track to Chaurikharka from Thamdada.

The completion of the road was the pet project of the former Chair of Khumbu Rural Municipality, late Nima Dorje Sherpa who died in June. He believed that connecting Phaplu to Lukla would further lift living standards, bring down prices, and reduce the drudgery of his Sherpa people.

It’s still our top priority project,” says Lhakpa Tseri Sherpa of Khumbu Municipality, adding that construction has been delayed somewhat by the Covid-19 crisis which has also devastated the region’s trekking and climbing income this year.

Khumbu used to earn Rs200 million a year just from trekking and climbing fees, not counting what visitors paid for lodging, food and portering. This year, the income is down to Rs60 million.

“It is because of this loss of income that the construction of this last 24km stretch slowed down,” explained Rinod Bhattarai, Chief Administrative Officer of Khumbu Municipality. “Now there is hardly any money to complete the project. We are struggling.”

The Municipality has decided to open Khumbu for trekking and climbing even through nine Covid-19 cases were detected in Namche Bazaar last month, and it could have spread. Local people have stopped trekkers from going above Pangboche on the Everest Trail.

South of Lukla on Thamdada, bulldozers are at work on the track, while flights to and from Lukla buzz roundabout all morning. The road alignment then drops precipitously to the river and Sukhe help pad below Lukla, before a final ascent to Chaurikharka.

Bhattarai is not giving up, he says: “The Province’s government has assured financial support for this project, and other officials and MPs, too, have said that the work need not stop. So, we are hoping that we can make up for lost time.”

Not everyone in Khumbu is happy with the road. They think it will spoil the region’s pristine beauty and fragile culture, as has happened when roads have reached other parts of remote Nepal in recent years.

Sonam Gyelmo Sherpa from Namche, who is chair of the Sagarmatha National Park Buffer Zone Management Committee, says the economy has to be balanced with ecology.

“The Road will enter the boundary of the national park from Sukhe and it will surely have some adverse impact on local culture and nature,” he said. “But since the Khumbu is remote and needs a road we are trying to ensure that the IIA is carefully done and its recommendations are strictly adhered to. It will be a big challenge for us. We are currently discussing how we can mitigate damage.”

However, there are also strong voices in support of the road. A cylinder of cooking gas that costs Rs1,500 in Kathmandu is Rs15,000 in Gokyo or Lobuje in Upper Khumbu. The cylinders have to be taken on a 12 hour truck ride to Phaplu, then transferred to mule trains that take several days to get up to Namche.

Sugar, salt and other food items cost several times more in Kathmandu.

“The road will surely make our life easier,” says Ang Jangbu Sherpa who runs a lodge in Dolap in the Everest Trail. “It will encourage more Nepalis to come trekking, and make certain goods such as cooking gas more affordable.”

Says Ang Rita Sherpa of Lukla’s Number Hotel: “Even if there is a road, most foreign trekkers are not going to travel to Lukla on a rough 14 hour road, but it will raise living standards in Khumbu.”

“With careful planning to reduce environmental impact and maintain the quality of the trekking experience, tourism in Upper Khumbu can benefit from the new vehicular road access to Chaurikharka,” says Sunita Miyahara, Managing Director of Hotel Everest View.

“Besides the lack of money, the road has several other terrain-related hurdles. A drone bridge need to be built across the Dudh Kosi with a big one in Orlang Ghat that will cost Rs2 million.”

Locals lament that despite the central government bragging about Mt Everest and Khumbu as an adventure destination and collecting revenue from fees, it has not chipped in for the road project.

“The federal government has done very little to help us knock on doors of various ministries,” said the Municipality’s Lhakpa Tseri Sherpa.

Locals are hoping that even if the 10m wide highway is not fully completed, the track will allow trucks and jeeps to negotiate the final stretch by 2022.

In Kathmandu, Infrastructure Minister Basanta Kumar Nembang told Nepal Times that the federal government was committed to the project: “The Phaplu-Lukla road is one of the plans we have given high priority even in this pandemic situation. That road project will go ahead as demanded by local representatives.”

Whatever the arguments for and against the road, one thing it will do is remove the need for travellers to be stuck, sometimes for weeks in Lukla, due to bad weather.
China and Vietnam must markets. Whale massacres in Japan, The Gadhimai sacrifice in Nepal. There are so many other forms of abuse of animals that can be stopped more urgently. I agree with Lisa Choegyal that elephant safaris in Nepal are much more lenient, and many livelihoods depend on.

Speaking for elephants

Lisa Choegyal's column 'The Elephant Dilemma', 4 October 2020

As a group of animal welfare organisations we have to disagree with Lisa Choegyal's stand on elephant safaris. Just because elephants are part of Nepal’s heritage does not mean traditions should not change. Many outdated practices have been abandoned, including widow sacriﬁce and child labour, because they were against the ethos of the time. In any case, even if elephant tourism stopped today, elephants would remain an integral part of Nepal's heritage.

Just because elephants in Nepal are not used in 'alien' environments such as beaches and temples, does not mean that Chitwan’s tourist safaris are ‘natural’. Most elephats live in ‘unnatural’ shelters, usually a simple structure of zinc sheets with 4 poles. They are tied 24/7 unless taken for a ride. With a lack of fresh greens, their diet is ‘unnatural’. Even the carrying of four tourist and a motabiot is ‘unnatural’; even though elephants look invincible, science says that their skeleton is not designed to carry great weight on top of their spines.

Just because of a concern for loss of tourism, elephant riding and bathing does not need to be continued. The quick growth of non-leisure tourism and bathing does not need to be stopped.”

Nepal introduced many humane options for tourists. At present we need all parties to save Nepal’s precious wildlife and the country’s tourism industry. The sooner we join hands, the better.

Animal Nepal
Animal Rights Club
Association Moey - Helping Captive Elephants
Elephant Aid International
Help Animals India
Nepal Elephant Walk Sanctuary
People’s Alliance for Nature Nepal

Stand Up 4 Elephants

Domesticated elephants play a major role in providing employment and economic opportunities to the local people through tourism, and also provide invaluable help to conservationists in researching and protecting Nepal’s wild places.

Hometa Mithra

Cruefully to animals is a worldwide phenomenon. Dogs caged in 'unnatural' shelters, usually a simple structure of zinc sheets with 4 poles. They are tied 24/7 unless taken for a ride. With a lack of fresh greens, their diet is ‘unnatural’. Even the carrying of four tourist and a motabiot is ‘unnatural’; even though elephants look invincible, science says that their skeleton is not designed to carry great weight on top of their spines.

Just because of a concern for loss of tourism, elephant riding and bathing does not need to be continued. The quick growth of non-leisure tourism and bathing does not need to be stopped.

Virtual Photo Kathmandu

Due to the Covid-19 crisis, Nepal's premier international photo festival will be held virtually over the whole of next year from 3 December. First-time Photo Kathmandu events have been month-long long-festivals in which Nepal itself turned into a stage for an explosion of the visual arts. The festival is a part of a larger continuum of image-making, research and cultural engagements at photo.circle and Nepal Photo Library, and has devised two strategies for the upcoming festival: time and place.

We came one in two years for a month, create a momentum and disappear, so we decided to stretch the festival over a longer period and create a conversation over the whole year. " says Photo Kathmandu’s co-founder Nupuraya Saraswati Kalekapa.

Photo Kathmandu will collaborate with newspapers and come with print exhibitions for artists and photographers. The opening week of the festival will have a series of portfolio reviews and will include professionals from all over the world. People can sign up for a free 30-minute session. Along with that, there will be artist talks and panel.

Irena Tokasovski online
Producer and distributor of films, including Kendy Puntum, 2012 documentary ‘I and the stars’, will be screening a series of four masterclasses on film production at Nepal’s first film and music festival’s opening week. The festival will go virtual, and screened 30 short, feature and documentary films from nine countries, including Sri Lanka and Nepal. 30 short, feature and documentary films.

Nandita Ghosh's column 'The Elephant Dilemma', 4 October 2020

Nandita Ghosh argues that people should take on a new meaning, ‘tamed’ in Sri Lanka and Thailand, is unconscionable. It is permissible that human beings in countries that practice the Buddha's ethical compassion should be treating sentient beings in this way. In fact, elephants in the wild have a sophisticated family structure, respond to stress just like human beings and are highly confirmed. Elephants belong to the wild, and the ‘elephant safaris’ should take on a new meaning, venturing into the jungle to observe them in their natural habitat.

Nandita Ghosh

Ms Choegyal argues that people 'should not treat the issue as a lost cause'. Instead sharp objects, employ kindness and positive reinforcement. Instead of cruel mistreatment of elephants in the tourism industry, we should take on a new meaning, ‘tamed’ in Sri Lanka and Thailand, is unconscionable. It is permissible that human beings in countries that practice the Buddha’s ethical compassion should be treating sentient beings in this way. In fact, elephants in the wild have a sophisticated family structure, respond to stress just like human beings and are highly confirmed. Elephants belong to the wild, and the ‘elephant safaris’ should take on a new meaning, venturing into the jungle to observe them in their natural habitat.

Nandita Ghosh

Nandita Ghosh's column 'The Elephant Dilemma', 4 October 2020

Ms Choegyal argues that people 'should not treat the issue as a lost cause'. Instead sharp objects, employ kindness and positive reinforcement. Instead of cruel mistreatment of elephants in the tourism industry, we should take on a new meaning, ‘tamed’ in Sri Lanka and Thailand, is unconscionable. It is permissible that human beings in countries that practice the Buddha’s ethical compassion should be treating sentient beings in this way. In fact, elephants in the wild have a sophisticated family structure, respond to stress just like human beings and are highly confirmed. Elephants belong to the wild, and the ‘elephant safaris’ should take on a new meaning, venturing into the jungle to observe them in their natural habitat.

Nandita Ghosh

Ms Choegyal argues that people 'should not treat the issue as a lost cause'. Instead sharp objects, employ kindness and positive reinforcement. Instead of cruel mistreatment of elephants in the tourism industry, we should take on a new meaning, ‘tamed’ in Sri Lanka and Thailand, is unconscionable. It is permissible that human beings in countries that practice the Buddha’s ethical compassion should be treating sentient beings in this way. In fact, elephants in the wild have a sophisticated family structure, respond to stress just like human beings and are highly confirmed. Elephants belong to the wild, and the ‘elephant safaris’ should take on a new meaning, venturing into the jungle to observe them in their natural habitat.

Nandita Ghosh

Ms Choegyal argues that people 'should not treat the issue as a lost cause'. Instead sharp objects, employ kindness and positive reinforcement. Instead of cruel mistreatment of elephants in the tourism industry, we should take on a new meaning, ‘tamed’ in Sri Lanka and Thailand, is unconscionable. It is permissible that human beings in countries that practice the Buddha’s ethical compassion should be treating sentient beings in this way. In fact, elephants in the wild have a sophisticated family structure, respond to stress just like human beings and are highly confirmed. Elephants belong to the wild, and the ‘elephant safaris’ should take on a new meaning, venturing into the jungle to observe them in their natural habitat.

Nandita Ghosh

Ms Choegyal argues that people 'should not treat the issue as a lost cause'. Instead sharp objects, employ kindness and positive reinforcement. Instead of cruel mistreatment of elephants in the tourism industry, we should take on a new meaning, ‘tamed’ in Sri Lanka and Thailand, is unconscionable. It is permissible that human beings in countries that practice the Buddha’s ethical compassion should be treating sentient beings in this way. In fact, elephants in the wild have a sophisticated family structure, respond to stress just like human beings and are highly confirmed. Elephants belong to the wild, and the ‘elephant safaris’ should take on a new meaning, venturing into the jungle to observe them in their natural habitat.

Nandita Ghosh

Ms Choegyal argues that people 'should not treat the issue as a lost cause'. Instead sharp objects, employ kindness and positive reinforcement. Instead of cruel mistreatment of elephants in the tourism industry, we should take on a new meaning, ‘tamed’ in Sri Lanka and Thailand, is unconscionable. It is permissible that human beings in countries that practice the Buddha’s ethical compassion should be treating sentient beings in this way. In fact, elephants in the wild have a sophisticated family structure, respond to stress just like human beings and are highly confirmed. Elephants belong to the wild, and the ‘elephant safaris’ should take on a new meaning, venturing into the jungle to observe them in their natural habitat.

Nandita Ghosh

Ms Choegyal argues that people 'should not treat the issue as a lost cause'. Instead sharp objects, employ kindness and positive reinforcement. Instead of cruel mistreatment of elephants in the tourism industry, we should take on a new meaning, ‘tamed’ in Sri Lanka and Thailand, is unconscionable. It is permissible that human beings in countries that practice the Buddha’s ethical compassion should be treating sentient beings in this way. In fact, elephants in the wild have a sophisticated family structure, respond to stress just like human beings and are highly confirmed. Elephants belong to the wild, and the ‘elephant safaris’ should take on a new meaning, venturing into the jungle to observe them in their natural habitat.
Mt Everest Diaries

In 2008, Shaller Basnet, called Mt Everest and the pages of the Sweet Camel Women Travel which have traveled the world. The first-person group of the highest peak in each continent. Shaller who is a mountaineer and a comedian is sharing many funny aspects of his life adventure

KIMFF

Every year in December, Kathmandu’s International Film Festival (KIMFF) brings a plethora of movies from across the world. While the festival has always demanded physical presence in the past, this year keeping in mind the Covid-19 visit, the festival is going virtual with free film viewing from their website. The 2020 edition will have 18 films to watch.

Otaku Next

For the first time ever in 2017, OtakuNext, which began the popular cosplay event in Nepal, is going online. The event will be divided into eight segments - Cosplay showcase, chronicles, and G&H among others. To participate in the event, visit their various social media channels.

Boudha market

Buy fresh from the farms and vegetables, baled goods, and other delicious goods. Support local products and fabrics, and follow various distance guidelines.

Sundays, 8 am – 12 pm, Uppula Cafe, Boudha.

Cafe de Tukche

Valleys, Chef special, and get authentic Tukche food, elevated from Cafe de Tukche. Order the Tukche Khatta plat, or take a break from the sun by the Thakali Dhoi, or indulge in a platter of delicious offerings, or just have a glass of wine or a cup of coffee.

The Workshop Eatery

Head to Facebook to choose the Workshop Eatery’s delicious雾霾 ginger chicken and lemongrass, and lemon. Try the cocktails, which include the classic BBQ chicken sandwich, or get the assorted box of burgers.

Our Pick

The South Korean web series – Kingdom set in medieval Korea during the Joseon period, three royals receive a letter summoning them to the capital. One of the royals is a powerful, ruthless general, and the other two are his descendants. The sets have been designed to bring the Readers to the story of the diverse characters and the epic battles that follow.

BINGE MODE

Episodes of this pop-culture podcast produced by The Ringer give detailed analysis of episodes of this pop-culture podcast. Episodes of The King: Eternal Monarch are available on Stitcher and Apple podcasts.

Executive

Discover cultural heritage from 3,000 museums, galleries, libraries and archives across Europe. Head online to read about historical places, watch exhibitions, photograph exhibits, ancient manuscripts and more.

POETRY FOUNDATION

Discover all things poetry. Browse through collections of classic and contemporary poems, readings, poetry news and the entire 100-year archive of Poetry Magazine.

Haadi Biryani

Casing is quick and easy. Biryani Haadi is the place to go to order from. Try the deliciously spiced biryani with a rice of your choice which came in clay pots that enhance the dining experience.

Erma Restaurant

Erma Restaurant offers an exquisite fine dining experience with chef-curated continental dishes. Try the cream of lentil soup, vegetable saslik, and the Erma House burger.

Otaku Next

For the first time ever in 2017, OtakuNext, which began the popular cosplay event in Nepal, is going online. The event will be divided into eight segments - Cosplay showcase, chronicles, and G&H among others. To participate in the event, visit their various social media channels.

Boudha market

Buy fresh from the farms and vegetables, baled goods, and other delicious goods. Support local products and fabrics, and follow various distance guidelines.

Sundays, 8 am – 12 pm, Uppula Cafe, Boudha.

Cafe de Tukche

Valleys, Chef special, and get authentic Tukche food, elevated from Cafe de Tukche. Order the Tukche Khatta plat, or take a break from the sun by the Thakali Dhoi, or indulge in a platter of delicious offerings, or just have a glass of wine or a cup of coffee.

The Workshop Eatery

Head to Facebook to choose the Workshop Eatery’s delicious雾霾 ginger chicken and lemongrass, and lemon. Try the cocktails, which include the classic BBQ chicken sandwich, or get the assorted box of burgers.

Our Pick

The South Korean web series – Kingdom set in medieval Korea during the Joseon period, three royals receive a letter summoning them to the capital. One of the royals is a powerful, ruthless general, and the other two are his descendants. The sets have been designed to bring the Readers to the story of the diverse characters and the epic battles that follow.
Heat map of Nepal’s Covid-19 hotspots

Cell phone data tracking reveals high risk areas because of the movement of people during Dasain

Sonia Awale

A ny other year, up to 2.5 million people leave Kathmandu Valley for their home districts during the Dasain festival. This year, according to police estimates, it was only 200,000. Constant warnings by the Health Ministry and the experts to celebrate this year’s Dasain-Tihar-Chhat in place seems to have worked. However, those who went home left Kathmandu Valley where the pandemic has been raging for the past month, with more than 60% of new daily cases nationwide. The fear is that many took the virus with them and spread it across the country.

Now, a new study of the movement of people during Dasain by tracking mobile telephone geolocation gives precise information where most people from Kathmandu went for the festival, and where the risk of Covid-19 clusters are highest.

The Covid-19 Crisis Management Center (CCMC) in collaboration with telecommunication service providers Nepal Telecom and Ncell, have analyzed the movement of at least 100,000 people who left for various districts two weeks before the start of Dasain by tracking their cellphone devices.

The data shows that the highest number of people left Kathmandu for Bhiluki and Namobuddha of Kavre, Thaba and Manahari municipalities of Makawanpur, Melamchi and Simkot of Sindhupalchok, Parwanipur of Bara, Bhanpur of Chitwan and Lekhnath of Kaski districts.

The CCMC now has red flagged high risk areas on its heat map. The agency has asked local authorities to be vigilant. The CCMC and Health Ministry seem to be working at cross-purposes and undermine each other. However, those who went home temporarily settled in the capital.

To prove this point, on Thursday it was found that more than 400,000 people left Kathmandu in the week following the disaster, while thousands of quake-displaced people temporarily settled in the capital.

At that time it was found that the maximum number went to earthquake-affected districts to check-up on families, with the eastern Tarai districts being the destination for others. The numbers going to western Nepal in 2015 was negligible.

To understand the movement pattern of people for effective aid distribution, Ncell collaborated at that time with Swedish organisation Flowminder to make use of the cellular network data for earthquake response. In this crisis, areas identified as ‘very high risk’ and ‘high risk’ of Covid-19 infection because of maximum human mobility and of late have been blaming each other for Covid-19 response are at loggerheads, consumed by turf battles, questions of responsibility, and of late have been blaming each other for the dramatic spread of Covid-19 across Nepal,

In fact, in July-August when Birganj was reeling under a Covid-19 crisis, the CCMC had identified Kathmandu Valley at high risk of infection because of maximum human movement should be prioritised in terms of contact tracing and follow stringent safety measures if we are to bring the infection under control, say experts. But the CCMC and Health Ministry seem to be working at cross-purposes and undermining each other.

As of 5 November, Nepal has a total of 185,874 confirmed Covid-19 cases with 36,514 of them active infections. The recovery rate is 79.9%. The total number of new Covid-19 cases which dropped during Dasain because testing centres were closed for the festival, is steadily picking up. Public health experts predicted that the cases will rise as the backlog is tested, as well as because of the rise in infections due to family movement.

To prove this point, on Thursday the total numbers testing positive was back to the prep-Dasain level with 19,347 new cases, 3,058 of them in Kathmandu Valley. Some 3,430 patients were discharged in the last 24 hours. There were 18 more deaths. The recovery rate is 79.9%.

Due to people’s movement from Kathmandu Valley to other Municipalities for Dasain

**Municipalities with Covid-19 Transmission Risk**

Due to people’s movement from Kathmandu Valley to other Municipalities for Dasain

**Outmigration from Kathmandu in week after the 2015 earthquake**

**Transmission Risk**

Due to people’s movement from Kathmandu Valley to other Municipalities for Dasain

**Heat map of Nepal’s Covid-19 hotspots**

**Municipalities with Covid-19 Transmission Risk**

Due to people’s movement from Kathmandu Valley to other Municipalities for Dasain

**Outmigration from Kathmandu in week after the 2015 earthquake**

**Transmission Risk**

Due to people’s movement from Kathmandu Valley to other Municipalities for Dasain

**Heat map of Nepal’s Covid-19 hotspots**

**Municipalities with Covid-19 Transmission Risk**

Due to people’s movement from Kathmandu Valley to other Municipalities for Dasain

**Outmigration from Kathmandu in week after the 2015 earthquake**
A tourist trip to Chitwan National Park usually includes interaction with the Tharu community. But most visitors do not get to see the region’s lesser known indigenous people, the Bote. The Tharu people, known for their unique culture and artistic, decorative manifestations on walls, verandahs and household items, and while the Tharu are known as the people of the forest, the Bote are the river people.

They mostly live along the East Rapti and Narayani rivers bordering Chitwan National Park, although there are some Bote settlements in Coppia, Tanahu and Lamjung. The Bote are one of the least known and dwindling indigenous groups in Nepal. According to the 2011 census, there are only 2,819 speaking the Bot language as a mother tongue.

The Chitwan National Park, although it is best in the Bote way of life. However, the intelligence could combine their traditions with uplift their socio-economic status culture, heritage. Programs to their subsistence lifestyles without generation can help Rishiram Bote working together, and they approach bonds. Community ties are still not been able to erode their filial their adversities and poverty, have have been regulated with strict policies that generate better income. The Chitwan National Park, which restricted their fishing tradition, has given some of them auto-rickshaws under an instalment scheme as an alternative to their traditional livelihood.

But Rishiram’s family has stayed on, and is one of the few that still make a living from fishing. He could not continue his studies as he had to become the provider of the family from a young age. He encourages his own children to get an education and pursue the profession of fishing.

The four children and Pashum’s two sons want to continue their profession, but they are yet unsure of their professional goals. Their school timings do not allow them to go fishing with their fathers, hence their interest in the traditional occupation of their community has waned. The girls go to school where they learn about English and Mathematics. They also help in the housework. They speak a smattering of Hindi, thanks to a photographer, Sravasti Ghosh Dastidar.

The transformation of the Bote lives, their adversities and poverty, have not been able to erode their tribal bonds. Community ties are still strong. Bote families find dignity in working together, and they approach life with plenty of smiles and pride in who they are.

As with other communities in Nepal, change is rapid and relentless. Literacy and income generation can help Rishiram Bote and others lift them out of their challenging socio-economic status by changing their subsistence lifestyles without eroding too much of their pristine culture, heritage. Programs to uplift their socio-economic status involving tourism and conservation could become a catalyst for change with modernity, and help preserve what is best in the Bote way of life.
Chitwan can accommodate more tigers

A new study says Chitwan and Parsa National Parks have enough prey for a larger tiger population, roughly one deer a week, and concluded that there were enough prey species to meet the tiger's demand.

The common conclusion of these two findings is that the parks can hold at least 175 tigers. If suitable habitat is developed in the intermediate zone and other corridors, this number could increase further," says Acharya.

The area of Chitwan National Park (652.68 sq km) and the adjacent Parsa (627.39 sq km) is a vast stretch of tall tropical forest stretching from the Inner Tarai Chitwan Valley to the Tarai. Even though the same area of Chitwan, it cannot carry proportionately the same number of tigers because of a lower prey density of chital deer.

There are 52 chitals per sq km in Chitwan, but only 14 in Parsa because of the same area of forest, lakes, ponds, rivers and grasslands than the drier Parsa.

At the Global Tiger Summit held in St Petersburg in 2010, tiger range countries pledged to double their tiger populations by 2022. Nepal achieved the target in 2018 with 235 adult tigers, the first country to do so with 235 adult tigers. In the country to do so.

This was a remarkable achievement considering that there were only 121 tigers in 2009. Nepal’s target is to reach 250 in the next two years, and given the new findings for Chitwan and Parsa, the country is on track to do so.
Sonia Awale

Up until two months ago, health experts were perplexed as to why mostly younger people were dying of Covid-19 in Nepal and other South Asian countries. In Europe and North America, it was mainly the elderly who were victims.

In fact, age-wise breakdown of coronavirus mortality shows that the elderly were already getting the least priority from the state. They are increasingly even within families. Physically fragile, suffering memory loss, or lonely seniors are politically ignored and socially ostracised.

"We know senior citizens are at the risk, focus should have been on saving them during this crisis," says Krishna Murali Gautam, social scientist and founder of Ageing Nepal that has added over 40 years of life expectancy, a dramatic public health achievement. But how well have we planned those added years or realised its potential? "Gautam asks.

To be sure, the elderly were already the most vulnerable, but now the pandemic has added to all the pre-existing problems they faced: collapse of joint families, children and grandchildren abroad for studies or work, economic hardships and expensive health care.

Older people are now more isolated than ever within their homes and communities: they cannot go out and mingle within a limited circle of friends and relatives, visit temples or take part in community bhajans and other religious activities. To make matters worse, they have been terrorised by the daily television headlines that highlight the death toll. Many are now showing psychosomatic symptoms of coronavirus without actually being infected out of sheer anxiety. In others, mental health illnesses have become an increasing problem. Those on medication for depression and dementia are suffering relapse due to additional stress, says health experts.

Gautam, who was recently awarded the UNESCO Literacy Prize for his activism on behalf of Nepal’s elderly, says: “Most seniors are either illiterate or at least digitally illiterate. A much more effective option would have been to utilise our great network of female community health volunteers spread across the country or even cooperatives to spread awareness about Covid-19 among the elderly.”

Lockdowns in the initial phase of the crisis to contain coronavirus added to the problem. Old age homes soon ran out of daily essential supplies and donations they relied on. The elderly at these care institutes also need regular health check-ups as well as stock of medicines for various conditions.

Rosha Shrestha of Harmony Care Home in Bambat worked early on to prepare for the coming crisis. In January, as the country was recording the first case of Covid-19, Shrestha started looking for an alternative should an outbreak occur and worked meticulously to develop her own protocols to keep the virus at bay. Harmony is now segregated into red, yellow and green zones for all people and materials entering inside or going out of the home, everything has to be disinfected. Shrestha who is a nurse by profession also equally focused on uplifting the moral of her family of senior citizens as well as in enriching their diet, using traditional home recipes.

As a result, none of the occupants have symptoms and have not had to visit a hospital in the last nine months, unlike in the past when they needed to be hospitalised every once in a while for their different ailments.

Shrestha has also trained other nursing homes and regularly consults elderly people over the phone, trying to dispel the notion that Covid-19 is catastrophic, that it is like any other epidemics of the past, not without casualties but also not something we can’t overcome with safety measures.

“Despite these positive steps, I know that I have to save my older people for at least another year or two so that they won’t have to visit hospital for any reason, which is now unsafe and also unavailable,” says Shrestha. “It was a grave mistake on the government’s part to allow all hospitals to admit Covid-19 patients instead of segregating a dedicated facility. Where do I take my 90-year-old man if they fall sick now?”

With increasingly more youth migrating abroad for jobs and further study, there is now a dire need of geriatric caregivers in Nepal. In fact, even as Nepalis take up elderly care jobs in Israel and Japan, they might be needed more at home in near future.

Since the 1950s, Nepal has added over 40 years of life expectancy, a dramatic public health achievement. But how well have we planned those added years or realised its potential? says Gautam: “It’s ironic that on the face of Covid-19 crisis, we have more or less abandoned the elderly when this was what we strived to achieve for so long. The good news is it is still not too late to care for them and their needs, especially this winter when the risks go up.”

AGE-WISE BREAKDOWN OF COVID-19 FATALITIES IN NEPAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>No. of Deaths</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-50</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61-70</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71-80</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-90</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91-100</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 100</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Health Ministry