Prime Minister K P Oli is known to play brinkmanship. He only relents when he is cornered, and even then a truce is only to buy himself more time.

Ironically, this was exactly the tactic used by Oli’s party rival Pushpa Kamal Dahal when he was still Chairman Prachanda – the Maoists used every ceasefire period to regroup before launching another offensive.

In the past year, Oli has been using every trick in the book: carrots and sticks, divide-and-rule, false promises and feint attacks to counter challenges against his leadership of the party and government from the Dahal faction.

This time, too, after a Dasain ceasefire, Dahal and his allies made their move: piling pressure on Oli to call a secretariat meeting of the Nepal Communist Party (NCP) and giving him a written 48-hour ultimatum. Oli ignored it, and Dahal gave him an extension. Just before that deadline expired, Oli made his counter-move on Wednesday – calling the meeting himself for 12 November 4pm in Baluwatar.

Oli had been publicly warning of a plot to oust him, and on Wednesday during an inspection of the Arun III project site in Sankhuwasabha, he assured the crowd that rumours of his political demise were exaggerated. On his helicopter ride back, however, he seems to have decided to call the secretariat meeting.

Oli has often threatened to split the party if Dahal and his ally Madhav K Nepal pushed near the edge. In case they did not believe him, Oli recessed Parliament, threatened an ordinance to allow a party split, and re-registered his previous UML at the Election Commission.

In the past two weeks, things had been deadlocked. The Dahal faction kept insisting on a Secretariat meeting to thrash out the power struggle within the party once and for all. The Oli group kept threatening to boycott any meeting it did not call, and not adhering to decisions taken in its absence. But why has a Secretariat meeting taken such inordinate importance?

“All we want is for the Secretariat to sort out the distrust between the two leaders which has paralysed the country,” said NCP Standing Committee member and Dahal loyalist, Surendra Pandey.

Meanwhile former speaker Subhas Nembang, who is close to Oli, says the prime minister is willing to call a Secretariat meeting at any time, but it has to be done as per rules. “He has always been ready to have a meeting any time,” Nembang said.

The previous Oli-Dahal ceasefire involved an agreement between the two to sort out their job descriptions: Oli serving out the rest of his term as prime minister, and Dahal handling party affairs. But this truce soon broke down after Oli unilaterally appointed three new ministers and ambassadors last month. Dahal and Nepal felt insulted.

Dahal is expected to raise this strongly at Friday’s meeting of the nine-member Secretariat in which he has a majority. But one cannot underestimate Oli’s ability to pull rabbits out his hat by wooing Dahal loyalists with lollipop Cabinet positions.

“We can’t stand this constant irritation in the party, every week there is some distraction. We got the MCC, they stopped it, we tried to do the reshuffle, they had objections. How long will this go on?” said one angry member of the Oli team.

Oli has been making fresh overtures to his former UML colleague Madhav Nepal to convince him that Dahal will dump him once his usefulness is over. He has sent mediators to talk to Nepal, but so far it looks like the dissidents are united.

Said Surendra Pandey: “The main issue is whether the prime minister can make decisions on his own, or whether he should listen to the party. If that is sorted out, there will be peace. If not, anything can happen.”

Mukesh Pokhrel
A slowwash in the world, Nepal’s media is consumed by the US elections and its aftermath, including Donald Trump’s refusal to concede. But the lack of interest in Kathmandu to another election at least happened right across our southern border in the Indian state of Bihar is puzzling.

Unlike in the past when there used to be both capturing and counting of dozens, the voting and counting in Bihar has been much smoother than in America – all these went largely unnoticed in Nepal.

Bihar may be a state within India, but if it was a country it would be the second most populous nation, having more than ten times more people than Nepal. It may no longer be even bigger if Jharkhand had not been carved out two decades ago. More than 78 million Biharis are eligible to vote, and there is a 55% turnout in these phases of the state assembly elections despite the pandemic.

India has recorded 8.6 million confirmed cases of coronavirus, and there have been 1.20 million deaths. Biharis have more than 220,000 cases, but the number of deaths so far is in the same ball park as Nepal’s- 108. Although the daily caseload has decreased in Bihar, the informal sector. Bihar’s development in the education, health and education also lift living standards in the borderlands of Nepal.

Bihar is a lot of Bed and Breakfasts within India (even Nepal) for having poor development indicators. Kathmandu’s airports are less than a day’s drive from the neighboring South Indian states even though its Joghani and Rastriya checkpoints handle most of Nepal’s trade.

India is also important for Bihar: most of Nepal’s rivers empty into the Ganges in Bihar, and an estimated 200,000 Biharis work in Nepal’s construction industry, and the informal sector. Bihar’s development in infrastructure, health and education also lift living standards in the borderlands of Nepal.

Kathmandu should be more interested in elections in a neighbouring Indian state than the United States.

Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal, is a city with a significant Indian influence, especially in terms of culture and language. India is Nepal’s largest trading partner, and the two countries share a rich history of trade and cultural exchange. India has a significant presence in Nepal, with many Nepalis working in India, and many India companies doing business in Nepal.

However, the recent election results in Bihar, India have caught the attention of Kathmandu, particularly with the win of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The BJP is a political party that is largely Hindu nationalist in its beliefs. It has been in power in several states in India, including Bihar, where it has been in power for several years.

The BJP’s win in Bihar is significant for a few reasons. First, Bihar is one of India’s most populous states, with a population of over 100 million. Second, the BJP has been in power for several years in Bihar, and its victory is seen as a major victory for the party across India. Third, the BJP is known for its anti-fascist stance and its support for Hindu nationalism, which has led to some controversy and criticism.

Although the election results in Bihar are significant, it is important to note that Nepal and India share a long history of cultural and economic exchange. Nepal has a rich cultural heritage, with many historical sites and cultural traditions that are shared with India. The two countries also share a rich history of trade and economic ties, with many Nepalis working in India and many Indian companies doing business in Nepal.

In conclusion, while the election results in Bihar are significant, it is important to consider the broader context of Nepal’s relationship with India. The two countries share a rich history of cultural and economic exchange, and the recent election results in Bihar are just one aspect of this relationship. It is important to consider the broader context of Nepal’s relationship with India when assessing the significance of the election results in Bihar.

References:


Conclusion:

In conclusion, while the election results in Bihar are significant, it is important to consider the broader context of Nepal’s relationship with India. The two countries share a rich history of cultural and economic exchange, and the recent election results in Bihar are just one aspect of this relationship. It is important to consider the broader context of Nepal’s relationship with India when assessing the significance of the election results in Bihar.
Once in a Halloween Blue Moon in Kathmandu

Unlike in the West, people of the Himalaya are totally at ease with the mystery of their lunar calendar.

Tourism attractions for visitors. I used to bike and hike through the dirt lanes and paddy fields to distant villages and far flung temples, sampling the celebrations, witnessing the puja, and processing with the pilgrims. I mixed with the colour-drenched crowds who concentrated in the Darbar Squares for vibrant festivals observed unchanged over centuries. One Indra Jatra I found myself in the royal Rana magnificence of the great room of Kathmandu’s Hanuman Dhoka Darbar, overlooking the square thronged with worshippers and pyramids of people packed onto the temple steps. As privileged guests we mingled with ministers, generals and diplomats in that imposing space beneath the sculpted columns, glittering glass chandeliers and grand vaulted windows. From our vantage on the stucco balcony, we could look directly into the intimacy of the Kumari’s chamber and feel the fervour of the masked dancers.

For me it was a once in a blue moon memory, especially precious as that wing of the palace was later destroyed in the 2015 earthquake.

niel Cox

On the other hand, people of the Himalaya are totally at ease with the mystery of their lunar calendars which determine all religious festivals, life celebrations and even government rules in Nepal, as well as tsechu in Bhutan, purimna Hindu rituals and Buddhist traditions. Comfortable with uncertainty, astrologers presided over everything from royal decision making to sacred ceremonies, choosing auspicious dates for ordinary existence, rites of passage, and mixed with the colour-drenched crowds who concentrate in the Darbar Squares for vibrant festivals observed unchanged over centuries. One Indra Jatra I found myself in the royal Rana magnificence of the great room of Kathmandu’s Hanuman Dhoka Darbar, overlooking the square thronged with worshippers and pyramids of people packed onto the temple steps. As privileged guests we mingled with ministers, generals and diplomats in that imposing space beneath the sculpted columns, glittering glass chandeliers and grand vaulted windows. From our vantage on the stucco balcony, we could look directly into the intimacy of the Kumari’s chamber and feel the fervour of the masked dancers.

For me it was a once in a blue moon memory, especially precious as that wing of the palace was later destroyed in the 2015 earthquake.
The late Rinpoche had asked that amulets be distributed to protect his Sherpa people from the coronavirus.

**Tengboche abbott’s last wish**

Devansh Mehta in Tengboche

A nxiety caused by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, and the collapse of a tourism-dependent economy appears to have deeply worried the head monk of Tengboche Monastery below Mt Everest who died on 10 October at age 86.

Nawang Tenzin Zangbu cared about the spiritual and material welfare of his people, and ever since he became the Rinpoche, he had worked tirelessly to make tourism a key element in lifting living standards of the Sherpa people, and help pay for conservation and clean-up of the Everest region.

His death comes at an unfortunate time for the Khumbu, as the pandemic overwhelms Nepal’s fragile health system and affects businesses from trekking and climbing for most of 2020, causing great economic hardship to porters, guides, hotels and others dependent in the Everest region.

“This year he had too much to think about for the people, and this stress may have resulted in his early death,” Pemba Gyanzen Sherpa, the Gerku (custodian) of Tengboche Monastery told us. He believes stress about the impact of the pandemic on the local population of the Khumbu may have played a role in hastening the Rinpoche’s demise.

“The day he died, the Rinpoche called me. He said that he was worried about this virus and wanted to protect all the people in Khumbu,” said Pemba.

The two then drew up plans for assembling and distributing protective buti and amulets to all the people living in Khumbu. These pouches containing herbs and other material are believed to ward off illness and protect the wearer from ill fortune.

Two days before he died, the Rinpoche had come down to Namche from Tengboche and was not feeling well. Upon reaching, he requested to have a shower. His caregiver feared that a shower would worsen his health, and so replied that it was not possible as there was no change of clothes.

The Rinpoche had difficulty breathing, and Pemba recalls that they tried giving him oxygen, but he pushed away the tube. He then made an action with his hands, immediately after which he passed away.

The Rinpoche was born to a Sherpa family in Namche on the same day as the Dalai Lama in 1935, and was recognised at age five as the incarnation of Lama Gulu who founded Tengboche Monastery in 1916. He was sent to Tibet to study Buddhism, and returned to the Khumbu in 1956 to head the Tengboche gumba – these years after the first ascent of Mt Everest.

After he died on 10 October, the Rinpoche’s body was brought back to Tengboche where he will lie in state for 49 days while prayer vigils are held for his timely reincarnation.

After that the monks will determine whether to cremate the body or preserve it in a stupa near the Monastery.

The Rinpoche had been a quiet but steady presence in the Khumbu. Besides presiding over religious ceremonies for the Sherpa people, he oversaw important initiatives like the formation of the Sagarmatha National Park.

Later in life, he became increasingly concerned about the garbage along the Everest Trail and on the mountains left by expeditions and helped set up the Sagarmatha Pollution Control Committee. He also spoke of his worry about how the people of the mountains had to bear the brunt of climate warming through no fault of their own.

Ever since he was selected to be the high Lama and right up to his death, he would wake up at 3AM to read advanced Buddhist texts. Pemba recalled how he and other monks requested him to discontinue this practice, and sleep a little longer to preserve his deteriorating health. However, the Rinpoche replied that it was too late to change his habits, and he would continue getting up early till his dying day.

October-November is also the time for the annual Mani Rimdu festival in Tengboche to commemorate the death of the Lama Gulu. Now in its 103rd year, Mani Rimdu has been held every year, and it appears it will not be cancelled this year despite the pandemic nor the death of the Rinpoche.

The Rinpoche always celebrated the festival and would never have wanted us to miss it for any reason,” said Pemba. “Even when he was ill, we always did the Dorche Semma prayers, and the dance for the festival.”

The monks at Tengboche these days are busy, some of them praying through the night for the Rinpoche’s timely reincarnation. Others are rehearsing a dance performance and cooking the Dorche Semma ahead of the festival. Moreover, the Monastery is also raising funds and working out the logistics to fulfill the Rinpoche’s dying wish of distributing the buti to all the people of Khumbu.

Forecasting the possibility of his death, the Rinpoche made plans so his demise would not affect the local population of Khumbu,” explained Ang Nima Sherpa of Khumjung, adding that the Rinpoche’s duties would be handled by the Druk Rinpoche of the nearby monastery of Pangboche.

Meanwhile, details of the successor Rinpoche will appear in Sakya Trichen, the high Lama’s close friend and the 41st head of the Sakya order of Tibetan Buddhism. After he provides a name, teams of monks will have to go and search for the family selected.

The reincarnated Rinpoche will then have to pass a test, including remembering incidents from the lives of the earlier Tengboche Rinpoche. Upon completion of the test, he will be sent for training at different monasteries, after which the Rinpoche’s position at Tengboche will be occupied once again.
E-shopping boom during Covid-19

Mega sales like 11.11 prove online retail is set to grow dramatically in the coming years
Alisha Sijapati

Infis Store had just begun its operation when the government announced a nationwide lockdown in March to contain the spread of coronavirus. Eight months later, the company with its out-of-the-box marketing strategy for delivery in partnership with Pathao ride service, has boomed.

Infis’s collaboration with Miniso and innovative schemes like home delivery of live mountain goats and chicken for Dasain, were all the rage with customers who were wary of venturing to markets because of Covid-19.

“We surprised ourselves, our business picked up because of the pandemic fears,” explained Yeshu Thakali of Infis Store.

While Infis was the right idea at the right time in Nepal's nascent e-commerce ecosystem, pre-existing establishments like Daraz and Sastodeal continue to dominate the online shopping market.

Daraz, which is a subsidiary of China’s Alibaba, this year launched a pandemic iteration of its 11.11 shopping festival timed for Diwali, announcing heavy discounts on products with jacket advertising in all Kathmandu dailies and portals on Wednesday. For the third year in a row, 11.11 has taken urban middle Kathmandu by storm. Alisha Sijapati, Managing Director of Daraz.

“Due to early warning and experience about the Covid-19 pandemic from sister companies in China, Singapore and other South Asian markets, Daraz appears to have been better prepared to take advantage of the lockdown and pandemic. Another online shopping company that has seen unexpected growth during the past month is Sastodeal, which recently partnered with India’s Flipkart. When Sastodeal started out in 2011, Nepal’s e-commerce market was big enough for both of them, and has the potential for tremendous growth. If it wasn’t, they say, the international partners would not have joined in.”

Ahlering of Daraz said that in a developing market like Nepal, there are challenges for even the whole e-commerce ecosystem much more professional. “Alibaba would have never invested if it did not see a potential here in Nepal. We are very bullish about the market, a lot of people get access to products and that is a win-win situation for the e-commerce market,” he added.

Sastodeal recently also got a $1 million investment from the Dolma Impact Fund to help the company achieve a milestone target of Rs1 billion in annual revenue within the next 18 months.

When watching the two giants of e-commerce in Yeshu Thakali of Infis Store, and he thinks the two were equipped with technical knowhow and experience of online retail to dive right into the market and seize the opportunity offered by the lockdown, just as his delivery startup did.

However, the Covid-19 crisis has also presented new obstacles for e-commerce, the growth is not matched by government policies and laws which have not caught up with the age of online commerce.

But if the government can get its act together, there is one important lesson from this year’s pandemic crisis and the festival season — online shopping is here, not just to stay, but also grow dramatically in Nepal in the coming years.
KIMFF
Every year in December, Kathmandu International Mountain Film Festival (KIMFF) brings a plethora of extraordinary films from all across the world. While the festival has always demanded physical presence in the past, this year keeping in mind the Covid-19 virus, the festival is set to go virtual with live film screening from their website. The 2020 broadcast will have 16 films to watch. 10-14 November
For more: www.kimff.org

Event:
FESTIVE BINGE MODE
Thursday, November 5

Hachi: A dog's tale
Cuddle with your pooch this cold festive season and check out a heart-warming story of a dog on November 7. The movie will be directed by Eric Brevig and will be available online on Netflix.

Beethoven
The classic Saint Bernard will surely melt anyone's heart, in the classic family comedy-drama movie available on Netflix.

101 Dalmatians
Walt Disney's 101 Dalmatian have been reviving over and over again, with the first classic animated adventure movie in 1961. The entitled, the story of Dalmatian puppies who are separated from their mother by Cruella de Vil, who wants to use their fur to make coats.

Ootaku next virtual showcase
For the first time since 2019, Ootaku Fest which targets the popular manga and anime culture is going online. The event will be divided into eight segments- Cosplay showcase, chronicles, and Q&A among others. To participate in the event, visit their various social media channels.

27 November

New kiosks and exciting offerings of Taza Treats:
Lakuri cafe
Surprise your friends and bring them with beautifully customized kiosks and cafes in the first ever Lakuri cafe in Kathmandu. Contact: 9803477018

Taza Treats
For those unversed—Taza, a Syrian restaurant based in Patan has another subsidiary Taza Treats that sell Mediterranean delights for the first time in Nepal. Celebrate Tihar at home with Taza's amazing Baklavas. Instagram: Taza Treats

Gift packages
Order special Taza Treats packages of your choice online from their website. Free chocolate bars with every order. Arrangement has a special healthy box full of healthy goodies inside for Tihar. Contact the Instagram page to know more or the goo.

14 November, Bhai Tika

101 Dalmatians
As Cruella de Vil is kidnapping 101 Dalmatian puppies, this is bound to happen when you watch Hachi: A dog's tale. Based on a real-life story set in Japan, the 2009 movie depicts the undying love and loyalty of the Man's best friend portrayed by Richard Gere.

VIA REPORT

15 November, Miha Puja
The Newa community worships oneself on this day. People observes puja to give glory to Lord Krishna. It’s also a Newa year. Miha Puja Bhintuna in the Newa calendar.

11 November, Hachi Tika

Lakuri cafe celebrates their launch and pray for protection from Yama, the harbinger of death.

16 November, Bhai Tika

For more: www.kimff.org

Face masks were sold for their event and face was worn for security, social and physical distancing, as well as to stop the continuous spreading of the virus. But evening and morning peaks will still be at unhealthy levels. For hourly AQI measurements, go to www.nepalitimes.com

Eco logic with Miss Moti
KIRPA JOSHI

DON'T BUY FUR

For creators, animal skins were killed for their meat and fur was worn for status, fashion, social and economic reasons. As a result, we have created a market for fur farming which has continued without understanding the cause and effect. Each year, around 100 million animals – rabbits, foxes, minks, and other animals are killed for their fur. But for that, the whole cycle of animal abuse for the purpose of fashion is caused by crop residue burning is still there, but luckily, the air is more cleaner.

Air quality index

KATHMANDU, 6 - 12 November

KATHMANDU

KIMFF

Festive binge mode

Fridays for Future

Hachi: A dog's tail
Cuddle with your pooch this cold festive season and check out a heart-warming story of a dog on November 7. The movie was one of the first major classics inspired by the British comic strip Hergé. It was released in 1993, and was directed by Eric Brevig. The story is simple: after you watch Hachi: A dog's tale, based on a real life story set in Japan, the 2009 movie depicts the undying love and loyalty of the Man's best friend portrayed by Richard Gere.

Beethoven
The classic Saint Bernard will surely melt anyone's heart, in the classic family comedy-drama movie available on Netflix.

Bollywood

101 Dalmatians
Walt Disney's 101 Dalmatian have been reviving over and over again, with the first classic animated adventure movie in 1961. The entitled, the story of Dalmatian puppies who are separated from their mother by Cruella de Vil, who wants to use their fur to make coats.

A rolling drum beat, a scream, a fire: 28 November, 5:45 am NST

Global climate protest: In 2018, the first Fridays for Future march was held outside of the United Nations in New York. The event was called upon by Swedish teenager Greta Thunberg, who participated in school strikes in Sweden to protest government inaction on climate change. In Kathmandu, the protests were organized by Youth for Climate, a local student group. The anti-plastic rally kicked off on November 28, raising the maximum temperature in 2020, the renunciation will be on the single digit.

November 06

Kathmandu

November 07

November 08

November 09

November 10

November 11

November 12
Every day is Dog Day

For Rashmi Tuladhar, strays need care all year round not just on Kukur Tihar

Kathmandu’s community canines already seem to sense that their special day is coming soon on 14 November, Kukur Tihar. That is when they are ritually worshipped as the messengers of Yamaraj, the god of death.

But for Rashmi Tuladhar, every day is dog day. Ever since she was a child, she took care of the dogs and cats in her tolé – these were not abandoned strays but community pets. No one owns them, but everyone does.

Over the years, Rashmi’s bond with dogs in her neighbourhood grew, and today at age 40 she has been taking care of several generations of dogs, while keeping some of the more needy ones in her own house in Asan.

The pandemic has been tough on Kathmandu’s community dogs, there is less food to rummage through and many butcher and food shops are closed. And, ironically, while dogs will be worshipped on Saturday morning by being fed treats, Tihar fire crackers will scare the wits out of them in the evening.

Rashmi Didi, as she is affectionately known in her neighbourhood, gets up before dawn every morning. Not to visit the temples as some of her neighbours, but to prepare the morning meal for the 100 community canines that she cares for: from Asan to Ratna Park, and as far as Ghanta Ghar. Rashmi keeps another dozen or so seniors and injured dogs in her cramped ancestral home.

“Many people just see them as filthy animals who are always breeding endlessly, so they either do not take care of them or mistreat them,” says Rashmi while on her daily rounds to check up on the dogs in her neighbourhood. “People are mean to them, they throw hot water or rocks, beat them with sticks,” she says. “Some people even say hurtful things even while I am feeding them. But at least these dogs know not all humans are nasty in this life that we are living together.”

Although she may sound despondent, Rashmi sees hope in young people in her neighbourhood who stop by to pet the dogs she is feeding. Many say they do not have dogs at home, but would like to have one. Rashmi recognises every dog on the streets by their names, and introduces them to the children.

After completing her daily round, Rashmi heads home to feed and care for her own resident dogs, who yelp happily to see her return. She says: “This is what makes me happy. My disability does not affect me so why should it affect others? I just hope people were kinder.”
A Biden presidency, climate and the Himalaya

The United States re-entering the Paris climate accord will be a huge deal for the Nepal Himalaya
Sonia Awale

W
ith just 4% of the world’s population, the United States is responsible for over 15% of annual global carbon emissions. What America does or does not do will affect how fast the Himalayan ice cap will melt during this century.

Which is why Joe Biden’s win in the US election is such a big deal for the global environment, including the Himalaya. Biden has announced he will reverse Donald Trump’s decision to withdraw from the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement, which ironically came into effect on 4 November, the day after the US vote.

The Himalayan arc from Burma to Afghanistan is the biggest storehouse of fresh water after the two polar regions, and it is warming between 0.3-0.7°C faster than the global average. The loss of Himalayan ice would have devastating consequences for 1.6 billion people living in the mountains, and in downstream countries.

“Reversing these warming trends will begin with Biden’s commitment to re-joining the Paris agreement, as the US is not only one of the world’s greatest climate offenders but also one of its best potential leaders and sources of needed funding,” said Alton C Byers of the University of Colorado, who has studied Himalayan glaciers for the past 30 years.

The Paris Agreement aims to cap the global temperature rise this century ‘well below’ 2°C by reducing carbon emissions through renewable energy technologies, and protecting forests and biodiversity.

But rejoining the Paris accord will be the easy part. Much harder for the Biden presidency will be overcoming domestic opposition to cutting emissions at home, push rapid transition to clean energy, and protecting forests.

The Biden-Harris win has raised hopes among environmentalists around the world, but the world has a lot of catching up to do to reverse Trump’s systematic action against the Paris accord. The Biden administration in January will also likely face a serious opposition from a possible Republican-led Senate as it seeks to transition America off fossil fuels.

To regain credibility on climate, the US now has to show the world that it is on a path to net zero emissions by 2050, only then can America press other high-emitting countries to act with the urgency required by the climate crisis, added Adam Stern, a California-based climate leader, formerly with the Environmental Defense Fund.

“If Biden can restore the role of science in determining US climate policy, he may also be able to focus world attention on regions like the Himalaya that are already experiencing extreme climate changes,” said Stern, who has written about energy use in Nepal’s Khumbu region.

International climate policies will have a lasting impact on the Himalaya where measurements of ice mass, temperature rise, glacial shrinking and receding snowlines have been more serious than previous estimates.

However, experts say that Nepal also has to do its bit to accelerate its shift to solar and hydropower in generating electricity for transport and household use. And since nearly a quarter of melting Himalayan glaciers is attributed to the deposition of soot and dust on the snow, transboundary collaboration in pollution control is a must.

Since October, for example, northern India has been blackened by thick smoke from crop residue burning, and this black carbon is being blown up to the snows by prevailing westerlies. And as winter sets in, industrial and vehicular pollution will be trapped by inversion across the Indo-Gangetic plains and ultimately reduce the reflectivity of Himalayan ice cover.

Air pollution was already decreasing the average lifespan of tens of millions of people in north India by 3.7 years. It killed 1.69 million people in Nepal last year alone, studies show, and this winter that risk for patients with respiratory issues is combined with Covid-19 complications.

The causes and solutions of air pollution and climate change are intricately interconnected, both largely affected by human activities over time and space. In fact, short-lived pollutants like black carbon, ozone and other gases exacerbate global warming.

“Dark coloured pollutants such as soot particles from diesel and forest fires, and sunlight and warm up the air at the altitude at which they are located,” explained atmospheric scientist Arnico Panday. “If they warm the air near snow or ice surfaces they can contribute to melting. And when dark particles, including windblown desert dust, settle on snowfields or glaciers they can darken the surfaces and melt the snow and ice. Certain air pollutants therefore accelerate glacier melt in the Himalaya.”

Even though a Biden presidency has given some hope for climate activities in the Himalaya, they point out that China has overtaken the United States, responsible for 28% of total carbon emissions in 2018. Carbon emissions in China and India are growing at a faster rate than in North America, and the two countries already contribute 37% of global greenhouse gases annually.

So, while a greener America will help, the real action to slow Himalayan melting will have to come from the immediate region.

The good news is there are already proven clean technologies for brick kilns, cement industries, solar and hydro here in Nepal and in South Asia. Governments need to incentivise these, provide subsidies, and investors need to back them up.

Air pollution has never moved it to the priority of our politicians, their mentality of focusing on short-term gains like taxes in the US on long-term gains can’t be changed,” says Manoj Pandey, who works to the Least Developed Countries support group at the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

He adds: “We must deploy our own young population to lobby and take part in climate action. What happens in the United States, whether international funds will be available will only help temporarily. We must cut emissions at source, educate our own people about the consequences, and provide alternatives.”

The south face of Mt Gauri Shankar (7,134m) on the border between Nepal and China is bare rock, and shows how dramatically the snowline has receded, and the glacier has thinned.

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“Dark coloured pollutants such as soot particles from diesel and forest fires, and...
In just 2 years, a Nepal peak becomes snowless

The bare rock face of once-icy Mt Saipal has flabbergasted scientists and locals

Basant Pratap Singh in Bajhang

Mountaineers, scientists, climate researchers, and local shepherds are all flabbergasted by a 7,000m high mountain in remote far western Nepal which seems to have lost almost all snow in the past two years.

The long glacial valley below Mt Saipal offers one of the most iconic mountain views in Nepal, its rare beauty enhanced by the sheer inaccessibility of the place. It takes an hour-long flight from Kathmandu, an arduous 12-hour jeep ride over treacherous switchbacks, and a week of trekking to get to Ranikharka at the base of the mountain.

Rajendra Dhami is 41 years old, and first trekked up to this stunning valley in 2002. Since then, he has been there every year with fellow villagers to graze sheep and pick yarsagumba.

“It was a difficult journey to take the sheep up those paths, but once up there it was like heaven, with the ice wall of Saipal right above us,” Dhami recalls, “I would not get tired of looking at the frozen wall of ice. And sometimes when there was not much snow, I used to walk up to the turquoise glacial lake and right to the base of that gigantic wall. Saipal is beautiful in every season, even the base of that mountain. Saipal’s south face is almost vertical, and it is not easy for snow accumulation. In winter the jet stream lashes Himalayan peaks above 7,000m with high winds, blowing away even the snow that clings to the rock face.”

Arun Bhakta Shrestha, a climate expert at ICIMOD. “It is all the more puzzling because this happened in a year when there has been heavy snowfall. This needs more study.”

Instead of snow, when shown the most recent photos from last week, a member of a Spanish expedition to Mt Saipal two years ago also expressed surprise that so much snow could melt so quickly on a 7,000m peak.

Even Sudeep Thakuri, a professor of environmental science at Tribhuvan University is astonished. He says, “From the pictures, I notice that the south face has lost not just its snow but also the ice cover. It must be a combination of climate change and high winds.”
New Delhi’s new dealings in Nepal

Impoverished ambassadors, eager princelings and invasive spy-masters – Kathmandu has seen, and survived, them all

Kanak Mari Dixit

When Kathmandu Valley was still known as Gorkha, in the medieval Lichhavi-Malla times, the Ganga plains did not send diplomats or spies there, they sent rulers. The Lichhavi arrived from Delhi via Vaishali, and later the dynasty of Mallas from Terathum/Khajuraho.

The unifying king Prithvi Narayan Shah instructed his followers to conquer the whole of the country, and they did. Taking matters to an extreme, who were the leaders of the Nepali sovereignty, who was the foreign policy of Nepal, was the foreign policy of Nepal. The best example is the Maoist leaders Pushpa Kamal Dahal, always virulently anti-Indian when out.

When it suited them.

Their King, the King of the entire of the country, was the British, and the treaty was the Treaty of Sugauli (1815). Only after the Kathmandu Darbar Sindhuli Gadi in 1767, and it was the British. The Treaty of Sugauli (1815) not only reduced Nepal to its present size and shape, but it also included the cession of territory to the British in the Kathmandu Valley, and this is what is known as the British occupation of Kathmandu Valley.

This is what the British occupied. They occupied the Kathmandu Valley and they occupied it for a long time. They occupied it for a long time because they wanted to control the Kathmandu Valley, and they wanted to control the Kathmandu Valley because they wanted to control the entire of the country.

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Kamal Dahal (Prachanda) and chief ideologue Baburam Bhattarai (Lalitpur) had been patched up, it is said with the intervention of India. Intelligence, the two leaders wrote a letter to Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee asking for a hearing.

The Strategic Services Advisor to Prime Minister Vajpayee, Brijesh Mishra, directed the Maoists to the Intelligence Bureau in a confidential memo saying that the Communist leaders of Nepal were in touch and conducting negotiations with India. But what happened to the Wallop? It seems that the leaders of the Communist parties of the Nepal, too, were forced to deal with the Wallop. The leaders of the floats across the length of the Nepali border. Meanwhile, the Maoist leadership fled to Ceylon and India.

This deal between Indian intelligence agencies and the Maoists meant that the leaders of the democratic parties of the Nepal, too, were forced to deal with Indian spies in order to make contact and conduct negotiations with Dahal and Bhattarai. As the intelligence bureau was trying to work on the spy situation, it was found that a lot of Nepali citizens were dying every day at the hands of fellow Nepalis.

Back then, the action leader in Ceylon, the 9-member entourage on a special Bombardier Global 5000 aircraft. This deal between Indian intelligence agency R&AW, the Indian Embassy in Kathmandu, the Indian political, diplomatic and security threat represented by the Maoists and the UML and NC and the Indian political, diplomatic and security threat represented by the Maoists and the UML and NC and the Indian political, diplomatic and security threat represented by the Maoists and the UML and NC.

Despite the attempts to co-opt Madhesi politicians, the Nepali public was not given that privilege. India – only the Madhesi politicians were not given that privilege. India – only the Madhesi politicians were given the opportunity to join the country and Nepali political system. The date should be pushed back to 23 September 2015. A longer version of this analysis is online at http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/magazines/insight/Indian-Blockade-helped-Nepal-s-move-to-open-up-its-hands-in-Economic-99538766.cms

The question that has not been answered is satisfaction to why the spy agencies have been allowed to function so openly in Kathmandu. The utility of a spy agency is said to be optimum when its work remains hidden, with full deniability. Yet in Kathmandu the only thing the agents do not do is give visiting cards saying ‘Station Chief’. Amongst all the chauvinists, a Nepali may be forgiven for taking solace in the fact that the specks are above ground and very visible – something to be said for transparency.

In India’s engagement with Kathmandu, the Nepali side has been increasingly confused by who to believe, where to look, and how to interpret the actions of the country. The spy agencies have been allowed to function so openly in Kathmandu. Even as the country was micromanaging affairs in India, the Nepali citizens were dying every day at the hands of fellow Nepalis.

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In the 1960s and 1970s, when the Constitution-giving went under way in 2008, one can imagine that the Indian diplomatic corps was petrified by what was being done by the agents on the ground and in corrdiors of power in India’s name. In the meantime, the Nepali politicians had no choice but to engage with the intelligence follows, either the station chief, or the RkA or IB bosses who came on secret visits without doing much to hide their presence. Is a spy agency that does not bother to be undercover actually more benign? During the term of the first Constituent Assembly, some extraordinary mind in New Delhi decided to use the opportunity to create a ‘buffer’ for India by proposing a One-Madhesi-Oneprashad formula for federalism. Any demographer, geographer, anthropologist or sociologist – let alone a politician – would have said that this was a crazy idea, to have a strip that is 300 miles long and less than 50 miles wide along the stretch of a Tarai so full of demographic, linguistic diversity, and which were connected economically to the hills and to the south across the border.

When many have remarked that during the 2000s, the US began to outsource its Nepal policy to India, the more egregious reality was that Indian establishment itself had outsourced much of its Nepal policy to the intelligence agencies. From my time as a law student in the late 1970s, I knew that the best the brightest applicants to Indian intelligence agencies.

By then, in May 2020, the two countries were still taking the brunt of the coronavirus. India published a new official map which may help to display the bifurcation of Jammu and on the first time, China with regard to Aksai Chin, the publication highlighted once again the Nepal’s existential fear of the area where India kept its Kalapani garrison as well as the entire Limpiyadhura Triangle was shown by Prime Minister Modi to stall the stalled talks. But then, in May 2020, the two countries were still taking the brunt of the coronavirus. India published a new official map which may help to display the bifurcation of Jammu and on the first time, China with regard to Aksai Chin, the publication highlighted once again the Nepal’s existential fear regarding Aksai Chin. India has taken nearly eight months for things to cool down enough for the general to make trustworthiness visit to visit this week to Kathmandu, long delayed by the Covid-19 pandemic and the fallout of the storm.

For the record, the Indian Chief of Staff Mr M N Naravane piped up to imply publicly that Nepal should be brought by China to raise the Lishu Lek issue, setting off a storm of international denunciation. It has taken nearly eight months for things to cool down enough for the general to make trustworthiness visit to visit this week to Kathmandu, long delayed by the Covid-19 pandemic and the fallout of the storm.

One would have been forgiven for thinking that the Indian leaders would be no going back after the series of setbacks, but it turns out the Indo-Nepal bilateral relations still contain a stone or two stiff. With the passage of time, economic agreements, the agreements, and the skirmishes with the PLA on the Lachauri frontier. Modi seems to have done it without sacrificing any of the agreements. It was with make up with the Maoist. The India was broken with Oli picking up the phone to greet Modi on the occasion of India’s Independence Day on 15 August. In reply, Modi said he had been sending a special emissary to Kathmandu to talk things over.

When the emissary did come on 21 October, it turned out to be Samant Kumar Goel, head of the external intelligence agency R&AW, leading a team from various wings of the intelligence community. In Nepal, it off the mark, and it pushed through the Maoist garrison as well as the entire Limpiyadhura Triangle was shown by Prime Minister Modi to stall the stalled talks. But then, in May 2020, the two countries were still taking the brunt of the coronavirus. India published a new official map which may help to display the bifurcation of Jammu and on the first time, China with regard to Aksai Chin, the publication highlighted once again the Nepal’s existential fear regarding Aksai Chin. India has taken nearly eight months for things to cool down enough for the general to make trustworthiness visit to visit this week to Kathmandu, long delayed by the Covid-19 pandemic and the fallout of the storm.

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Lain Singh Bangdel’s legacy lives on

Two decades after he died, family, friends and students say Nepal ought to value its foremost artist more

Alisha Sijapati

On 15 September, a UK-based art promotion site MutualArt announced plans to auction a collection of 300 to 350 works of art by Nepal’s most famous artist, Lain Singh Bangdel. The announcement was the English translation of Bangdel’s Sanepa. He also plans to publish a collection of 300 to 350 of his father’s works, “to keep his memory alive with the later years of his life.”

Thapa is a lifelong admirer of Bangdel’s work, and says she owes a lot to “Laini” to launch her own career in art. She worked with Bangdel’s daughter, Dina, in promoting Nepali art in the international arena. Dina’s sudden death came as a deep void in Nepal’s country’s art scene. Thapa says, and Nepal will probably never have a better father-daughter duo for the distribution of the Bangdels’ work.

The exhibition, when in September was organised by the UK-based Bunston & Hewett via the Abbey Auction Gallery, and the watercolour portrait was under the lot #10436. This is not the only Bangdel painting that has been sold abroad at such a low price; three other abstracts were sold via a Canadian auction house, Westbridge Fine Art Auction House, in 2016 and 2017, each at less than 700 Canadian dollars.

“In places like Canada, we cannot access people haven’t heard enough about Bangdel and that could be what determined the price,” says art crime professor Erin L Thompson at the City University of New York.

Dina’s husband Binabok Shakya is also saddened to see the latest developments in Nepal’s art. “I think he would be happy to see his work fetch a good price in Nepal,” he says. Shakya has been keeping Lain Singh Bangdel’s legacy alive with his art teaching and documentation. “I witnessed Lain Singh for many years, and he was a remarkable person,” says Shakya.

The exhibition has also been a source of inspiration for some of his students. “I feel the tug of home, and was taken by Laxmi Prasad Devkota’s Munca Museum which impacted on his art,” says art historian, and shared the experience of how little his teacher’s painting fetched in an European auction.

Lain Singh Bangdel’s life: Lain Singh changed his name from Rai to Bangdel in 1939, and as Lain Singh Bangdel he eventually became an able interpreter of Nepal’s cultural legacy.

His most important work was the multi-faceted career. He was a painter, art historian, and shared the passion for Nepal’s heritage among profoundly flavored his life, guided his scholarly development throughout a distinguished and multifaceted career.

Meeting Satyajit Ray for the first time...: the stranger asked somebody, ‘Why don’t you provide another place for this gentleman?’ Only then did Ganguli come over and introduce the stranger as Satyajit Ray whom he addressed familiarly as Manik Babu. Space for Law was arranged right next to Ray and in time they got to know each other, who such was, their interests and so forth. They were immediately attracted to one another, as fellow artists and inspired young intellectuals.

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