

Important Vocab for the Editorial

1. **shadow** (noun) – trace.
2. **turmoil** (noun) – disorder, turbulence, confusion, trouble, chaos.
3. **uncertainty** (noun) – unpredictability, unreliability, riskiness/precariousness.
4. **engage** with (verb) – to establish a meaningful relation with someone.
5. **actor** (noun) – participants (in an action).
6. **dissolve** (verb) – dismiss, disestablish, disband, abolish.
7. **partisan** (adjective) – biased, prejudiced, one-sided, unjust/unfair.
8. **disregard** (verb) – ignore, take no notice of, pay no attention to, pay no heed to.
9. **machinery** (noun) – system, apparatus, structure.
10. **deadlier** comparative adjective of **deadly** (adjective) – fatal, lethal, life-threatening.
11. **opportunistic** (adjective) – selfish, self-centred, self-seeking, egocentric, inward-looking.
12. **undertake** (verb) – begin, start; launch into, enter on, embark on.
13. **Federal Republic** (noun) – A constitutional government in which the powers of the central government are limited by law to create individuals (states or providences) with certain degrees of self-governing powers, e.g. the United States.
14. **absolute majority** (noun) – a condition in which a party is winning more than half of the seats/members in an election.
15. **ally** (noun) – partner, supporting (political) party (with common interests).
16. **cement** (verb) – bond, join, connect.
17. **alliance** (noun) – association, union, partnership.
18. **reservation** (noun) – misgivings, scepticism, hesitation; doubt, qualm.
19. **tirade** (noun) – attack, verbal onslaught, rant; a long talk of criticism/accusation.
20. **autocratic** (adjective) – undemocratic, totalitarian, authoritarian; domineering, high-handed.
21. **tendency** (noun) – inclination, disposition, penchant.
22. **surface** (verb) – emerge, appear, come to light, become visible.
23. **work out** (phrasal verb) – devise, formulate, draw up, prepare.
24. **fray** (verb) – strain, overtax, irritate.
25. **take turns** (phrase) – alternate, change, switch.

26. **run** (verb) – organize, manage, control.
27. **co-chair** (noun) – a person who chairs something (party/meeting & etc) jointly with another.
28. **irksome** (adjective) – irritating, annoying, vexing, displeasing, disagreeable.
29. **wean away (from)** (phrasal verb) – to detach, disconnect, separate someone from depending on something.
30. **disgruntled** (adjective) – aggrieved, dissatisfied, unhappy/disappointed.
31. **gravitate** (verb) – move towards, be attracted to.
32. **difference** (noun) – disagreement, dispute, difference of opinion, misunderstanding, argument, quarrel.
33. **give up** (phrasal verb) – resign, stand down, step down, forgo, relinquish, renounce.
34. **Kalapani** (noun) – Kalapani is a region located in the easternmost corner of Uttarakhand's Pithoragarh district. It shares a border on the north with the Tibet Autonomous Region of China and Nepal in the east and south. The area is in India's control but Nepal claims the region because of historical and cartographic reasons. The area is the largest territorial dispute between Nepal and India consisting of at least 37,000 hectares of land in the High Himalayas.
35. **demarcate** (verb) – delineate, outline, delimit.
36. **material** (adjective) – significant, major, important.
37. **don** (verb) – put on, get dressed in, get into, slip into, change into.
38. **mantle** (noun) – (figuratively) anything that conceals something else; a cloak; (generally) a type of loose garment.
39. **inherit** (verb) – assume, take over, receive something (e.g. a situation & etc.) from a predecessor (previous holder of the post).
40. **take over** (phrasal verb) – assume control of, take control of, gain control of.
41. **(be) caught up in** (phrasal verb) – become involved in (something unintended).
42. **defer** (verb) – postpone, put off, delay, hold off.
43. **bilateral** (adjective) – involving two groups or countries.
44. **perhaps** (adverb) – maybe, possibly.
45. **pilgrimage** (noun) – religious journey, holy expedition/excursion.
46. **up the ante** (phrase) – to increase demands/stakes (in a tough condition) even though it has risks; To take an action that raises the risks.

47. **whip up** (phrasal verb) – excite, evoke/provoke, stimulate, encourage (strong emotions in someone intentionally).
48. **endorse** (verb) – uphold, support, ratify, approve, justify.
49. **sanctify** (verb) – approve, sanction, vindicate, endorse, justify.
50. **on the ground** (phrase) – in a situation/place where things are happening really/practically.
51. **cramp** (verb) – hinder, impede, inhibit.
52. **prospects** (noun) – possibilities, chances, opportunities.
53. **reprieve** (noun) – cancellation, suspension, postponement (of something undesirable event).
54. **haunt** (verb) – torment, oppress, disturb, trouble, worry, burden, beset.
55. **comrade** (noun) – associate, partner, colleague, fellow, friend.
56. **untimely** (adjective) – premature, early, too early, too soon.
57. **demise** (noun) – end, death, dying, passing.
58. **charismatic** (adjective) – strong in character, full of personality, attractive, appealing, captivating, fascinating.
59. **back** (verb) – support, endorse, stand by.
60. **elevation** (noun) – rise, growth, promotion, upgrading, advancement.
61. **reciprocate** (verb) – return the favour, give back; respond.
62. **propriety** (noun) – morality, ethics, appropriateness, correctness.
63. **dubious** (adjective) – suspicious, questionable, doubtful, untrustworthy.
64. **ordinance** (noun) – order, law, directive/regulation. (An ordinance introduced on 15th Dec 2020 in Nepal, is to amend the Constitutional Council Act (Functions, Duties, and Procedures) 2010, according to which a meeting of the council can be convened even if it falls short of the quorum (the minimum number of members of a deliberative assembly) required to convene the meeting. The ordinance gives the prime minister the right to convene meetings and make decisions even in presence of only three members).
65. **Constitutional Council Act** (noun) – The Constitutional Council (Functions, Duties, Powers and Procedures) Act, 2066 (2010) is related to the highest constitutional authority in Nepal. The Constitutional Council is headed by the prime minister and includes the chief justice, speaker, chairperson of the National Assembly, leader of the opposition, and the deputy speaker as its members. The council makes recommendations for key appointments including in constitutional bodies, judiciary and foreign missions.
66. **enable** (verb) – permit, allow, authorize.

67. **pack** (verb) – fill.
68. **loyalist** (noun) – supporter, admirer, champion.
69. **amid** (preposition) – in the middle of, surrounded by; during.
70. **motion of no confidence** (noun) – According to rule 198 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of the Lok Sabha, a no-confidence motion is “a motion expressing want of confidence in the Council of Ministers.” It’s a vote in which MPs from all parties decide whether they want the government to continue. It has the power to trigger a general election and could see a new prime minister appointed.
71. **studiously** (adverb) – deliberately, consciously, intentionally.
72. (Parliamentary) Standing Committee/Parliamentary panel (noun) – it is a committee (consisting of Members of Parliament) constituted usually on an annual basis to enable detailed consideration/discussion on all bills (all proposed laws).
73. **dissolution** (noun) – cessation, termination, discontinuation, suspension.
74. **pave the way for** (phrase) – clear the way for; make preparations for, put things in order for.
75. **unconstitutional** (adjective) – undemocratic, autocratic, dictatorial, totalitarian.
76. **steer clear of** (phrase) – keep away from, avoid, shun.
77. **ambassador** (noun) – representative, promoter, campaigner (of a particular activity).
78. **push for** (phrasal verb) – demand, insist on, ask/call/speak for; urge, advocate, recommend, champion, espouse.
79. **rapprochement** (noun) – reconciliation, reuniting, restoration of harmony, compromise/understanding.
80. **faction** (noun) – group, section, division (within a larger group).
81. **bench** (noun) – a court of law with a number of judges.
82. **unanimously** (adverb) – without opposition, agreed to by everyone involved.
83. **call (for)** (phrasal verb) – require, necessitate, demand.
84. **restoration** (noun) – reinstatement, re-establishment, reinstallation.
85. **bombshell** (noun) – a shocking event; blow, upset, disturbance.
86. **overturn** (verb) – cancel, reverse, repeal, revoke.
87. **reins** (noun) – controlling power. (In general, rein is the long leather strap(s) attached to a horse’s head (usually on either sides), by which the rider controls a horse).
88. **revive** (verb) – energize, resuscitate, strengthen, regenerate, renew.
89. **split** (noun) – division, rift, break-up, partition.

90. join hands (phrase) – work together with.
91. wage (verb) – engage in, carry on, conduct.
92. overtake (verb) – overwhelm, overpower, take by surprise.
93. hubris (noun) – feeling of superiority, excessive self-importance, excessive pride, excessive self-confidence/self-glory, overconfidence, arrogance.
94. confidence motion/trust vote (noun) – a confidence motion, or a vote of confidence, or a trust vote, is sought by the government in power on the floor of the House in order to prove the majority.
95. dissident (adjective) – dissenting, disagreeing.
96. abstain (verb) – not vote, decline to vote, refuse to vote.
97. impropriety (noun) – misconduct, wrongdoing, dishonesty, illegitimacy.
98. swear in (phrasal verb) – admit into office, inaugurate, introduce (into office).
99. seek (verb) – ask for, appeal, request, demand.
100. gain ground (phrase) – make progress, progress, advance, proceed.
101. rush (verb) – act rapidly/hurriedly.
102. caretaker (noun modifier) – temporary, provisional, interim.
103. fabric (noun) – the basic/fundamental structure.
104. obliging (adjective) – helpful, accommodating, willing, cooperative, considerate.
105. uncertain (adjective) – unknown, unsettled, unresolved, unsure, pending.
106. raging (adjective) – violent, strong; severe, extreme, excessive, inordinate.
107. campaign (verb) – canvass, electioneer, solicit (ask for/request) votes.
108. constitutionalism (noun) – limited/restrained/controlled government.
109. juncture (noun) – point in time, time/moment, stage.
110. perceive (verb) – view, regard, consider.

The long shadow of political turmoil in Nepal

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With uncertainty set to continue, India needs to remain actively engaged with all the political actors

Politics in Nepal entered another phase of uncertainty last week. The country's President, Bidya Devi Bhandari, dissolved the House of Representatives (lower house) late night on Friday, at the suggestion of Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli (*picture*), in a partisan move that disregarded the Constitution. Fresh elections were announced for between November 12 and 18. Announcing elections was just to ensure that Mr. Oli continues in office and controlling the state machinery, even as Nepal battles a second and deadlier COVID-19 wave.

Oli's opportunistic politics

Mr. Oli came to power after the 2017 elections, the first undertaken in the federal republic of Nepal, established under the 2015 Constitution. He led his party, the CPN(UML), to an impressive tally of 121 seats and together with the Maoist Centre's 53 seats, enjoyed a near absolute majority in the 275-strong House. In May 2018, the two allies merged to cement their alliance and created the Nepal Communist Party (NCP).



K.P. Oli clings to power even as Nepal President dissolves Parliament

Relations with India saw positive movement. New Delhi was willing to overcome its reservations about Mr. Oli's anti-Indian nationalist tirades. Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Nepal in May 2018, shortly after Mr. Oli's visit.

However, Mr. Oli's autocratic tendencies soon began to surface. The power sharing arrangement worked out with former Maoist leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' started fraying. The original idea that both would take turns at being Prime Minister and run the NCP as co-chairs became irksome for Mr. Oli. While he weaned away the Maoist cabinet members, senior disgruntled UML leaders led by former Prime Ministers, Madhav Kumar Nepal and Jhala Nath Khanal, gravitated towards Prachanda. Differences emerged in the open and a growing demand surfaced for honouring the 'one person one post' policy. Prachanda was willing to let Mr. Oli continue the full term as Prime Minister, provided he gave up his role as co-chair of the party. Mr. Oli decided otherwise.

Mr. Oli needed a distraction and by end 2019, found one in the Kalapani boundary issue. India issued new maps following the division of the State of Jammu and Kashmir into Union Territories, Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. While 98% of the India-Nepal boundary was demarcated, two areas, Susta and Kalapani, had remained pending.

Editorial | Losing trust: On K.P. Sharma Oli and Nepal politics

Though the new Indian map did not affect the India-Nepal boundary in any material way, it was an opportunity for Mr. Oli to don his nationalist mantle. He expanded the Kalapani area dispute from one covering approximately 60 square kilometres on Nepal's northwest tip with Uttarakhand and China by raising the demand for restoring an additional 335 sq. km. The boundaries were fixed in 1816 by the British, and India inherited the areas over which the British had exercised territorial control in 1947.

Domestic politics takes over

Caught up in the first COVID-19 wave, India kept deferring bilateral talks, perhaps not realising the domestic political pressures on Mr. Oli. In May 2020 when Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated the 75 km road through Kalapani that linked to the Kailash-Mansarovar pilgrimage route, Mr. Oli upped the ante by whipping up nationalist sentiment, getting a new map of Nepal endorsed by the House and adopting a constitutional amendment to sanctify Nepal's new territory. While this did not alter the situation on the ground, it cramped the prospects of any dialogue with India. It was a short reprieve and Mr. Oli's political troubles soon returned to haunt him.

President Bhandari has been Mr. Oli's close comrade since she entered active politics after the untimely demise of her husband Madan Bhandari, a charismatic UML leader, in a car accident in 1993. Mr. Oli was her political mentor and backed her elevation as President. She reciprocated by ignoring constitutional propriety and approving dubious ordinances including amending the Constitutional Council Act that enabled Mr. Oli to pack constitutional positions with his loyalists.



A second chance for Nepal's young democracy

Amid rumours that Prachanda and Mr. Nepal were planning to move a no-confidence-motion against him after he had studiously ignored the meetings and decisions of party's Secretariat and the Standing Committee, Mr. Oli got President Bhandari to approve dissolution of the House on December 20, paving the way for elections in April-May. The President's decision was uniformly criticised as unconstitutional as the NCP enjoyed a near-absolute majority.

India decided to steer clear of the mess, calling it an 'internal matter' while the Chinese Ambassador continued to actively push for a rapprochement between the NCP factions. A five-judge constitutional Bench of the

Supreme Court unanimously called for a restoration of the House on February 23 strengthening the Prachanda-Nepal faction but on March 7, delivered a bombshell by overturning the UML-Maoist merger of May 2018, against which an appeal had been pending for two years.

Mr. Oli took over the reins of the old CPN(UML), reviving prior structures but now excluding Mr. Nepal and his supporters. Some were served suspension notices. The Nepal faction was reduced to a minority; under the law, a split in the party requires a 40% of both the parliamentary party and the central committee. Prachanda, heading the Maoist Centre with 49 members since four had joined hands with Mr. Oli, needed new allies to wage his battles.

Though Mr. Oli had lost majority in the House as Maoist Centre was no longer supporting him, he challenged the Opposition to file a no-confidence-motion, certain that the Maoists, Nepali Congress (NC) and the Janata Samajbadi Party (JSP) would fail to reach an agreement on a new Prime Minister. He was proven right but overtaken by hubris, he took another gamble. He called for a trust vote on May 10 that he lost as 28 UML dissident members were absent and half the JSP voted against him while the other half abstained.

Presidential improprieties

The Opposition again failed to present an alternative. In a questionable decision, Mr. Oli was sworn in by President Bhandari on May 14 as Prime Minister under Article 76(3) that permits the leader of the largest party to be sworn in and given 30 days to demonstrate majority. Within a week, Mr. Oli announced that he would not seek another vote of confidence. Without resigning, however, he advised the President to explore other options. Within a day, as rumours gained ground that NC leader Sher Bahadur Deuba had managed to gather support from 149 members, including 49 Maoists, 26 UML dissidents and 12 from the JSP, Mr. Oli rushed to the President and gave her a list of 153 supporters that included all 121 UML and 32 JSP members, including UML dissidents and JSP members who voted against him on May 10. Without bothering to verify, President Bhandari dissolved the House and announced fresh elections, justifying that the rival claims exceeded the strength of the House.

Since 2008 when a new Constituent Assembly was elected to prepare a constitution for a federal republic, Nepal has seen three NC Prime Ministers

(G.P. Koirala, Sushil Koirala and Deuba), two Maoist Prime Ministers (Prachanda twice and Baburam Bhattarai), three UML Prime Ministers (Nepal, Khanal and Oli sworn in thrice) and a Chief Justice as caretaker Prime Minister in 2013. None has damaged the Constitution and the political fabric of Nepal as much as Mr. Oli, together with an obliging Ms. Bhandari. Opposition leaders have challenged the House dissolution in the Supreme Court but its outcome is uncertain. Meanwhile a raging COVID-19 puts a question mark on the election. In case an election is held, Mr. Oli will campaign on a nationalist anti-Indian platform.

It is clear that political uncertainty will continue. India has traditionally supported constitutionalism and multi-party democracy in Nepal. At this juncture, it needs to remain actively engaged with all the political actors, and equally importantly, avoid being perceived as partisan.

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