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[Home](#) > Nepal: Border claim over Lipu lekh Area Gets Ugly:

Nepal: Border claim over Lipu lekh Area Gets Ugly:

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In our paper 6578, we had indicated that the construction and inauguration of the link road in Lipulekh area by India may help the beleaguered Oli to latch onto this issue and take a nationalistic stand (read anti India) to distract public attention from the real political issue of his losing the confidence of his party. At that point Oli did not but now with the senior party leaders totally against him, it looks that Oli is using this opportunity to whip up anti Indian sentiments to divert attention. But the language he used against India in the spread of Wuhan Virus in Nepal was totally unacceptable and does not befit the dignity of a person holding the rank of a Prime Minister.

On November 19, Oli while responding to the spread of Wuhan Virus in Nepal blamed India for the spread of the virus to the neighbouring countries and said that the Virus was more “lethal” than that of the Chinese and Italian ones.

We have in the last two papers on Nepal indicated the poor infrastructure the Nepalese have in checking and monitoring the returnees for Virus infection. In many instances the migrants were not tested at all. We had mentioned about the migrant labour from India and elsewhere assembling in thousands in Doti and Jumla. We had also mentioned about thousands of migrants who left India but hanging around in the border for want of instructions from Kathmandu and also of many sneaking out into Nepal without the knowledge of the authorities. There are also over 120,000 migrants waiting in the Gulf to return but no steps have been taken by the Government in Nepal so far to get them back as India has done. These labour are already having the feeling of being abandoned by their Government.

Oli's remarks of Indian Virus being more lethal than the Chinese or the Italian ones appear to have been done more out of frustration and anger but is still not acceptable.

A word about the link road to Tibet through Lipulekh area. The road which has been under construction for many years has followed the

traditional trade and pilgrimage route to Mount Kailas through the Lipulekh area. There was no objection either from the Nepalese authorities till now. As late as November 19, 2019, the Nepalese Foreign Office Spokesman said that the Government will hold talks with the southern neighbour to resolve existing border dispute through diplomatic channels.

On 19th May to a question in Parliament, Oli said that Limpiyadhura, Kalapani and Lipulekh all belong to Nepal and that he will get them back at any cost. But yet he added that his Government will hold talks at the diplomatic level with India and resolve the issue at the latest. If the idea was to sort out the issue through diplomatic channel why this vituperative outburst against India on the Corona Virus spread in Nepal that was totally unrelated to the border issue?

Oli also raised the level of confrontation by getting an official map of Nepal including the claimed territories approved by the Cabinet a day before and formally releasing it on the 20th of May. These territories were not included in the map that was issued with the 2015 Constitution and would therefor need a constitutional amendment now.

Sure enough- there was an immediate response from India. The Ministry of External Affairs India, called it as an unjustified cartographic assertion and called upon Nepal to respect India's sovereignty and integrity.

Oli has to get ready for the party meeting to be held anytime today to decide on his future. It depends on Bam Dev Gautham now who has been promised a safe Parliamentary seat and eventually the post of Prime Minister. Will he (Gautham) wait so long? The Chinese will also be interested to ensure the continuity of Oli and have already been talking to other NCP leaders. In terms of size, it is to be remembered that the Nepal Communist Party is the fourth largest in Asia after China, Vietnam and North Korea!

Tags:

[Wuhan Virus](#) [1]

[border dispute](#) [2]

Category:

[Papers](#) [3]

Countries:

[India](#) [4]

[Nepal](#) [5]

Topics:

[Political](#) [6]

[General](#) [7]

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Links

- [1] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/taxonomy/term/2098>
- [2] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/taxonomy/term/2106>
- [3] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/papers>
- [4] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/india>
- [5] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/nepal>
- [6] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/political>
- [7] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/general>