

GOVERNANCE

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UML scrutinized over business mogul's donation: rising demands for policy amendments to bar such transactions

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Photo By Setopati

Min Bahadur Gurung, the owner of Bhat-Bhateni Supermarket, Nepal's largest department store chain, has donated land to Nepal's communist party, **CPN-UML**, to build the party's central office. The party currently chairs the government. About 10 ropani 14 aana of land, which is about 0.55 hectares of land in Kirtipur, was donated to UML. Prime Minister Oli, president of UML, concealed the identity of the donor to the party members, referring to him as an altruist, but the two jointly performed rituals for commencing construction of the party's central office.

Min Bahadur Gurung's donation to the Prime Minister's party is being perceived as a form of indirect bribery, performed legally to advance his entrepreneurial and personal interests. In 2023, Min Bahadur Gurung was arrested on Lalita-Niwas land embezzlement case and is currently out on bail. PM Oli had strongly endorsed Gurung's innocence as the then leader of the opposition. When contextualized with the previous government's action on Gurung's VAT fraud and embezzlement of public land, this donation can be seen as an attempted political bailout.

The controversial donation has already fueled public's resentment towards the ruling party in Nepal and it has the potential to further degrade the civic perception of politics, politicians, and the democratic republican system, which is yet to set its roots firmly. Moreover, a lack of a proper legal framework prevents capitalists, and accused or convicted individuals from donating to political parties. Such deals can only lead to monopolistic practices where key decisions might favor specific individuals or companies with ill interests.

Read More: [Setopati](#), [Ratopati](#), [The Kathmandu Post](#), [The Indian Express](#), [NepalKhabar](#)

Governance issues of the week

- 1 The Chief Ministers of Sudur Paschim and Madhes provinces have expressed their dissatisfaction over the delay in the formation of necessary laws that include the police force integration to the provinces. CM Shah of Sudur Paschim stated that the federal government must give the provinces an alternative if the bill is not passed, while CM Singh of Madhes stated that due to the delay and ambiguity in the roles and responsibilities of the provinces, the provincial government cannot exhibit progress.
Read More: [Online Khabar](#), [Online Khabar](#)
- 2 PM Oli has requested Japan's support for the reconstruction of the BP Highway in his meeting with the Japanese ambassador. Over 12 kilometers of the highway were swept away by the recent devastating floods. The government has estimated the cost for highway reconstruction to be Rs 20–25 million rupees.
Read More: [The Kathmandu Post](#)
- 3 Nepalis have sent around \$705,850,000 abroad in just one month (Shrawan) for education. Even though the number of Non-Objection Certificates (NOC's) distributed has plummeted this year, more money has been sent abroad for education purposes.
Read More: [ekantipur](#)
- 4 In response to the Supreme Court's call for complaints against the proposed Justices of the Supreme Court, Nripa Dhwoj Niroula and Nityanand Pandey, on October 1, two complaints had been filed against Niroula. One was for the selection process of the justices and the other was in relation to the construction of the Supreme Court building.
Read More: [myRepublica](#)
- 5 The Nepal Army has confirmed that no Nepali peacekeeper was harmed in the recent attack by Israel. PM Benjamin Netanyahu has claimed Israel had asked the peacekeeper to stay away from the combat zone before launching an attack, and the action was not deliberate.
Read More: [The Himalayan Times](#)
- 6 Out of the 753 local-level governments, only 25 women are in the top executive posts. Despite the constitution ensuring at least 33% participation of women across all local governments, only 3% of them have a woman as their municipal chairperson or the deputy municipal chairperson.
Read More: [Annapurna Post](#)

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