

GOVERNANCE

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New Government Committee Draws Criticism Amid NEA Trunk Line Dispute

भीराम

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The Nepal Electricity Authority's (NEA) dedicated trunk line controversy has resurfaced following the government's formation of a new three-member committee, bypassing the earlier Lal Commission. Announced without a deadline on a public holiday, the new committee formed by the Ministry of Energy has raised concerns over its necessity, intent, and institutional coherence in Nepal. Below is an overview of the origin and developments of the controversy.

The root of the controversy dates back to 2009, when NEA introduced dedicated and trunk lines to provide uninterrupted electricity to key industries during long hours of load-shedding. Industries agreed to pay a 65% premium tariff in exchange for consistent power supply, which helped ensure their operational stability. However, the elimination of load-shedding in 2016 under the leadership of Kulman Ghising shifted the dynamics. Many industries argued the tariffs were excessive and began defaulting on payments, citing adverse impacts on productivity and profitability. This also led to a long legal and financial dispute between both parties.

In January 2024, the government established the Lal Commission to address the longstanding disputes. The commission's report recommended that arrears related to the dedicated and trunk lines be collected based on Time-of-Day (ToD) meter readings. By August, NEA issued a 90-day deadline for industries to clear outstanding dues. Those failing to comply faced power cuts in October. However, considering electricity to not be a viable solution, the cabinet directed NEA to reconnect the power lines within 24 hours and recover dues within 15 days based on TOD meter readings. NEA reconnected the power lines accordingly.

Now, the new committee formed by the government to address the same issue raises concerns about potential bias favoring industries. Out of 325 industries, 264 have already cleared their dues, leaving only 35 yet to comply. Collectively, about **NRs. 22.24 billion** is remaining to be paid by the industries. According to the NEA, such disputes should be resolved through the legal framework outlined in the Electricity Regulatory Commission Act, 2017, which mandates that disputes between consumers and the NEA be settled by the commission within 90 days, with provisions for appeals in the High Court if necessary.

NEA officials fear that repeated government intervention could lead to industries evading payments, receiving undue discounts, or influencing investigations in their favor. While the government's involvement in resolving disputes may be justified under certain conditions, it should avoid appearing partial or forming unnecessary committees that could undermine NEA's authority and established processes.

Read more: [Naya Patrika](#)

Governance Issues of the Week

1. The selection of 8 deans, 17 campus chiefs, and 7 joint examination controllers at Tribhuvan University has been stalled since September 2024 due to political interference and bargaining. Although the selection committee had called for applications, the executive council, chaired by the university vice chancellor, has yet to make a decision. This delay follows conflicting claims over the dean positions from Nepal's three major political parties.

Read more: [Kantipur](#)

2. The Ministry of Culture, Tourism, and Civil Aviation has formed a task force to investigate the artificial scarcity of airline tickets and the increased prices as a result. The task force is asked to swiftly submit their findings to the ministry. To further look into the matter, the ministry has also sought airfare rates from 11 international flights operating in Nepal, which have been accordingly submitted.

Read more: [The Himalayan Times](#)

3. The Ministry of Health and Population is distributing HPV vaccines to 1,70,000 adolescent females to prevent the increasing cervical cancer mortality in women. Female students in grades 6-10 as well as children ages 10 to 14 will receive the vaccine on the occasion of International Cancer Day. 27,080 health volunteers will be mobilized across 18,900 schools and 8,200 other centers for the purpose.

Read more: [Kantipur](#)

4. The Provincial Coordination Council, meant to bridge the gap between local and federal governments, has failed to show its effectiveness. The 12-member council, formed based on the recommendation of the Chief Minister, is affected by the frequent government changes, which have also undermined its efforts to ensure policy alignment, strategic partnerships, shared rights, and equitable resource distribution.

Read more: [Onlinekhabar](#)

5. The tripartite electricity trade deal between India, Nepal, and Bangladesh has come to fruition, with 40 MW of electricity from noon to midnight on November 5th. As per the agreement signed by Nepal and Bangladesh on October 3, Nepal will export 40 MW annually from mid-June to mid-November for five years. Nepal is expected to sell 144,000 MWh (megawatt-hours) of electricity for five months at 6.4 US cents per unit.

Read More: [myRepublica](#)

6. The National Private and Boarding Schools Association (NPABSAN) has decided that private schools across Janakpur Sub-Metropolitan City will shut down on 17th November, in response to sub-metropolis orders to pay collected dues from students under the scholarship program. The scholarships were provided to students from grades 11 and 12, but the issue has led to entire schools being shut down, resulting in an estimated 35,000 students being unable to attend school.

Read More: [Ukaalo](#)

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