

GOVERNANCE

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The 135-Ropani Land Dispute in Pokhara Expose Political-Rent-Seeking Nexus!

WEEKLY

Corruption involving political elites and land mafias is increasingly becoming normalized in Nepal, with the recent controversy surrounding a 135-ropani land parcel in Pokhara providing yet another troubling example. The scandal, which has already led to the resignation of former Minister of Federal Affairs and General Administration Rajkumar Gupta, reveals the strong nexus between politicians, bureaucrats, middlemen, and legal loopholes in land ownership disputes.

At the center of the case is a plot of land located in Lichighari, Pokhara Metropolitan City-16. Originally granted to the Rana family as Birta land in 1920s AD, the property has seen layers of ownership changes over decades — from informal transactions to official land certifications under various names. Although court rulings in the 1980s acknowledged claims from the Rana descendants (notably Durgadevi and Geetadevi Shah), they failed to align the land with survey maps or involve all key stakeholders, leaving room for exploitation.

Fast forward to 2023, the Shah family revived their claim, which also prompted middlemen to step in, allegedly to broker deals and "resolve" the complex ownership status. This led to a political scandal, with a leaked audio suggesting a bribe of NPR 5.3 million to transfer the chief of the Land Revenue Office, Kaski and to manipulate the Land Issue Resolving Commission's decisions. Following the leak, Minister Gupta resigned, but no legal action has been taken against the implicated brokers — notably Sujan Lama, who, despite his role in the alleged bribery, remains free and politically affiliated.

The local administration and police have distanced themselves, stating investigations will only proceed with higher-level instructions. This hands-off approach has only fueled suspicions of political protection and selective accountability. Locals who have legally acquired and occupied the land for generations — many from the Thakali community — now feel threatened, alleging harassment and intimidation from individuals claiming to be legal heirs or their "representatives."

What makes this case particularly alarming is not just the size or value of the land, but also the normalization of backdoor dealings at the ministerial level. That a minister's residence was allegedly used to finalize bribe negotiations speaks volumes about how deeply entrenched these practices have become.

This case also highlights several systemic problems in Nepal's governance. First is the failure of the state to resolve historical land disputes through transparent and legally coherent processes. Secondly, it highlights the pervasive role of brokers and political figures in influencing public offices for private gain, including the transfer of civil servants and appointment of commission officials. Lastly, the silence or inaction of regulatory bodies to take swift actions despite formal complaints.

Read more: [Setopati](#)

Governance Issues of the Week

- Govt Spends 32% of Capital Budget in Final Month:** The federal government spent 32% of its annual capital budget in the final month of the fiscal year, continuing its pattern of year-end expenditure. According to the Financial Comptroller General's Office, capital spending rose from NPR 143.38 billion in mid-June to NPR 211.35 billion by mid-July, with NPR 67.96 billion spent in the last month. While this is NPR 39 billion more than the same period last year, overall capital expenditure reached only 59.96% of the annual target.
Read more: [Online Khabar](#)
- CIB Probes Trafficking Linked to Spain Conference:** Following public criticism, the Central Investigation Bureau (CIB) has formed a special committee to probe suspected human trafficking linked to a UN conference in Seville, Spain. While Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli led a 21-member official delegation to Seville from June 28 to July 4, reports say 82 others also travelled claiming to be participants, with 55 more also stopped at Nepal's airport. Many reportedly stayed in Spain or moved to other European countries, raising suspicions of a larger trafficking scheme.
Read more: [The Kathmandu Post](#)
- Nepal Rastra Bank Unveils Monetary Policy 2025:** The Nepal Rastra Bank has unveiled the Monetary Policy 2025, introducing several key changes. The interest rate corridor has been revised, with the upper limit reduced to 6% and the lower to 2.75%. Individuals going abroad can now receive up to USD 3,000. Banks can issue home loans up to NPR 30 million and provide up to NPR 1 million in agricultural loans based on internal evaluation. The policy also allows banks to raise capital and calls for a review of cooperatives' bonus distribution.
Read more: [Setopati](#)
- Government Fails to Endorse School Education Bill:** Despite ending teachers' protests on April 30 after an agreement to table the School Education Bill, the government has failed to endorse it after three attempts. Chief Whips of the Nepali Congress and UML pledged in writing to pass the bill by June 29, but it remains stalled. UML lawmaker and Parliamentary Subcommittee Chair Chhabilal Bishwakarma received over 1,700 proposed amendments from lawmakers—many contradictory—delaying the legislative process. The Teachers' Federation is now renewing pressure on the government.
Read more: [The Kathmandu Post](#)
- RSP collects over 2.4 Million Signatures in Lamichhane Solidarity Campaign:** The Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP) says 2,457,618 people backed its 25-day signature campaign supporting President Rabi Lamichhane amid ongoing legal proceedings. Lamichhane has been accused of multiple cooperative fraud cases in different districts and remains in judicial custody. The RSP claims the campaign reflects public solidarity and protests for what the party calls political vengeance against Lamichhane, while calling for a fair judicial process.
Read more: [Nayapatrika](#)
- Kanchanpur CDO campaigns to demolish chhaupadi huts:** Following the death of 28-year-old Kamala Aauji Damai from a snakebite while sleeping in a chhaupadi hut in Krishna Municipality-1, Kanchanpur, the District Administration Office has directed all nine local governments in the district to demolish such huts. The office issued the order on 14th July, urging immediate action to end this harmful tradition. Krishna Municipality has also warned all its wards of a Rs. 10,000 fine and legal action if huts are not dismantled within 15 days.
Read more: [Kantipur](#)



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Nepal Governance Weekly is an analytical update of Nepal's current affairs based on media and real sources mining, to sensitize the communities on hot news on various governance issues from the perspective of accountability.

Presented by



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