

NEPAL

# GOVERNANCE

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## Supreme Court Blames the soil in Minister-related Corruption Case

Photo from Ekantipur

In a shocking ruling that has raised questions about the integrity of Nepal's justice system, the Supreme Court has provided a clean chit to the alleged construction company and contractors involved in the Sikta Irrigation Project corruption case. The Court cited dissoluble soil as the cause of the project's failure, absolving all parties of any wrongdoing.

The Sikta Irrigation Project is a national pride project that began in the fiscal year 2005/06 with the aim of providing irrigation facilities to 42,755 hectares of land in Banke. The project has so far cost NRs. 13 billion. Kalika Construction, owned by the current Minister for Urban Development, Bikram Pandey, was contracted to construct the canal of the project in December 2011. However, the canal suffered multiple damages and required repairs soon after completion.

In June 2016, the government spent 15 million to repair the canal, but the repairs were unsuccessful. In December 2018, the Commission for Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA) registered a corruption case against 21 people, including Minister Pandey, with an alleged sum of over eight billion rupees. Pandey was charged with a claimed amount of Rs 2.13 billion.

Despite these allegations, Pandey was appointed as the Minister of Urban Development while the case was still pending. The recent Supreme Court decision to absolve the construction company and contractors of any wrongdoing has raised concerns about the extent to which Nepal's justice system can cover up the misdoings of political leaders.

Read more : [EKantipur](#)

### Governance Issues of the Week

1. The Election Commission has published the 881-person voter list for the March 9 presidential election. The list includes the names of 331 federal parliament members and 550 members of provincial assemblies. Any complaints on the list will be scrutinized on 24 February. Nominations for president will be registered by 25 February 2023.

Read more: [Republica](#)

2. A writ petition has been filed at the Supreme Court against the President's decision to pardon the fines imposed on the candidates who didn't submit their election expenses from the local elections in May 2022. The commission had imposed a fine of up to NRs. 750,000 to a large number of the candidates who ignored the repeated warnings.

Read more: [The Kathmandu Post](#)

3. The Kathmandu Metropolitan City (KMC) is preparing to install CCTV cameras in the major places in Kathmandu. NRs. 105.9 million had been allocated in the fiscal year 2079/80 to install 54 CCTVs in 25 wards of the KMC. Meanwhile, the KMC has also allocated NRs. 60 million for communication security in the city.

Read more : [Online Khabar](#)

4. Since the winter bill of parliament session began on January 9, 2023, the government has only registered one bill to amend laws related to Competition Promotion and Market Protection Act. Lawmakers insist that if the government doesn't present any business to Parliament, it should still answer MPs' queries raised in the parliament.

Read more: [EKantipur](#)

5. The federal government has proposed the idea of developing disability villages in partnership with provinces in a new procedure. The villages will provide different services, including skill development, education, healthcare, employment, etc., to differently-abled individuals who lack proper caretaking.

Read more: [The Himalayan Times](#)

6. As per the recent data, 14 rhinos have died so far in the current fiscal year 2022/23. Among them, three rhinos were killed by poachers inside the national park and forest area. The Department of National and Wildlife Conservation has launched an investigation following the incident and increased security.

Read more: [Rising Nepal](#)

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