On April 5th, 2023, the Civil Registration Department, a government body under Nepal Ministry of Home Affairs, issued a new circular on birth registration that has sparked controversy among women's rights advocates. While the circular includes three new provisions to benefit children born to single mothers, it reinforces patriarchal norms and portrays them as second-class citizens through various means. Women’s rights advocates are calling for the government to make holistic mechanisms to reduce structural issues that perpetuate gender inequality.

These provisions, in themselves, were necessary, and no criticism has been made around it. But the use of terms such as “mother’s surname” or “mother’s surname and address” has been heavily criticized by women’s rights advocates, arguing that it reinforces patriarchal norms and implies a woman's married status before her marital age. While the certificate will be issued from the mother’s current address, the certificate will not be dismissed, and a new one will be issued from the father’s address on the basis of father’s address. If the child lives with the maternal family, the certificate will also be provided. If the child’s father is unknown, then the child will be provided birth certificate based on her maternal surname, while the certificate will be issued from the mother’s current address. A certificate will also be issued from the maternal address with the mother’s permission. However, if the father’s whereabouts are discovered after the birth registration is completed, the original birth certificate will be dismissed, and a new one will be issued from the father’s address on the basis of the father’s address.

This incident highlights the Nepal government's apparent progressive facade that masks deeply ingrained patriarchy. While the government claims to preach about gender equality and pledges to grant equal rights to women, it subjugates women and portrays them as second-class citizens through various means. Women's rights advocates are calling for the government to make holistic mechanisms to reduce structural issues that perpetuate gender inequality.

3. According to recent reports, Civil Hospital has been buying 60 to 90 oxygen cylinders every day from commercial suppliers instead of using its own two internal oxygen plants which have been inactive for over a year. This decision is costing the hospital approximately NRs. 1.6 million per month, which is NRs. 900,000 more than what it would cost to run the plants.

4. The government has significantly reduced its economic growth targets following a mid-term review. The earlier projection of 8% growth has been reduced to 4.5% due to several factors, including insufficient foreign investment, slow economic growth of only 0.8% in the first quarter of the year, import ban, low capital spending by the government, liquidity issues, and ongoing issues. Despite the existence of the “Urban Area Public Transport Management Act-2079,” its implementation is insufficient, leading to ongoing issues.

5. Nepal is currently experiencing a surge in coronavirus cases, with 308 confirmed cases of XBB.1.16, a sub-variant of Omicron, already reported. However, due to reduced funding for COVID-19 infrastructure, only a limited number of polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests are being conducted, and vaccines are available only for priority groups.

6. The Nepal Intermodal Transport Development Board (NITDB) has initiated plans to construct five new dry ports at key locations along the Nepal-China border, including Nechung (Mustang), Olangchung Gola (Taplejung), Yari (Humla), Kimathanka (Sankhuwasabha), and Rasuwagadhi, exist along the Nepal-China border. These dry ports, Tatopani and Gola (Kailali), Goka (Humla), Gola (Darchula), and Gola (Taplejung), are reportedly costing the government approximately NRs. 1.6 million per month, which is NRs. 900,000 more than what it would cost to run the plants.

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