

GOVERNANCE

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Nepotism and Controversy : The Tangled Web of Personal Secretaries in Politics

WEEKLY

Photo by Naya Patrika

The appointment of personal secretaries of the leaders of major political parties has long been a matter of significant concern as it often raises questions about nepotism and transparency. It is a common observation that these secretaries are often selected based on family connections rather than their expertise in the relevant field. Such appointments have led to a multitude of controversies surrounding the leaders and their personal secretaries. However, despite the persistent controversies, leaders are reluctant to make any changes due to the fear that their own secrets might be exposed to the public.

The role of a personal secretary should encompass qualities such as reliability and capability. Without a clear distinction between right and wrong, leaders can easily be manipulated by self-serving groups. Personal secretaries hold the responsibility not only to manage meetings and schedules but also to safeguard the leader from issues that may arise out of self-interest. Unfortunately, there have been cases where personal secretaries appointed based on kinship have proven to be detrimental. One such instance involves the former Home Minister, Ram Bahadur Thapa's decision to appoint his own son as his personal secretary has come under scrutiny, as his son now faces allegations of involvement in a scandal related to Bhutanese refugees.

Another recent case highlights the concerns surrounding the involvement of family members in official foreign visits. Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal faced questions when his daughter, Ganga Dahal, attended a meeting with India's National Security Advisor and Foreign Secretary during his visit to India. It is particularly alarming that there was no representative from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs present in that meeting. This incident is not an isolated occurrence, as it is not the first time Pushpa Kamal Dahal has included family members in official foreign engagements.

To ensure that the secrets of influential leaders remain contained, their inner circles are increasingly restricted. This practice aims to prevent the disclosure of crucial information beyond the confines of their trusted circle. However, it is crucial to recognize the importance of competence and integrity when appointing personal secretaries, as their role directly impacts the leader's effectiveness and reputation.

Read more: [Ekantipur](#)

Governance Issues of the Week

1. The provincial governments have appointed civil servants without enacting the 'Federal Civil Service Act', which governs the appointment of civil servants. According to the data obtained from the provinces, 5185 civil servants have been appointed by the Provincial Public Service Commission. These employees have been appointed for both provincial and local services.

Read more: [Naya Patrika](#)

2. The Nepalese government's failure to deliver on promised funds for start-ups has left hundreds of aspiring entrepreneurs disillusioned and skeptical of government support. Despite receiving over 400 proposals, the Department of Industry approved only half of them for subsidized loans, the successful applicants were to get up to Rs2.5 million at 3 percent interest for this fiscal year but with the fiscal year ending soon, there is no sign of the promised funds.

Read more: [The Kathmandu Post](#)

3. The Post Enumeration Survey (PES) conducted in Nepal has revealed that 771,998 individuals were not included in the National Census 2021, indicating an error rate of 2.73%. The survey, conducted by the independent Labour Studies Programme of Tribhuvan University, found that the actual population of Nepal is approximately 29.9 million, compared to the earlier reported figure of 29.16 million. The PES identified the exclusion of 2.58% of the population during the counting process, while 0.15% resulted from duplication.

Read more: [The Himalayan Times](#)

4. The Immigration Office at Tribhuvan International Airport has returned 117 workers who were destined for Kuwait. The Immigration Office at the airport conducted thorough checks on visa stickers and other visa-related documents, leading to the determination that the workers were sent back due to discrepancies in their visa classification. The workers have now called for an investigation into the visa issue, highlighting an increase in the number of workers with similar visas heading to Kuwait.

Read more: [Online Khabar](#)

5. The Traffic Police in the Kathmandu Valley have taken action against 876,141 vehicles for violating traffic rules. Among the offenses, vehicles were fined for driving in the wrong lane, using intoxicating substances while driving, operating vehicles during red lights. Furthermore, vehicles were fined for speeding, for improper parking, for not using seat belts, honking unnecessarily, using mobile phones while driving, and overloading. In the Kathmandu Valley alone, there are around 1.2 to 1.5 million vehicles in operation.

Read more: [Naya Patrika](#)

6. Residents of Kalikot, Raskot-7 whose houses were destroyed by a landslide, face disappointment as an integrated settlement falls short. Only 73 houses were built out of the planned 100, leaving families without proper homes. Allocated NPR 50 million proved insufficient forcing locals to take on debt, unable to sell or use their houses. Essential infrastructure like water, schools, and electricity is lacking. Disillusioned, residents are reluctant to move due to the settlement's shortcomings.

Read more: [Annapurna Post](#)

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