

GOVERNANCE WEEKLY

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Rising Incidents of Fire Calls for Increasing Fire Truck Capacity

Fires have become a widespread problem across Nepal. According to the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office of Nepal Police, approximately 3,733 houses have been completely destroyed by fire in the last three years. It has caused the loss of 325 lives due to suffocation, and 1,379 people have been injured. Similarly, Nepal has incurred a total loss of about NRs. 7.29 billion due to the damage caused by the fires.

Despite the alarming statistics, the capacity to combat fire remains severely limited. Although the responsibility of disaster preparedness and response falls under the responsibility of local units, only 109 among 753 local governments own fire trucks while an overwhelming 644 local governments do not. As of now, there are only 151 fire trucks in Nepal, with only 134 operational. This shortage is particularly severe in the Karnali province, where there are only 5 fire trucks in 79 local governments.

But while the focus on disaster preparedness and response has been negligible, huge investments have been made to aid infrastructure development. For instance, there are about 26,000 dozers in operation in Nepal, which also shows glaring disparity in the priorities of all tiers of government.

There are disaster management committees across 753 local units in Nepal. However, the committees are active only post-disaster. It is important for the committees to also invest their time in identifying and mapping high-risk disaster areas, raising public awareness, preparing institutional and policy mechanisms, building mitigation and response strategies etc.

Read more: [Annapurna Post](#)

Governance Issues of the Week

1. The Nepal Telecommunications Authority and Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal (CAAN) are facing operational difficulties as its several staff members are under investigation by the Commission for Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA) for alleged corruption in acquiring mobile device management systems (MDMS) and wide-body aircraft. The employees are currently suspended in line with the Corruption Prevention Act 2059.

Read more: [Naya Patrika](#)

2. The Supreme Court has sustained the order of the Patan High Court against the release of the seven accused in the fake Bhutanese refugee scam including the former minister Top Bahadur Rayamajhi. Rayamajhi and others had appealed to the Supreme Court against the sub-ordinate court's orders. The accused have been under investigation in the case since May 2023.

Read more: [The Kathmandu Post](#)

3. The Nepal government has registered the Media Council Bill in the National Assembly, which had previously been inactive after failing to be tabled in parliament. The bill introduces provisions such as mandating journalists to obtain identification cards from the media council, requiring the media to establish a self-regulatory mechanism to address audience complaints and feedback, and the government to create an online complaint mechanism.

Read More: [Setopati](#)

4. The Nepal government and Qatar government have agreed on areas including culture and arts, education, youth and sports, industry, and trade during the two-day visit of Qatari Emir, Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al on 23 and 24 April 2024. However, they did not reach any breakthrough agreement on investment or foreign employment considering over 400,000 Nepali citizens work as migrant laborers in Qatar.

Read more: [Online Khabar](#)

5. As the existing laws are inadequate to address all the concerns related to the Saving and Credit Cooperatives, the government has decided to review the legal framework of the financial cooperatives. The updated provision aims to create mechanisms to solve and ensure the security of the depositors.

Read more: [Kantipur](#)

6. The reconstruction of Dharahara and its surrounding structures remains incomplete, despite extending the deadline six times. The government had initiated its reconstruction following the 2015 Earthquake with the aim to finish the project within three years. The project has incurred costs of 900 million so far, with an anticipated additional cost of 100 million.

Read more: [Naya Patrika](#)

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