

GOVERNANCE

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Urgent Call for Accountability on Bal Mandir Land Embezzlement Case

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The Kathmandu District Court's issuance of arrest warrants for 20 individuals marks a significant development in the case of illegal embezzlement of 1.45 hectares of land belonging to Bal Mandir by Brihaspati Vidyasadan. The arrest warrant came following the complaint of Bal Mandir against the Brihaspati Vidyasadan, run by the Vishal Group in the Central Investigative Bureau (CIB). Among those implicated are former Nepal Bal Sangathan chairperson Rita Singh Baidhya and other members, alongside former Brihaspati chairpersons and directors.

Under Baidhya's leadership, the agreement to lease the land of Bal Mandir to Brihaspati Vidyasadan for NRs. 9 million per year was made in 2048 BS and valid until 2088 BS. Subsequently, the school subleased 0.27 hectares of the land to Rai School for an annual sum of NRs. 6 million. The initial lease agreement to Brihaspati Vidyasadan stated a 5% rent increase every two years excluding the first and last five years of the agreement. However, 16 years before the expiration of the lease, Brihaspati Vidhyasadan secured a mysterious deal of 1.48 hectares of Bal Mandir land for 6 rupees per square foot. In addition to the deal secured for the surprisingly minimal amount, a deal to hand over the land for another 43 years from 2088 BS was also sealed on the same date.

In response to the land embezzlement issue in 2076 BS, the government established an investigation committee. Within four months, the committee submitted its report, with a recommendation to conduct an investigation on the former members of Bal Mandir and Brihaspati Vidhyasadan. However, despite the report's completion, the Ministry of Women, Children, and Senior Citizens has neither disclosed it to the public nor initiated any concrete actions, raising concerns about accountability and transparency in addressing the matter.

Read more: [Ukaalo](#)

Governance Issues of the Week

1. Nepal has secured the 74th position in the World Press Freedom Index 2024, with 60.52 points, in the global rankings of Reporters Without Borders. This marked an improvement of 21 spots from the previous year and positioned Nepal as a top South Asia country in terms of press freedom. The factors determining the ranking include political, legal, economic, and socio-cultural context and safety.
Read more: [The Kathmandu Post](#)
2. The Vice-Chancellor of Tribhuvan University has created 4 distinct committees to assess and recommend reforms. It includes a committee to resolve issues on human resource management and recruitment; a committee to review the guidelines related to equivalence; a committee to study policy coherence within TU aligning it both with TU Vision 2030 and the Vice-Chancellor's paper; and a committee to prepare recommendations for the basis and criteria to appointing officials.
Read more: [Naya Patrika](#)
3. The Federal Civil Service Bill has received 1,583 proposed amendments from the members of the parliament. The bill was tabled in the parliament on 3rd April 2024 and then opened for amendments. It will be tabled in the parliament in the budget session of the parliament beginning on 10 May 2024. The bill was first registered in the parliament in 2018, but couldn't be introduced in the previous term of the parliament.
Read more: [Online Khabar](#)
4. Wheelchair users and other people with disabilities staged a protest rally at Maitighar Mandala, Kathmandu demanding free community support and individual support services. An agreement was reached between Deepak Bhandari, an activist from Tanahun, who had been on hunger strike with the demand, and the Ministry of Women, Children, and Senior Citizens in March 2024. However, as the government couldn't follow through, Bhandari again started the protest on 30 April 2024.
Read more: [Kantipur](#)
5. In the past 10 months, 21 rhinos have died around the Chitwan National Park, where 2 were killed by poachers and 19 died due to natural reasons including being stuck in swamps, aging, tiger attacks, and electrocution. Currently, there are about 694 rhinos in the park, some of which have been shifted from the western to the eastern region of the park due to favorable habitat.
Read more: [Online Khabar](#)
6. There is an increasing trend of prominent politicians being arrested for investigation and ending up in hospitals citing illness. After a huge criticism, a nine-member committee was formed by the Nepal Medical Council upon the request of the Ministry of Home Affairs to provide suggestions on the issue. The Council has recommended excluding hospital stays when calculating the judicial custody period to the ministry.
Read more: [The Kathmandu Post](#)

Reading

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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.

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