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A. International Relations and Foreign Affairs

News Brief

- The eighth China-South Asia Expo Kicked off in Kunming city of Yunnan province on July 23, which featured some [120 stalls from Nepal](#). Nepal's Foreign Secretary [Sewa Lamsal delivered a keynote speech](#) at the six-day-long forum, which has been termed by China's Vice Minister of Commerce Li Fei as "[one of the most important events](#) for economic and trade exchange between China and South Asian nations."
 - Deteriorating security conditions in Bangladesh caused by anti-government protests led to [hundreds of Nepali nationals fleeing the country](#) both by air and [through the Kakarbhitta border point](#) in Jhapa. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA)'s swift action and [India's cooperation](#) helped over [1400 Nepali students](#) return home by July 23.
 - Foreign Secretary [Sewa Lamsal led Nepal's delegation](#) to the second BIMSTEC Foreign Minister's retreat held in New Delhi, India, on 11-12 July. Reaffirming Nepal's "unwavering commitments to the BIMSTEC process," she emphasized a need for "[collaborative efforts for sustained peace, stability, and prosperity in the region.](#)"
 - Deputy Speaker Indira Rana attended the 4th China Xizang Trans-Himalayan Forum and [met the Chinese Foreign Minister](#) Wang Yi on the 4th of July. Rana expressed Nepal's willingness to expedite the implementation of the Trans-Himalayan platform, as it carries "immense potential and opportunities" to promote not just BRI but also socio-economic cooperation among the countries in this region through increased trade, transit, and investment.
 - Six years after the initial agreement on energy cooperation among Nepal, India, and Bangladesh, the three South Asian countries were [set to finally sign the electricity deal](#) on July 28, which would allow Nepal to export 40 MW of electricity to Bangladesh through India. However, deteriorating protests in Bangladesh halted the process, making the power deal uncertain temporarily.
 - On July 29, the Nepal government recalled five ambassadors and [appointed 18 new ones](#) to the countries including the U.S., U.K., Russia, and China. Dr. Shankar Sharma was repeated as Nepal's Ambassador to India.
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News Analysis

Geopolitical Dimensions of the New Congress-UML Government

A secret negotiation between CPN-UML's K.P. Oli and Nepali Congress (NC)'s Sher Bahadur Deuba materialized in the parliament's two biggest parties joining hands to sideline CPN-Maoist Centre's Pushpa Kamal Dahal, Prachanda, and form a new coalition government, under which Deuba and Oli would take turns to lead the country. It was July 14, 2024, when Oli was appointed the country's prime minister under clause 72(2) of the constitution. Although the constitutional amendment was one of the stated points of agreement between the parties, reducing Dahal's pride in his political salience appears to be the two parties' larger point of convergence. Nevertheless, the government change has again exposed geopolitics' relevance and intensity in Nepali politics.

Immediately after Oli took oath, India's [PM Modi](#) and [Minister of External Affairs \(MEA\) S. Jaishankar](#) congratulated him and Foreign Minister Arzu Rana Deuba, respectively; both China's and India's Ambassadors to Nepal, followed by a host of other foreign diplomats, paid courtesy calls to the newly-appointed ministers, which even [generated criticisms](#) from analysts and observers. While these are standard diplomatic practices, in Nepal, who meets whom first becomes a matter of severe scrutiny, analysis, and discussion. Instead of their content, the theatrics of these meetings, gather the attention of the media, analysts, and observers, which suggests how prominently geopolitics features in Nepali politics and governance.

Against this backdrop, Nepal has gotten the PM and the Foreign Minister from NC and CPN-UML, respectively, whose historical affinities to China and India, respectively, put them on the two extremes of Nepal's foreign policy of balancing these two countries. Consequently, Nepal's foreign policy choices and its international position, vis a vis the India-China or the U.S.-China duality, are likely to be shaped by a lack of a natural convergence at home. This division has been apparent in the case of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in Nepal; while the PM's party officially endorses the initiative and is willing to sign the BRI framework, its coalition partner NC of Arzu Rana Deuba staunchly opposes the overall loan component of the Initiative and has shown clear reluctance to sign the framework agreement. In her recent summon to the federal parliament's International Relations Committee, the foreign minister iterated her party's [preference for grants](#) and indicated a [need for broader discussions](#) on BRI before its implementation.

The NC and UML are not the only sources of polarization on BRI in Nepal. The newly-formed Rashtriya Swatantra Party (RSP) has also demanded a parliamentary discussion on BRI before opting to sign its implementation plan being pushed by China. There are questions even about the overall

need for a separate implementation plan, instead of moving ahead to BRI's execution at a project level. To further complicate the matter, the outgoing PM Dahal's [cabinet approved](#) the "Strengthening the Development Cooperation in Building the Trans-Himalayan Multidimensional Connectivity Network" agreement, aimed at improving connectivity under the BRI. There have also been concerns and criticisms about involving the National Planning Commission (NPC) in the BRI implementation plan drafting process, something that lies under the purview of Nepal's Finance and Foreign Ministries, clearly indicating malpractice. These growing concerns around BRI's implementation in Nepal demonstrate that the issue of BRI is no longer confined under the two ministries of finance and foreign affairs but has become a national issue that requires open and transparent parliamentary discussions.

B. Domestic Politics and Governance

News Brief

- CPN(UML) chair KP Sharma Oli has secured his [forth tenure as the prime minister](#), after forming a government with the Nepali Congress. After taking the oath of secrecy, he inducted 22 ministers in his cabinet.
 - The Nepali Congress and CPN(UML) has reached an agreement to form a new government under the leadership of KP Sharma Oli. They agreed to form a [government in accordance](#) with Article 76 (2) of the Constitution of Nepal. Further, they submitted their proposal for the same to President Poudel on July 12.
 - Pushpa Kamal Dahal lost his vote of confidence on July 12. He secured a mere 63 votes in favor and 194 votes against him. Dahal was forced to take a [vote of confidence](#) after a major partner in the alliance, the CPN(UML) withdrew support to his government. Dahal was the 13th prime minister to assume office in the past 16 years.
 - Rastriya Swatantra Party(RSP) has been embroiled in controversies post their exit from the government. The general secretary of Rastriya Swatantra Party(RSP) Mukul Dhakal has been relieved from his position. Earlier, he had submitted a [report for the party](#) that he made by traveling to 38 districts. The report was made public before submitting or discussion inside the party, which did not go well with the party chair Rabi Lamichhane. Party spokesperson Manish Jha said Dhakal was punished for his misconduct and not the report.
 - Deputy speaker Indira Rana has landed in controversy after her letter to the US Embassy was leaked. The letter, dated February 26,2023 [reveals Rana requesting](#) for preponement of interviews of six people including her. In the letter, Rana states that it is the purpose of
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attending a conference in New York in March 2023. In defense, Rana and her party has stated that the matter has been raised unnecessarily to tarnish her image. Similarly, another parliamentarian and party member Swarnim Wagle was also criticized for [his statement](#) on the Monroe Doctrine. While he said that Nepal should accept that it lies in India's area of interest, many other parliamentarians debated and differed to accept his take, pulling him into a controversy.

News Analysis

Domestic Politics Change its Faces Yet Again

Khadga Prasad Oli, the chair of CPN(UML) has become the [prime minister of Nepal](#) and secured his forth tenure. Oli has become the 14th prime minister to come to power in the last 16 years. Ex-prime minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal(Prachanda) was ousted after CPN(UML) withdrew its support and he lost the vote of confidence. Dahal's government [remained in power](#) for 19 months. Oli's party then partnered with the Nepali Congress to form a new government. The frequent change in the government is owed to the personalities of the leaders combined with their ideologies.

As per the speech in the parliament seeking vote of confidence, Oli mentioned that both the leading parties in the coalition had to come together to form a 'national consensus' government to resolve the political instability, and has agreed to amend the constitution regarding the electoral process for the same. But, amendments seem difficult, as even the parties who voted in favor of Oli would not support to phase out proportional representation, the achievement was materialized after a long history of political struggle.

Furthermore, given the divergence in ideologies of both the leading parties, it may be difficult for both parties to reach consensus on various issues. In lieu of international relations, while China may seek a leeway to sign the BRI implementation plan through PM Oli, it may not be as easy as it seems. PM Oli will not be able to take decisions in terms of foreign policy single handedly as a crucial position of the foreign minister is handled by Congress leader Arzu Rana Deuba. The process of decision making may take a wide discussion and consultations among the leading parties.

Furthermore, regarding the future of the present government, it could serve its full term, given Oli resorts to more collaboration rather than his authoritarian tendency as during the former instance of his prime ministership. The Nepali Congress, post two years, expects to hold an election under party president Deuba.

If Oli becomes assertive as in his last term, there is a possibility of fallout from the government. Then, Maoist Centre and RSP may come into picture again. Until then, they are expected to resolve

their current internal controversies and issues, remaining as the opposition parties. Whether or not the opposition parties are able to resolve their internal conflicts and emerge as a strong opposition is a matter of time.

Instability seems like a major concern in domestic politics at present. One of the leading newspapers in France also termed Nepal as the '[world champion in political](#) instability'. Leaders have continuously been concerned for their seats in the parliament and power only and not thinking about the welfare of the public. While the public has been continuously suffering from various issues and disasters, the leaders seem concerned about their own party and seats, displaying a self-centric approach of administration, instead of using a public-centric approach.

C. Federalism

News Brief

- Sharing power in provinces is always a tricky game whenever a coalition changes at the federal level. With the exception of Madhesh Province, the Nepali Congress and CPN-UML [did agree](#) to lead three of each province's governments in accordance with the Congress-UML agreement. UML is leading the governments in Koshi, Lumbini, and Karnali provinces and Congress is leading the governments in Bagmati, Gandaki, and Sudurpaschim provinces.
 - Soon after the formation of a new federal government between the Nepali Congress and CPN-UML on July 3rd, the UML swiftly [withdrew its support](#) from the provincial governments in Lumbini and Sudurpaschim. Chief Minister Shalikram Jamkattel did resign. The Nepali Congress took the lead in forming a government with the support of the CPN-UML in Bagmati. Bahadur Singh Lama (Tamang) of the Nepali Congress has been [appointed](#) Bagmati Chief Minister, with nine ministers—six from the CPN-UML and three from the Nepali Congress.
 - Similarly, Chief Minister Jekh Bahadur Mahara resigned from Lumbini Province. The [CPN-UML](#) has taken the lead to form a new government with the support of the Nepali Congress. Despite [expectations](#) that Leela Giri of the CPN-UML would become the Chief Minister, Chet Narayan Acharya, also from the UML, was appointed instead. This decision was allegedly influenced by a rivalry between UML vice-chair Bishnu Paudel and General Secretary Shankar Pokharel, with Acharya being aligned with Pokharel.
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- The CPN-UML also [withdrew](#) its support for the Bagmati Province government and resigned from its ministerial positions. The party also urged the government to refrain from making any important decisions, stating that it is now in a minority position.
- Likewise, Madhesh Province Chief Minister Satish Kumar Singh [dismissed](#) six ministers from four political parties, including the Maoist Centre, Unified Socialist, Nagarik Unmukti Party, and Sanghiya Samajbadi Party. The Janamat Party, led by Singh took such a move to form a new coalition with the Nepali Congress and CPN-UML in Madhesh Province.

News Analysis

Political Uncertainty in Nepali Provinces

The unstable and dynamic nature of Nepali politics, with rapid shifts in alliances and government formations, has been affecting provincial governments time and again.

After a week-long standoff, the Janmaat Party in Madhesh Province has [agreed](#) to give the Ministry of Finance to the Congress party. This decision came after threats from Congress to withdraw support from the government. The cabinet expansion also includes other ministries distributed among the Janmaat Party, Congress, and UML. The power-sharing agreement ends a period of political uncertainty in the province.

In Sudurpaschim Province, the province is facing a [budget crisis](#) due to a political deadlock. It has resulted in a halt to revenue collection and expenditure. The same had happened in Koshi Province last year. This has led to significant financial losses for the province. The root of the problem lies in the political rivalry between the ruling party and the opposition, with both sides refusing to compromise. The Chief Minister is in a minority government and has been unable to secure a vote of confidence, while the opposition is demanding his immediate resignation.

The fragility of provinces is to blame Political parties for prioritizing their own interests over the development of provinces, leading to instability and a lack of focus on governance. While it is not the first time that coalition change has affected the province, there is a strong need to establish effective mechanisms for cooperation between federal, provincial, and local levels. Substantial reform is necessary for smooth governance delivery in provinces.

D. Economy and Development

News Brief

- [Nepal faces ongoing challenges in capital expenditure](#), with recent fiscal data showing only 63.47% of allocated funds spent last year, amounting to Rs191.73 billion out of Rs302 billion. Over the past four years, average capital spending has hovered at 60%, indicating sluggish development. The Covid-19 pandemic exacerbated these issues, disrupting projects and contributing to economic slowdowns.
 - Nepal faced a [significant trade deficit of Rs 1,440 billion in the fiscal year 2023/24](#), with total foreign trade amounting to Rs 1,745 billion. Imports totaled Rs 592 billion, while exports amounted to Rs 152 billion, marking a decrease in both import and export figures compared to the previous fiscal year. The trade deficit narrowed slightly by 0.96%, reflecting a decrease in overall foreign trade by 1.33%. India remained Nepal's largest trading partner, contributing to a deficit of Rs 893.17 billion, followed by China with Rs 296.18 billion. Nepal achieved its highest trade surplus with Denmark, amounting to Rs 467.05 million, driven by exports exceeding imports.
 - [Remittances to Nepal surged to Rs 1327.51 billion](#) in the first eleven months of the current fiscal year, as reported by Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB). This marks a notable 19.3% increase compared to the previous year's 22.7% rise. In US Dollar terms, remittance inflows grew by 17.3% to \$9.98 billion during the review period, up from a 13.0% increase in the same period last year. The report also highlighted that 422,936 Nepali workers obtained first-time approval for foreign employment, while 262,705 renewed their entries during this period. These figures reflect a dynamic trend in remittance inflows, which have significantly bolstered Nepal's economic landscape amidst global uncertainties.
 - The [IMF's recent report on Nepal highlights a significant shift in credit growth patterns post-pandemic](#). Before COVID-19, demand-driven credit expansion fueled robust economic growth, supported by remittances and accommodative monetary policies. However, the post-pandemic period saw a supply-driven credit boom, particularly benefiting households and non-tradable sectors due to relaxed financial regulations. This rapid expansion has raised concerns about financial sector vulnerabilities, exacerbated by mounting capital pressures and rising non-performing loans (NPLs). Despite fiscal pressures, Nepal's government has restrained spending to improve fiscal balances.
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- [India has announced a subsidy of Rs 700 crore for Nepal in the upcoming financial year 2024/25](#), an increase of Rs 500 million from the previous year's allocation. This subsidy is part of India's broader regional aid package, which includes Rs 2,680 crore for Bhutan, Rs 400 crore for Maldives, and varying amounts for Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, African countries, and Mongolia, reflecting India's strategic priorities and developmental commitments in the region.
- [Nepal Rastra Bank's new monetary policy aims to boost economic dynamism and growth](#). Governor Mahaprasad Adhikari announced a continuation of a flexible policy to manage liquidity and direct credit towards productive sectors, targeting a 6% GDP growth for the fiscal year. The policy sets a 12% growth rate for broad money supply and a 12% increase in private sector loans.
- The ongoing protests against the reservation system in government services in [Bangladesh](#) [have severely disrupted trade activities along the Phulbari-Banglabandh route, affecting Nepal, India, and Bhutan](#). This vital trilateral trade route, usually bustling with activity, has been deserted for the past 10 days due to the unrest. Despite the cessation of trade, customs revenue at Mechi Customs remains unaffected. This situation has exacerbated the already declining Nepal-Bangladesh trade, with potential further declines looming amidst the ongoing unrest.

News Analysis

[Nepal Rastra Bank has unveiled its monetary policy framework for the current fiscal year, targeting enhancements in economic dynamism and overall growth](#).

The Nepal Rastra Bank's (NRB) monetary policy for the financial year 2081/82 plays a pivotal role in meeting the government's 6% economic growth target. The NRB is concentrating on expanding credit to drive investment and consumption, which are essential for economic advancement. This policy is particularly significant given concerns from the private sector that the current budget may not sufficiently address structural economic challenges. The recent economic recovery is largely credited to the easing of monetary policy, assuming that private-sector credit is utilised productively. In the previous fiscal year, private sector credit contracted due to stricter regulations on working capital loans, elevated lending rates, and weak domestic demand.

[For the first time, the Rastra bank has acknowledged that the country has experienced an 'economic slowdown' over the past two consecutive years, with its new monetary policy](#). Consequently, it was anticipated that the NRB will introduce measures to enhance liquidity, reduce borrowing costs, and

bolster business activities. The board's meticulous planning and dedication to sustainable economic management suggest a strategic approach aimed at both immediate recovery and long-term stability, though its effectiveness remains under scrutiny. Effective monetary policy can influence inflation, exchange rates, and overall economic stability, making market responses crucial in evaluating the policy's success. Continuous monitoring and adjustments will be necessary to adapt to changing economic conditions and ensure that the policy achieves its objectives.

The NRB's recent decision to lower both the policy rate and the bank rate indicates a targeted effort to revitalise economic activity and meet the financial year's growth objectives. By reducing the policy rate from 5.5% to 5% and the bank rate from 7% to 6.5%, the NRB aims to lower borrowing costs for commercial banks, thereby facilitating more affordable credit for businesses and consumers. This move is designed to stimulate investment and consumption, potentially enhancing overall economic activity and aiding in the achievement of growth targets. Additionally, maintaining the deposit collection rate at 3%, the lower bound of the interest rate corridor, ensures that depositors receive a minimum return while the NRB adjusts policy rates to influence lending conditions. This monetary stimulus is particularly relevant during periods of economic uncertainty or slowdown, though it must be carefully managed to mitigate inflation risks and ensure financial stability, as Nepal's economy remains under considerable strain. The effectiveness of these rate cuts will depend on broader economic conditions, including business and consumer confidence, as well as external and domestic factors. While the rate reductions aim to support growth, vigilant monitoring of inflation and financial stability remains essential to maximise their benefits.

The NRB's monetary policy for the financial year 2081/82 reflects a multifaceted approach to economic stabilisation and growth. By projecting inflation to remain within a 5.5% limit, the NRB demonstrates its commitment to price stability, which is crucial for maintaining economic predictability and consumer confidence. Strong foreign exchange reserves, bolstered by robust remittances and reduced imports, provide a buffer against external shocks, with increased tourist arrivals further supporting the balance of payments. The policy's focus on utilising remittances productively, including for infrastructure investment and import substitution, aims to enhance economic productivity and reduce import dependency. Despite fiscal pressures and rising public debt at 42.4% of GDP, the NRB anticipates manageable impacts on interest rates due to favourable liquidity conditions. Support measures for the construction sector, such as extending interest payment periods and relaxing blacklisting rules, are designed to alleviate sector-specific financial strains. The NRB's emphasis on developing [AI guidelines reflects](#) a forward-looking approach to integrating digital technology to enhance financial sector efficiency and security. Overall, the NRB's policy

seeks to balance growth and stability through strategic monetary measures and investments, with ongoing monitoring essential to address potential risks and ensure effective implementation.

The NRB's decision to offer unsecured loans based on future remittance inflows marks a significant policy shift with various economic implications. By providing collateral-free loans to individuals with work permits for foreign employment, the NRB aims to ease liquidity constraints and enhance credit access for those without substantial assets. This approach uses anticipated remittance flows as a form of security, potentially increasing credit accessibility for prospective remitters. Additionally, promoting the use of formal banking channels for remittances could stabilise foreign exchange reserves and improve remittance efficiency. However, this policy introduces new credit risks, as delays or failures in remittance flows could lead to defaults. Effective risk management and oversight will be crucial to mitigate these risks. While the policy promotes financial inclusion and aligns with broader monetary objectives, its success will depend on careful implementation and oversight to ensure the stability of the lending framework and the effective integration of remittance flows into the financial system.

The NRB's recent monetary policy adjustments underscore a strategic focus on macroeconomic stability and financial inclusion through two key measures: managing foreign exchange reserves and enhancing housing finance. The NRB aims to maintain reserves sufficient to cover at least 7 months of imports, reflecting a prudent approach to ensure liquidity and mitigate external economic shocks. As of May, reserves have reached a record 19.67 trillion rupees, comfortably exceeding this target and providing a strong buffer against global volatility. Concurrently, the NRB's decision to increase the first residential home loan limit from 2 crore to 2.5 crore rupees is designed to boost the housing sector and improve access to home ownership. This increase addresses affordability challenges and is expected to stimulate economic activity and investment in real estate. These measures reflect a balanced approach to supporting economic stability and growth, with robust foreign exchange reserves safeguarding against external risks while expanded housing finance promotes domestic demand and financial inclusion.

The NRB's recent monetary policy adjustments illustrate a comprehensive strategy to stimulate economic activity, enhance financial stability, and promote financial inclusion. The increase in the first residential home loan limit from 2 crore to 2.5 crore rupees is a strategic move to boost the housing sector by making higher-value loans more accessible. This adjustment is anticipated to stimulate demand in the real estate market, support construction activities, and potentially drive broader economic growth through increased investment in housing. Similarly, the extension of the debt adjustment period and the review of loan limits for SMEs reflect the NRB's response to low

credit disbursement, providing businesses with greater flexibility to manage their finances and improve credit uptake during economic adjustments. Enhancements in import facilities, such as raising limits for import-related transactions and margin trading, are designed to ease international trade and boost market liquidity, while the removal of institutional margin trading limits aims to promote dynamic capital market activities with no new provisions made on personal or individual loan limits.

The [NEPSE's recent surge reflects positive market sentiment driven by accommodative monetary policy](#), there are concerns about the sustainability of this growth, particularly given the volatility and the rise in prices of financially unstable companies. But Investors should remain cautious and rely on comprehensive analysis to navigate the evolving market conditions. The most notable sectoral performances included substantial gains in life insurance and non-life insurance sub-groups, as well as significant increases in development banks and manufacturing and processing stocks. Conversely, the microfinance sub-group experienced a slight decline.

The NRB's commitment to advancing financial literacy through awareness campaigns underscores its focus on consumer protection and informed financial decision-making. The reforms to improve the business environment could attract more private investment. Collectively, these policy measures are strategically aligned to stimulate economic growth, support key sectors, and strengthen the financial system, balancing immediate economic needs with long-term stability and resilience.

E. National Security and Climate Change

News Brief

- Political parties have come close to agreeing on a [legal arrangement that will reduce the punishment](#) for serious human rights violations during the armed conflict by up to 75 percent. In the meeting held on July 23, 2024, of the working group formed to finalize the bill to amend the Commission for Investigation, Truth and Reconciliation Act, 2071, it was almost agreed that the Attorney General could recommend that the punishment be 25 to 30 percent according to the prevailing law. The working group meeting was held in the presence of Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli and Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba.
 - The Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal (CAAN) has [confirmed the death of 18 people](#) in the Saurya Airlines aircraft crash at Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu on Wednesday. The Pokhara-bound flight, carrying 19 people including two crew members, suffered a runway excursion and plunged into a gorge. One passenger, a Yemeni citizen, was
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among the deceased, while Captain MR Shakya was rescued and admitted to KMC Hospital for treatment. All passengers were airline staff traveling to Pokhara for aircraft maintenance, according to Nepal Police.

- Since May 28, floods and landslides caused by monsoon rains have claimed 133 lives and injured 145 people in Nepal, with seven individuals still missing. Police reports indicate that the [fatalities and injuries are spread across various provinces](#), with Gandaki Province experiencing the highest death toll at 38. Rescue efforts have saved 67 people, and over 4,000 families have been displaced due to the disaster. The two buses swept away by Simaltal mudslides are still missing. The police are continuing their search and rescue operations amidst the ongoing monsoon crisis.
- The Ministry of Health and Population has confirmed a cholera outbreak in Thaiba, Godawari Municipality, Lalitpur, with several [patients testing positive](#). Health officials attribute the outbreak to monsoon rains contaminating water sources, heightening the risk of water-borne diseases. Four residents of a local rehab center have tested positive, with one in critical condition, while three have fled the hospital. [Authorities are mobilizing health teams](#) and collecting water and stool samples to contain the spread.

News Analysis

Nepal faces severe monsoon-induced disasters annually, highlighting the state's chronic lack of preparedness. The Simaltal mudslides and the missing buses have exposed the government's inability to deal with disasters. Since May 28, floods and landslides have claimed 133 lives, injured 145 people, and left seven missing. In 2022, over [100 people died from similar disasters](#), and the 2023 monsoon resulted in 104 deaths from floods, landslides, and lightning. This persistent crisis underscores a glaring disregard by the state for the safety and well-being of its citizens and requires urgent action.

The state's disaster management is reactive rather than preventive, lacking robust infrastructure and preparedness. Nepal currently doesn't have robust strategies to mitigate the devastating impacts of monsoon-related disasters. The country requires a multi-faceted strategy to enhance disaster resilience.

There's minimal investment in disaster-resistant infrastructure. Constructing flood barriers, improving drainage systems, and reinforcing buildings to withstand landslides can significantly reduce monsoon damage. Implementing early warning systems for floods and landslides will provide

crucial lead time for evacuation and protective measures, thereby saving lives. However, the government still resorts to reactive solutions.

Similarly, [disasters have increased due to poorly constructed roads](#) lacking safety measures and proper planning. Inadequate policy clarity on road maintenance, indiscriminate soil dumping during construction, and the absence of necessary drainage systems exacerbate flooding risks. Many rural road developments lack the necessary drainage system, making disasters even more imminent. Addressing these issues requires incorporating engineering expertise and clear maintenance policies in infrastructure projects.

Comprehensive disaster preparedness plans must be developed and rigorously implemented. This includes regular drills, community education programs, and well-equipped emergency response teams. Local governments should be empowered with knowledge and resources to act swiftly and effectively during disasters. Moreover, environmental conservation efforts, such as reforestation and sustainable land use practices, can mitigate the risk of landslides and floods. The state should prioritize ecological preservation to maintain natural barriers against these disasters.

The state's neglect to adequately prepare for monsoon-induced disasters has led to unnecessary loss of life and suffering. The nature of monsoons and the devastating consequences that follow are likely to rise due to climate change. By investing in resilient infrastructure, enhancing preparedness, promoting environmental conservation, and leveraging international support, Nepal can significantly improve its disaster management capabilities. Protecting its citizens must be a paramount priority, necessitating immediate and sustained action.

F. Gender, Social Inclusion & Human Rights

News Brief

- [The government has appointed Leela Devi Gadtaula, the secretary at the Office of the Prime Minister, as the chief secretary.](#) During a meeting of the Council of Ministers chaired by Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli on Thursday, Gadtaula was appointed to the role, making her the first female chief secretary in the history of Nepal's civil service. She had been serving as the acting chief secretary since 15th July. The position of chief secretary holds the highest authority in the Nepali civil service. Gadtaula was appointed as the acting chief secretary based on seniority after Chief Secretary Baikuntha Aryal was suspended due to a corruption case on 23rd June.
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- After Hon'ble Sumana Shrestha, Nepal has another female Education Minister, Hon'ble [Vidya Bhattarai](#). [Vidya has now been appointed as the Education Minister of Nepal](#). She was elected from Kaski 2 in the parliamentary elections of 2079. After working as a professor for seven years, Vidya resigned as a vice professor in 2076, became a candidate in the by-election of Kaski 2, and won with a majority of votes. Vidya Bhattarai is an established name in Nepal's student politics. However, after marrying Rabindra Adhikari in 2056, her active political life was somewhat overshadowed as she became busy with family and professional work.
- [The ninth edition of the ACC Women's T-20 Asia Cup cricket](#) tournament commenced on Friday, 19 July, in Dambulla, Sri Lanka. Eight countries, including Nepal, participated in the competition, which will run from 19 to 28 July. Nepal is in Group A of the tournament, alongside two strong Test nations, India and Pakistan. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is the fourth team in Nepal's group. Group B consists of Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Malaysia, and Thailand.
- On 18 July, office-bearers, including the President of the [Federation of Women Entrepreneurs Association of Nepal \(FWEAN\)](#), Shobha Gyawali, met with the newly appointed Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli to congratulate him on his appointment. According to FWEAN, they discussed women's entrepreneurship during their meeting with PM Oli.

News Analysis

After the new government was formed under Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli, his cabinet faced criticism. While the [cabinet formed had only 2 female ministers](#) Hon'ble Vidhya Bhattari as Education minister and Hon'ble Arzu Deuba as Foreign Minister, there seems to be a lack of social inclusion which should have included other minority groups.

Soon after the cabinet list was published a professor of political science Dr.Lok Raj Baral wrote, [“What an irony! Not a single Dalit got berth in the new Cabinet formed by the so-called champions of inclusive democracy”](#).

Likewise, Bhimarjun Acharya, a constitutional expert, also questioned the new Cabinet's inclusiveness. [“Everyone did a lot of politics in the name of Dalits, and the communists even more so. Dalits were not given any place in yesterday’s government led by Pushpa Kamal Dahal nor in today’s government led by Oli,”](#) Acharya wrote on social media. “I request that Dalits be represented in the Council of Ministers immediately.”

Prime Minister Oli formed a full 22-member Cabinet, including two deputy prime ministers. Among the 22 members including the prime minister, 10 are from the Congress, while nine represent the UML. The other parties in the Cabinet are the Janata Samajbadi Party (JSP), led by Ashok Rai, and Loktantrik Samajbadi Party (LSP), which have two and one ministry, respectively.

[As per the guiding principle of “Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Policy 2021”](#) it advocates for participation and inclusion, equality and non-discrimination, and accessibility during the formation of government all these things are forgotten. Not only has the policy been forgotten but the simple mathematics that every party advocates for election has also been missed which is 33% of reservation seats. While people have different opinions about present and past cabinets the pattern clearly shows every government is not welcoming of female leadership. The trend also shows that the government has appointed female leadership, which requires years of investment for a positive impact. In the last 2 terms, the education ministry has been given to female leadership.
