

# GOVERNANCE

WEEKLY

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## Corruption Scandal Reveals Deepening Kleptocracy Challenge in Nepal

Photo by Ekanipuri

In a shocking revelation, corruption has once again reared its ugly head in Nepal, shedding light on the alarming misuse of public funds meant for crucial public health initiatives. This disturbing case involves seven individuals, including former officials from Madhes Province, who now stand accused of embezzling funds designated for the establishment of a snakebite treatment center in the name of former Prime Minister and CPN United Socialist Party leader, Jhalnath Khanal.

The snakebite treatment center project was ostensibly created to fulfill Khanal's promise of providing a life-saving facility for snakebite victims. However, it soon became a means for corrupt officials to siphon off public money through a coordinated effort involving high-ranking politicians and provincial and local government authorities.

Operating under the deceptive guise of a snakebite treatment center, an agreement was brokered among the Madhes government, Lalbandi Municipality, and a non-governmental organization, with a staggering budget of Nepali rupees 720 million, all intended to be funded by the government. Of this colossal sum, 180 million was allocated for the initial phase, with a focus on constructing the snake venom treatment center and establishing snake venom collection and processing facilities. Shockingly, despite this significant allocation, there has been zero progress on the project. Adding to the scandal, the then-secretary of the Ministry of Madhes Province, Prem Kumar Shrestha, is facing allegations of breaking the law by entrusting spending authority to a non-governmental organization with no matching costs.

This case serves as a stark reminder of an alarming trend of kleptocracy in Nepal, where corrupt leaders exploit provisions for social welfare, collaborating with unscrupulous bureaucrats and provincial and local government authorities to serve their self-interest and malicious purposes. This deepening issue of kleptocracy demands immediate attention and stringent measures to ensure that public funds are used for the benefit of the people rather than falling prey to corrupt practices. The fight against corruption in Nepal has never been more critical, with the need for transparency, accountability, and justice to protect the nation's resources and the welfare of its citizens.

Read more: [Kantipur](#)

### Governance Issues of the Week

1. A dedicated family bench within the Kathmandu District Court has been added to fast-track legal proceedings related to women such as cases of domestic violence, marital rape, and family disputes. The specialized bench is anticipated to expedite the legal proceedings of nearly 1000 women related cases filed in the district court.

Read more: [EKantipur](#)

2. Ten Nepali students were killed, four were injured and 1 has gone missing in the armed attacks by Hamas in Gaza Strip in Israel. As of now, the Nepali government, in coordination with the Israeli government, has successfully evacuated 253 Nepalese students who were stranded in the conflict zone.

Read more: [Naya Patrika](#)

3. Barmouth University, UK's research in Dhanusha district found that Nepali workers returning from employment in Malaysia and Gulf countries are at a higher risk of kidney disease. The workers who stayed at least two years abroad showed decreased kidney function, with 5.8% showing reduced glomerular filtration capacity compared to 3.6% of local residents.

Read more: [Khabar Hub](#)

4. Private sector hydropower developers in Nepal are urging the removal of provisions in the Electricity Bill-2023 that allow the government to issue survey and construction licenses without competition. The bill allows government to provide construction license to domestic or foreign firms without any competition.

Read more: [The Kathmandu Post](#)

5. Nepal and Romania have signed a key agreement to enforce legal labor migration and workers' welfare along with strong commitment to ensure equal rights and opportunities for Nepali workers in Romania. Currently, 15,590 Nepali workers are employed in Romania, the second-largest group of non-EU foreign workers in the country.

Read more: [My Republica](#)

6. A new gold smuggling route via land from Rongjia, China has been discovered after 11 kg of gold imported through the border was recently seized and 11 people were arrested. The Central Investigation Bureau (CIB) and Dolakha police are conducting a joint investigation on the route, which is the second largest gold smuggling route after Tribhuvan International Airport.

Read more: [EKantipur](#)

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