Towards an Independent Nepal

What is the issue?

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The transition by Nepal to being uninfluenced by external factors is seen to be not so smooth or quick either.

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What is the recent development in Nepal?

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- For long, Nepal’s internal politics, the making of the constitution and the peace process have kept it far from smooth governance.
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- These issues have been dictated by the international community, mainly India, the European Union, the US and the United Nations.
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- The new government in Nepal is armed with all the powers and a majority in Parliament.
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- These give it the mandate to confront the external forces more firmly than before.
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What is the present government's stance?

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- The new government led by K P Oli in Nepal has asserted that Nepal would no longer accept interference by outsiders in its internal politics.
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- He has conveyed to the international community that Nepal would pursue an independent foreign policy.
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- The Nepali PM directly supervises many of the government departments.
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- These include the state intelligence and the social welfare council which issues permits to NGOs to operate in Nepal.
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- The PM has asserted that any NGO or donor indulging in local politics or working against Nepal's national interests will be expelled.
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- As, donors too are suspected to be promoting corruption.
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Why is the transition difficult?

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- **NGOs** - Recently, around 30 philanthropists from the UK, US and other western countries assembled in Nepal.
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- They were there to explore how best they could spend a part of their wealth for the good of Nepal.
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- The aim was to fund the fight against "modern slavery".
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- The group decided not to get into political issues, and work for children, women and oppressed groups trapped in "slavery".
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- But this indirectly meant supporting "liberation" or "secessionist" movements in parts of Nepal, including the Tarai.
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- **Violations** - There were widespread human rights violation by the state and the Maoists during the decade-long conflict.
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- The peace process and the investigations into these human rights violation cases are incomplete.
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- Maoists, a key ally in the coalition government, are keen to have general amnesty granted in such cases.
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- This is possible only if these are handled exclusively by national agencies.
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- Oli tries to make these an internal affair and outside the gaze of international actors, which could prove to be a huge challenge.

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- **Foreign relations** - Indian ambassador visited to meet with the Nepal PM.
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- Oli hosted Pakistan PM Shahid Khaqan Abbasi with full state honours.
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- Both sides agreed to “convince” India that the SAARC summit be held in Islamabad.
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- Abbasi’s visit was part of “Pakistan’s pro-active diplomacy” and its desire to extend trade, commerce and defence relations with Nepal.
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- Pak PM expressed hope that the belt and road initiative of China would enhance connectivity and advantage in the neighbourhood and beyond.
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- Notably, Nepal and Pakistan are signatories to the initiative.
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- The visit of Pakistan PM, Nepal's growing proximity to China, substantial investment of the international community in Nepal, all demonstrate the inescapable fact of external influence.
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- Key external forces appear to be in a withdrawal mood, at least for now.
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- But it is unlikely for Nepal to be free from the influence of external player, at least not any time soon.
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Source: The Indian Express

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