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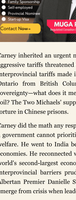
What Nepal Can Learn from Leaders Who Put National Interest First

Dr. Rajendra Panthee कुवैत समय | Wednesday December 17,2025

Nepal Touch Graphics

When Mark Carney became Prime Minister of Canada in March 2025, he inherited two frozen diplomatic files that threatened his country's economic future. The Sikh-Canadian community demanded he take a hard line against India after Gurdeep Singh Nijjar's murder. Supporters of the "Two Michaels" (Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig) insisted Canada should never normalize relations with China after years of hostage diplomacy. Both groups had legitimate grievances. Both believed their issues should take priority.



Instead, Carney chose Canada. Within months, he moved decisively to repair relations with both India and China. He understood that Canada's 40 million people needed jobs and economic growth more than symbolic diplomatic victories. The Sikh community protested. Critics accused him of betrayal. But Carney grasped something crucial: sometimes serving the national interest means disappointing vocal groups who believe their particular concerns trump the country's welfare.

Nepal faces the same choice now, but with far higher stakes.

Canadian and US Model of National Interest Over Group Demands

Carney inherited an urgent need to diversify Canada's economic partnerships. Donald Trump's aggressive tariffs threatened vital U.S. trade. But Canada faced an even more absurd problem: interprovincial tariffs made importing wine from Italy or Africa cheaper than bringing wine to Ontario from British Columbia. The Sikh community raised profound questions about sovereignty—what does it mean if foreign governments can assassinate Canadians on Canadian soil? The Two Michaels' supporters asked how Canada could simply move on after 1,000 days of torture in Chinese prisons.

Carney did the math any responsible leader must do. When 40 million lives hang in the balance, a government cannot prioritize one community's demands, however valid, over everyone else's welfare. He went to India because Canada needs access to one of the world's fastest-growing economies. He reconnected with China because Canadian businesses cannot thrive without the world's second-largest economy. He utilized the crises of both external tariffs and dangerous interprovincial barriers prudently. Canadian provinces are now working together. Recently, Albertan Premier Danielle Smith and Carney signed a deal, showing that national unity can emerge from crisis when leaders prioritize the whole country.

This wasn't betrayal. It was leadership. It meant understanding that national interest means what's best for the entire country, not just the loudest voices. The Sikh community remains angry. The Two Michaels' supporters feel abandoned. But millions of quiet Canadians will benefit from expanded trade and economic opportunities.

Trump's "America First" agenda, however controversial, demonstrates the same priority. He imposed 100% tariffs on Chinese goods, arguing America had tolerated unfair trade for decades while other countries—India (70% on cars), the EU (10%)—levied massive taxes on American products while America kept tariffs low (2.5%). His core question was simple: why should America sacrifice workers' prosperity to maintain global relations?

Carney's tenure has just begun, and critics dismiss him as just a corporate leader, just as they dismiss Trump as merely a businessman. But what both have accomplished in a short period under specific circumstances offers Nepal a powerful lesson: putting the nation first requires clarity of purpose and courage to act. Both total Nepal that leaders who clearly articulate the national interest and pursue it consistently achieve results that trying to please everyone never can.

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Nepali Leaders' Journey from Freedom Fighters to Self-Servers

In September 2025, Nepal's Gen Z uprising forced Prime Minister Oli to resign. They installed former Chief Justice Sushila Karki as interim prime minister, tasked with delivering free and fair elections by March 2026. But within weeks, idealism collided with reality.

The irony is bitter. Nepal's old political parties and their leaders fought heroically against the Rana regime and Panchayat system. But after democracy's restoration, they forgot Nepal entirely. They focused on enriching themselves, their relatives, their cadres, and business people who funded their elections. The declaration of a republican state for a country smaller than some Indian states only deepened the chaos. Since then, governance became a musical chairs—sometimes one party in power, sometimes two, always corrupt.

Because every party and leader was corrupt, there was no real opposition. Top leaders protected each other even as their grassroots cadres fought. They appointed loyal cadres throughout the justice system and even in the Commission for Investigation of Abuse of Authority. Every appointment from top to bottom was political. These leaders wanted to be kings who tolerated no criticism. The Gen Z movement erupted when the Oli government tried from blocking social media. The provocation was clear: leaders who claimed to have fought for freedom now refused to allow even basic criticism.

Different Gen Z factions now make incompatible demands—swift prosecution of corrupt officials, constitutional amendments, investigations into party finances. Sudan Gurung, who touched Karki's feet in September, now protests outside her residence. Old political parties demand their voices matter. Ethnic and regional groups pursue their own agendas. Karki's own government shows signs of nepotism and questionable connections—the very things Gen Z protested.

Many Nepalis harbor a Bollywood fantasy that Nepal needs a hero-leader who can magically fix decades of systemic corruption in six months. This is fiction. Constitutional change requires time and broad consensus. Fighting corruption demands functioning legal systems and years of work. An interim government a lacks democratic a mandate for sweeping reforms. Karki wasn't elected. Asking her to prosecute officials, rewrite the constitution, or implement their agendas means asking her to be a dictator.

Nepal Lost in Group Politics

Here's Nepal's real problem: the country has completely lost sight of its national interest. Nepal drowns in endless negotiation between competing group demands.

Every decision becomes a calculation: Which caste groups will protest? What will Madhesi leaders demand? What will hill communities ask in return? Instead of asking "what's best for Nepal?" politicians ask "which constituencies can I mobilize?"

The result? Paralysis. Corruption. Dysfunction. The very problems that sparked September's uprising.

Tragically, the post-uprising period follows the same pattern. Instead of old parties trading favors, we have competing Gen Z factions making impossible demands. Ethnic groups push their agendas. Everyone insists their priorities define "real change."

Each group's concerns are legitimate. Madhesi demands for recognition matter. Indigenous aspirations are important. Gen Z's anger about corruption is justified. But satisfying every group's demands isn't the same as serving the national interest. Trying to please everyone will please no one and paralyze governance entirely.

This isn't democracy. This is the formal for permanent dysfunction. When everyone only cares about their slice, nobody takes responsibility for the whole.

Governance becomes impossible when every faction declares its priorities non-negotiable. When every group treats compromise as betrayal, the country fragments into warring tribes, each protecting its interests while the nation lurches toward failure.

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The Way Forward

The silent majority matters more than vocal minorities. Millions who don't protest need jobs and economic opportunity. Their quiet needs outweigh the demands of agitated groups who believe particular issues trump the country's overall welfare.

Sometimes leaders must disappoint groups they respect. Carney likely understands Sikh concerns and the Two Michaels' pain. But sympathy cannot replace judgment about what serves everyone best. Symbolic gestures don't create prosperity or secure economic futures.

Nepal needs to grasp something fundamental. The nation's welfare isn't determined by any single group's demands. Not the Nepali Congress, not the CPN-UML, not Gen Z protesters, not Madhesi activists, not any caste or region. Nepal is all these things and more.

Karki should focus exclusively on one thing: ensuring free, fair, and timely elections. When Gen Z demands immediate prosecutions, her answer should be simple: "Justice should be pursued by a properly elected government with democratic mandate. My job is ensuring you can vote for that government." When old parties demand concessions: "My job is ensuring voters can judge your records in free elections. Nothing else."

She can establish independent commissions to investigate corruption that continue beyond her tenure. She can ensure transparent, fair elections. She can produce white papers documenting failures and recommending reforms. But she must refuse demands exceeding her authority.

Every Nepali who genuinely cares about Nepal's future must ask hard questions. Are you prioritizing Nepal or your group? Will you accept democratic outcomes even if you dislike them? September's uprising proved Gen Z can topple governments. The coming months will show whether Nepalis can build something better through democracy.

Put Nepal Above All Other Interests

Nepal needs what mature democracies share: leaders willing to articulate the national interest and pursue it even when disappointing some groups. Citizens must recognize that their group's desires don't always align with the country's welfare.

September's uprising created possibilities. Will Nepalis use them wisely? They could focus on democratic transition and let elected governments handle complex issues. Or they could squander it making impossible demands on a temporary administration lacking the power, time, or a mandate to fulfill them.

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The alternative is grim. Permanent fragmentation means everyone protects their interests while the country fails. This serves nobody. Not Gen Z, not old parties, not any group. When the country fails, everyone suffers.

Nepal's future depends on critical questions. Can enough Nepalis stop thinking in groups and start thinking about genuine national interest? Can they accept that democratic processes matter more than outcomes? Can they trust that free and fair elections serve the country better than having an unelected leader impose their vision?

Nepal doesn't need a street revolution. It needs a mental revolution in how citizens and leaders think about politics and governance. One fundamental shift unlocks everything else. Stop asking, "What's best for my group?" Start asking, "What's best for Nepal?"

-Brampton, Canada

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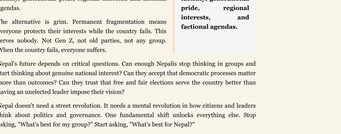

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