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Sudan Gurung's rise from Kathmandu nightlife and disaster volunteering to one of Nepal's most powerful ministries is not a conventional political story. It is the story of a man shaped by emergency response, digital mobilisation and a growing public appetite for leaders who appear willing to act quickly. It is also a story about the limits of that instinct once it enters government, where speed has to coexist with law, procedure and institutional restraint. In that tension lies the central question of Gurung's political career: can the habits that make an activist effective also make a state

work better?

By September 2026, the Ministry of Home Affairs officially listed **Sudhan Gurung** as Nepal's Home Minister, using the spelling carried on government records. In much of the English-language press and in public conversation, however, he is widely known as Sudan Gurung. His path to that office was remarkably compressed: social-service organiser, central figure in the 2025 Gen Z movement, Rastriya Swatantra Party candidate, elected lawmaker from Gorkha-1, Home Minister, resigned minister under investigation, and then Home Minister again. Few contemporary Nepali politicians have moved from civic activism to state power so quickly.

Before Politics, There Was Thamel

Long before Gurung entered Parliament, his world was centred on events, nightlife and the informal economy of Kathmandu's entertainment scene. Profiles of his early life describe him as working in event management, DJing and running businesses connected to Thamel. A 2015 Kathmandu Post profile identified him as the owner of a nightclub before the earthquake radically altered the direction of his life. That background matters because it placed him outside the organisational pipelines that traditionally produce Nepali politicians—student unions, party youth wings, professional associations and long years inside party hierarchies.

The skills he developed were instead operational. Event work requires coordination, quick decisions, crowd management and the ability to improvise when a plan breaks down. Those are not the same skills as lawmaking or public administration, but they help explain Gurung's later style: direct, impatient with delay and comfortable taking charge in fluid situations. His public persona has consistently carried that preference for action over formality.

The Earthquake That Changed the Direction of His Life

The earthquake of April 25, 2015, became the decisive break between Gurung's earlier life and the public role that followed. He was in Basantapur when the quake struck and soon became involved in rescue and hospital support, eventually working around Bir Hospital as patients and families overwhelmed the emergency system. Contemporary reporting from 2015 described him buying water and food for patients and staff, helping coordinate volunteers and travelling to earthquake-affected districts. In later interviews, Gurung described the death of a child during those chaotic days as a moment he could never forget, even though different retellings have varied on the precise circumstances.

What is consistent across the record is that he responded by organising. He called for volunteers through social media and

quickly assembled a loose network of people willing to help with logistics, hospital support and relief. The group did not begin as a polished non-government organisation with a formal hierarchy, professional fundraising unit or institutional headquarters. It began as a response to a vacuum—the kind of situation in which people stopped waiting for instructions and started solving the next visible problem.

From I 2 We to Hami Nepal

The volunteer network that emerged during the earthquake evolved into what became Hami Nepal. Its early identity was built around disaster relief, blood donation, emergency support and post-earthquake rehabilitation, with social media serving as both recruitment mechanism and public record. Gurung's organisation later formalised its structure and expanded into other areas of humanitarian response. By 2023, Hami Nepal had become one of the more recognisable volunteer-led civic organisations associated with emergency response in Nepal.

The organisation's credibility grew through repeated interventions rather than one defining campaign. During the Covid-19 crisis, Hami Nepal became involved in supplying oxygen cylinders and coordinating support for hospitals and vulnerable communities. It later worked in flood-affected areas including Manang and Sindhupalchowk and participated in relief efforts after disasters in Nepal and abroad, including assistance connected to the 2023

earthquake in Türkiye. The model was consistent: mobilise quickly, publicise needs, gather resources and move them toward the affected community.

This method created a political asset long before Gurung formally entered politics: visibility tied to usefulness. In a country where citizens often encounter bureaucracy as delay, Hami Nepal presented itself as the opposite—fast, informal and physically present. That reputation helped Gurung build a constituency that was not initially electoral but emotional. Supporters knew him as someone associated with showing up when systems appeared overwhelmed.

From Relief Work to Civic Pressure

Over time, Gurung's work moved beyond emergency relief into advocacy and public pressure. Hami Nepal became associated with campaigns around governance, health institutions and public accountability, including activism linked to BP Koirala Institute of Health Sciences in Dharan. The organisation's approach reflected a broader shift in civic mobilisation across Nepal: campaigns increasingly used social media to document problems, coordinate supporters and pressure officials in real time. Gurung's public style fit this environment naturally.

He was no longer simply helping institutions perform their jobs during crises; he was increasingly questioning why institutions

were failing in the first place. That transition changed the nature of his public role. Humanitarian work had given him legitimacy, but activism placed him in direct confrontation with authorities and political actors. The line between social service and politics was beginning to disappear even before he joined a party.

The 2025 Gen Z Uprising

Gurung became nationally significant during the youth-led protests of September 2025. The movement grew from anger over a government social-media ban and widened into a larger revolt against corruption, political privilege and the performance of Nepal's established parties. Hami Nepal became one of the visible organisational nodes around the protests, using online channels to circulate information and help coordinate participation. Gurung's profile rose rapidly as television, newspapers and international media searched for identifiable figures inside a movement that was, by nature, decentralised.

That last point remains essential. Hami Nepal was influential, but there has never been full consensus that Gurung or his organisation "led" the entire Gen Z movement. Other youth groups organised independently through messaging platforms and informal networks, and some participants resisted the idea that one organisation should later claim ownership of a movement that had many centres. A professional account of Gurung's rise therefore has to distinguish between visibility and sole leadership.

The protests turned deadly, transforming a political confrontation into a national crisis. Dozens of people were killed and many more were injured as demonstrations escalated and security forces responded. The political consequences were enormous, eventually contributing to the fall of the government and opening a period in which youth movement representatives, civil-society actors and institutional leaders negotiated what should come next. Gurung moved from protest organiser to participant in discussions about national political transition almost overnight.

Influence Without Office

In the aftermath of the uprising, Gurung became one of the most visible intermediaries between street mobilisation and formal state institutions. He was associated with negotiations surrounding the interim political arrangement and the elevation of former Chief Justice Sushila Karki to lead the transitional government. For supporters, this was evidence that the generation demanding change had finally forced its way into rooms where decisions were made. For critics, it raised concerns about how unelected activists were acquiring influence without clearly defined constitutional authority.

The debate intensified because Gurung's style remained confrontational even after the government changed. He publicly challenged established politicians, criticised institutional lethargy

and continued to frame politics as a contest between old systems and people demanding visible results. That rhetoric resonated with citizens exhausted by delays, but it also made him a polarising figure. He was becoming a political actor before becoming a politician.

Entering Party Politics

By early 2026, Gurung made the move that would test whether civic popularity could survive the discipline of elections. He joined the Rastriya Swatantra Party and contested Gorkha-1, turning his association with the Gen Z movement and Hami Nepal into a formal electoral campaign. His platform included anti-corruption commitments, public accountability, education, health and modernisation priorities. The shift was significant because it required him to move from criticising the political system to asking voters for authority inside it.

The result was decisive. Gurung won Gorkha-1 with 29,896 votes, defeating Nepali Congress candidate Prem Kumar Khatri, who received 15,398. Hariraj Adhikari finished third with 11,124 votes, while the UML candidate received 3,732. The margin transformed Gurung from protest figure into a lawmaker with direct democratic legitimacy, giving him a stronger claim to political authority than he had held during the transitional period.

Home Minister After a Meteoric Rise

On March 27, 2026, Gurung was appointed Home Minister in the government led by Balendra Shah. The appointment placed a former activist in charge of the ministry responsible for internal security, district administration, disaster management and oversight of Nepal Police and the Armed Police Force. It was perhaps the sharpest possible test of his politics. The man who had built his reputation by demanding that institutions move faster now had authority over some of the institutions most constrained by law and procedure.

His first weeks were defined by highly visible interventions. Gurung pushed for action in politically sensitive cases, including proceedings involving former Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli and former Home Minister Ramesh Lekhak over the crackdown on the 2025 protests. Supporters interpreted the moves as overdue accountability; legal and security officials warned that political urgency could not substitute for due process. The distinction between decisive leadership and interference in operational policing became one of the central debates around his tenure.

The Problem with Governing Like an Activist

Activism and government operate under different rules. A volunteer organisation can improvise, bypass bureaucracy and

prioritise the immediate need in front of it. A Home Ministry controls coercive power, meaning decisions can affect liberty, policing, investigations and public order. That power requires procedure not because procedure is always efficient, but because it is designed to restrain arbitrary authority.

Gurung's political strength has always been his impatience with institutional delay. Inside government, the same instinct can become a vulnerability if speed outruns legal preparation. Kathmandu Post reporting after his first tenure quoted police officials who acknowledged his desire for results but said decisions were sometimes made hastily, creating difficulties for the organisation. The criticism was not that he wanted too much action; it was that the state cannot act sustainably when policy is announced before authority, jurisdiction and implementation are settled.

His announcement that the government would revisit the 2001 royal palace massacre illustrated the tension. The decision immediately captured national attention because the event remains one of Nepal's most sensitive historical cases. Yet reopening such a matter requires clarity about legal authority, investigative body, evidentiary standards and the relationship between past reports and any new inquiry. Political willingness can put a dormant issue back on the agenda, but willingness alone cannot build a credible investigation.

The Financial Questions

In April 2026, Gurung's tenure was overtaken by questions about his own finances. Media reports examined share investments, personal transactions, Hami Nepal accounts and alleged links to businessman Deepak Bhatta, who was under scrutiny in a separate financial investigation. The reporting did not establish a simple conclusion; instead, it exposed a mixture of documented transactions, explanations from Gurung and unresolved questions about sources of funds and business relationships. For a government elected on anti-corruption and transparency themes, the controversy was politically damaging even before any finding of wrongdoing.

On April 22, Gurung resigned as Home Minister. Reuters reported that he framed the decision in terms of ethics and public trust, stepping aside while questions about his investments were examined. The resignation distinguished him from politicians who remain in office while agencies under their own ministries examine allegations against them. At the same time, resignation was not exoneration, and the underlying financial questions required an independent process rather than political interpretation.

The Government Probe

The government subsequently formed a committee chaired by former High Court judge Achyut Prasad Bhandari to examine allegations concerning Gurung's assets, investments and financial conduct. The committee reviewed landholdings, business income, borrowing claims and transactions connected to Hami Nepal. By early June, reporting indicated that the panel did not find Gurung's landholdings unusual and did not establish a direct financial connection between him and Bhatta. It also examined Gurung's explanation that income from the sale of a Thamel business had contributed to later investments.

The findings did not end every public question. Kathmandu Post reporting noted that the government had not initially made the full investigation report public, leading critics to argue that reinstatement should not move faster than transparency. Supporters countered that the panel's findings removed the central basis for treating Gurung's assets as suspicious. The dispute showed how a politician built on demands for transparency can face a higher standard precisely because transparency is part of the political brand.

Return to the Home Ministry

On June 9, 2026, Gurung returned to the Home Ministry. The official ministry website currently lists Sudhan Gurung as Home

Minister with that appointment date, confirming his second tenure. His return came less than two months after his resignation and placed him back in control of the same institution from which he had stepped aside to avoid questions about conflict of interest. Politically, the reinstatement was both a rehabilitation and a renewed test.

The ministry he returned to was confronting problems far larger than individual headline cases. Nepal Police continues to operate under a decades-old legal framework while federal restructuring has created unresolved questions about the relationship between central and provincial policing. Armed Police Force legislation, disaster preparedness, border management and institutional reform all require long-term administrative work that attracts far less public attention than arrests or dramatic announcements. Gurung's second tenure therefore offers a clearer measure of whether his politics can move from visible action to durable systems.

Disaster Response: Where His Background Still Matters

Disaster management remains the area in which Gurung's pre-political experience most clearly overlaps with his ministerial responsibilities. Hami Nepal spent years operating in emergencies, and Gurung developed a practical understanding of how information, volunteers, supplies and official agencies

interact under pressure. Even before entering government, his presence at disaster-preparedness meetings generated debate over whether an activist organisation was being given excessive influence. Officials defended the participation on the grounds that experienced volunteer groups can provide useful operational knowledge.

As Home Minister, however, the standard is different. He is no longer an external volunteer advising institutions; he is responsible for strengthening the institutions themselves. The measure of success is therefore not whether Gurung personally appears at every crisis site, but whether disaster agencies, district administrations and security services become more coordinated before the next emergency arrives. A resilient system should perform even when the minister is not physically present.

The Social-Media Political Style

Gurung's political communication remains closely tied to the medium that helped build Hami Nepal. Social media rewards urgency, direct language and visible action, while ministries operate through files, legal opinions, chains of command and procedures that are often invisible to the public. Gurung's instinct has frequently been to make government visible—to show inspections, interventions and decisions as they happen. That approach can make institutions feel more accessible, but it also risks turning operational processes into political performance.

This is particularly sensitive in policing and investigations. A Home Minister can set policy priorities and demand institutional accountability, but individual cases must still be handled according to law by competent agencies. The more a minister publicly associates himself with a particular arrest, investigation or outcome, the more easily operational independence can be questioned. Gurung's challenge is to preserve the political energy that brought him to office without making state institutions appear dependent on his personal intervention.

What His Rise Says About Nepal

Gurung's ascent cannot be understood only as an individual biography. It reflects deep dissatisfaction with Nepal's established political class and a generational shift in how public legitimacy is built. Traditional parties accumulate authority through organisation, ideology, patronage networks and history; figures such as Gurung built recognition through disaster response, digital communities and visible confrontation with failing institutions. In an era of mass migration, youth frustration and declining trust in established parties, that alternative route became electorally powerful.

The attraction is straightforward. Many voters no longer ask first how long someone has served a party; they ask what the person has actually done. Gurung's years in Hami Nepal gave him a

record that supporters could point to before he ever asked for a vote. Yet governing requires capacities that activism does not automatically provide: legislation, budgeting, coalition management, bureaucratic reform, institutional patience and respect for limits on executive authority.

Action Is Not the Same as Institution-Building

The difference between action and institution-building may ultimately define Gurung's legacy. Action is visible and immediate: a minister arrives, calls officials, announces a decision or orders a response. Institution-building is slower and often politically unrewarding: writing laws, clarifying jurisdictions, improving procurement, professionalising appointments, setting measurable procedures and ensuring that a system performs the same way under the next minister. Nepal has repeatedly produced leaders who promised action; it has had more difficulty producing institutions that continue working after those leaders leave.

Gurung's unusual background gives him both an advantage and a risk in this regard. He knows what institutional failure looks like from the outside because Hami Nepal repeatedly operated where citizens believed the state was absent or too slow. That experience could make him unusually sensitive to administrative weakness. But if the response is to replace weak systems with personal

intervention, the system remains weak—the only difference is that it temporarily has an energetic minister.

The Man Between Two Political Cultures

Sudan Gurung now stands between two political cultures. The first is the culture that made him: volunteer networks, protest movements, direct communication and a belief that citizens should not wait passively when institutions fail. The second is the culture he now controls in part: formal authority, police powers, legal procedure, bureaucracy and constitutional restraint. Neither culture is sufficient on its own. Activism without rules can become arbitrary; government without urgency can become inert.

That is why Gurung remains one of Nepal's more consequential political experiments. His career is not simply about whether an activist can become a minister; Nepal has seen outsiders enter politics before. The deeper test is whether a leader formed by crisis mobilisation can learn to build systems that do not need crisis mobilisation. If he succeeds, his transition from Hami Nepal to Singha Durbar will represent more than personal advancement. It will suggest that civic energy can be converted into institutional capacity without losing accountability along the way.

What Comes Next

As of September 2026, Gurung is again serving as Home Minister, and the decisive phase of his career is still ahead. He has already demonstrated that he can attract volunteers, command attention, survive controversy and convert public recognition into votes.

Those are substantial political achievements, but they are not the same as governing well. The Home Ministry will eventually be judged by the quality of policing, disaster readiness, administrative reform, public security and institutional independence—not by the intensity of the minister's public image.

Gurung's biography began in places far removed from conventional state power: clubs, event venues, hospital corridors and volunteer networks. The earthquake taught him that institutions can fail people at the moment they need them most; politics has now given him responsibility for strengthening some of those institutions himself. That reversal gives his story unusual weight. The activist who once demanded that the state act faster is now responsible for proving that the state can act effectively, legally and without depending on one individual's presence.

That is the real test of Sudan Gurung's politics: not whether he can move faster than the system, but whether he can leave behind a system capable of moving well on its own.

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