

GOVERNANCE

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Nepal's Constitutional Amendment: Calls for Broader Inclusivity and Participation

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Photo By The Annapurna Express

In July 2024, Nepal's two largest political parties, the Nepali Congress (NC) and the Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML), formed a coalition, with CPN-UML chairperson KP Sharma Oli taking leadership of the government. The coalition's primary goal was to ensure political stability, which included addressing key issues within the 2015 constitution.

To take concrete action, in December 2024, the two parties had established an eight-member committee tasked with reviewing the constitutional weaknesses and recommending potential amendments. However, recently, Prime Minister Oli clarified that the constitutional amendment process could be delayed until 2027, citing the lack of a two-thirds majority in parliament. While the call for amendments is a shared interest among Nepal's major political parties, their views on the scope and impact of these changes differ significantly. After the NC and CPN-UML agree on a framework for review, broader discussions with other political parties are expected to follow.

However, there is growing criticism that the current mechanism for constitutional review lacks multi-party representation and inclusivity. Parties such as the Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP), which did not exist when the constitution was promulgated in 2015, have begun internal discussions, to determine their position on constitutional issues. The Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) has launched its own review, proposing to abolish federalism, restore Nepal as a Hindu state, and revive the monarchy. The CPN-Maoist party is advocating for three key amendments; introduction of a directly elected president, a fully proportional electoral system, and ensuring 50 percent women's representation in state organs. Madhesh-based parties are also aligning their positions on constitutional reforms.

While the momentum for constitutional amendments is growing, the process must be inclusive, transparent, and participatory, reflecting the diverse views and opinions. There are concerns that without a more open and consultative approach, the amendment process could undermine the very inclusivity it aims to enhance. It is crucial to engage a broader spectrum of society including legal experts, CSOs, media, and diverse communities, to ensure that the amendments align with the aspirations of all Nepalese citizens. The reforms should prioritize further institutionalising rule of law, transparency, strengthening federalism, promoting economic advancement and more, while ensuring true representation and inclusion for all.

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Governance issues of the week

- 1 Nepal Police to start its own 'Staff College' institution :** After two decades of effort, Nepal police has established its own staff college aiming to streamline leadership development and promotion systems for senior officers. The college plans to launch its first course in March, with an annual intake of 35 police officers and additional slots for 5 external candidates, including military and foreign-security personnel.

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- 2 Election law amendment draft approved :** A draft to amend the election law, submitted by the election commission to the home ministry, has been approved and amended by the home ministry. The ministry has updated the vote threshold for proportional representation from 3% to 5% in the federal parliament, and from 1.5% to 3% in the provincial assembly in the draft. The approved draft now has been submitted to the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, and, upon its approval, will be submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers.

Read More: [Kantipur](#)
- 3 Victims displeased with the co-operative ordinance :** Cooperative fraud victims have accused the government of introducing the Cooperative ordinance with the intention of protecting perpetrators rather than providing justice or resolving the issues. They have released a 16-point recommendation letter urging the government to correct the ordinance including a minimum refund of NPR 500,000 per saver. They have also displayed contention with the classification of cooperatives, citing it as a divisive strategy.

Read More: [Ukaalo](#)
- 4 Germany pledges grant to restore Dhulikhel water supply:** Germany will provide Rs. 14.2 million (100,000 EUR) to reconstruct the drinking water project in Dhulikhel, Kavrepalanchowk which was damaged by the recent monsoon flood in 2024. The municipality had proposed reconstruction of the damaged project, estimated to cost NPR 35 million, to the German ambassador of Nepal in mid-October.

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- 5 Application for NIA Chairperson opens following corruption charges:** Application for the post of Chairman of Nepal Insurance Authority (NIA) is now open. Eligible candidates must submit their application within 25th January 2025. The position has been vacant since the Commission of Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA) filed a case against then NIA chairman Surya Prasad Silwal. Currently, a Ministry of Finance representative is serving as the acting chairman.

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- 6 Nepal urges for Bipin Joshi's release:** Foreign minister Arzu Rana Deuba has requested Qatar and Egypt to mediate with Hamas for the release of Bipin Joshi. Amid talks of Hamas releasing 34 individuals in their custody, Nepal urges for Bipin's inclusion in this phase of releases. In October 2023, Hamas attacked Israeli territory, killing over 1,000 people, including 10 Nepali citizens. Bipin was among those abducted in the attack.

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