

# GOVERNANCE

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## Twin Protests in Kathmandu Highlight Rising Discontent and Deepening Polarization in Nepal

WEEKLY

Photo By The Himalayan Times

On March 28, 2025, Kathmandu witnessed two simultaneous large-scale protests, each drawing thousands of supporters from across the country. In Tinkune, pro-monarchy demonstrators, under the leadership of the Joint People's Movement Committee, gathered to demand the reinstatement of the monarchy and a Hindu state. Meanwhile, in Bhrikutimandap, a pro-republican protest—led by the socialist front (comprising of CPN (Maoist Centre), the CPN (Unified Socialist), the Mahindra Ray Yadav-led Nepal Socialist Party and the Communist Party of Nepal led by Netra Bikram Chand)—voiced support for the existing federal democratic republic.

The monarchy agenda has been gaining momentum recently. . Actively led by the Rastriya Prajatantra Party and a renowned businessman Durga Prasai, the monarchy supporters demanded a constitutional monarchy—envisioning Nepal as a parliamentary democracy with a Hindu identity. The revival of the monarchy, abolished in 2008, is driven by widespread frustration with the current political system, with some citizens perceiving the monarchy as a more stable and unified alternative. In response, pro-republican forces have been active in asserting that rather than abandoning the republic, efforts should focus on strengthening and reforming the existing system.

Both protests and their locations were pre-approved by the administration and were supposed to be peaceful events. While pro-republican protests in the Bhrikutimandap concluded without major incident, the situation in Tinkune quickly escalated into violence. Police are said to have deployed excessive force—firing 58 bullets, 746 tear gas shells, 198 blank rounds, and two live pistol rounds. Twenty people were shot, including Sabin Maharjan of Kirtipur-4, who died after being shot in the shoulder. In the chaos, the protesters also retaliated and vandalized a building where journalist Suresh Rajak tragically lost his life in a house fire.

Furthermore, the protesters also set fire to the Herbal Production and Processing Company in Jadibuti, causing NPR 280 million in damages. The company, which supports over 900 farmers and employs a workforce that is 70% female, has halted its operations and requested NPR 100 million from the Ministry of Forests to resume production. Such damages have raised questions on the police administration's security arrangements for the protests. In addition, protesters are facing criticism for attacking public and private properties and clashing with security forces.

Beyond the immediate aftermath, these events highlight a growing polarization within the country, and mistrust among a large fraction of the population towards the existing system. It is evident that the public are demanding reforms in existing governance systems and service delivery. It is time for the existing political leaders to fulfill their past promises to regain trust in the system that was introduced through decade-long civil war. Nepal simply cannot go back to being an experimental field, as we have too much at stake. Now, with 2.5 years remaining until the next general election, the ballot box may ultimately reveal which direction the majority of Nepalis wish to take.

Read more: [The Himalayan Times](#)

### Governance issues of the week

**1 Kathmandu tops global pollution ranking:** The air pollution in Kathmandu Valley has massively surged, placing it among the world's most polluted cities in recent days. According to the Department of Environment, reduced rainfall in winter over the past four years, delayed pre-monsoon showers, increasing wildfires, and lack of eco-friendly infrastructure have contributed to the crisis. On April 3, 2025, the Air Quality Index (AQI) hit 348, indicating a hazardous pollution level.

Read more: [Online Khabar](#)

**2 Nepal-Thailand strengthens bilateral ties:** During the Nepali Prime Minister's official visit to Thailand, the two countries signed eight agreements, including six sectoral agreements involving non-government actors. The agreements focus on enhancing cultural exchange and boosting tourism cooperation. Thailand's Prime Minister expressed a strong commitment to increasing investment in Nepal's aviation and tourism sectors, and has signaled an interest in expanding Thai Airways' operations in Kathmandu and introducing direct flights to Lumbini.

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**3 Teachers launch protest in Kathmandu:** Nepal's Teachers' Federation launched a protest in Kathmandu on 2 April, 2025, demanding the immediate passage of the long-pending School Education Act. Protesters carried placards calling for respect for their profession and legislative action. Despite constitutional provisions placing school education under local governments, teachers oppose the move, fearing political interference and biased treatment. The bill remains stuck in Parliament, despite prior government commitments to expedite its endorsement.

Read More: [The Kathmandu Post](#)

**4 Parliament passes nine laws in winter session:** The winter session of federal parliament, also known as the "bill session," has concluded with the passage of only nine laws relating to good governance, cooperatives and financial procedures, and investment promotion. However, a much-debated land management ordinance failed to gain enough support and has been dropped. Similarly, key bills related to federalism, such as those on school education, federal civil service, and police reforms, still remain under review in parliamentary committees.

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**5 Cooling off period dropped for judicial and diplomatic appointments:** The final report of the Federal Civil Service Bill has removed the previously agreed-upon cooling-off period for ambassadorial and judicial appointments. Initially intended to curb bureaucratic misconduct in constitutional bodies and foreign missions, the bill—currently under review by the State Affairs and Good Governance Committee—has included a loophole that exempts diplomatic and judicial roles from the one-year restriction, reportedly after lobbying by senior bureaucrats and legal officials, including the Law Ministry Secretary.

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**6 Nepal fire incidents increase, responses lag:** Fire incidents are rapidly increasing across Nepal, often spreading from forests to settlements and destroying entire villages. However, the government's response remains inadequate despite the growing risk each year. Nepal Police, often first responders, struggle with limited resources. Over the past five fiscal years, fires have caused damages worth Rs 12.85 billion and claimed 476 lives, including 59 deaths recorded by end of February of the current fiscal year.

Read more: [Annapurna Post](#)

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