

W GOVERNANCE E K L Y

Issue **180** | JULY 25, 2025

Drought in Madhesh Province Raises Alarms Over Climate Resilience and Agricultural Sustainability

Madhesh Province, long regarded as Nepal's agricultural hub, is experiencing one of its most severe droughts.. With all 136 municipalities officially declared disaster crisis zones, it has exposed Nepal's lack of preparedness in terms of agricultural infrastructure and climate adaptation. While the hilly regions battle deadly floods and landslides triggered by erratic monsoon patterns, Madhesh is suffering from an acute water crisis that has severely impacted its farming economy.

The Federal Department of Hydrology and Meteorology had initially predicted above-average rainfall in the province, particularly in its western and southern belts. However, as the monsoon season reaches its midpoint, Madhesh has received only 12% of the expected precipitation. The department has since revised its outlook, now warning of below-average rainfall in the southern parts of the province—further aggravating the situation.

Madhesh is Nepal's largest rice-producing region, but the prolonged dry spell has hugely affected rice plantation efforts. By late June, only 34% of paddy fields had been planted—a sharp decline from previous years. National figures reflect a similar concern, with only 72.14% of land cultivated by mid-July, compared to 84.6% during the same period last year. Officials warn that this delay in rice transplantation will significantly reduce yields and increase the threat of food insecurity in the months ahead. Similarly, paddy contributed 12.82% to the country's agricultural GDP in the fiscal year 2023/24. A major drop in output due to the drought will have a direct impact on the national economy.

While climate change is a direct driver, the structural neglect and poor planning has also contributed to the crisis. Incomplete and outdated irrigation projects have left farmers without water when they need it most. Overuse of the Chure hills has disrupted groundwater recharge, dried up aquifers and worsened the drinking water crisis. In several districts, hand-pumps and wells have gone dry, and broken cold storage, fertilizer shortages, and limited agricultural extension services have only worsened the strain.

In response, the provincial government has sought federal and donor assistance. However, experts argue that emergency aid alone is not enough. Farmers are being advised to shift to drought-resilient crops like millets, maize, sesame, soybeans, and short-duration vegetables. Urgent investment in climate-smart agriculture, functional irrigation systems, and long-term planning is essential. Similarly, all levels of government must urgently implement localized and practical solutions to confront current challenges and prepare for future climate shocks.

Now in madhesh, but it is sure to escalate, infrastructural preparation should thus begin across Nepal, also in urban areas

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Governance Issues of the Week

- Govt awards passport tender to ineligible firms:** The Department of Passports awarded an NPR 8 billion e-passport contract to two German firms that failed to meet mandatory technical specifications. The tender required advanced blade servers, but the selected companies proposed outdated rack servers which are three times cheaper. Despite objections from the technical committee, the firms were still declared eligible. French company IDEMIA, Nepal's passport printer for 15 years and a competing bidder, has taken the case to court over the alleged irregularities.
Read more: [Nayapatrika](#)
- Hundreds of education consultancies found operating without approval:** The Ministry of Industry and Commerce's recent monitoring has found hundreds of education consultancies operating without legal registration or approval. According to the Education Consultancy Services and Language Training Guidelines 2073, the consultancies must obtain operational approval from the relevant division under the Ministry of Education. Yet, only 900 out of 5,000 have complied. Many were also found not keeping transaction records and conducting unregulated cash dealings.
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- Parliament resumes without calendar:** Both the House of Representatives and National Assembly have resumed meetings without publishing a formal calendar, disrupting a practice established in early 2024 to enhance transparency and coordination. No calendar has been released since mid-July, leaving the legislative timeline for the month unclear. The National Assembly has also announced a session for July 26, but has not disclosed its agenda.
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- NID services disrupted amid system maintenance:** The Department of National Identity and Civil Registration has reported partial disruption in its services due to ongoing upgrades and maintenance of its Management Information System. The affected services include online registration, ID card distribution, data correction, and social security allowance processing. The department has advised the public to use offline methods for submitting information and collecting national ID cards in the meantime
Read more: [The Himalayan Times](#)
- China begins rebuilding Rasuwagadhi border link:** The Reconstruction has begun at the Nepal-China border in Rasuwagadhi, where floods and landslides on 8 July 2025 destroyed key infrastructure, including the Miteri (Friendship) Bridge and road sections. The Chinese government has started building a Bailey bridge and repairing damaged roads, aiming to complete the work by August 15. Small vehicles are now allowed on the Syafrubesi-Rasuwagadhi route, while heavy vehicles remain restricted.
Read more: [The Rising Nepal](#)
- Ex-Minister Shrestha Also Implicated in Land Grab Scandal:** Following the resignation of Minister of Federal Affairs and General Administration Raj Kumar Gupta, the former Minister of Land Management, Cooperative and Poverty Alleviation has also been linked to the 134-ropani Pokhara land grab scandal. Audio recordings suggest she played an intermediary role in a bribe deal involving broker Sujan Lama and Gupta. The Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA) has initiated interrogations and plans to summon Shrestha to verify the voice in the recordings and investigate her possible involvement in the corruption case.
Read more: [Kantipur](#)

This edition was possible with technical support of  **Open Co Hub**

Nepal Governance Weekly is an analytical update of Nepal's current affairs based on media and real sources mining, to sensitize the communities on hot news on various governance issues from the perspective of accountability.

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