

GOVERNANCE WEEKLY

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Madhesh Political Crisis: Controversial Chief Minister Appointment Sparks Tensions

Photo By The Kathmandu Post

Madhesh Province experienced one of its most volatile political episodes in the appointment of Chief Minister this week. The crisis began in mid-October when Jitendra Prasad Sonal of the Loktantrik Samajwadi Party was appointed Chief Minister of Madhesh Province with an anticipated backing of 56 provincial assembly members. However, as key partners and individual members withdrew support, he concluded he could not secure a majority in the 107-member assembly and [resigned](#) on November 8—just 25 days after taking office.

The next day, the Provincial Chief, Sumitra Subedi Bhandari [swore](#) in Saroj Kumar Yadav of CPN-UML as the Chief Minister. This became highly controversial, as swearing-in took place not in the legislative chamber but in a hotel, and happened while the provincial chief was officially on leave citing health concerns. UML only had 25 seats out of 107 and support of 2 other members from RPP and NFSP. While UML, as the largest party, could claim the chance to [form](#) a government under Article 168(3) after Sonal's resignation, the haste and manner of Yadav's appointment were widely condemned by opposition parties as unconstitutional, disrespectful to the province, and procedurally improper.

On November 11, seven opposition parties [filed](#) a writ petition signed by 74 assembly members. Similarly, the federal cabinet recommended the removal of Provincial Chief Sumitra Subedi Bhandari, who had appointed Yadav; she was subsequently replaced by Surendra Labh Karna. The very same day, the speaker of the Provincial Assembly, Ram Chandra Mandal who is from UML then expelled 5 assembly members citing their absence for 10 consecutive assemblies. The Vice-Speaker Babita Kumari Raut Ishar, however, immediately [reversed](#) the decision, calling it a retaliatory act after 74 members from seven parties formally questioned the Speaker's conduct and professionalism.

Moreover, the Supreme Court, on November 13, [issued](#) a show-cause order to Chief Minister Yadav, directing him to submit a written response through the Attorney General within 15 days. The Court also asked for all documents related to the November 9 appointment and the formation of the Council of Ministers. A preliminary hearing has been scheduled for November 16.

These events reflect a clear pattern of federal political parties seeking to dominate provincial politics—a trend increasingly common but counterproductive for federalism. Madhesi leaders perceive this as a sidelining of provincial voices, raising fears of renewed polarization. Janmat Party chair CK Raut has already called for Madhesh to be declared a self-administered region. It is important that the national parties respect provincial autonomy and the spirit of federalism to prevent further political unrest in the province.

Election watch

No Biometric Required for Voters with National Identity Number: The Election Commission has simplified voter registration for citizens who already hold a National Identity Card or National Identity Number. Applicants with the identity number no longer need to provide biometric data or visit government offices in person. The registration deadline is November 16 and will not be extended, as doing so could affect the poll schedule and delay the upcoming elections. [Read More](#)

Governance issues of the week

- Five new parties registered, 21 more seek EC approval:** Five new political parties have been registered at Election Commission, taking the total registered political parties to 126. Another 21 parties are undergoing the registration process ahead of upcoming elections. Newly registered parties include Harka Sampang's Shram Sanskriti Party, Nagarik Unmukti Party, Nepal; Janswaraj Party, formed after a Janmat Party split; Rastriya Janmukti Party, split from Nepal Janmukti Party; and Gatisheel Loktantrik Party led by Buddha Air's Birendra Basnet. A newly unified Nepali Communist Party is also seeking registration. [Read more](#)
- AG faces scrutiny over ovum-trafficking case involving daughter:** The Attorney General's Office has opted not to pursue legal action in a child ovum-trafficking case linked to two fertility clinics run by AG Sabita Bhandari's daughter, Dr. Pratyusha Baral, and Dr. Swasti Sharma. The clinics allegedly sold the ova of around 10,000 financially disadvantaged girls for up to NPR 2 million. AG Bhandari claimed she did not direct prosecutors but admitted difficulty remaining neutral. Her remarks including questioning victims' behaviour and age has raised concerns over impartiality. [Read more](#)
- Dedicated and trunk line arrears payment starts:** Out of the 58 industries who hadn't paid the fees to NEA for Dedicated and trunk lines, 47 industries have begun paying installments, while 2 government owned industries have expressed commitment to start paying. Of the remaining 9 who have not begun paying, two industries have shut down, 6 have obtained interim orders and 1 is currently under maintenance. So far, NPR 431.4 million has been collectively paid, and 9 industries still have NPR 1.316 billion to pay. [Read More](#)
- Melamchi locals end Protest, kathmandu water supply restored:** Water supply to the Kathmandu Valley resumed on 12 November after Helambu Municipality locals ended their 11-day protest. The halt was lifted following an agreement with the Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport, which commits to assessing damage caused by the 2021 floods and landslides, providing relief and compensation within three months, and prioritising employment for flood-affected families. The deal paved the way for the Melamchi project to restart water distribution to the valley. [Read More](#)
- 610 startups forward proposals for concessional loans from MoICS:** The Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies has invited startups to submit applications for concessional loans within 21 days. So far, 592 applicants have applied online and 18 applicants have submitted applications in-person. The government seeks to provide the loans to upto 400 start-ups. In the last fiscal year, 600 such projects were allocated with a fund of NPR 1 billion. [Read More](#)

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