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Analysis

Nepal's Upcoming Election: High-Risk Context Demands Robust Security

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DAYS TO GO

FEB EVENTS

- FEB 3 : Final PR Closed candidate lists published.
- FEB 15 : Official Election campaign period begins nationwide.

Nepal's Upcoming Election: High-Risk Context Demands Robust Security

Nepal's upcoming House of Representatives (HOR) election on March 5th is increasingly treated as a high-risk context, prompting the government and security agencies to undertake extensive preparations. Authorities are treating this election with heightened caution to avoid any potential security challenges that could disrupt the voting process and affect public confidence in the polls.

The government has classified 3,680 of the country's 10,967 polling stations as "highly sensitive," reflecting concerns over political tensions and local vulnerabilities. Of the remaining polling stations, 2,845 have been categorized as "normal" in terms of security risk, while 4,442 have been designated as "sensitive." These classifications are based on a range of factors, including historical conflicts, demographic challenges, and the accessibility of security personnel. The polling stations are usually designated as highly sensitive if they are conflict-prone, difficult to access, or have experienced disturbances in the past.

In total, 337,911 security personnel are being mobilized from all 4 security agencies, as per the Home Ministry. In line with these assessments, the Nepal Armed Police has temporarily [suspended](#) resignations, transfers, and leave across all offices of the Armed Police Force Nepal, ensuring that maximum personnel are available to support election security. Simultaneously, the Nepal Army is being [mobilized](#) on an unprecedented scale, with 79,729 personnel deployed to support other security personnel in maintaining order and ensuring peaceful voting. The army is being deployed from barracks a month ahead of the election. Joint teams of the Nepali Army, Nepal Police, Armed Police Force, and election police (Myadi) are also being deployed.

We believe that this election could face both conventional and unconventional security threats. The higher number of "sensitive" polling stations increases the potential for localized incidents. Many weapons looted from security personnel during last September's demonstrations still remain unrecovered, and thousands of absconded prisoners are still at large. This has added to the anxiety among political parties and stakeholders. Therefore, ensuring a smooth electoral process will also depend on the behavior of political actors, the responsiveness of security agencies, and public adherence to democratic norms.

Thus, the credibility of this election depends on a robust security chain that extends from voters' confidence and access to polling stations to the protection of election officials, ballot papers, and ballot boxes, as well as the counting and announcement of results. Finally, early security risk assessments, coupled with rapid and decisive action by security forces, are critical to keeping emerging threats under control.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE NEWS

Vote with Any One of 6 Government Documents

The Election Commission has clarified that voters who have lost or do not possess their voter ID card [can still vote in the upcoming election](#), by presenting any one of six government-issued identification documents at the polling station, provided their name appears on the official voters' list. Accepted documents include Nepali citizenship certificate, national identity card, passport, driving license, and land ownership certificate.

Election Preparations Underway

The Election Commission has begun [printing ballot papers](#) for the upcoming HoR election, with about six million first-past-the-post (FPTP) ballots already printed for 55 of the 165 constituencies. The printing is being done under tight security by the Nepali Army at Janak Education Material Centre in Bhaktapur, and all ballots, including proportional representation ones, are expected to be completed by February 23, after which distribution to districts will start.

ECN Signs MoU with TikTok to combat Election Misinformation

The Election Commission of Nepal has entered into a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with TikTok in a proactive effort to curb misinformation ahead of the upcoming House of Representatives election, and [as part of MoU, TikTok](#) has committed support free of charge to assist in preventing misuse of its platform during the election.

Code of Conduct Clarification Notices Issued to Certain Candidates

The Election Commission has been actively enforcing the Election Code of Conduct, [seeking clarifications](#) from numerous candidates, parties, officials and organizations after complaints of violations, including hate speech, misuse of campaign materials, and exceeding allowed numbers at nomination events. Notices have been issued to candidates and leaders from different parties for various alleged breaches as part of the Commission's effort to ensure compliance ahead of the polls, with [authorities also arresting Durga Prasai](#) in connection with alleged election-related misconduct.

Women Candidates Face Online Abuse and Misogyny

Women contesting the March 5 elections in Nepal are [facing intense scrutiny and abuse online](#), often focused on their bodies, age, health, or reproductive status rather than their vision or agenda. In addition to the political parties fielding very few women candidates, societal attitudes continue to treat women as electoral liabilities rather than legitimate leaders. This points to persistent barriers to meaningful gender inclusion in electoral politics

Election Security Plan–2082



Source: Nagarik News



Anukul Regmi

Digital Campaign Lead, YD fellow

My social media is flooded with political content right now. No matter how well I seem to manage the preferences & screen time, I come across content mostly about elections and candidates from different political parties. From interviews & podcasts to reels & memes. They just are there everywhere and everytime.

But what worries me the most is how aggressively political narratives are being pushed and amplified during elections. I've seen ordinary individuals bullied, threatened, and personally targeted simply for expressing their political preferences. Use of AI and social media algorithms itself intensifies this by feeding us content that aligns with our existing beliefs, promoting popular contents and polarizing narratives while suppressing dissenting views. This limits exposure to diverse perspectives, deepens division, and distorts public discourse.

This raises an important question for all of us: is the overwhelming support we see on social media, a true reflection of voters' choice, or is it just to stay visible and relevant? And, if the election results differ from the dominant social media preferences, how prepared are we to accept the ground reality? The Election Commission has created provisions to regulate social media campaigning, curbing misinformation, hate speech, character assassination, AI-driven manipulation, and paid promotions outside official party or candidate pages. However, we, as citizens, also carry a responsibility to engage on social media thoughtfully, verify information before sharing, and contribute to respectful and fact-based discussions, recognizing that online behavior plays a role in safeguarding election integrity.

This weekly newsletter is a joint initiative of Accountability Lab Nepal (ALN) and Digital Rights Nepal (DRN), specifically launched to provide comprehensive coverage and analysis of the 2026 elections in Nepal. During this time, this publication consolidates their regular newsletters, ALN's ***Nepal Governance Weekly*** and DRN's ***Digital Rights Weekly***. Consequently, those will not be produced separately until the election cycle concludes.

This material aims to promote electoral integrity and enable informed citizenry by delivering non-partisan, evidence-based analysis, and rights-oriented perspective. It does not endorse or oppose any political party or candidates.

The data presented here is synthesized from diverse credible sources, including government agencies, international organizations, news media, social platforms, and our extensive local networks. The topic selection are based on their prevalence, relevance, and potential societal impact, ensuring all information is accurate and verified at the time of publication.

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