

EP : 06 21/FEB /2026

Analysis

A Comparative Look at Party Manifestos

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- Major highlights across the media include: ECN polls ban, online abuse of women candidates, HoR ballots printed.
- 'Factsheet' presenting major political parties' manifesto status.
- 'Community Voices' presenting youth's voices on voting for the first time.

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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.
- FEB 15 : Deadline to submit manifesto.

A Comparative Look at Party Manifestos

As Nepal approaches the House of Representatives elections, major political parties have unveiled ambitious and often overlapping manifestos, emphasis on governance, corruption control, economic growth, employment generation, constitutional reforms, and public service improvements. Youth activism, particularly among Gen Z, has influenced several party platforms, although the UML downplays its significance, framing recent protests as politically motivated. While parties broadly aim to address public frustration over governance inefficiencies and corruption, their goals differ sharply on structural issues such as governance models, federalism, and electoral reforms.

For the governance structure, [Nepali Congress](#) (NC) emphasizes merit-based appointments, institutional reforms, and term limits, alongside restructuring investigative bodies and reviewing the electoral system. The [UML](#) focuses on national sovereignty, large-scale infrastructure projects, and AI-driven anti-corruption initiatives, while largely avoiding electoral reforms. The [Rastriya Swatantra Party \(RSP\)](#) proposes a fully proportional parliament, a directly elected executive, and non-partisan local governance. The [Nepal Communist Party \(NCP\)](#) prioritizes constitutional and federal restructuring, youth-centered governance reforms, and smart city development, whereas the Janata Samajbadi Party (JSP) champions proportional representation and a directly elected executive tied to national identity. The [Rastriya Prajatantra Party \(RPP\)](#) stands out with its advocacy for a constitutional monarchy, a Hindu state, and abolishing provinces. Parties such as the [Shram Sanskriti Party](#) and [Ujyalo Nepal Party](#) also focus on direct executive elections, proportional representation, and streamlined ministries. Digital governance, including e-services, paperless offices, AI-based oversight, and internet accessibility, is increasingly central to party platforms.

Economic growth is a central promise across all platforms, with annual targets ranging from 7% to 10%. Job creation commitments vary, from NC's 1.5 million to RSP's 1.2 million, NCP's 500,000 regular jobs plus self-employment, and Ujyalo Nepal's 900,000. Infrastructure, energy, and digital economy initiatives are consistently emphasized, including hydropower expansion, smart cities, cross-border pipelines, modern transportation, and nationwide 4G connectivity. Social sector promises focus on accessible healthcare and education, with free or fully insured healthcare pledged by NC, RSP, RPP, and NCP, and free education up to Grade 12 prioritized by JSP and RPP.

Anti-corruption measures remain a defining feature of manifestos, ranging from asset investigations and citizen-driven commissions to structural reforms in oversight institutions. The UML highlights AI monitoring and legal campaigns, while NC, RSP, NCP, and others propose high-level commissions to ensure transparency and accountability.

Regarding non-resident Nepali (NRN) rights, parties show varying approaches. RSP and RPP support citizenship continuity for NRNs even if they acquire foreign nationality, while NC, UML, and NCP propose constitutional amendments to safeguard NRN rights. All parties pledge reforms to enable political participation for the diaspora, with varying mechanisms for economic engagement, property protection, and leveraging NRN expertise and capital for national development.

Ultimately, the battle of manifestos reveals as much competition as consensus. While parties promise growth, jobs, and digital transformation, they remain divided on the very structure of the state. Many pledges sound ambitious, some arguably populist, echoing a familiar pre-election pattern where bold commitments fade once power is secured. In the end, elections will not be decided by the thickness of manifestos but by public trust in who can actually deliver. For voters weary of corruption and unfulfilled promises, credibility, not rhetoric, may be the decisive ballot.

ECN Urges Media to Avoid Opinion Polls During Election Period

Acting Chief Election Commissioner Ram Prasad Bhandari has [urged media outlets](#) not to conduct or publish any opinion polls during the election period, stating that such surveys are prohibited under the Election Code of Conduct. Speaking at a program organized by the Election Commission of Nepal on the occasion of the 10th Election Day, he warned that action would be taken against violations. Bhandari also called on political party supporters to respect the code of conduct, avoid character attacks on social media, and rely on factual information. He encouraged voters to choose representatives independently, free from pressure or influence, and emphasized that even minor mistakes during elections could create serious problems. The Commission has been conducting voter education in all 6,743 wards nationwide and has introduced new financial transparency measures requiring political parties and candidates to open separate bank accounts for election expenses.

Rising Online Abuse Against Women Candidates Despite 344 Complaints to Election Commission

As Nepal prepares for the House of Representatives election on March 5, 2026, online abuse against women candidates is rising despite clear legal prohibitions. The Election Commission of Nepal has [received 344 complaints](#) for violations of the Election Code of Conduct, many involving obscene, hateful, and misogynistic comments targeting female candidates. Women contesting both direct and proportional seats have reported sexualized trolling, character assassination, AI-generated defamatory content, and even threats. Candidates say such attacks not only harm them personally but also distress their families and discourage women's political participation, undermining constitutional commitments to women's representation. Although the 'Election Code of Conduct-2082' prohibits hate speech, misinformation, and character defamation, the growing trend of digital harassment highlights weak enforcement and the urgent need to ensure a safer and more respectful electoral environment.

Dedicated Bank Accounts Made Mandatory for Election Campaigns in Nepal

To ensure a fair and transparent House of Representatives election on March 5, 2026, the Election Commission of Nepal has mandated that all candidates open [a dedicated bank account](#) for campaign finances. Under the new "House of Representatives Campaign Banking Operation and Management Procedure, 2082," donations above Rs. 25,000 must be processed through banks, and candidates are required to submit detailed expense reports in line with the Election Code of Conduct. The Nepal Rastra Bank has [directed banks to facilitate](#) these accounts for parties, candidates, and independents, granting a temporary exemption to allow separate campaign accounts until the Election Commission orders their closure.

Gyanendra Shah, former king Calls for Postponement of March 5 Election

On the eve of Democracy Day, Gyanendra Shah, former monarch, [urged postponement of the March 5 parliamentary election](#), warning that holding polls amid widespread public dissatisfaction could deepen instability and fuel further conflict. In a video message, he argued that elections alone cannot resolve the country's political crisis and questioned the legitimacy of the interim government overseeing the process. The government rejected his remarks and confirmed elections will proceed as planned, while leaders from the Rastriya Prajatantra Party backed his call for broader political consensus before voting.

KEY POLITICAL PARTIES MANIFESTO STATUS

Manifesto Released



Nepali Congress



Nepali Communist Party



UML-CPN



Rastriya Swatantra Party



Rastriya Prajatantra Party



Shram Sanskriti Party



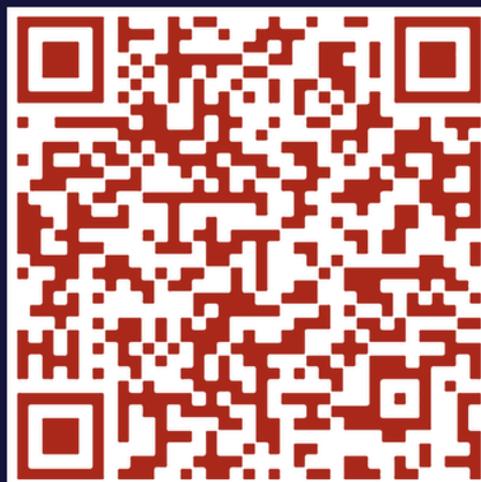
Ujyalo Nepal Party



People's Socialist Party



SCAN TO ACCESS MANIFESTOS





Khusi Adhikari

Student, Kathmandu

It's easy to forget, when indifference is the norm, that your actions have the power to change the course of actions that are a catalyst to bringing about real change in Nepal. When the disappointment repeats over the years, it's easier to disengage. I will be voting for the first time in this election. I feel grateful knowing how the elections this time around are incredibly important for the future of Nepal's democracy and economy. The choices we make are going to shape the leadership, direction and accountability of our country. I urge people to not be swayed by the popular narratives and false promises that are pushed by the people in power that have regularly been a source of disappointment. Think about yourself, about the community and not from a comfort of one's privilege, but from the perspective of



Ganesh Adhikari

Kathmandu

This is going to be my 6th time voting in the parliamentary elections, and I hope these elections will bring about the implementations of new and improved policies within Nepal. We have seen previous leaders in powerful positions go about running this country while simultaneously being adamant that their way of thinking is the right way, which has undoubtedly led to various forms of political discourse within the citizens. However, I hope the current elections will help in providing a more open and transparent government, that will be able to make decisions, not based on their ego, but based on the betterment of their homeland itself.

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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Our return e-mail address is:

nepal@accountabilitylab.org and
info@digitalrightsnepal.com

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