

EP : 08 28/FEB /2026

Analysis

With the approaching election and heightened campaigning, upholding the election code of conduct has become increasingly tricky!

IN THIS EPISODE

- Analysis of the growing challenges in upholding the Election Code of Conduct.
- Major highlights across the media including election preparations in its final stage, limitation on vehicle mobility, and mobilisation of security for the polling day.
- 'Factsheet' outlining key facilitative measures for Election Day.
- 'Community Voices' presenting youth voices on election hopes.

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DAYS TO GO

MARCH EVENTS

- **MAR 3** : Silent period begins (48 hours before polling).
- **MAR 5: ELECTION DAY**
Nationwide polling for FPTP and PR.

With the approaching election and heightened campaigning, upholding the election code of conduct has become increasingly tricky!

With only six days remaining until Nepal's House of Representatives election on March 5, political campaigning has intensified dramatically, with parties and candidates employing increasingly aggressive and digitally sophisticated strategies. In this crucial moment, the responsibility of the Election Commission of Nepal (ECN) to ensure strict enforcement of the Election Code of Conduct has become more urgent than ever. According to the Commission, [254 complaints](#) were received at the central level through email, in-person registration, and media sources. Clarifications were sought in 88 cases, and responses were received in 57 cases involving four political parties, 33 candidates, and 51 government or educational institutions, employees, and individuals. After review, the Commission imposed fines of NPR 25,000 each on three candidates or parties and formally warned two candidates. It also directed the Ministry of Forest and Environment and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology to initiate departmental action against a government office chief and a school teacher for engaging in political activities and improper social media conduct in violation of the Code. While these actions show that monitoring mechanisms are active, the scale and repetition of violations raise legitimate concerns about whether current penalties are strong enough to deter misconduct.

At the district level, 1,076 complaints were registered, with 99 percent reportedly resolved. Lumbini Province recorded the highest number of complaints, while Sudurpaschim recorded the lowest. Notably, 91 percent of complaints were submitted through telephone, SMS, and other informal channels, with only 9 percent filed in writing. Common violations included oversized banners and flags, misuse of social media, noise pollution through campaign events, involvement of teachers and civil servants in campaigning, display of party flags in public spaces and vehicles, and the use of unauthorized vehicles. Meanwhile, under the Election Information Communication and Coordination Center, the Information Integrity Promotion Unit identified [612 instances of harmful or toxic information](#). Of these, 545 cases were referred to Nepal Police under the Electronic Transactions Act, 121 to the Central Code Monitoring Committee under the Election Code of Conduct, 74 to the Press Council, and one to the Advertisement Board. So far, only a portion of these referrals has resulted in action. A study by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) further revealed that 54 percent of harmful election-related content involved AI-generated deepfake images and videos, underscoring the growing threat of technologically advanced manipulation in Nepal's democratic process. In addition to enforcement actions, the Commission has recommended stricter measures during the campaign silence period, including a ban on alcohol sales seven days prior to voting, restrictions on vehicle movement on polling day, and temporary closure of international border points 72 hours before voting. A Joint Election Operation Center has also been activated to coordinate security among relevant agencies. While these logistical and security arrangements are important, the integrity of the election depends equally on transparent, consistent, and proportionate enforcement of the Code of Conduct.

Serious concerns remain regarding transparency and due process: authorities have not disclosed the specific content flagged, the individuals implicated, or the legal reasoning behind their decisions, and there is no accessible redress mechanism for those affected. Delayed action and minimal sanctions undermine deterrence at this critical stage of the electoral cycle, allowing violations to persist unchecked.

With polling day imminent, the Election Commission of Nepal must act decisively. Timely enforcement, proportionate sanctions, transparent regulation of political advertising, and clear public disclosure of decisions are not optional, they are essential to safeguard both democratic integrity and the digital rights of Nepali voters. The credibility of this election will not be measured solely by orderly polling, but by whether the campaign environment itself is fair, accountable, and free from manipulation. Repeat offenders and those exploiting digital platforms to mislead voters must face swift and visible consequences. Political parties and candidates must also recognize that victories built on misinformation, intimidation, or manipulation erode democracy itself. This is a defining moment for Nepal's electoral process: firm, consistent, and courageous enforcement today will determine public trust tomorrow. The Election Code of Conduct must be applied without fear, without favor, and without delay, anything less risks undermining the very foundation of Nepal's democracy.

Election Preparations in Final Stage as Materials Reach All Constituencies

Election materials have been delivered to [all 165 constituencies across 77 districts](#) for the March 5 House of Representatives election. Over 41.153 million ballot papers for both FPTP and PR systems have been printed and distributed, with preparations now in the final stage. Voter education is ongoing in 6,743 wards across 753 local levels until March 1, while monitoring committees are actively overseeing compliance with the election code of conduct.

Vehicle Ban Imposed for March 5 HoR Election

The Election Commission of Nepal has announced a [nationwide vehicle ban](#) from midnight on March 4 until voting ends on March 5 for the House of Representatives election. The restriction applies to all public and private vehicles, except emergency and essential service vehicles with special passes. The Ministry of Home Affairs has been directed to enforce the decision, with borders sealed 72 hours before voting. The sale of beverages is also banned from one week before polling until final results are announced. Flights will operate as usual, and voters must carry valid identification to cast their ballots.

Over 221,000 Staff Deployed for March 5 HoR Election

The Election Commission of Nepal [will deploy 221,000 personnel across 165 constituencies](#) for the March 5 House of Representatives election. Staff will manage 23,112 voting centers and 143 temporary PR-only centers across 77 districts.

Nine staff members will be assigned to centers with over 500 voters and eight to those with fewer. Election officers have been trained and will train other polling staff. The commission confirmed that all election materials and ballot papers have reached every constituency.

Government Mobilises Additional Security Forces to Strengthen Election Security

The Ministry of Home Affairs has [deployed additional teams from Nepal Police and Armed Police Force Nepal](#) across all seven provinces to strengthen election security. Senior officers from DSP to SSP rank are leading the teams, which will remain in the field until voting concludes. Security personnel have been mobilized under the Integrated Election Security Plan–2082 to monitor risks, coordinate in the field, and report to the center. Extra focus has been placed on sensitive and high-risk districts, including Madhesh Province. The government has warned that activities disrupting religious harmony, inciting violence, or violating the election of conduct will not be tolerated, stating that offenders will face legal action to ensure a free, fair, and peaceful election.

Silent Period for election begins from the midnight of Falgun

Alcohol sale and consumption banned from 7 days before voting until final results are announced.

Election Security and Necessary Facilitation in the Voting Process



International borders in concerned districts will close 72 hours before the polling day.

Domestic and international flights will operate on election day; passengers must carry valid tickets when traveling to/from the airport.

All vehicles except essential services (ambulance, fire brigade, security, etc.), diplomatic missions vehicles, and those with an official pass are prohibited from 12:00 midnight, Falgun 20 until the end of Falgun 21.

A special unit at the Election Commission and Kathmandu DAO will issue vehicle passes for voting day.

Voters listed on the voter list may vote using any valid ID: Voter ID card, Citizenship certificate, National ID card, driving license, Land ownership certificate, or Passport.



Padam Kattel

CEO—Yatra Holidays

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I am hopeful and enthusiastic about this election, believing it will bring meaningful change and sustainable development. I value integrity and honesty in a political leader, who should also be dynamic, energetic, and passionate. Most importantly, a leader should be focused on action and delivering results over making empty promises. Anti-corruption and transparency are key issues, as frustrated citizens want major changes promoting transparency and good governance, alongside issues like quality education, accessible health care, youth employment, infrastructure development, and effective waste management. My hope is for the nation to overcome obstacles and move toward progress and prosperity.

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Rubedian Chaudhary

Student, Dhangadi

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I am looking forward to the upcoming elections, as this will be my first time voting. I am casting my vote in hopes of seeing a positive systemic change. My main expectation from the election is the building of the system that promotes eradication of corruption. Beyond the election I further hope for the end of the idolization of the people's representatives and government officials and instead we equally prioritize holding them accountable for their actions. Citizens must be equally active and accountable.

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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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