

# Nepal GOVERNANCE

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**The government's recent National Commitment Framework signals ambition, but questions remain on delivery**

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The Government of Nepal has circulated a draft of the [National Commitment Framework](#), which consolidates the manifestos and pledges of the six major national political parties into a single national roadmap. The document outlines objectives spanning 17 key sectors, including transforming Nepal into a middle-income country while addressing governance, economic reform, and geopolitical positioning. While many concrete plans are included in the framework, generic commitments also fill this document. Nevertheless, it seeks to provide strategic direction and ensure implementation through national policies, programs, budget allocations, and roadmap priorities for the upcoming fiscal year.

At its core is an ambitious economic reform agenda. The framework targets 7 percent annual growth, per capita income of USD 3,000, and a USD 100 billion economy within the next five years. It identifies the digital economy as a future engine of jobs and productivity while also proposing tax simplification, stronger fiscal transparency, and anti-money laundering reforms to address FATF grey listing risks. This could improve investor confidence and help Nepal address international compliance concerns.

In agriculture, the document focuses on modernization and farmer welfare. Plans include agricultural credit cards; unique farmer identity cards that can unlock subsidies and social protection; local seed banks; geography-specific farming; and irrigation expansion to 300,000 hectares of cultivable land. If implemented well, these could address chronic underinvestment in rural productivity.

The framework also places strong emphasis on tourism, infrastructure, and energy. It proposes restructuring the Civil Aviation Authority into separate regulatory and service entities and full operation of Pokhara and Bhairahawa international airports, including direct flights from major global cities to these airports. On energy, Nepal aims for 30,000 MW generation capacity, prioritizing reservoir-based hydropower projects such as Budhi Gandaki and Dudhkoshi. Major highways and cross-border connectivity with India and China are also highlighted.

A notable feature is its focus on jobs and human capital. The framework promises 1.5 million jobs in the next five years and proposes integrating coding, artificial intelligence, data literacy, and cybersecurity into school curricula. It also seeks to channel the skills and capital of returnee migrant workers into domestic development. In education and health, the state promises model schools at every local level, public libraries in each district, disability rehabilitation centers in every province, an 8 percent health budget share by 2031, and a 'one citizen, one digital health profile.'

On governance, the proposals are politically significant. They include defining the powers of political and administrative leadership by law, inducting 25 percent new personnel into government service, limiting ministries to 17, reducing partisan influence in public institutions, and turning the National Planning Commission into a policy think tank. The framework also advances social inclusion, promising inclusive audits, support for sexual and gender minorities, stronger disability rights mechanisms, and care centers for vulnerable communities.

Perhaps most strategically, it reaffirms Nepal's neutral, independent, and non-aligned foreign policy while describing the country as a "Buffer State." The phrase may appeal to geopolitical balancing instincts, but it could also trigger debate over sovereignty and diplomatic messaging.

Overall, the framework is politically ambitious and symbolically important. However, the real challenge lies not in drafting commitments, but, as seen in previous plans, in ensuring their implementation.

## Governance Issues of the Week

- **Dispute Over School Admission Schedule:** The Ministry of Education has directed schools to begin admissions from Baisakh 15 and start classes from Baisakh 21. However, districts including Pyuthan, Tanahun, and Rupandehi have issued notices allowing admissions from the first week of Baisakh. Local authorities cite their constitutional authority over basic and secondary education, stating the academic session has already begun. Schools and PABSON say early admissions help align calendars and avoid delays caused by Sundays, with private schools following the same practice. [Read more](#)
- **Water Crisis Deepens in Madhesh Province:** Madhesh Province is facing a severe drinking water shortage due to declining rainfall, extreme heat waves, and overexploitation of natural resources. With only 24.78% forest cover—mostly in the Chure region—and 84 of 136 local units lacking forest, the ecological balance is weakening. Illegal extraction of riverbed materials, often linked to industry-contractor collusion, is also worsening Chure degradation, the province's key water recharge zone. [Read more](#)
- **Labor Permits Rise Despite Global Unrest:** Despite conflicts in West Asia and internal disturbances, the number of Nepalis obtaining labor permits for foreign employment has increased this fiscal year. According to the Department of Foreign Employment, 818,730 individuals received permits—a 1.06% rise from the previous year. On average, 2,243 Nepali migrants left abroad daily for work. The labor migration remained steady due to limited domestic job opportunities, though a slight decline was observed toward year-end. [Read more](#)
- **Over three thousand complaints to the Health Ministry:** In the first 15 days of assuming office, 3,122 complaints have been lodged with the minister of health addressing grievances on shortages of medicines, long waiting times, lack of medical personnel, poor hospital management, and inadequate treatment facilities. The ministry stated that these complaints will guide immediate reforms, monitoring mechanisms, and accountability measures aimed at improving service delivery in government hospitals across the country. [Read more](#)
- **TU to Reclaim Encroached Land:** Tribhuvan University has adopted an 8-point decision to reclaim encroached land and made its 2081 land and property report public. The report, earlier submitted to the government and later released by the education ministry under Mahabir Pun, estimates around 2,500 ropani of university land have been encroached upon. TU has formed a high-level task force and an implementation committee and issued a 35-day notice urging the return of occupied assets, warning of legal action if the directive is not followed. [Read more](#)

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