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# Ballot Bulletin Nepal

*A Weekly Election Governance Monitor*

## NEPAL HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ELECTION 2026

Reporting Period: February 14 to 20, 2026

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# 1. Key Election Developments

## Election Commission Directives and Enforcement

- On February 15, the Election Commission issued a 64-point directive governing campaign conduct.
  - Campaigning (rallies, public meetings, corner assemblies, and door-to-door outreach) permitted only between February 4–18 between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.
  - Mandates all campaign transactions through banks, requires submission of expense reports within 35 days of results.
  - Prohibits distribution of items bearing election symbols (e.g., T-shirts, caps, badges).
  - Violations subject to fines, disqualification, or up to a six-year ban from contesting elections.
- As of February 15, the Commission reported receiving 66 complaints of code-of-conduct violations, with only 32 responses submitted and monitoring ongoing at district levels.
- On February 16, the Commission wrote to the Press Council Nepal seeking action against Setopati for allegedly publishing predictive and poll-related content in violation of election rules.
- On February 19, the Commission issued the ‘Temporary Voter List Procedure 2082’, enabling temporary voter list inclusion and permanent registration for proportional representation voters, including government employees, security personnel, prisoners, and election staff on duty.
- As of February 20, only 41 political parties had submitted their manifestos. Additionally, 7 political parties and 8,867 candidates have opened mandatory election bank accounts for campaign finance compliance.

## **Operational Preparedness and Logistics**

- Election authorities confirmed that 20.3 million first-past-the-post ballots had been printed and packaged as of February 17.
- 20.83 million proportional ballots being dispatched province-wise, with Sudurpashchim, Karnali, and Koshi Provinces already receiving supplies.
- In Madhesh Province, 1,236 out of 2,160 polling stations (58%) were classified as “highly sensitive,” based on district-level security assessments indicating uneven geographic risk concentration and potential security strain in the province.
- The Commission launched a nationwide voter education program (Falgun 3–17), deploying volunteers across 6,743 wards and utilizing digital platforms (Facebook, X, TikTok, YouTube) to reduce invalid votes and counter misinformation.

## **Financial Compliance and Administrative Issues**

- On February 20, police personnel deployed for election duty staged a protest in Garuda, Rautahat, alleging delays and lack of transparency in election-related allowances.

## **Grievance-Driven Political Mobilization**

- On February 14, cooperative victims in Bharatpur, Chitwan, submitted a 13-point memorandum to Nepali Congress candidate Mina Kharel (Chitwan-2), demanding restitution of long-pending savings and accountability from authorities.

## 2. Incidents of Election-Related Violence

### Explosions and Suspicious Objects (February 17)

Following a nationwide shutdown call by CPN (Majority), multiple bomb-like devices and suspicious objects were reported across Dang, Kapilvastu, Jajarkot, Makwanpur, and Rupandehi:

- A cylinder bomb exploded near Tikri, Tulsipur (Dang)- *No casualties reported.*
- In Kapilvastu, bomb-like devices were planted at multiple highway locations- *One suspect affiliated with a Nepal Communist Party (Bahumat) arrested under explosives-related provisions.*
- In Jajarkot and Makwanpur, suspicious objects were safely neutralized by joint security teams - *later confirmed to be non-explosive.*
- In Rupandehi, a hoax device placed near Lumbini Gate - *disposed safely.*

*These incidents suggest coordinated low-intensity psychological disruption aimed at creating fear rather than causing mass harm.*

### Assaults and Vandalism

- On February 17, Raju Harijan, a candidate affiliated with a Maoist faction, was assaulted during door-to-door campaigning in Bardaghat Municipality, Nawalparasi (West). Police arrested a suspect on February 18.
- On February 16, election mobilization committee offices of the CPN (UML) in Biratnagar (Wards 15 and 17) were vandalized. The party condemned the act and demanded legal action.

## Political Symbol Burning and Retaliatory Protests

- On February 19, supporters allegedly burned a CPN (UML) party flag during a rally welcoming Rabi Lamichhane in Tulsipur, Dang.
- Police arrested multiple suspects, and investigations are ongoing.
- Subsequent protests, including torch rallies and demonstrations by CPN (UML) and affiliated youth groups, were organized in Dang and other districts on February 19–20.
- Security forces intervened to prevent escalation, including attempted targeting of a local Rastriya Swatantra Party office.

*The rapid escalation from symbolic burning to organized mobilization reflects heightened polarization in competitive constituencies.*

## **The pre-election period (14-20 February) reveals two notable patterns:**

- Heightened localized security incidents, including coordinated bomb hoaxes across multiple districts designed for fear generation and psychological disruption rather than physical destruction.
- Rising political polarization is primarily expressed through symbolic confrontation (Flag burning, vandalism, and retaliatory protests) and intimidation, rather than large-scale violence.

Overall, in this reporting period, incidences of large-scale organized violence have remained limited, though patterns of increasing polarization and competitive tension signal rising stakes in the pre-poll phase. Consequently, the Election Commission's strong, proactive and assertive institutional enforcement, particularly regarding media regulation, campaign finance, and code-of-conduct compliance has helped contain potential escalation and reinforce procedural integrity. However, the clustering of coordinated hoax devices and politically charged protest activity suggests a moderate pre-election risk environment, there necessitating sustained monitoring and rapid security response.