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Ballot Bulletin Nepal

A Weekly Election Governance Monitor

NEPAL HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ELECTION 2026

Reporting Period: March 3 to 9, 2026

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1. Key Election Developments

On March 5, 2026, the nationwide House of Representatives election was conducted peacefully, with over 3,400 candidates competing in 165 constituencies under the first-past-the-post system and over 3,100 candidates contesting proportional representation for 110 seats. Out of 18.9 million eligible voters across 23,112 polling centers, around 60% voter turnout was recorded, which is lowest since 1991.

Out of 68 parties, only six (Rastriya Swatantra Party, Nepali Congress, CPN-UML, Nepali Communist Party, Shram Sanskriti Party, Rastriya Prajatantra Party, plus one independent) secured parliamentary seats. The four-year-old party, RSP became the largest party after securing 125 out of 165 seats and around 48 percent of the total votes cast under the proportional representation (PR) category. Only 14 of 391 female candidates won seats, mostly from the RSP, while major parties like CPN-UML, Nepali Congress, and Shram Sanskriti Party elected no women directly, reflecting continued gender disparities in politics.

Election Commission Directives and Enforcement

- On March 4, the Election Commission canceled the candidacy of Kishori Sah from the Rastriya Swatantra Party in Dhanusha District constituency-1 after discovering he was on the blacklist of a financial institution. Votes for the party's "bell" symbol in that constituency will be invalid, and the candidate with the next highest valid votes will be declared the winner if necessary. On March 8, the Election Commission decided not to announce results for Dhanusha-1 until a Supreme Court directive, following the disqualification of Rastriya Swatantra Party candidate Kishori Sah.
- On March 4, the Election Commission sought clarification from JSP Nepal candidate Asheshwar Yadav and four others detained with Rs 487,000 cash and

¹<https://kathmandupost.com/national/2026/03/12/voter-turnout-revised-to-60-percent-lowest-since-1991>

alleged ballot papers during the silent period, potentially leading to fines or disqualification.

- On March 4, an election complaint was filed in Kanchanpur against Ujyaalo Nepal Party candidate Yogendra Bahadur Saud for violating the election code during the silent period by publicly supporting a Rastriya Swatantra Party candidate on social media. This was one of five complaints registered in the district, all under investigation.
- On March 9, the Election Commission fined Setopati Sanchar Pvt Ltd Rs 100,000 for publishing election analyses in violation of the 2082 Election Code of Conduct. Setopati, which interviewed over 10,000 voters across 11 constituencies, has challenged the penalty in the Supreme Court, arguing it infringes on citizens' right to information.

Grievance-Driven Political Mobilizations

- On March 3, members of the Dharan Child Network began a hunger strike in Dharan, Sunsari District, accusing candidates like Harka Sampang and Uddhav Shrestha of using children in rallies, slogans, and videos, in violation of child rights. The protest followed ignored complaints to the Election Commission.
- On March 5, voter boycotts occurred in multiple polling centers across Darchula (Gaurishankar Secondary School and Dudhila Primary School), Dang (Deuti Secondary School, Janata Primary School, Janata Basic School, and Deuti Secondary School in Babai Rural Municipality), Okhaldhunga (Shahid Smriti Basic School), and Dolakha (Beding, Gaurishankar Rural Municipality-9), due to neglect, lack of development, wildlife threats, and unaddressed demands like hospital establishment or relocation from buffer zones. In some cases, only election staff cast proportional votes.

Court Interventions and Releases

- On March 6, the Supreme Court directed the release of Durga Prasai from police detention, ruling that his re-arrest on the same public peace disturbance charge violated prior to habeas corpus orders, especially as no post-election threat remained.

2. Incidents of Election-Related Violence

Explosions and Suspicious Objects

- On March 3, two suspicious objects were found at Ratu Bridge on the East–West Highway in Mahottari-Dhanusha Districts. One exploded when kicked, injuring two people with minor wounds, while the other was defused by the Nepali Army bomb disposal team.
- On March 3, a suspicious object in a black plastic bag near the District Administration Office in Biratnagar, Morang, prompted a night-long security operation. It was later found to contain ashes and ritual materials for worship.
- On March 3, a suspicious item by the roadside in Chandrapur Municipality-5, Rautahat, was disposed of by the army and deemed harmless, containing soil, a helmet, promotional materials, and sample ballots.
- On March 3, two vehicles were set on fire in Kathmandu during the silent period (a van in Naikap and a car in Sokedhara). Pamphlets linked to Durga Prasai were found, leading to the arrest of two affiliates for arson.
- On March 4, a suspicious object wrapped in red cloth was found in front of a house in Nagarjun Municipality, Kathmandu. Later Nepal Army defused it, revealing sand, wires, and plastic in a paint bucket.
- On March 4, a suspicious object resembling a bomb was found in a vehicle trunk in Badaniyar Chok, Parsa, carrying Nepali Communist Party candidate Manoj Kumar Chaudhary. The group was detained, and the device was disposed of the next morning.
- On March 4, three individuals were arrested in Birgunj Metropolitan City-16, Parsa, with nine sutali bombs, a pig's head, wiring, and other items, allegedly to provoke religious tensions at a mosque during Ramadan and the election.
- On March 5, a suspicious object in a sack on Chabahil–Sankhu road in Shankharapur-9, Kathmandu, was inspected by the army and found to contain only stones.

Assaults and Vandalism

- On March 2, four individuals attacked a police Quick Response Team in Mahalaxmi Municipality-7, Lalitpur, throwing stones and injuring one officer. Police fired one aerial round, and the suspects were remanded for eight days on assault charges.
- On March 4, ward chairperson Sohayeb Anwar of Golbazar Municipality-11, Siraha, was assaulted by 5–7 individuals, injuring him and two others. The attack was linked to disputes over money distribution.
- On March 5, independent candidate Ramadhar Kapar from Mahottari Constituency-3 was assaulted by an unidentified group in Jaleshwar Municipality-7, sustaining injuries and requiring hospital treatment.
- On March 5, a quarrel at Patiyapada Secondary School polling center in Sunbarshi-6, Morang, led to the arrest of an individual for abusing officers and disrupting voting.
- On March 5, a dispute at Malu polling center in Dolakha escalated when individuals attempted to assault election officials, leading to police firing warning shots. 56 ballots went missing but were recovered, allowing voting to resume under tightened security.
- On March 7, supporters at the Rastriya Swatantra Party contact office in Ghorahi, Dang, were attacked by a group.
- On March 8, Nepali Congress leader Dr. Kamaleshwar Sinha was injured in a brick attack by individuals linked to Rastriya Swatantra Party supporters in Balara-4, Sarlahi.

Clashes Between Supporters

- On March 4, members of the Rastriya Swatantra Party and CPN-UML clashed at a hotel near RSP candidate Sulabh Kharel's secretariat in Butwal, resulting in minor injuries and vehicle damage over suspected code violations.

Arrests and Detentions for Violations

- On March 3, 10 people were arrested in Damak, Jhapa Constituency-5, for violating the election code, including disturbances under alcohol influence and suspicious movements.
- On March 3, astrologer Pandit Rudranath Adhikari was arrested in Kathmandu for spreading rumors on social media that the election would not occur.
- On March 4, Nandaprasad Bhatt was arrested in Chitwan for creating and sharing an AI-generated deepfake video falsely claiming a message from Indian PM Narendra Modi, under the Electronic Transactions Act.
- On March 4, Ramesh Mandal, son-in-law of a CPN-UML candidate from Dhanusha-1, was arrested for using a government vehicle with a fake private plate during the silent period, suspected of voter influence.
- On March 4, YouTuber Ratan Karki was summoned in Chitwan for posting a video during the silent period. He removed it and was released without action.
- On March 4, 51-year-old Raju Jang Kandangwa was arrested in Birtamode-5, Jhapa, with 565 large and 27 small sample ballots.
- On March 4, two Nepal Communist Party (Bahumat) leaders were arrested in Kanepokhari Rural Municipality-6, Morang, for election boycott activities, with a motorcycle, phones, flags, and 107 pamphlets seized.
- On March 5, two CPN (Majority) supporters were arrested in Chitwan for displaying anti-election pamphlets near a polling station.

The election period from March 3–9 marked the completion of voting and the onset of counting, characterized by generally peaceful overall conduct but punctuated by localized boycotts, suspicious object incidents, and code violations aimed at disruption rather than cause widespread harm. Institutional responses, including rapid security interventions and Election Commission enforcements, helped maintain procedural integrity amid moderate tensions. Post-voting developments, including result announcements and legal challenges, indicate a stabilizing environment, though persistent gender underrepresentation and party consolidation highlight ongoing systemic issues in Nepal's electoral landscape.