

GOVERNANCE

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Nepal's Parliament Faces Criticism Over Sweeping Bill Amendments

Photo by kathmandupost

Nepal's parliamentary proceedings have once again come under scrutiny as controversy brews over a wide-ranging bill introduced by the government. On May 9, 2023, the House of Representatives witnessed the presentation of a bill aimed at amending a staggering 80 laws, constituting roughly one-third of the country's legal framework. This ambitious legislative overhaul seeks to make amendments to the civil code, civil procedure code, criminal code, and criminal procedure code.

The most recent development in this contentious legislative journey took place on July 28, 2023, when the President granted authentication to specific amendments pertaining to the civil code. These amendments are designed to prioritize justice for victims of usury or loan sharking. However, the spotlight remains on the sections of the bill that address amendments to the criminal code, which are currently under heated debate in the parliament. Concerns have surfaced regarding a provision that could potentially grant amnesty to individuals associated with political parties involved in violent protests in the past.

Adding fuel to the controversy are allegations that Nepal's lawmaking process lacks inclusivity and transparency. Critics argue that instead of involving stakeholders and elected parliamentarians in the drafting of bills, a select group of bureaucrats and government-appointed individuals hold primary responsibility for the process. This has led to accusations of favoritism and has been described by some experts as a form of "policy corruption."

Notably, the comprehensive bill also proposes changes to the Forest Act, National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act, and the Environment Protection Act. Legal experts express concerns that while bills amending laws of similar nature are not uncommon, the practice of introducing a single bill that amends laws across a wide array of sectors raises suspicions about the government's intentions. The approach has been heavily criticized for its lack of transparency, limited consultation, and the apparent haste with which it is being pushed through the legislative process.

The controversy surrounding this bill has ignited debates on the need for a more inclusive, consultative, and transparent lawmaking process in Nepal. As the nation watches closely, the fate of this far-reaching legislative overhaul remains uncertain, and the government faces growing pressure to address concerns raised by critics.

Read more: [The Kathmandu Post](#)

Governance Issues of the Week

1. The government has banned the unnecessary development of software in government agencies due to concerns about excessive cost and security. The secretary-level meeting decided this to ensure the safety of citizens and keep the source code of office software systems within government control.

Read more: [Online Khabar](#)

2. The leaders of the 10 thematic committees of the House of Representatives have been elected nine months after the election. The committee has been divided among Nepali Congress, CPN-UML, CPN (Maoist Centre), Janata Samajbadi Party, Rastriya Prajatantra Party, CPN (Unified Socialist) and Janamat Party.

Read more: [The Kathmandu Post](#)

3. The election commission is preparing to include the option of "no-vote" in the ballot paper from the upcoming election, as per the election Commissioner Dinesh Thapaliya. If 50 percent of the total votes are cast under "no-vote," then the election will be canceled, and the candidates won't be able to contest again.

Read more: [The Himalayan Times](#)

4. After eight years and five months, the Northern border of Nepal to China, Tatopani, has been opened for the general public from Friday. The border crossing was inaugurated by allowing 30 residents of Bhotekoshi to enter Chinese territory through the border crossing from Bhotekoshi Rural Municipality-2 to China.

Read more: [EKantipur](#)

5. China's 2023 standard map edition, which includes disputed territories, has ignited tensions in the region, drawing strong protests from both India and Nepal. The Ministry of Natural Resources in China released the contentious map featuring India's Arunachal Pradesh and Aksai Chin while disregarding Nepal's endorsed map revisions. The unresolved territorial disputes have now become a trilateral issue.

Read more: [The Himalayan Times](#)

6. In Maruwahi, Mahottari, a 13-year-old girl fell ill, and her grandfather accused his neighbor's wife of being a witch and demanded a cure. This led to a physical altercation between the two families, despite laws against such practices for the past seven years, highlighting the persistence of superstition-related incidents in the area.

Read more: [EKantipur](#)

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