Constitutional reform in Nepal

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What is the issue?

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- Nepal is governed according to the Constitution of Nepal, which came into effect in 2015, replacing the Interim Constitution of 2007.
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- The demand for a new constitution was raised by Maoists rebels, who waged a 10-year civil war which ended with a 2006 peace deal.
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- The Constitution was drafted by the Second Constituent Assembly following the failure of the First Constituent Assembly.
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- There is a new balance of power in recent years, but no force quite had the ideological and political dominance to push through the agenda.
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- As a result, the cry for amendments and parity continue.
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What are the developments?

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- The country adopted the new post-monarchy Constitution in 2015.
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- Many members of traditionally marginalised groups fear that the constitution will still work against them.
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- They fear that the changes are rushed through by established parties which, including the Maoists, are dominated by high-caste, mostly male, leaders.
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- Madhesi, a minority group residing in the Terai of Nepal, have been demanding a redrawing of federal boundaries.
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- They expect it to reflect the fact that the community residents of the Terai area, and other minority groups are in a majority in some new provinces.
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- The government had also initiated amendments that went some way in addressing Madhesi concerns.
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- These include the formation of a federal commission to look into a redrawing of federal boundaries, and the recognition of local languages as national ones.
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- These amendments were, however, rejected by Madhesi parties, who are uncompromising in their extreme demands.
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- The opposition Communist Party of Nepal (Unified-Marxist-Leninist) has also rejected them.
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- The Madhesi parties and ethnic forces saw Nepal’s problem as one rooted in an exclusionary and unitary state and wanted to redefine Nepali nationalism to make it more inclusive and federal.
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- These conflicting visions are wrecking havoc in constitution finalisation.
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Source: The Indian Express

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