Nepal’s First parliamentary polls

Why in news?

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Under new constitution first parliamentary polls held in Nepal.

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What is the significance of the polls?

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- Nepal voted on 26th November in the first phase of parliamentary elections under its new Constitution of 2015.
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- The turnout in the first phase was estimated to be 65%.
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- The first round was mostly concentrated in the upper hill regions, with the rest of the country scheduled to vote on December 7.
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- Uniquely for Nepal’s highly fragmented party politics, these elections witness a direct battle between two fronts.
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What are the parties contested in the election?

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- **Democratic alliance -** It is led by the Nepali Congress and includes the former Panchayat parties and Madhesi groups.
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- **Left alliance -** It brings together, in a surprise agreement hammered out between, the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist Centre).
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- This is an electoral battle between the forces belonging to the centre-right and the centre-left, but to reduce it to an ideological battle would be misleading.

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What issues are expected to be resolved in Nepal?

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- Populism dominates the ideological positions of the major parties and the politics of patronage has governed their engagement with the people.
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- The consequence of this has been lack of movement on key issues facing the underdeveloped nation-state.
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- One such issue that dominated the political discourse in the last half-decade has been the need for decentralisation and representation of the marginalised communities.
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- Madhesis and Janajatis (tribals) have continued to claim that their demands for adequate state restructuring and federalism were not met in the new Constitution.
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- The new electoral alliances have subsumed such differences with the Maoists, who were willing to grant such demands for amendments to the new Constitution, joining hands with the UML, which is strongly opposed to any concessions.
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- The political instability has meant that vital issues of economic development have remained largely unaddressed.
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- Contradicting hopes that Nepal’s transition from a monarchy to a republic would focus the people’s concerns.
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Source: The Hindu

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