Nepal’s Local Body Election

Why in news?

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Local body elections are being held after a gap of 20 years, which saw epochal changes in Nepal’s polity without much development on ground.

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What is the election about?

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- Results of the local body elections held in three of Nepal’s seven provinces on May 14 showed that both the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) and the Nepali Congress (NC) will be reasonably satisfied with their performance.
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- Madhesi parties that are still demanding amendments to the Constitution related to state restructuring are expected to participate in second phase.
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- These polls are to elect representatives in the ward, village, municipal and metropolitan councils that will have decentralised decision-making powers related to local revenue generation and spending.
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- Local representation should return the focus to local development, which has been long neglected due to the political parties fight for power.
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Why is this local election important?

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- For too long, Nepal’s polity has been caught up with Constitution-writing and wrangling over power amid political instability.
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- The citizens at the grassroots had been prevented from choosing their

representatives for two full decades, which bureaucratised and corrupted local administration.
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- This has resulted in lack of attention to economic development leading to **large-scale labour migration of Nepalis,** and poor response systems to disasters.
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- The present local body election tries to give back the power of deciding the country's future back to its citizen.
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- The two phase election is a step for implementing Nepal's new constitution which needs to be followed by elections for seven newborn provincial councils, and national parliamentary elections next year.
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- Nepal will be 'normalised' only when the present oversized House, an extension of the Constituent Assembly elected in 2013, is replaced by the new Parliament.
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What are the concerns for India?

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- Democratic stability, social transformation and economic growth in Nepal will have an **immediate downstream impact** on Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal.
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- This election decides which political party's holds power in Nepal and thereby signal India **Nepal's subsequent shift** either towards India or China.
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- At present juncture Nepal pivoted to the north, and even joined the Belt and Road Initiative last week, all of which was accelerated by New Delhi's attitude and actions in relation to the new Constitution.
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- Bilateral matters on open border, job migration, security concerns, and mutual economic growth, environmental issues including pollution and climate change, and India's increasing desperation for water should be the focal point of discussion.
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- The **Qinghai-Tibet Railway** will arrive from Lhasa and Shigatse to a point north of Kathmandu by 2020, and the roads from the south are already being

upgraded to receive goods and passengers.
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- These significant steps clearly shows that **China is slowly and steadily making inroads into Nepal** which India fails to tackle.
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Source: The Hindu

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