

political convergence

post-movement federal parliament elections launched, young and possibly the most technocratic members of parliament in Nepal's history and with youth across all parties, demands for sweeping digitally facilitated reforms and comprehensive digital governance converged irrespective of ideology- as demonstrated by electoral manifestos of political parties

this leap towards Nepal's digital future is a significant breakaway from party commitments in previous electoral cycles

common political commitments to a digital future

digital governance cashless paperless faceless service delivery

information management and service delivery **one-stop solutions**

reduce financial crimes, encourage fintech & curb corruption **financial digitization**

IT industry tax breaks, start-up funds, employment generation & investment

AI integration into public infrastructure (health, education, urban planning, etc)

data centers, smart cities & national broadband expansions **digital infrastructure**

rise of techno-optimism

political forces seem to have opted into the belief that complex social and environmental problems (such as climate change, poverty, social inequality) are best solved through technological advancements, instead of fundamental social restructuring.

critical gaps

no AI ethics or regulatory framework	deepfakes, algorithmic manipulation, and misinformation named only once	safety
digital violence against women & children raised by few but only as awareness campaigns	cybersecurity framed as a mere infrastructural aspiration, with no enforcement body, no incident response, no public transparency requirement	
mass data collection through National ID with no data protection law, no consent framework, no independent oversight	language access almost entirely absent from expansion of digital services and infrastructure	accessibility
faceless, paperless systems eliminate physical touchpoints without accounting for lack of access to digital infrastructure	connectivity not understood as a right but an infrastructural investment	
consideration of disability included by only one party in an unrelated sector	nominal discussion of content liability & taxation of multinational tech companies	justice
expansion of surveillance infrastructure without privacy, autonomy, agency, consent-based remedies	minimization of human intervention & automation prioritized, discounting contextual judgment and discretion	
platform accountability is entirely absent, with none concerned about surveillance, manipulation or harm		



curated by **Body & Data**

established in 2017, Body & Data works to enhance understanding and access to information on digital rights among women, queer people and marginalized groups where they are able to exercise their rights in a **safe, just, and accessible digital space**

we work towards the vision of accessible, safe and just digital space for all, through cross movement building, facilitation for access to information, knowledge building and dissemination on digital rights in the context of Nepal

www.bodyanddata.org

DIGITAL TRACES OF NEPAL'S GEN-Z MOVEMENT

While you flaunt your corrupt wealth without shame



Never forget who pays the price with blood, sweat, tears and taxes



Nepto Baby Trend | Philippines



3



1

Mugiwarra hat | Indonesia

Nepal's Gen-Z Movement in estimates*

30,000

protestors on the streets on September 8

150,000

YAC discord group members (at time of voting for interim leadership)

76 2100

killed injured

950

arrested in relation to the movement

*figures represent conservative lower-bound estimates; actual numbers are likely higher

access, exclusion, and safety

turnout problem only 5.1% of the 150,000 Discord members actually voted; 95% non-participation rate would be considered a failed referendum by any democratic standard

mandate problem the Prime Minister was chosen by 3,833 people out of a nation of 29 million- roughly 0.013% of the population

funnel problem to participate, one needed to know about the movement, know about and have access to VPNs, join a banned platform, find the server, engage in organizing, and later voting- limiting participation to a specific demographic- young, tech savvy, able bodied and most likely already politically engaged

young Nepalese movement members took to discord (a banned platform) to organize the movement, primarily through a discord server called Youth Against Corruption (YAC)

after the government was toppled, they used the platform to "vote-in" the interim leader



as of June 4, 2026

Youth Against Corruption
4,049 Online • 135,505 Members
Est. Sept 2025

"participatory" and "democratized" voting process

discord members 150,000 discord voters 7,600



total population 29,164,578 discord members 150,000

Moderator 3:02 AM

Who now?	
Sushila Karki	50% 3,833 votes
Harka Sampang	6% 487 votes
Sagar Dhakal	14% 1,098 votes
Random Nepali	26% 2,022 votes
Mahabir Pun	4% 273 votes

post-movement duality of digitality

visibility, scrutiny and criminalization

visibility and political cache

the initially leaderless movement eventually birthed multiple self-proclaimed youth leaders who significantly affected (and in some cases dictated) the decisions of the interim government

while some youth leaders were able to transform pre-movement capital into post-movement credibility primarily through online visibility- going on to become opinion makers, cabinet members, and even members of parliament

even among such credible youth, marginalized youth (especially those who were nominated for executive positions in the government) faced disproportionate scrutiny in the form of media trials, defamation, and hate speech

on the other almost a thousand across the country (disproportionately of marginalized identities, lacking access to meaningful legal representation, and access to justice) remain imprisoned on the basis of digital evidence (photo/video) of even mere participation in the movement

leaderless, spontaneous, young, digitally facilitated campaigns turned movements against systemic inequities, corruption, and authoritarian governments continue to emerge in south asia

while structural issues drive these youth movements, online platforms are becoming the primary means of organizing and sustaining movements

1 jul- aug | indonesia

when transportation reforms weighted centralized, elite interests over that of working class drivers, truck drivers waived the "Straw hat" flags in place of the national flag- demonstrating discontent against the economic policies, military expansion, rampant corruption, and shrinking civic space in the country

he movement used the "straw hat" (or Mugiwarra as seen in the anime One Piece) flag as a symbol of resistance against oppressive and corrupt regimes

2 aug-sept | philippines

the nepo baby trend started when public frustration boiled over against systemic corruption in flood control projects

in the July 2025 floods, 6 million people were affected with over 30 dead- this prompted investigations into contractors of the flood control projects, who turned out to have ties with current politicians

3 sept | nepal

following the Philippines, when the nepo baby trend started highlighting the deepening economic divide and rampant corruption in the country, the government banned 26 social media platforms- catalysing the Gen-Z protest

protestors also borrowed the Indonesian "straw hat" flags in their nationwide demonstration against corruption

also inspired by Aaragalaya in Sri Lanka (2024) and in particular the July Declaration that came of the Student Protests of Bangladesh (2025), Nepalese youth expected systemic reforms under the interim government itself through the December Agreement in preparing for surveillance and repression, young Nepalese protestors turned to Bitchat, a platform that connects users through bluetooth akin to the "air drop" function used in the Hongkong 2019 protests - over 48,000 users downloaded the app on September 8 alone