

Nepal Gen Z Protest: Why is Kathmandu burning?

A day after 19 young protesters were killed in firing by police in Kathmandu, Nepal's capital was engulfed in flames, and the country appeared to have no government left. PM K P Sharma Oli resigned, and President Ram Chandra Poudel was at an undisclosed location under the protection of the Army.

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🕒 8 min read



An aerial view of smoke rising from the Federal Parliament of Nepal, in Kathmandu, after it was set on fire during anti-government protests on Tuesday. (PTI)

‘Gen Z’ protesters, enraged by the repressive actions of the K P Sharma Oli regime, set fire to government buildings, offices of major political parties, and the homes and offices of top political functionaries, including several former Prime Ministers on Tuesday.

Several Ministers and politicians were attacked and injured by protesters who defied a curfew and roamed the streets of Kathmandu and some other cities in Nepal. Military helicopters rescued members of the Oli cabinet and most others who were targeted.

Who are the protesters on the streets of Nepal's capital, and why are they angry?

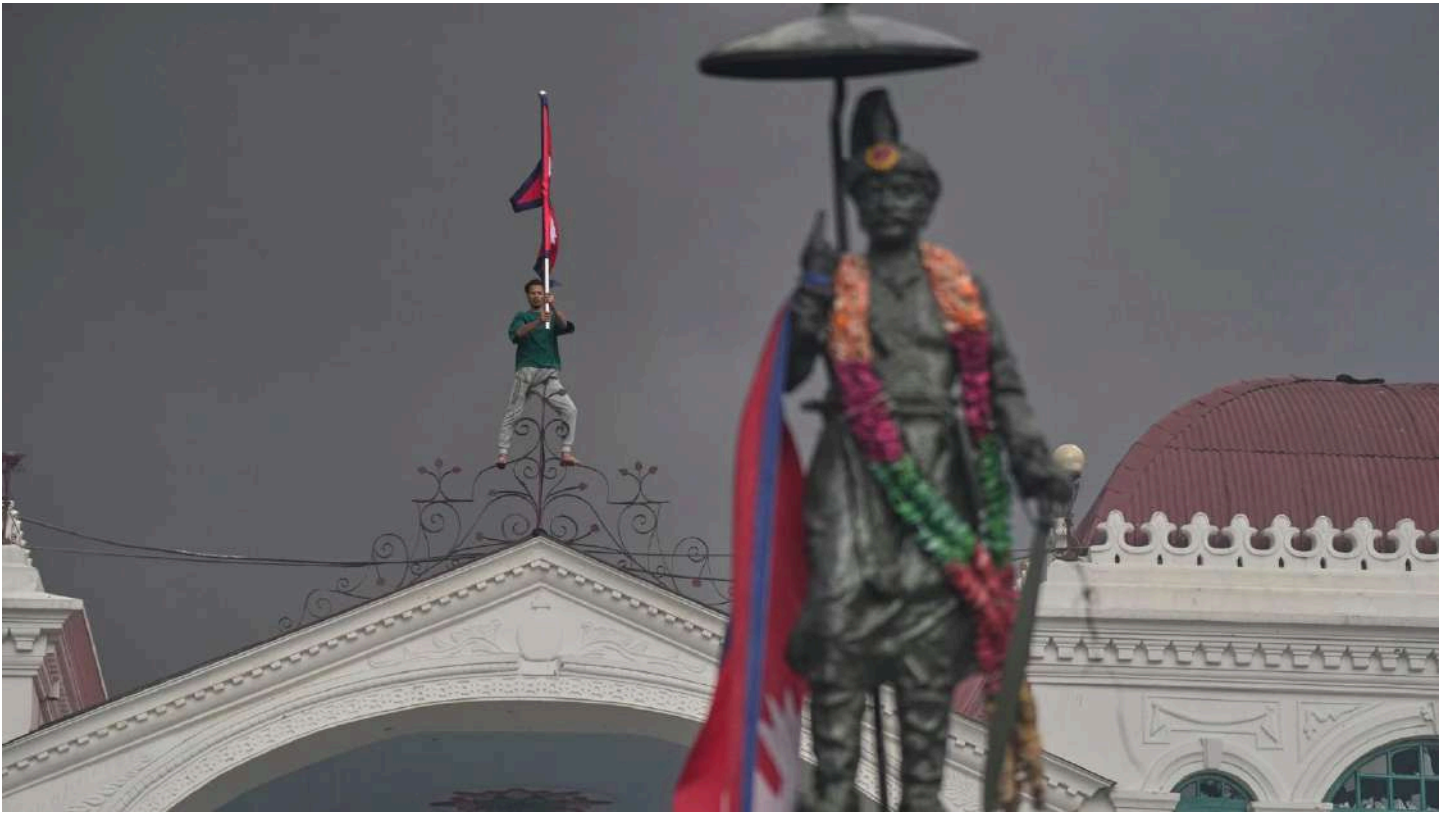
A couple of months ago, some [Facebook](#) pages, including one called Next Generation Nepal, began to post on the grim political situation in Nepal and the massive corruption in high places.

No specific individuals appeared to be promoting the posts, but it was clear that most of them belonged to a generation that was born between 1996 and 2012, the cohort known as "Generation Z", or 'Gen Z'.

Read | Nepal PM resigns after 'Gen Z' protests spread; Parliament set on fire, former PM assaulted

The young people, teens and those in their 20s, expressed their anger and frustration at the corrupt political system — and the immunity that politicians who have run Nepal by turns since the republic was created in 2008, have given themselves from investigation or accountability.

The criticism especially targeted the extravagant lifestyles of the children and wards of senior politicians, and expressions like 'Nepo Babies' and 'Nepo Kids' trended online.



A protestor celebrates standing at the top of the Singha Durbar, the seat of Nepal's government's various ministries and offices, after it was set on fire during a protest against social media ban and corruption in Kathmandu, Nepal, Tuesday, Sept. 9, 2025. (AP Photo/Niranjan Shrestha)

A couple of weeks ago, the government banned 26 social media platforms, including prominent ones like Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, X, and YouTube, for failing to register with the authorities by a certain deadline.

The digital ban took away the primary avenue that Gen Z was using to vent, comment, and seek solidarity among themselves, and greatly aggravated their anger.

The frustration boiled over on Monday, when large numbers of young people came out on the streets, and 19 were killed after police and security forces opened fire.

The protesters did not put forth any specific demands other than the lifting of the ban on social media, which was fulfilled on Monday evening. In more general terms, they sought an end to corruption, social inequality, and the lack of job opportunities.

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Whose houses were attacked on Tuesday?

The protesters had planned a rally near Parliament House, but the excessive use of force by the government on Monday provoked an explosion of fury. Protesters, some of whom were

seen carrying weapons, went on the rampage against prominent political figures and buildings and symbols of government.

They burnt or vandalised the residences of at least five former PMs — Oli, Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', Madhav Kumar Nepal, Jhala Nath Khanal, and Sher Bahadur Deuba. Some of them were roughed up before they could be rescued by the Army.



Protesters celebrate at the Singha Durbar, the seat of Nepal's government's various ministries and offices, after burning it down during a protest against a social media ban and corruption in Kathmandu, Nepal, Tuesday, Sept. 9, 2025. (AP Photo/Nirajan Shrestha)

Rajyalaxmi Chitrakar, the wife of former PM Khanal, died after suffering serious burns when their house in Kathmandu was torched.

Deuba and his wife Arzu Deuba, who is Nepal's minister for foreign affairs, were assaulted, and the former PM sustained serious injuries.

Finance Minister Bishnu Prasad Paudel and Member of Parliament Eknath Dhakal — both of whom are close to Oli — were stripped and paraded.

Arzu Deuba's house in western Nepal's Dhangarhi, and Prachanda's residence in Chitwan

were razed to the ground.

The protesters also set ablaze Nakkhu Central Jail in Lalitpur in the Kathmandu Valley and set free Rabi Lamichhane, chief of the Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP) and a powerful critic of Oli, who was imprisoned there.

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With the government having resigned, who is in charge in Nepal now?

No clear way forward was visible on Tuesday. There were demands for the dissolution of Parliament. The unprecedented situation pointed to a further deepening of the constitutional crisis and potentially, the collapse of the current system and the constitution.

Army Chief General Ashok Raj Sigdel has appealed for calm and is believed to have urged politicians including Kathmandu Mayor Balen Shah to move forward towards national reconciliation.



Protesters celebrate standing at the top of the Singha Durbar, the seat of Nepal's government's various ministries and offices, after it was set on fire during a protest against social media ban and corruption in Kathmandu, Nepal, Tuesday, Sept. 9, 2025. (AP Photo/Niranjan Shrestha)

Could the Army step in to play a significant political role?

Nepal's Army said it would take charge of security operations from Tuesday evening, and appealed to the public to cooperate with the forces.

It is unlikely that the Army will step into a direct political role. However, it will probably have to take the responsibility of facilitating dialogues among the political players, along with maintaining peace and tranquility in the absence of the government.

Read | Who is Mayor Balendra Shah: The Gen Z favourite poised to succeed Oli as PM

Where does the political opposition in Nepal stand in this crisis?

The protesters have targeted almost all senior political leaders in the country.

Balen Shah, a former rapper in his 30s, and RSP leader Lamichhane, a former television anchor, have expressed support for the GenZ protesters. The pro-monarchy Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) is considering resigning from parliament en masse.



Protesters take selfies and celebrate at the Singha Durbar, the seat of Nepal's government's various ministries and offices, after it was set on fire during a protest against social media ban and corruption in Kathmandu, Nepal, Tuesday, Sept. 9, 2025. (AP Photo/Niranjana Shrestha)

Does the former King of Nepal figure anywhere in the present situation?

The former King, Gyanendra Shah, has sent a message of commiseration to the families who have lost one or more members in the violence, and he has wished a speedy recovery to those who have been injured.

He has also issued an urgent appeal to all sides to sit together and find a solution to the crisis, which suggests that he may be willing to play a role similar to the one envisaged for the monarch by the country's pre-republic Constitution.

It is likely that an interim government will be formed after a decision is reached on the political agenda.



Nepal witnessed the onset of the most violent uprising in recent decades on September 8, culminating in the ouster of sitting Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli and President Ram Chandra Poudel on September 9. (AP Photo)

How is India looking at this situation?

India will be deeply concerned as its next-door neighbour burns. But it will find itself facing a delicate situation, as it is seen as being aligned more closely with some sides of Nepal's body politic. India lost its traditional goodwill with the monarchy and the Nepali Congress when it led the international initiative to abolish the monarchy, and bring the Maoists to the centrestage of Nepali politics.

Late on Tuesday evening, Prime Minister [Narendra Modi](#) chaired a meeting of India's Cabinet Committee on Security, which discussed the developments in Nepal.

“The violence in Nepal is heart-rending. The stability, peace and prosperity of Nepal are of utmost importance to us,” the PM said.

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