

Nepal Parliament amends Constitution to end political crisis

24/01/2016 19:35 by admin

Kathmandu: Nepal's Parliament on Saturday voted to amend the country's Constitution with a two-thirds majority four months after its promulgation, in a bid to resolve the political crisis involving the minority Madhesi community.

The amendment aims at resolving the ongoing agitation by the Madhesi parties. The lawmakers of the agitating parties, however, boycotted the voting saying the purported amendment was incomplete and would not address their demands.

"I announce that the Nepal constitution first amendment bill has been passed with a two-thirds majority in favour," said speaker Onsari Gharti Magar as lawmakers thumped their desks in agreement.

The amendment addresses two key demands of the Madhesis - proportionate representation and seat allocation in the Parliament on the basis of population.

When put to vote, the bill garnered 461 votes in its favour while seven lawmakers voted against it.

Deputy Prime Minister Chitra Bahadur K C was among the seven lawmakers who opposed the move.

The amendment includes provisions such as proportionate and inclusive representation of all marginalised communities including the Madhesis in all state mechanisms and allocation of seats in Parliament on the basis of population.

For this, three articles - Article 42, Article 84 and Article 286 - were amended.

With this, the number of Parliament seats in the 20 districts in the southern plains has been significantly raised.

Madhesis, largely of Indian-origin, are opposed to the new Constitution that divides the country into six federal provinces, claiming the federal structure incorporated in the new charter does not satisfy their demands.

Madhesis, who share strong cultural and family bonds with India, are demanding demarcation of provinces, fixing of electoral constituencies on the basis of population and proportional representation.

Fifty-five people have been killed in violent protests by the Madhesis since last year.

- PTI