

## Nepal hopes for world support to implement new Constitution

Deputy Prime Minister Kamal Thapa on Tuesday expressed hope that the world community would support Nepal for the smooth implementation of the new Constitution and assured that all “genuine concerns” of the Madhesis would be addressed through dialogue.

Addressing chiefs of diplomatic missions based here and representatives of donor agencies, Thapa, who is also foreign minister, noted that Nepal has become only the second country in South Asia to draft its constitution through a democratically-elected constituent assembly.

Thapa also thanked the international community for its support in concluding the peace process and promulgation of the new Constitution in September last year.

“I am also confident of receiving your continued support which is crucial for the implementation of this Constitution,” he said.

“Nothing is perfect in this world,” he said adding “Nepal’s new constitution encompasses the main features of a democratic and inclusive polity to judge by any fair standard”.

“Commitment has been expressed in the very Preamble to democratic norms and values, civil liberty, fundamental freedoms, human rights, adult franchise, periodic elections, complete press freedom and an independent, impartial and competent judiciary, and the rule of law,” he said.

He said that the new constitution has guaranteed the rights of socially backward groups and communities based on principle of inclusion.

Stating that a few political parties, especially Madhes-based parties, have expressed discontent over some of the provisions of the new statute, Thapa stressed that Nepal government has repeatedly made it clear that the Constitution is dynamic in a true sense and genuine concerns can and will be addressed through dialogue.

Nepal has been in political turmoil as the Indian-origin Madhesi people are opposing the seven-province model of federalism which was introduced in the country through the promulgation of the new Constitution.

Madhesis are also protesting against division of their ancestral homeland under the new structure and have led an ongoing blockade of key border trade points with India.

Thapa said as a result of several rounds of dialogue between the government and the agitating leaders an amendment bill has been tabled to address the demands of proportional inclusiveness in state organs and delineation of electoral constituency on the basis of population while maintaining at least one seat in each geographical district.

He noted that a high-level mechanism with representatives of major parties will be formed to settle the dispute over demarcation of provinces.

Lauding the Indian government’s statement on the amendment proposal as an encouraging and positive gesture, Thapa hoped that problems would be resolved soon.

He said supply of commodities from the southern border check points that were disrupted following the promulgation of new constitution has been gradually improving in recent days.

“I have been informed that all other check-points, except Raxaul-Birgunj, are now operational,” said Thapa.

The continued disruption of supplies, especially medicines and food might lead to a humanitarian crisis, Thapa said adding that the government has conveyed this concern to the Indian authorities.

He hoped the supply situation will return to normal with resumption of all border check-points within a few days.

Highlighting the foreign policy of the new government, Thapa said that the country is fully committed to further strengthening relations with its neighbours and all other friendly nations.

“We pursue the policy of friendship with all and enmity with none. It was in pursuance with this commitment that I visited India and the People’s Republic of China where I had very fruitful discussions on matters of mutual interest with my counterparts and other high dignitaries,” he said.

“The government is serious about the reconstruction of the infrastructures, both public and private, damaged by the earthquakes,” he said.

“I am pleased to say that with passage of Reconstruction Authority Act by the Legislature-Parliament and the appointment of its CEO, the Authority has started its task,” he said.

Thapa further requested all donor countries to use government channels for their support and firmly recognise the national leadership and ownership in development efforts rather than channelling such precious resources through non-transparent agencies, NGOs and other entities.

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### Nepal passes bill on quake rebuilding

Nepal’s parliament yesterday passed a long-delayed law to pave the way for rebuilding after April’s massive earthquake, ending months of bickering that paralysed reconstruction despite donor pledges of billions in aid.

“I announce that the bill related to reconstruction of earthquake-affected infrastructure... has been passed unanimously,” Speaker Onsari Gharti Magar said in parliament.

The government vowed in June to set up a National Reconstruction Authority (NRA) to oversee rebuilding and ensure that all aid went to victims, as part of its bid to attract funding from sceptical foreign donors.

But political wrangling between the ruling CPN-UML party and the opposition Nepali Congress over the leadership of the new body prevented the bill conferring legal status on the NRA from being passed.

The final vote paving the way for the NRA, which will process all aid funds, followed weeks of closed-door negotiations.

A spokesman for the ruling party told AFP the government would work fast to set up the new state body to avoid further delays in rebuilding.

The 7.8-magnitude quake killed almost 8,900 people and destroyed more than half a million homes. Thousands of victims still live in tents eight months later due to the government’s

failure to spend a \$4.1 billion reconstruction fund.

Quake victims have so far received just \$150 in compensation per household, while the government has promised an additional \$2,000 once the NRA is set up and able to disburse funds.

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### Dish Home office in Bhaisepati attacked

An unidentified gang hurled petrol bomb at Dish Home control unit office in Bhaisepati early Wednesday morning.

Lalitpur SSP Pitambar Adhikari informed that the incident occurred at 6:15 am this morning. Motorcycle-borne assailants sprinkled petrol on the transmitting unit of the control office and set it on fire, police said.

Though the motive remains unknown, police suspects that the Netra Bikram Chand-led CPN Moist might have carried out the attack on the television network for airing Indian news Channel.

No arrests have been made relating to the attack.

Police team on the site has been assessing the damage caused by the attack.

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### Police baton charge protesters, fire several rounds of teargas (Update)

The Police baton charged and fired several rounds of teargas at the protesters in Janakpur on Wednesday as situation remains tense due to President Bidhya Devi Bhandari's visit at the Ram Janaki Bibaha Mahotsav.

The agitating Samyukta Loktantrik Madhesi Morcha (SLMM) had announced on Tuesday that it would protest Bhandari's visit. Bhandari is scheduled to arrive at Janakpur at around 12 pm by a helicopter.

Meanwhile, the Ram Janaki temple is being evacuated for security purposes. The pilgrims from Nepal and India have complained that it is improper to evacuate the pilgrims from temple premises.

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### 'Nepal-India relations genuine'

Nepal and India enjoy centuries-old people-to-people relations, said speakers on Tuesday at an interaction organised by Nepal-India Friendship Association in the Capital on 'Nepal-India Relations and Present Situation'.

On the occasion, Indian Ambassador to Nepal Ranjit Rae said that both the countries would augur no benefits if ill efforts from any side is made to weaken the historical ties.

Nepal itself can manage the ongoing Tarai unrest, he said, adding that India always wants Nepal's betterment.

The Ambassador went on to say that Indian government was hurt as Nepali people are panicking due to the current blockade. He hinted at gradual flexibility on the smooth operation of border points.

On the occasion, United Democratic Madhesi Front (UDMF) leader Hridayesh Tripathi said the blind and narrowed nationalism would benefit no one while accusing the incumbent government of trying to threaten Tarai agitation.

Also speaking on the occasion were former Chief of Army Staff Rookmangad Katuwal, former governors of Nepal Rastra Bank and former ambassador.

<http://bit.ly/10Jr8he>

### Bhutan supports Nepal with US \$1m relief aid

In a magnanimous gesture of supporting the earthquake victims in Nepal, Bhutanese Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay handed over Ngultrum 62 million, at par with US \$1M, to Nepal's PM Sushil Koirala.



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*The emotional Attachment: PM Tobgay and his Nepali counterpart Sushil Koirala embrace each other in Kathmandu (Picture courtesy: PM Tobgay's Facebook)*

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Furthering to supporting the victims in another Shangri-la, Bhutan dispatched a team of sixty-three consisting medical persons, volunteers (Desupps) and Royal Bhutan Army personnels carrying tents, medical equipments, clothes and blankets.

While in Nepal, PM Tobgay also visited some of the historical sites devastated by the earthquake.

Prime Minister and Health Minister Tandin Wangchuk returned in the afternoon by the special Druk Air flight.

“Back in Paro after a long, emotional day. Pictured is the last group of the 231 stranded Bhutanese who were evacuated out of Kathmandu today. I’m deeply grateful to all officials, in Nepal and Bhutan, and our two airlines for making today’s important missions a success,” the PM wrote in his Facebook upon his arrival in Paro.

Meanwhile, Bhutanese national flag is hoisted half-mast to show the empathy over loss of thousands of lives, BBS writes.

Tremors are felt in Bhutan throughout Saturday and Sunday. According to Facebook post of Dr. Damber Nirola, shocks are felt in around 6:30 pm Sunday in Paro.

In light of continuing aftershocks, the government in Bhutan has issued alert notice to take safety measures, in case quakes continue to jolt the ground.

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### Prez’s visit sparks protests in Janakpur

The situation has remained tense due to President Bidhya Devi Bhandari’s visit to Janakpur since early Wednesday. President Bhandari’s participation for the Ram-Janaki Bibaha Mahotsav has sparked protests all over Janakpur.

Supporters of Madhesi Morcha and Madhesi coalition are jointly demonstrating at Janakpur’s main chowk. The security has been tightened and heavy deployment of security personnel can be seen in the area.

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