

# The Himalayan

## SHORT TAKES



Prime Minister Jhala Nath Khanal releasing pigeons during a programme organised to celebrate fourth Republic Day at Army Pavilion in Kathmandu on Sunday. President and veep are also seen.



Participants of the Tenzing Hillary Everest Marathon at the Everest Base Camp on Sunday. A total of 65 international and 40 Nepali runners participated in the high altitude event.

## NEPAL

### Nano launch next month

KATHMANDU: Tata Motors is all set to launch Tata Nano, the world's cheapest car, in Nepal next month. There is much speculation over the price of the car, which costs around INR 120,000 in India. It is likely that Nepali buyers will have to pay more than triple the price as the government imposes a hefty duty on import of vehicles. This would make the Nano more expensive than the Tata Nano Europa — the model especially designed for export to Europe. Europa costs around \$6,000. Nano's first overseas sales began on Sunday as it was launched in Sri Lanka. The no-frills Nano costs \$8,486 in Sri Lanka. Sijratri Trading, Tata motor's authorised distributor for Nepal, informed Nano is a rear engine, four-passenger city car. —HNS

## Parliament to monitor peace process

Himalayan News Service  
Kathmandu, May 29

Chairman of the Constituent Assembly Subas Chandra Nembang today said the Parliament will monitor the peace and constitution-writing processes during the extended tenure of the CA and intervene if needed.

Nembang disclosed this day after the CA term was extended for three months in order to move ahead with the twin tasks.

"We have established a mechanism to monitor peace and statute drafting processes," Nembang said speaking at a programme organised by the Forum for Women, Law and Development to mark its 16th anniversary. He stated that they are concentrating in delivering visible progress in constitution drafting through the mechanism of monitoring.

There has been no practice of keeping political agreements under Parliament's domain.

Nepali Congress chief whip Laxman Prasad Ghimire presented a proposal, which mentioned the five-point deal at the House meeting on behalf of the three major parties demanding to make it the property of the Parliament.

The House endorsed it unanimously. Ghimire said it gave a message that Nepalis were capable of ending the peace process themselves.

Following the deal, the ninth amendment to the Interim Constitution was approved by two-third majority — 504 votes. Four RPP-Nepal members voted against the bill. United Democratic Madhesi Front comprising five Madhes-based parties, who have 71 members in the CA, did not take part in the voting though they were present at the meeting. They accused the three major parties of ignoring their demands and discriminating against the Madhes.

Jay Prakash Gupta, chairman of Madhesi Janaadhikar Forum (Republic), a member of the front, addressed the House before the voting began. "Although, our concerns were not addressed fully, we believe that CA's extension will pave the way for conclusion of peace and constitution writing processes," said Gupta.

Following the extension, Prime Minister Jhala Nath Khanal said he would resign the moment an alternative government was formed.

Nepali Congress leader Ram Chandra Paudel said agreement had been reached to hand over the arms in seven Maoist cantonments to the government and to integrate 5,000 to 6,000 combatants in security bodies.

The five-point deal was signed by Maoist chairman Dahal, Congress president Sushil Koirala and CPN-UML chairman Jhala Nath Khanal.

### Five-point deal

- Conclude the major tasks of peace process within three months.
- Prepare first draft of the new constitution by the Constituent Assembly within three months.
- Effectively implement past agreements, which include making Nepali Army inclusive, reached with Madhesi front.
- Extend the CA's term by three months.
- Prime Minister to clear the way by tendering resignation for national unity government.

## American held captive for 15 hours Freed after paying Rs 40,000 to abductors posing as soldiers

Himalayan News Service  
Kathmandu, May 29

Two unidentified persons broke into Thamel-based Hotel Dream Home feigning themselves as Nepali Army personnel and abducted a 24-year-old American tourist, John Robert Schrupf, at around 2.30am today.

However, Schrupf contacted the police after 15 hours of captivity.

"He was set free by the ab-

ductors at around 5.30pm in Durbar Marg area after he paid Rs 40,000," informed DSP Hridaya Thapa, investigating official.

One of the abductors had shown an ID card of Nepali Army bearing the name S Gautam on the pretext of carrying out a security check and took away Schrupf after 25 minutes from the hotel for "smelling of cannabis".

DSP Thapa said: "Primary investigation suggests they are serial robbers, who target

foreigners in Thamel and surrounding areas." The kidnapers are still at large.

Schrumpf had been staying in the hotel since May 1 and was to leave for the US on Tuesday.

"They held me captive at a hotel room in Durbar Marg and sought money to set me free," DSP Thapa quoted Schrupf as saying.

The victim was forced to call his parents back home for dollars equivalent to Rs 20,000 to pay a ransom of

Rs 40,000. He was handed over to officials at the United States Embassy later.

Narayan Sodari, who was on duty at hotel when the incident occurred, said two persons in their late 20s came around 2 am and said they were assigned to carry out security checks in Thamel-based hotels by Nepali Army, as all Nepal Police personnel were deputed at Constituent Assembly building and neighbouring areas.

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## NC, Maoist hard sell went on till dawn

Tika R Pradhan  
Kathmandu, May 29

The Unified CPN-Maoist and the Nepali Congress slugged it out till the wee hours on Sunday before signing a five-point agreement that paved the way for the extension of the Constituent Assembly's tenure.

According to Maoist Vice-Chairman Narayan Kaji Shrestha, who was involved in almost all of the night's parleys, NC refused to budge on its demand that Maoists handed over arms to the government until the very last moment.

However, the Maoists maintained that NC's demand was against the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, as arms management was part of the army inte-

gration process.

NC's second rider was to extend the CA's term in phases so that the peace process was completed in the first phase and the constitution was drafted in the second. Its third demand was to form a national consensus government.

In response to NC's demands, the Maoists said they would prepare a time-bound operation calendar for both the army integration and Constitution writing processes.

Nepali Congress was in favour of extending the CA's term only by 45 days so as to complete the peace process first. The Maoists were pressing for at least six months to finish both the tasks together.

But later, both the parties

agreed on a three-month extension to conclude the peace process and resolve contentious issues of the new constitution.

The Maoists also agreed to do away with dual security for its leaders within a week and hand over the weapons they have been using to the Special Committee for Supervision, Integration and Rehabilitation of Maoist combatants.

According to Shrestha, his party sought a week to seek some alternative to the security being accorded to Maoist leaders by PLAs.

Leaders have begun speculating when PM Jhala Nath Khanal will resign. The Maoists say the PM would put in his papers only after the parties secured national consensus and named a

candidate to replace Khanal.

The Maoist vice-chairman said the Madhes-based parties had said they would accept Prachanda as the next PM if the army integration process gathered momentum. He, however, flatly denied that Maoists had proposed NC leader Sher Bahadur Deuba as the next PM. NC and United Democratic Madhesi Front had been demanding that PM Khanal tender his resignation immediately.

The issue of PM Khanal's resignation was high on United Democratic Madhesi Front's agenda. The front also demanded progress on management of arms and group entry of some 10,000 Madhesi youth into the Nepali Army.

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