

# NEPAL REVOLUTION: Update June 12 : One Step forward !

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## Situala, Prachanda sit to resolve issues

### **KATHMANDU: Monday, June 12,2006**

Home Minister and head of the government negotiating team, Krishna Prasad Sitaula on Sunday met Maoist Chairman Prachanda alias Puspa Kamal Dahal in a village in Kaski district, western Nepal. The meeting, which lasted for two hours, comes within hours of the ruling seven-party alliance deciding to adjourn the ongoing session of the reinstated House of Representatives for a few weeks "to speed up the peace talks with the Maoists."

Maoist Spokesman Krishna Bahadur Mahara, who is the coordinator of the rebel talks team, accompanied Minister Sitaula while meeting Prachanda. "Our chairman and the minister talked for nearly two hours," Mahara said over the phone. He, however, refused to provide any details about the meeting. "I had gone to apprise the chairman about the latest political developments including the talks with the present government, so helped Minister Sitaula meet Chairman Prachanda," he added.

Mahara also said that he found Prachanda "positive" about the recent political developments in the country. "He was positive about the ongoing peace process between us and the government." During the meeting with Mahara, Prachanda said that the need of the hour was "to give the agenda of constituent assembly a concrete shape." "We (Maoists and the government) should materialize the agenda and ways for going to the constituent assembly elections," Mahara quoted Prachanda as saying.

Maoist Number two Dr. Baburam Bhattarai was also present during the meeting, it is learnt.

Following mounting pressure from the rebels, the ruling seven-party alliance on Sunday decided to adjourn the ongoing session of the reinstated House for a few weeks with effect from Monday.

A meeting of the SPA leaders at the Prime Minister's residence at Baluwatar this morning took the decision "to facilitate the government-Maoist peace talks."

In an interview, Prachanda had warned that the country would witness further bloodshed if the government moved ahead by considering the parliament as "everything", demanding immediate dissolution of the reinstated House.

## **Nepal scraps anti-terror law, withdraws cases against Maoists**

**Kathmandu, Monday, June 12**

The Nepal government Monday scrapped a draconian anti-terror law imposed during King Gyanendra's regime and decided to withdraw all cases against Maoist cadres and leaders.

The announcement comes close on the heels of a meeting between Home Minister Krishna Prasad Sitaula and Pushpa Kamal Dahal aka Prachanda, the chief of the Maoist guerrillas, in a remote village in western Nepal Sunday.

The council of ministers, that was expanded Sunday, met Monday and decided to revoke the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Ordinance (TADO) that was given extra teeth this year by King Gyanendra to suppress the protests against his absolute rule. The revised ordinance had given the royalist government the power to hold a suspect incommunicado for a year without starting legal proceedings. In the absence of parliament to approve the amendment, the king had passed the ordinance by a royal decree and kept renewing it every six months.

Widely condemned by human rights organisations, including the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the TADO was flayed by the Maoists who had been demanding its annulment before beginning peace negotiations.

Besides ending the TADO, the government withdrew all cases against Maoists and agreed to stop investigations against them, Dilendra Prasad Badu, government spokesman and minister of state for information and communications, told reporters after the cabinet meeting.

According to Maoist spokesman Krishna Bahadur Mahara, who also heads the three-member Maoist team holding preliminary peace negotiations with the government, about 300 Maoists would be freed immediately with cases against them being dropped. Investigations against about 150 more Maoists would be withdrawn.

Mahara said the government had given a positive response to his party's demand to obtain the release of Maoists being held in Indian prisons. According to Prachanda, about 140 Maoists are currently being held in various Indian prisons.

Monday's announcement came after Sitaula flew to an undisclosed location in Siklesh village in Kaski district by helicopter Sunday afternoon to pacify Prachanda who had in a recent televised interview expressed doubts at the government's delay in suspending parliament.

Mahara, who had been present in Siklesh Sunday, said both the government and his party had entered the negotiations with a new spirit and "summit talks" between Prachanda and Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala would be held very soon.

"If both sides agree to follow the mandate given by the people through the anti-king agitation and hold an election to choose between the king and a republic, all other issues can be resolved," Mahara said. "We are ready to be flexible and reach a consensus after holding talks with an open mind."

## **Maoists force Nepal govt to suspend**

**KATHMANDU: Sunday, June 11, 2006 11:17:43 pm**

Revived dramatically after four years, Nepal's reinstated parliament goes into hibernation from Sunday under pressure from the Maoist guerrillas. And the spectre of renewed violence has forced the new government to choose peace talks over the house.

The decision to suspend the House of Representatives, the lower house resurrected in April, and treat the ongoing peace talks with the Maoists top priority was taken at a meeting of the seven-party alliance (SPA) held at prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala's official residence in Baluwatar on Sunday morning.

"We have decided to suspend parliamentary sessions till the budget to inspire confidence among the Maoists and to go forward with them as our partners," Madhav Kumar Nepal, chief of the Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist Leninist, the second-largest partner in the coalition government said.

Meanwhile, in a fresh move to curtail his authority, Nepal's parliament has unanimously voted to strip Gyanendra of his right to veto laws, ensuring a purely ceremonial role for the once powerful monarch.

The new regulation was passed by the lawmakers late on Saturday, according to a parliament notice published on Sunday.

**TIMES OF INDIA**

## **Talks moving in positive direction: Mahara**

CPN-M central committee member and spokesperson Krishna Bahadur Mahara...

Maoist spokesman and coordinator of the Maoist talks team Krishna Bahadur Mahara has said the informal talks between Home Minister Krishna Prasad Sitaula, the coordinator of the government talks team, and Maoist supremo Prachanda was helpful to remove confusion between the government and Maoists and will help to expedite talks process.

Speaking at an interaction at the Reporters Club on Monday, Mahara said the talks should concentrate on the agenda of holding election to the constituent assembly rather than minor issues.

"The coordinator of the government's talks team presented the government's roadmap for talks and our chairman presented our roadmap during the meeting and both agreed to lead the talks in a positive direction," Mahara added.

Chief government negotiator and Home Minister Krishna Prasad Sitaula held talks with top leaders of the CPN (Maoist) at a village in the western district of Kaski Sunday afternoon. Mahara said that they are in extensive informal discussions with the government to make the talks a success and that the talks are moving in a positive direction. He however charged the talks process was delayed due to the government, with the government and the parliament engaged in other issues rather than the main issue of holding elections to the constituent assembly.

He said that the decision of the seven political parties to postpone the parliament session to concentrate on talks with the Maoists is positive but added that the house should be dissolved to

form an interim government including the Maoists. "The parliament does not have the representation of Maoists and civil society, which played an important role for the success of the popular movement of the country. The government should immediately dissolve the parliament and form an interim government through political conference," Mahara added. He however said that the postponement of the parliament session will help the parliamentarians to concentrate on the agendas of talks.

Mahara informed that the Home Minister assured to release some Maoist cadres today and to release all cadres soon to create conducive environment for talks. Stating that all decisions in the transitional period should be done with consensus among all political forces, he urged the government to announce the budget of the fiscal year either after forming an interim government or with consensus with the Maoists as well.

When asked about the violation of code of conduct by the Maoists, Mahara said the government side is also violating it in some cases and we are also doing so in some cases, but such issues should not be taken seriously.

Commenting on the issue of extortion, Mahara said they are collecting donations and taxes from the people and not forcing people to give donations.

He said that they are not recruiting people in the People's Army after signing the code of conduct with the government.

Though Mahara did not mention the timeframe for the next round of talks and the dates of the summit talks, he said the talks are moving in a positive direction and the summit talks will be hold soon.

The first round of government-Maoist talks were held in Kathmandu on May 26, finalising a 25-point ceasefire code of conduct.

It is said that Maoist chairman Prachanda and Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala will hold 'summit talks' to give final touch to the agreements reached by both sides. The date for the second round of direct talks is yet to be announced.

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**P.S.**

\* Circulated on Socialist Pakistan News email list.