RJP-N, Federal Socialist Forum putting up good showing

Kathmandu: Two Madhes-based parties—the Federal Socialist Forum-Nepal and the Rastriya Janata Party-Nepal (RJP-N)—have performed well in Province 2. Observers say if the SSF-N continues to maintain the current trend, it would mean its Chairman Upendra Yadav’s comeback in the forefront of Madhes politics. Yadav’s then party Madhes Janadikhat Forum-Nepal had failed to win a single seat from the constituencies which are now in Province 2 during the 2013 Constituent Assembly elections. Yadav’s legacy of 2007-08 still seems to be alive in the region. Secondly, he has been in the past many months very clear about participating in the local level elections. Yadav’s party received huge support from the Yadav population when he launched his poll campaigns months ago. On top of that, the Federal Socialist Forum-Nepal had an advantage over the RJP-N, as the latter hemmed and hawed for long before deciding to join the polls.”

The Yadavs account for 10 percent of the Madhes population and is the largest caste group in the Tarai region. The RJP-N, which was adamant about not participating in the elections without constitution amendment, started its poll campaigns only after August 21 when the constitution amendment bill failed in Parliament. According to the observers, the RJP-N could have done much better though. The RJP-N was formed in the third week of April through the unification of six Madhes-based parties. But the party failed to emerge as an “organically unified” force, as the merger decision was taken with the main goal of piling pressure get the charter amended. As far as the UML is concerned, in core areas, where the Madhesi population is dominant, its performance is unlikely to improve, say the observers, adding that the CPN (Maoist Centre) is rather likely to maintain its constituencies. If the current trend continues, the UML may lose some of its constituencies in the Madhes.

For the Congress party, which has traditionally enjoyed good support in the Madhes, chances of it emerging as the largest force in Province 2 are high, said the observers.

RJP strong in cities, Forum Nepal in villages

The result in the local bodies of Province 2 has showed that hold of Rastriya Janata Party Nepal is limited to urban areas. Many had hoped that RJP, formed after unification of six different parties, will do well in the election. There were a few reasons behind that. Sum of the votes received by its six constituent parties in the second Constituent Assembly (CA) in 2013 election is greater than that received by Nepali Congress (NC).

The six parties together got 18 percent of votes while NC got 17 and CPN-UML 16. Federal Socialist Forum-Nepal (FSF-N), the other major party in Madhes, had received around seven percent of votes only. RJP also had the goodwill of leading the Madhes Movement after promulgation of the constitution. But RJP is strong only in a few cities of Madhes, according to result. Many had expected the party to be weak in the settlements around the East.

Continued in page 4...

Nepali entrepreneurs join hands to promote tourism

Siliguri (India): Tourism entrepreneurs of Mechi zone and other stakeholders of Nepal have coordinated with tourism entrepreneurs of the Indian state of West Bengal for the promotion of tourism of both countries. At the initiation of I llam Hotel Association and Mechi Hill Area Tourism Promotion Development Committee, the entrepreneurs have initiated the promotional activities for both Nepal and India. As a starting point of this initiative, stakeholders from both the countries have jointly celebrated ‘World Tourism Day’ in Siliguri, India.

A Nepali team of 22 members has reached Siliguri, along with the executive director of the committee Kesav Dhaurali, president of I llam Hotel Association Devi Poudel, senior vice-president of I llam Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ishwor Chipal, and other stakeholders. In celebration of the tourism day, an exhibition of local production is organized in Siliguri from September 22-24. The Nepali products in display include organic tea, cardamom, lollypop (Nepali chocolate), dhaka clothes, and red chili. According to the Nepali entrepreneurs, visitors coming from West Bengal and south India have shown their interest on the local products of Nepal. One of the entrepreneurs, Suman Rai, said that visitors were more attracted toward agricultural product of Mechi hill of Nepal in comparison to the products from India’s Darjeeling, Sikkim, Mirik and Siliguri areas. The months from September to March, except December, are considered as tourist season for Mechi hill, Darjeeling, Mirik and Sikkim. So to take the advantage of this, stakeholders from both the countries have came together to promote their tourism industry. The Nepali entrepreneurs have targeted to bring tourist in Nepal who visit Darjeeling and Mirik every year. Nepali cultural dance is also presented during the exhibition.

According to the statistics of tourism information center based in Kalebung, every year 0.66 million Indian tourists visit I llam. Especially the tourists from West Bengal choose to visit I llam, Pauchhatar and Tapplejung districts of Nepal. However the Gorkhaland movement in Darjeeling has affected the flow of Indian tourists this year, said Dhaurali.
The third round of polls

The third and final phase of local elections was completed on September 18 in Province 2. Elections were held in a remarkably uneventful manner. Incidents of violence and disruption were even fewer than during the first two phases, and there was not even a single fatality. The peaceful electoral environment is noteworthy particularly since the Eastern Tarai has a reputation as restive place, especially during elections. Beginning in the 1990s, there were many cases of electoral fraud in the Tarai, which was aided by hired men from across the border in India. Over the past few years, there has been great discontent in the Tarai towards the state. For this reason the security forces were concerned, and had deployed a massive presence for the elections. But their fears did not materialize. Furthermore, the security forces also acted in a restrained manner. They do not seem to have intimidated or provoked the population, as some had feared.

The election count has now begun, and the Election Commission (EC) has adopted a very cautious and meticulous process. The Commission is concerned not to allow any disputes to arise. It is also keen to prevent disruptions of the kind that happened in Bharatpur after the first phase of the election. The counting process has thus been very slow so far. The EC has decided to put wire cages around the vote counters, so that political party representatives cannot interfere in their operations. While this method does seem to be working, it is rather cumbersome. Perhaps other methods of preventing disruption can be thought about in the future.

Since the counting has been slow, we may have to wait a couple of weeks for concrete results from the polls. However, early indications show that the results may be of a rather different nature than in the first two phases of local elections. While the CPN-UML was the largest party in the first two phases, it looks to be lagging substantially behind the Nepali Congress (NC) this time around. Moreover, the CPN Maoist Centre) seems to be performing quite well. And perhaps more noteworthy is the fact that the Rastriya Janata Party-Nepal (RJP-N) is trending to lead in quite a few local units. For many, this was unexpected. The RJP-N was expected to perform poorly, especially since there were so many internal disputes over the selection of candidates. The Sanghiya Samajbadi Forum-Nepal (SSF-N) also seems to be performing at par with the RJP-N. The trend seems to demonstrate that large sections of the population in the Tarai remain unhappy with the UML and its leader KP Oli for the manner in which he belittled the Madhesi population when he was prime minister. Furthermore, voters also seem to be supporting the agenda of the Madhesi parties for a constitution amendment for the revision of state boundaries and other provisions to increase representation for Madhesi.

All eye's in Province 2

Nandita Tiwari

The result has shown there is no question of political honesty on their part to make further effort to amend the constitution

The result of the recently held local level election in province no. 2 has shown that major parties, Nepali Congress, CPN-UML and CPN-Maoist Center, are no less popular than the Madhes-based parties in the so-called stronghold areas of the Madhes-based parties such as Rastriya Janata Party, Nepal (RJP, N) and Federal Socialist Forum (FSF). If we consider the victory of the main ruling Nepali Congress in terms of the number of the head and deputy head of the local governments it has so far won in the province, it can be said that the NC alone is almost equal to that of the MC.

If we put the number of the head and deputy head won by NC, UML and MC together, the seats of the Madhes-based parties have been won is equal to only 45 per cent of the total. Given their months-long protest against the new constitution the Madhes-based parties have made an overwhelming victory in this election. Moreover, the RJP was just a few months ago through the unification of half a dozen agitating Madhes-based parties. But despite unity and consolidated strength, the RJP has won seats almost equal to that of the MC.

Following the promulgation of the constitution in September 2015, the Madhes-based parties had intensified their protest against it. They claimed that the new constitution had discriminated them. In the months-long agitation, over six dozen people have lost their lives. But most of the protest against the constitution was made to address their agitation, but they remained dissatisfied and more or less continued the agitation. They had/have such demands as forming a single province out of entire southern plains, ensuring rights of the naturalised citizen almost as equal as to the citizenship of the existing areas from plain areas while forming the province and increasing the number of local levels in Province 2.

While the previous UML-led government rejected their demands, the present ruling coalition of the NC and the MC tried to address some of their demands. Although the effort made to amend the constitution failed, the government increased the number of local levels in Province 2 and the RJP which had boycotted the first and second phase of local level polls agreed to participate in the third phase local p.i.e. local poll in Province 2.

Keeping in mind the landslide victory of the Madhes-based parties in the first Constituent Assembly (CA) election and the participation of the people in the protest launched by the RJP, FSF, and MC, it can be assumed that these two parties would sweep away the other parties from at least Province 2. In the CA election held in 2008, the Maoist party which had come out of armed rebellion through a peace process had become the single largest party and its strength was slightly more than the NC and UML put together. But neither of them has even become a single largest party in the stronghold area. The ‘traditional’ parties have come out victorious even in areas where there is no mixed population of the hill origin and Madhesi. This proves that the agenda the Madhes-based parties have been carrying are yet to be approved by the people concerned.

More interesting is the fact that even the UML has won seats only slightly less than either of the Madhes-based party. The way the Madhes-based parties have been blaming the UML for being anti-Madhesi, this party should have won nowhere in Province no. 2. Still more, it has won some local levels where majority of the population is made up of Madhesi community. The number of votes the UML has got in the stronghold area of the RJP and FSF indicate that a considerable number of people are not in favour of the kind of constitution amendment as demanded by these parties simply because the UML has been rejecting any need of such amendment as insisted by the Madhesi parties.

The result of the local poll in this province has also sent a strong message across the border to the south as well. India was hand in hand with the Madhesi parties when they intensified protest against the constitution in September 2015. As a part to the support for their protest, India had even imposed an unofficial blockade over Nepal. While the nearly six months blockade has left a deep scar in the Nepali psyche, now the party that India supported so strongly has fared no better in election.

It is a fact that the RJP took part in the poll following the assurance from the ruling parties such as NC and MC to make effort even in future to address their demands through amendment to the constitution. It is also a fact that had there not been a Maoist-led government in place to engage the Madhesi parties in dialogue and hold the first phase of local election, no election would have taken place even by this time and in such peaceful manner. Equally important is the tactics/efforts the ruling coalition made to ensure RJP participation in the local poll in Province 2.

Had the RJP come out victorious this time, the NC and MC would have no choice but to keep their promise. But, the result has shown otherwise and therefore there is no question of political honesty on their part to make further effort to amend the constitution. The RJP should also realize this and cooperate with the government to hold the slated provincial and federal parliamentary election. For the time being, the RJP and other Madhes-based parties have lost true political ground to resume protest demanding constitution amendment.
UML already swept away from Madhesh

In the context of the current local elections, the situation of Nepali Congress in Madhesh has come to an end. Similarly CPN Maoist Center is also in same situation. UML has already swept away from Madhesh. The position of RJP-Nepal as third is not very bad as the party participated in the election within four months just after its unification. We selected the candidates within only 11 days just after declaring to go to the polls. Other side, the election symbol was not also finalized. In over all, the party did not get sufficient time for election preparations.

How do you see the election result of Province 2?
This result does not give us much pleasure but also has no discouragement. Overall, there is a place to be satisfied. In particular, Madhes has given a message during the second Constituent Assembly of 2070 that Madhesi parties should unite. Although we have made such attempt by uniting six Madhesi parties but it is not sufficient.

Before the election, RJP-Nepal claimed to be the first in Province 2 but it is now seen in the third number, how do you look it?
It has not been concluded RJP-Nepal has got the third position as the vote counting still continued. But there is possibility that the party will secure at least the second position. Even Nepali Congress expected more seats as it got now. The defeat of major political parties was due to their weakness and cheating in Madhesh. In the context of the current local elections, the situation of Nepali Congress in Madhes has come to an end. Similarly CPN Maoist Center is also in same situation. UML has already swept away from Madhesh. The position of RJP-Nepal as third is not very bad as the party participated in the election within four months just after its unification. We selected the candidates within only 11 days just after declaring to go to the polls. Other side, the election symbol was not also finalized. In over all, the party did not get sufficient time for election preparations.

We united the party and we also concluded party’s name, flag, election symbol as well as other logistic issues. But we have still to unite the ideologies. Even still there is internal conflict among some leaders. Some responsible leaders quit the party on the eve of election. Nepali Congress and CPN Maoist Center got more seats in the election as they made a long-term financial move. Due to financial movements, these parties have able to bring some seats. The leaders and cadres of RJP-Nepal could not afford to economically.

Does RJP-Nepal satisfy with current election result?
It is not a matter of displeasure. It was not as good as it seemed to be better than that. If RJP-Nepal and the Federal Socialist Forum had given the joint candidacy, we should have won most of seats in Madhes. People had also asked us to go together but Uendra Yadav did not ready. If two parties jointly participated in the election, we become the first in Madhesh.

What do the people of Province 2 have their vote in favor of change. The people clearly asked that this constitution is incomplete and it wants change. They also asked the country that issues of Madhes are strong and for making them stronger, Madhesi parties should be integrated. The people also ordered that the democratic front and the rest of the parties also should be united. We can do the development of Madhes.

So what could happen if the UML already swept away from Madhesh

Manish Suman
General Secretary,
RJP-Nepal

Federal Socialist Forum and the RJP-Nepal participated in Province 2 election together 2?
The situation would have been good if we were cooperated each other. Even if the unification could not be done, the situation would have been created even when the alliance was forged. So even if we were united by compromising, it could have been good.
Indian prez, PM send messages of felicitation

Kathmandu: On the occasion of the Constitution Day of Nepal, President Bidhya Devi Bhandari and Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba have received separate messages of felicitations from President of India Ram Nath Kovind, and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi respectively. According to a press release issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in his message to President Bhandari, the president of India stated India-Nepal bilateral relationship is unique, time tested and multifaceted, which is steeped in both countries’ strong cultural ties and civilization bonds.

He further mentioned that bilateral partnership is expanding to new and diverse fields for both countries’ mutual benefit. “India remains committed to working together with the people and the Government of Nepal in advancing its close and friendly ties and for the well-being of the people of our two countries,” reads the message.

Likewise, in his message to PM Deuba, Indian PM Modi stated that India and Nepal have long-standing ties of friendship, underpinned by strong people to people connections. Prime Minister Modi has expressed confidence that bilateral ties based on the foundation of deep-rooted historical and cultural contacts will continue to expand in diverse sectors and the close development cooperation will bring socio-economic transformation of the lives of the two peoples.

Referring to the State Visit to India of Prime Minister Deuba last month, Prime Minister Modi stated that the same had provided further impetus to the multifaceted bilateral engagement. The message further reads, “As a close friend and neighbour, India remains steadfast in its support to the people and Government of Nepal in their national efforts to achieve peace, stability and development”. Similarly, President of China Xi Jinping, and Li Keqiang, premier of China, have also sent separate messages of congratulations and best wishes to President Bhandari and PM Deuba on the occasion of the Constitution Day of Nepal.

In their congratulatory messages, the president and premier of China attached great importance to the development of Nepal-China relations and its continuous development through deepening cooperation in various fields between the two countries, according to a press release issued by MoFA.

International community welcomes local polls

Kathmandu: The Kathmandu-based international community, mainly the countries from the West and Europe, extended congratulations to Nepal for completing the local level polls.

Issuing a statement, the embassies of Australia, Denmark, Germany, Finland, Norway, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States of America and the Delegation of the European Union congratulated the people of Nepal on their participation in the first local elections in 20 years. “These elections are an important contribution towards reviving liberal democracy at the grassroots level,” read the joint statement. “We recognise the government of Nepal and the Election Commission’s significant efforts which have allowed the completion of the complex and technical preparations needed to undertake nationwide elections for the 753 local units. This provides important lessons for future elections.” The last leg of local elections concluded on Monday with people from Province 2 voting to elect representatives for 136 local units. The first and second phases of local polls were held on May 14 and June 28 in Provinces 3, 4 and 6 and Provinces 1, 5 and 7 respectively. “We encourage the political parties and the government to consolidate the role of the newly elected local authorities so that they can fulfil the promise of decentralization outlined in the constitution,” the statement said. “The dates for the elections to provincial assemblies and the House of Representatives have already been set; these are important steps on the road to the effective implementation of the constitution,” it added. “We trust that these elections will be held in a peaceful, inclusive and broadly supported manner. We reaffirm our commitment to work with all the stakeholders for the further implementation of the constitution and in support of the aspirations of the Nepali people.”

RJP strong in cities,...

West Highway that have a dense population of people of hill origin. But they had expected the party to dominate in the southern parts around the Postal Highway.

But RJP’s influence seems to be limited to a few cities in the province. FSF-N seems to be stronger than RJP in the villages bordering India. RJP seems strong in Birgunj, the biggest city of the province and Janakpur, the second largest.

RJP has a tight competition with NC in the mayoral race in Birgunj with the two parties taking turn to lead until now. RJP has been leading from the start in Janakpur and has been increasing the lead over NC.

RJP, NC and FSF-N are involved in a triangular race in Jaleshwor, the district headquarters of Mahottari. Similarly, RJP and UML are involved in a close fight even in Gaur, the Rautahat headquarters.

The sentiment of Madhes Movement seems to have worked for RJP in the urban areas but FSF-N has been preferred by the voters in rural areas. RJP has been leading in just seven of the 37 local units around the Postal Highway, including Birgunj and Janakpur, from where preliminary vote tallies have been received.

RJP is third in the local units around the Postal Highway where NC is first, like it is in the whole province, leading in 11 units. FSF-N is second leading in 10 of the 37 units. UML is leading in four, CPN (Maoist Center) two and Nepal Democratic Forum one.

Chances of RJP whose constituent parties had received the largest number of votes in the last election finishing fifth in the province have increased as the party, that was already deemed weak in the northern belt, has failed to perform well even in the southern belt.

RJP candidates do not appear to have reaped the benefits of unification of six parties. The candidates seem to have been put in an awkward position in some places instead due to the dispute about distribution of tickets. General secretary of RJP Bimal Srivastav did not just quit the party over dispute in ticket distribution in Birgunj, but filed nomination for mayor on a Nepal Democratic Forum ticket.

Another general secretary Jangi Lal Raya also quit the party over dispute in ticket distribution. Member of the chairman council of Mahottari, Narendra Yadav, also quit the party after not getting mayoral ticket for Jaleshwore.

Not all the leaders have helped the candidate even at places where the leaders of all six parties are together, RJP has not reaped the expected gains of unification also due to that.

NC and FSF-N have reaped benefits of the poor performance of RJP. NC seems moving toward becoming the largest party in the province while FSF-N seems set to become the largest Madhes-based party.
Nepali Embassy marks Constitution Day in Delhi

Kathmandu: The Embassy of Nepal in New Delhi organized a reception to mark the Constitution Day. Minister of State for External Affairs of India, Vijay Kumar Singh, attended the reception as the chief guest. Also present in the event were Members of Parliament, political leaders, government officials, members of diplomatic community, former ambassadors, business community, media-persons, dignitaries from various sections of Indian society as well as Nepali community in India, said a press release issued by Embassy of Nepal in New Delhi.

Highlighting the importance of the Constitution Day in his welcome remarks, Ambassador of Nepal to India, Deep Kumar Upadhyaya, stated that the making and promulgation of the Constitution by the elected Constituent Assembly in 2015 marked a new chapter in Nepal’s glorious history. He further stated that the Constitution guaranteed human rights and fundamental freedoms to all citizens without any discrimination, and social justice was one of its key objectives.

Ambassador Upadhyaya termed Nepal’s political transformation as a rare experience of its kind. He said that in the land of Buddha, the apostle of peace, successful transformation from armed conflict to peaceful, democratic political process had been possible. This journey of Nepal could be a good case study for researchers, scholars and political scientists, he added.

He further mentioned about the important milestones achieved in the implementation of the Constitution including the successful conduct of the local election. After nearly two decades of transitional absence, the local bodies, which are the foundation of the country’s democracy and development, do now have elected leaders, he added.

On Nepal’s foreign relations, the Ambassador underlined that Nepal had excellent relations with all friendly countries in the world and close ties with its neighbours. He characterized these relations as comprehensive and multidimensional and stated that the economic dimension of Nepal-India relations was increasingly receiving greater focus at both leadership and functional levels.

Money, power had role in candidate selection: Ex-prez

Kathmandu: Former president Dr. Ram Baran Yadav has stressed the need for maintaining balanced and respectful relations among the executive, legislature and the judiciary for institutional development of democracy.

“Respect among the three [state] organs is necessary to strengthen democracy and the constitution envisages the same,” Yadav said at a programme organised by the Sushil Koirala Memorial Foundation on the local level elections and constitution implementation. The former president said the constitution would be fully implemented only after elections to the House of Representatives and the State Assemblies.

Commenting on the bad practices that grip the elections, Yadav, who hails from Dhanusha, said people dedicated to their parties and those having lasting contributions were not fielded as candidates. “Instead, crusher industry owners and those with cash got the chance,” he said, calling for an end to the anomalies.

“There were reports that a person spent or donated up to Rs5 million to get the ticket for a ward chair and up to Rs10 million for a chief/mayor,” said Yadav, warning that if the current situation persisted, people with honesty would not get opportunities to compete in the elections.

EC approves sample of PR ballot for upcoming elections

Kathmandu: The Election Commission (EC) has approved the model ballot paper towards the Proportional Representation system to be used in the upcoming elections to the members of House of Representatives and State Assemblies. The elections have been scheduled to be held in two rounds late this year- November 26 and December 7.

As per the decision of EC meeting held Friday, the upper portion of the ballot shall have election symbols of political parties taking part in the elections to the House of Representatives.

Similarly, the lower section of the same ballot paper shall have the election symbols of political parties confirmed to compete in the election of State Assemblies under the PR seats.

EC Spokesperson Nawaraj Dhakal said voters’ convenience was considered while determining the sample of the ballot paper. A single ballot paper shall be used in the both elections under the PR system. The upper half is for the House of Representatives election and the lower half for the State Assemblies.

A total of 110 members shall be elected to the House of Representatives and 220 for the State Assemblies under this electoral system.

The order of position of election symbols shall be as determined in the respective election acts. It means the order will be determined on the basis of PR votes that political parties received in the second Constituent Assembly (CA) election. In case of the new political parties or those not taking part in the previous CA elections, it will be done on the basis of the registration (for the purpose of election) serial number at the EC.

As per the schedule of the election of House of Representatives and State Assembly passed by the EC, the printing of ballot papers for the proportional election would begin soon.

However, the printing of the ballot papers for the first past the post (FPTP) category in the election of House of Representatives and of State Assembly will begin after allotting the election symbols to the parties and the independents. The number of the ballot papers would be determined on the basis of the number of election candidates in the respective constituency.
Major parties gear up for provincial, federal polls

Kathmandu: As the vote counting for the third phase of local level elections progresses, political parties have started preparations for the upcoming provincial and federal parliamentary polls.

Parties have a month’s time before candidate nomination for the two crucial polls. According to the time table published by the Election Commission, contestants need to be nominated on October 22 for the first phase of the joint vote to be held November 26.

Federal parliamentary seats have been brought down to 165 from 240 while there are 550 seats up for grabs in the state assemblies. There are also opportunities for parties’ central leaders to vie for the chief minister in the seven provinces.

The main opposition CPN-UML, which ranks first in the seven provinces, has been vigorous with its discussions for the upcoming polls. The party is preparing to launch an election campaign by naming its chief minister candidates before other major forces. A meeting of the party’s central committee begins on Friday to devise a strategy for the looming elections.

In the ruling CPN (Maoist Centre), Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal has already announced to contest the federal election from Chitwan-3 while senior leader Narayan Kaji Shrestha will be fighting against Naya Shakti candidates.

As the vote counting for the third phase of local level elections progresses, political parties have started preparations for the upcoming provincial and federal parliamentary polls. The party is preparing to launch an election campaign by naming its chief minister candidates before other major forces. A meeting of the party’s central committee begins on Friday to devise a strategy for the looming elections. In the ruling CPN (Maoist Centre), Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal has already announced to contest the federal election from Chitwan-3 while senior leader Narayan Kaji Shrestha will be

Even as the ruling Nepali Congress has yet to hold meetings to prepare for the polls with the party leadership busy in government, NC leaders have started announcing their constituencies.

The provincial committees of several parties have started selecting candidates. The Naya Shakti has asked its state committees to provide the final list of candidates by October 6.

Tentative plans for major Congress leaders are Sher Bahadur Deuba contesting in Dadekhura, Ram Chandra Poudel in Tanahun-1, Shashank Koirala in Nawalparasi-1, Prakash Man Singh in Kathmandu-1, Purna Bahadur Khadka in Surkhet-1, Arjun Narsing KC and Ram Saran Mahat in Nuwakot, Chitra Lekha Yadav in Siraha-2, Pradip Giri in Siraha-3, Mahesh Acharya in Morang and Gagan Thapa in Kathmandu-4.

According to NC sources, the leaders vying for chief minister’s post are Bhimraj Aangdambe, Biswo Prakash Sharma and Tamaran Gurung in Province 1; Mahendra Yadav, Ram Krishna Yadav and Farmullah Mansur in Province 2; Gagan Thapa and Nabindra Raj Joshi in Province 3; Dhanraj Gurung, Shankar Bhandari and Pradip Poudel in Province 4; Balkrishna Khand, Chandra Bhandari and Dipak Giri in Province 5; Hridaya Ram Thani and Jeevan Bahadur Shahi in Province 6; and NP Saud, Ramesh Lekhak and Bir Bahadur Babayar in Province 7.

Province 2 voter turnout to 77 pc

Kathmandu: The Election Commission asked that voter turnout in the last leg of local elections in Province 2 held on Monday was 77 percent, up from its earlier estimates of 73 percent and the highest among all the three phases of polls.

Voter turnout in the first phase of local polls on May 14 was 74 percent while it was 76 percent in the second phase on June 28. The second Constituent Assembly elections in 2013 had 77.57 percent voter turnout.

The Rashtriya Janata Party-Nepal (RJP-N)’s decision to participate in the elections helps create a positive political environment for elections in Province 2, which resulted in higher voter turnout,” said former election commissioner Dulabh Bahadur Gurung.

Voting concluded in all eight districts of the previously troubled Province 2, where local elections had to be delayed in a bid to address the concerns of the RJP-

Probable NC chief minister candidates

Province 1: Bhimsa Raj Aangdambe, Biswo Prakash Sharma and Tamaran Gurung
Province 2: Mahendra Yadav, Ram Krishna Yadav and Farmullah Mansur
Province 3: Gagan Thapa and Nabindra Raj Joshi
Province 4: Dhanraj Gurung, Shankar Bhandari and Pradip Poudel
Province 5: Balkrishna Khand, Chandra Bhandari and Dipak Giri
Province 6: Hridaya Ram Thani and Jeevan Bahadur Shahi
Province 7: NP Saud, Ramesh Lekhak and Bir Bahadur Babayar

N, a unified force of six Madhes-based parties, which was pressing for the removal of the former government, has already started working in six other provinces after the two rounds of elections.

Experts said enthusiastic participation of people in May 14 and June 28 elections also encouraged Province 2 people to take part in the polls.

Elected representatives had already started working in six other provinces after the two rounds of elections. People of Province 2, who were hard hit by flooding and inundation in mid-August, also must have felt how lack of local representatives can affect relief works in the aftermath of a disaster, said an expert.
RJP-Nepal's humiliating defeat in home district of its three prominent leaders

Sarlahi: In the recently concluded third phase of local elections, the Rastriya Janata Party Nepal (RJPN) has faced a humiliating defeat in Sarlahi, the home district of its three prominent leaders - Mahantha Thakur, Rajendra Mahato and Mahendra Ray. Election results of 16 out of 20 local units of the district have been published as of Saturday evening. Out of that, RJPN has won in only five areas - a humiliating result considering that three of their senior leaders are from this district.

RJPN Sarlahi Coordinator Pramod Sah blamed faulty candidate selection as the major reason behind the party’s poor performance in the district. "Not only did the leaders make mistakes in candidate selections, but also our management could not be efficient during the elections. Party cadres were not able to meet their leaders and were thus demoralized" he said. According to him, the party had anticipated to win at least 12 local units in the district.

Heads of all three bodies of government out of country

Kathmandu: The heads of the executive, legislative and judicial branches of the government are all out of the country at a time when the country is passing through a series of crucial elections. Many see this as serious negligence towards domestic priorities and the important happenings within the country.

Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba is in the USA to participate in the 73rd United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). He is accompanied by Foreign Minister Krishna Bahadur Mahara and other senior officials of the government.

Deuba had left the country just a day before the third round local polls in Province 2. Soon after the prime minister left for New York, Speaker Onsari Gharti departed for China. Currently, she is still in China. Chief Justice Gopal Parajuli is also out of the country. A day before the prime minister and the speaker flew out, Parajuli headed for Japan to participate in the Conference of Chief Justices of Asia and the Pacific. Sources at the apex court said the chief justice is also scheduled to visit Russia and the US. Former bureaucrats term such moves by apex officials of the country a bad precedent. “It shows that the heads of the executive, legislative and judicial branches of the government are not serious about the country and the people,” said former home secretary Shreekant Regmi, adding, “This is a bad precedent.”

He accused them of focusing on their personal interests over the good of the people. “Our institutions are not working to meet the people’s expectations. Instead, they are guided by business interests,” said Regmi, referring to the recent parliamentary decision to endorse the Education Act amendment bill. “If they were really working in the interest of the people, why did they endorse such a controversial bill unanimously?”

Madheshvani Radio Program (Sunday to Friday)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>F.M</th>
<th>MHZ</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Radio Rajdhani</td>
<td>100.6</td>
<td>Kathmandu</td>
<td>10:40 P.M (Excluded Saturday)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio Sunrise</td>
<td>90.2</td>
<td>Jhapa (Birtamod)</td>
<td>6:30 P.M (Excluded Saturday)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red FM</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>Morung (Biratnagar)</td>
<td>9:30 P.M Re-Broadcast 9:30 A.M (Excluded Saturday)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio Rubaru F.M</td>
<td>104.5</td>
<td>Banka</td>
<td>8:15 P.M (Excluded Saturday)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio Rudraksha</td>
<td>98.8</td>
<td>Mahottari (Jaleshwor)</td>
<td>8:15 P.M (Excluded Saturday)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popular F.M</td>
<td>95.2</td>
<td>Sunsari (Inaruwa)</td>
<td>9:00 P.M (Excluded Saturday)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio Jay Madhesh</td>
<td>93.5</td>
<td>Saptari (Dharampurn)</td>
<td>5.20 P.M (Excluded Saturday)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio Janakpur</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>Dhanusa (Janakpurdham)</td>
<td>5.30 P.M (Excluded Saturday)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swarnim F.M</td>
<td>96.3</td>
<td>Sarlahi (Malangawa)</td>
<td>8.25 P.M (Excluded Saturday)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rautahat F.M</td>
<td>90.8</td>
<td>Rautahat (Gaur)</td>
<td>6.30 P.M (Excluded Saturday)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio Saugat</td>
<td>88.1</td>
<td>Siraha (Lahan)</td>
<td>7:30 A.M (Excluded Saturday)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio Dhadkan</td>
<td>89.6</td>
<td>Siraha</td>
<td>9:30 P.M Re-Broadcast 9:30 A.M (Excluded Saturday)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio Birgunj</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>Birgunj (Parsa)</td>
<td>9.15PM (Excluded Saturday)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio Safalta</td>
<td>103.4</td>
<td>Kaksi (Pokhara)</td>
<td>7.15 P.M (Excluded Friday and Saturday)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madhesh F.M</td>
<td>89.3</td>
<td>Sarlahi (Malangawa)</td>
<td>9.15 A.M (Excluded Saturday)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio Madhesh Janaawaja</td>
<td>98.6</td>
<td>Rautahat</td>
<td>7.30 A.M (Excluded Saturday)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio Madhesh Masala</td>
<td>106.4</td>
<td>Rautahat</td>
<td>7:30 PM Re-Broadcast 7:30 A.M (Excluded Saturday)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio Aakashganga</td>
<td>107.6</td>
<td>Siraha</td>
<td>9:30 PM Re-Broadcast 9:30 A.M (Excluded Saturday)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio Baadal</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>Bara</td>
<td>9:30 PM Re-Broadcast 9:00 A.M (Excluded Saturday)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio Tilaurakot</td>
<td>107.6</td>
<td>Kapilbastu</td>
<td>7.30 PM (Excluded Saturday)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio Madi</td>
<td>107.6</td>
<td>Chitwan (Madi)</td>
<td>Every Wednesday 5.30 PM to 6 PM (Excluded Saturday)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio Samarthya</td>
<td>92.1</td>
<td>Kawasoti (Navalparasi)</td>
<td>7.00 PM (Excluded Saturday)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio Sahalesh</td>
<td>88.8</td>
<td>Siraha</td>
<td>6:30PM Re-Broadcast 7:30 A.M (Excluded Saturday)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Kathmandu: Election for federal and provincial assemblies will be held simultaneously on November 26 and December 7. The election for provincial assemblies, to be held for the first time in the country, will elect chief ministers (CM). But the government has yet to make arrangements for the places for convening provincial assemblies, swearing-in of CMs and their residence and office.

The constitution has vested the responsibility of management of provinces to chief of the state, a bureaucratic position, until the formation of provincial government. But the government has yet to appoint such chiefs in any province or fix the provincial capitals.

The Prime Minister’s Office (PMO) has prepared to use the places where five regional offices are located as an alternative as the government has yet to decide on provincial capitals, according to PMO Spokesperson and Joint Secretary Hari Prasad Panthi. “We have not started construction of any new structure as the provincial capitals have yet to be fixed. The five regional structures, therefore, can be used for provincial assemblies and CMs,” Panthi reasoned. “We can make do with the government offices in big cities even in the provinces which do not have the regional headquarters,” he added.

He stated that physical structures will be built with detailed planning once the provincial capitals are fixed after election. “These things will gradually fall in line once the provincial governments are formed after election.” he assured.

The government, however, has formed provincial structures for Nepal Police to be commanded by an AIG in each province since then. It has also already set up high courts in the seven provinces. AIG offices and high courts have already been established in Biratnagar of Province 1, Janakpur of Province 2, Lalitpur of Province 3, Pokhara of Province 4, Tulsipur of Province 5, Surkhet of Province 6 and Dipayal of Province 7. CPN (Maoist Center) leader Narayan Kaji Shrestha says all the major parties have consented to fix the places where AIG offices and high courts have been established as respective provincial capitals.

Minor misunderstanding doesn’t deteriorate relations: Indian envoy Puri

Nepalgunj: Indian Ambassador to Nepal Manjeev Singh Puri has said the minor misunderstanding cannot deteriorate the Indo-Nepal relations.

Speaking in an interaction organized by the Nepalgunj Industry Association, Ambassador Puri shared that the Indo-Nepal bilateral ties were connected in political, cultural, social and various other levels, therefore such strong ties cannot weaken due to minor misunderstanding. He added that India was always positive for holistic development of Nepal.

UN Secretary-General Guterres lauds Nepal’s elections

New York: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has lauded Nepal’s efforts for concluding the local level elections in the recent days and wished for the success of upcoming elections.

In a high-level meeting between Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba and Secretary-General Guterres on Saturday, the latter expressed happiness over Nepal’s ongoing process to institutionalize democracy, PM Deuba’s Foreign Affairs Advisor. In the meeting held at the office of UN Secretary-General, they exchanged views on a number of issues ranging from the implementation of the Constitution to Nepal’s role in UN peacekeeping operations, and from Nepal-UN cooperation to the evolving challenges to development.

On the occasion, PM Deuba also updated the Secretary-General on recent development including the preparations for holding provincial and federal level elections. The Prime Minister also underlined the need to increase the number of Nepali nationals in higher positions commensurate with Nepal’s contribution as the sixth largest troop and police contributing country.