

## NATIONAL

The Supreme Court, in January 2014, passed a judgment, giving the voters the right to cast negative votes. But the Election Commission has failed to implement the provision for the lack of a law.

The voices in favour of new faces surface due to the lacklustre perfor-

for well-known old leaders. "As the public votes for the same old politicians, new leaders do not get a chance," she said.

Observers suggest implementing some measures to encourage new faces in parties and legislative positions.

Political parties should select election candidates not on the basis of who knows who, but through fair competition so that meritorious candidates get the opportunity, Pokharel added. "So we need to select candidates through primaries. Candidates should be filtered from the lower level," he said. "Primaries should be used to reject mediocre leaders."

Adhikari, on the other hand, suggests putting a term limit for positions like lawmakers. "Even in the political parties, a term limit should exist for the party head who has the chance to become prime minister. Our intelligentsia has also come to realise this," she said.

**Banned parties participate in polls**  
Even when political parties were fighting against monarchy and the partyless Panchayat for the establishment of democracy, they participated in the elections for the national legislative body, the Rastriya Panchayat, and local bodies. The underground parties fielded their candidates even though the polls were held in a partyless system. They used elections to strengthen their connections with the public. On these occasions, some political forces whose connections were limited only to their cadres succeeded in expanding their reach among the general public.

**Fame and power through elections**  
The first parliamentary election of Nepal in 1959 helped establish Nepali Congress. The party secured two-thirds majority in the 109-member House of Representatives. Charismatic leader BP Koirala became the

Until the 1980s, communist parties were in a dilemma about whether to participate in parliamentary elections. The then CPN (Marxist-Leninist) was one such confused organization. Also, there were apprehensions at national and international levels about the communist parties' policies. When Madan Bhandari rose to the party's leadership, he gave a clear direction to the CPN (Marxist-Leninist), stating that even communists can secure state power through democratic elections. A section of communists criticized him as a revisionist. But he didn't falter.

The party merged with the then CPN (Marxist) to form the CPN-UML in 1991. In the first election after the reinstatement of democracy, the UML emerged as the second-largest party and established itself as a strong competitor against Congress. As the UML has consistently been in favor of electoral politics, it has established itself as a democratic force despite its communist ideology.

In the general election of 1991, UML General Secretary Bhandari stole the limelight defeating incumbent prime minister Krishna Prasad Bhattarai. The result surprised the international community as well. The rise of Bhandari and UML's strong performance proved to be a turning point in the party's history.

The UML had legendary leaders like Mohan Chandra Adhikari, who was regarded as Nepal's Nelson Mandela as he served over 16 years in jail during the struggle for restoring democracy. When multiparty competition began, young leaders like Bhandari excelled while leaders like Adhikari were left behind. What differentiated them was that Bhandari won public trust through elections but Adhikari could not.

#### Elections radically transform Maoists

In 1996, the Maoists started an armed insurgency, partly to destroy the parliamentary system. Fast forward to 2021, the Maoist party was one of the forces that took to the street and sought Supreme Court's support to reinstate parliament to "safeguard parliamentary supremacy" when the then Prime Minister KP Oli dissolved

Assembly elections. They put forward various conditions. The Assembly election had to be postponed multiple times due to Maoist threats of a boycott. Later, the Maoist success in the election surprised many. As things now stand, we hardly find any substantive difference between the Congress, the UML and the Maoists. It is the electoral system that transformed the Maoists so fast.

If the election success of 1959 was the base of the Congress and the 1991 polls of the UML, the election of 2008 can be taken as a base of the Maoists and Madhesi parties to establish themselves in mainstream politics.

Since 1994, six communist leaders have become prime ministers through elections. Among the eight sitting and former prime ministers still alive, five are communists, one is a Congress leader, another from the Rastriya Prajatantra Party, and yet another is an independent.

#### Boycotts and boomerangs

While several political parties established themselves through elections, many others have run away from the electoral race. Some are still following the boycott path. Parties including those led by Mohan Baidya, Netra Bikram Chand Biplab, Dharmendra Bastola and Bishwabhakta Dulal Aahuti have announced a boycott of upcoming elections.

Things have drastically changed now. The home ministry and the Election Commission after conducting assessments of the security situation concluded that the parties that have announced to boycott polls are no longer serious security threats.

In 1990, when UML participated in parliamentary elections, another communist party, the CPN-Masal, decided to stay away. The party was headed by Mohan Bikram Singh. The party that termed the change of 1990 'incomplete achievement' decided to boycott the general elections of 1991, vowing to create ground for Constituent Assembly elections and seize powers from the king. However, a faction of the same party split and formed Ekata Kendra. The new party's electoral front Samyukta Janamorchha contested the elections and won nine seats. Krishna Bahadur Mahara and

ship of a party to Dahal around 36 years ago. Even when Dahal led the insurgency, Baidya and Bhattarai were the two figures seen in tandem with Dahal. Some party members gave Baidya more respect for his integrity and clean image. But now he is nowhere in the scene. The CPN (Revolutionary Maoist) party that he leads has no influence in national politics. This is again because Baidya and his party are shy of elections.

His party hasn't participated in general elections since it was formed in 2012. Large sections of the Maoists accused Dahal of betraying Maoist cadres and they supported Baidya's bid to form a new revolutionary outfit in 2012. As Baidya could take them nowhere, most have returned to the mother party. Similar are the situations of the Biplab-led organization and other splinter groups.

The Rastriya Janamorchha is the electoral front of the CPN-Masal. While Mohan Bikram Singh is party chief, Chitra Bahadur KC leads the party's electoral front. So Singh is KC's boss in the party. But as KC gets elected by the people, he overshadows his party chief Singh in the public eye. Singh now seems to have realized the importance of being elected. Therefore, he has been putting all efforts to establish his wife, Durga Paudel, through elections. The party sought support of the UML and Maoists to get her elected in 2017. Now it is seeking the support of the Congress and Maoists for her re-election.

**Time for principled stance on polls**  
In the past six decades, Nepal conducted nine general elections including two during the partyless Panchayat system and two for Constituent Assembly. After the restoration of democracy in 1990 and especially after the establishment of a republic system in 2008, electoral success has become probably the most important factor for leaders to thrive in politics.

This is not at all a bad thing. The only rider is that political parties should not only see elections as tactical tools to secure power and perks. Their faith in elections should also reflect in their abiding commitment to the democratic process.

#### मोटरसाइकल हरायो

मिति २०७१/०४/१० गते साँझ १७:३० बने पशुपतिमा पार्किङ गरिराखेको बा१०५ ४२२२ नं. को Chassis No. MD2J4CYG8HC087988, Engine No. 7-906-07677, २०० सिसिको सेतो रंगको KTM 200 RC मोटरसाइकल हराएकोले पाउनु हुने महानुभावले नजिकको प्रहरी कार्यालय वा निम्न ठेगानामा खबर गरिदिनु होला।

सवारी घनी: अश्विज राज खरेल

ठेगाना: दरवेश ९, मोरङ

फोन नं.: ९८४१५६९४४



#### Government of Nepal

#### Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport

#### Department of Roads

#### Development Cooperation Implementation Division

#### Accelerating Transport and Trade Connectivity in

#### Eastern South Asia-Nepal Phase 1 Project

Jwagal, Lalitpur

### Amendment on Request for Expression of Interest (REOI)

Notice No.: ACCESS/02/079-80

Date of Publication: 11<sup>th</sup> October, 2022

In reference to REOI Notice, published on 24<sup>th</sup> September, 2022, for Consultancy Services of (i) Detailed Engineering Survey and Design of Upgradation Works for Gorusinghe-Chanauta (19Km) highway section and associated Bridges, (ii) Environment Assessment for Upgradation Works for Gorusinghe-Chanauta (19Km) highway section and associated Bridges and (iii) Construction Supervision of Improvement/Widening of Butwal-Gorusinghe-Chanauta section (69Km) of East-West Highway under Accelerating Transport and Trade Connectivity in Eastern South Asia-Nepal Phase 1, the Expression of Interest submission deadline is extended up to 21<sup>st</sup> October, 2022.

Interested consultants may obtain Terms of Reference (TOR) for the mentioned assignment title and further detail relevant information from <https://dor.gov.np/home/notices>. Expression of Interest must be delivered in written form to the given address (in Person or by email) by 21<sup>st</sup> October 2022.

Project Director