

Focus on:

- *Local polls boycott in Nawalparasi*

THRD Alliance keenly observed the second phase of local polls held on 28 June, 2017 in 35 districts of province-1, 5 and 7. Although the government held the polls peacefully, THRD human rights monitors present in the election booths in the Terai districts reported some terrifying incidents. The Nepalese Army was seen patrolling in the village and towns of Terai districts in armored vehicles as if they were deployed in battle fields. Terai people said that they had never seen in the past such a huge deployment of Nepalese Army.

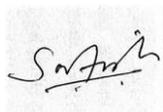
Just before the day of the second phase of local poll, Netra Bikram Chand led CPN-Maoist had called for a general strike, mainly to disrupt the local polls and create insecurity among the voters but they failed to impose general strike.

Notwithstanding the heavy presence of security personnel, bombs were found in Urlabari of Morang and Tulsipur of Dang. Similarly, bombs were planted near the forest office and Kohalpur of Nepalgunj Sub-metropolitan City in Banke district. The security personnel were able to defuse these bombs.

Keeping in mind the previous incidents of clashes between the security personnel and protesters, our Regional Coordinator Shailendra Prasad Harijan, who is based in Rupandehi, went to Nawalparasi District to monitor the polls. According to his report, civilians from southern district of Nawalparasi boycotted the second phase of local polls as per the call issued by the Rastriya Janata Party Nepal. The RJPN, which has been demanding to amend the constitution and increase the number of local levels in Madhes in proportion to the population of the southern plains, boycotted the second phase of local polls.

Only two votes were cast in VDC Sarawal 6, at the booth of Janata Higher Secondary School where the number of eligible voters was 502. Similarly, in the polling centre at VDC Pratappur 6, Guthhiparsauni Ward Office out of 1800 eligible voters, only 500 voters cast their votes. In the booth of Jagriti Higher Secondary School in the same district, out of 900 eligible voters only 160 votes cast their votes.

The civilians of the Terai region complained that Nepalese Army, police personnel and government officials threatened them with dire consequence if they did not vote. The local voters, however, resisted the security personnel's threat and boycotted the polls. They reiterated that they won't vote until the demand of Madhesi, Jantajati and minority communities were met by the Government. Overall the second phase of local polls was conducted in peaceful manner but the government failed to ensure peaceful environment for local polls.



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