

THE KATHMANDU POST

Printed simultaneously in Kathmandu, Biratnagar and Bharatpur



(FILE) Princess Purnika with her brother Navayuvraj Hridayendra.

PHOTO: SURAJ KUNWAR

The cabinet also asked the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation to work on selection of a National Anthem to replace the current one. The Ministry will consult litterateurs, historians, culture experts and musicians to prepare the new National Anthem.

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The cabinet also amended the law on Royal Household Expenditure, limiting the recipients of state facilities and allowances to the king, queen,

Dr Sanduk Ruit wins Magsaysay award

BY SANGEETA RIJAL
KATHMANDU, JULY 31

The man who gave eyesight to millions in Nepal and in other parts of the developing world has finally been spotted by the selection body of one of the world's most prestigious awards.

Dr Sanduk Ruit, medical director of Til Ganga Eye Hospital, has won the renowned Magsaysay award, becoming the third Nepali to accomplish the feat.

Ruit has been selected for the Magsaysay International Peace and Understanding Award for his contribution in introducing cost effective eye technology beneficial especially to poorer patients in developing countries. Ruit is a pioneer in the development of modern cataract surgery in Nepal.

"It's great that such a big international body has acknowledged Nepal's effective and qualitative service," Dr Ruit told the Post after winning the award. "I hope this award will burnish the image of Nepal."

Visibly happy and contented after bagging the Magsaysay -- dubbed Asia's Nobel Prize -- Ruit said it took nearly five years for him and his team to prove to the world that their work was of great value.

with severe objections in Nepal. But slowly it won the minds of its critics as it won the hearts of millions of Nepalis, who regained their eyesight with its help.

"It was thus introduced in other developing countries for the benefit of poorer patients," Sanduk said.

The technique and the cost effective lenses are today used widely among the rural communities in Africa, South America, Thailand, Bhutan, Myanmar, Cambodia, China, the Pacific islands, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan.

Ruit is promoting his expertise in modern cataract



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— Dr Ruit

In the 1980s, more than 70 percent of the blind in Nepal were suffering from cataract. The cost of intra ocular lenses used for cataract surgery was very high -- about US\$100 per lens-- which was beyond the reach of poor Nepalis. Dr Ruit took the initiative, with the Fred Hollows Foundation, to manufacture these lenses locally for about \$4. And his team simplified the cataract

surgery through the World Health Organization, the International Agency for Prevention of Blindness and the American Academy of Ophthalmology.

Born in Olangchunggola in Taplejung, one of the remotest areas in eastern Nepal, in 1954, Dr Ruit completed his Residency in Ophthalmology at the All India Institute of

Govt asks UN mission to extend stay

BY TILAK P. POKHAREL
KATHMANDU, JULY 31

As the government and the Maoists haven't been able to reach a common understanding on the kind of support they will seek from the UN, the government Monday requested the high-level UN mission currently in Nepal to extend its stay.

During his meeting with the UN mission, Deputy Prime Minister Amik Sherchan requested the mission to extend its stay in Nepal so that the government and the Maoists may have more time to agree on a common understanding.

"They repeated that [three-day ultimatum given by the team yesterday to the government and the Maoists to come up with a common understanding on arms] even today, warning that they should return [empty-handed] if nothing comes up within this period," Sherchan told the Post, after holding a meeting with the team.

He said he will talk to the prime minister and the other parties to concentrate on the UN ultimatum, setting aside all prescheduled programs for tomorrow.

Upset about dillydallying on the part of the government and the Maoists towards coming up

Dr Sanduk Ruit...

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Mahesh Chandra Regmi and Bharat Dutt Koirala are the other two Nepalese to have received the Magsaysay award, for their contribution in the fields of research and journalism respectively.

Besides Ruit, the others

selected for the award this time are Arvind Kejriwal - India, Ek Sonn Chan - Cambodia, Park Won Soon - South Korea and Eugenia Duran Apostol and Antonio Meloto - Philippines.

They will be presented the awards amidst a ceremony in Manila on August 31.

REQUIREMENT