

NEPAL'S SEARCH FOR CONSTITUTIONAL STABILITY



About The Talk:

A federal, democratic, republican constitution was adopted by the Constituent Assembly of Nepal on 20 September 2015, following seven years of effort including two elections. It is a 'rights based' constitution of the post-modern era, written by politicians rather than jurists and constitutionalists. It picks up from the 1990 Constitution which delivered open society to Nepal, and the 2007 Interim Constitution which managed the transition from Maoist conflict to peace even as identity politics flared. The eventual adoption of the 2015 Constitution was spurred by the earthquake of April, but the hope that it would bring immediate stability leading to economic growth was dashed because of the dissatisfaction with some provisions among a section of the Madhesi plains-based politicians, and the resulting protests led to more than 45 dead. The dissatisfaction should be and is being addressed through an amendment process in the Parliament. However, the Constitution as adopted has raised the ire of the Indian Government, which decided to take sides on the internal matters of a friendly neighbour, going as far as to organize an economic blockade. The only lesson that can be taken from this experience in one corner of South Asia is that while constitutions have to be written by democratically elected and representative constituent assemblies, there is no saying how far a powerful neighbour will go in trying to dictate the text of the document. The lecture 'Nepal's Search for Constitutional Stability' will dwell on the challenges of writing the 2015 Constitution, its salient features, the voiced dissatisfaction with its provisions, and the shocking geopolitical aftermath.



About The Speaker:

Kanak Mani Dixit is publisher of Himal Khabarpatrika and editor of Himal Southasian. He has been a journalist since finishing high school in Lalitpur in 1971. He is a pioneer in the field of South Asian journalism. Over the course of the late 1990s and early 2000s, he became involved in civil rights amidst the Maoist insurgency and King Gyanendra's autocracy, and was active in the People's Movement of 2006. Since then, Dixit has been involved in a campaign to roll back violence and work to ensure the promulgation of a democratic constitution. He was awarded the first Prince Claus Award to Nepal for "his outstanding contributions to public debate, for creating platforms that enable South Asians to connect, interact and network transcending national and cultural boundaries, and for his socially engaged, multi-disciplinary approach to creativity and development".



Thursday, November 5th, 2015, 06:30 p.m. to 07:30 p.m.
@Tariq Rafi Lecture Theatre, Habib University



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