

Nepal to hold elections later in 2007

by UPI

KATHMANDU, Nepal -- The interim eight-party coalition governing Nepal Thursday agreed to hold elections later this year to pick a constituent assembly.

The constituent assembly will rewrite the constitution and decide the fate of the Himalayan state's monarchy headed by King Gyanendra. The actual dates for the elections, which will be in November or December, will be announced soon.

The agreement was reached after a month-long discussion and was concluded after Maoist party leader Prachanda, who uses one name only, gave his approval, reports the Voice of America.

The promise of elections, which were originally scheduled to be held in June, was a condition of the peace deal under which the Maoists gave up their decade-long insurgency against the monarchy and joined the interim government.

Despite the election agreement, a Maoist member of parliament told VOA his party would still like to see the monarchy abolished and Nepal made a republic prior to the polls. Nepal Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, however, has said the issues can be decided only by the elected assembly.

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