

Nepal elects first woman speaker of parliament

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Kathmandu: Nepalese lawmakers today unanimously elected a former guerrilla fighter as the country's first woman speaker of Parliament following the formation of a new government.

Parliament unanimously elected UCPN-Maoist lawmaker Onsari Gharti Magar, 37, as the Speaker of the House. A former Maoist guerrilla fighter, Gharti Magar took part in the decade-long Maoist insurgency that ended in 2006.

Nepal's Constituent Assembly was converted into the legislative Parliament after the promulgation of the Constitution on September 20 following which K P Sharma Oli was elected as the new prime minister defeating incumbent Sushil Koirala in a contest which became necessary after parties failed to forge a consensus amid violent protests over the country's new Constitution.

Gharti was elected unanimously to the post after Nepal Workers and Peasants Party withdrew the candidacy of its lawmaker Anuradha Thapa Magar.

With the victory, Gharti became the first woman to lead the legislative body in Nepal's parliamentary history. Earlier she had served as Deputy Speaker in Parliament.

Gharti was backed by the ruling coalition, consisting of CPN-UML, UCPN-Maoist, Rastriya Prajatantra Party-Nepal, Madhesi Janaadhikar Forum-Democratic and some fringe parties.

The main opposition Nepali Congress had also extended support to her candidacy. Similarly, Ganga Prasad Yadav has also been elected Deputy Speaker of the Parliament unanimously.

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