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## Nepal: Two Third Majority for Oli has not worked:

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Prior to the last General Elections, the unified Communist party of Maoists and the UML went round the country seeking votes promising that they would need a good majority to have proper governance and stability. Not that the country has not had a majority government in the past, but it was a good justification to ask for votes purely on the promise of stability of the country. Yet fourteen months have passed and the two third majority has really not worked. One of the writers in the media has examined this issue and has come up with good reasons.

First, there is rivalry and ego clashes among the top leadership. Oli is getting more and more isolated with all other leaders both from the UML and the erstwhile Maoist leadership ganging up together to thwart any new initiative.

Second, is the uneasy relationship between the two top leaders- Dahal and Oli as the latter will have to be constantly looking behind his back to watch Dahal who has ambitions of his own to become the next Prime Minister! He is yet to tell Oli as what transpired between him and the Indian leadership during his recent visit.

Third, is the intra party relationship and the merger of the two groups is actually in name and not in spirit. At the ground level they remain as two entities. On top of that, two senior UML leaders Jhalanath Khanal and Bam Dev Gautham are taking sides with Dahal on any issue where differences arise within the party leadership.

Fourth, in my view is that Oli is taking decisions all by himself and has given up consulting the senior leadership within the party. There are allegations that he is making the PMO strong thereby making other departments irrelevant. The PMO has brought in departments like the National Investigation Dept, Department of Revenue investigation, Department of Money laundering within its control thus making the PM's

office very powerful and it could harass anybody.

Above all, Oli is moving a bill to get the power to deploy Army unilaterally thus bypassing the National Security Council. This is being opposed even by the Army. The National Security Council consists of the PM as the chairman with the Defence, Law and Finance Ministers as members along with the Chief Secretary and the Army Chief.

In the matter of administration everything appears to be frozen. The two transitional mechanisms, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Agency to look into the disappearances are frozen and it is said that the TRC files have all been bundled up and sealed for a new committee to be yet appointed by the Cabinet. The TRC has received over 63,000 complaints and after all these years enquiry has been completed in only 4000. Of the investigation into disappearances, out of 4000 complaints, investigation has been completed in 2200 petitions. No one except the poor victims care about the disposal of these cases. Meanwhile there is a talk of "forget and forgive" amongst the erstwhile top Maoist leadership.

Oli has since realized the need for firm against the breakaway faction of the Maoists led by 'Biplab' alias Netra Bikram Chand and his group. Some arrests at the middle level have been made while the top leadership have gone underground! Unless Oli gets full support from the erstwhile Maoists ( he is ot getting), the problem is likely to develop into serious proportions affecting the law and order situation of the whole State. A task force has been formed from the Security Forces to coordinate, monitor and deal with the problem.

There is yet no sign of getting the constitutional amendments to satisfy the MADHESI groups and most likely Upendra Yadav, who is keen to keep his Deputy Prime ministership in tact may wait till the next General Elections to approach the innocent voters to vote for them again! Some fifty lives have been lost in the protest campaign so far but no effort is seen to have been taken by the leaders to give the victims' families their due compensation.

The media is abuzz with the rumour that a National Security Policy has been approved by the cabinet two weeks ago and it is said that the Ministry of Defence has categorically asked officials not to disclose the details.

Yet, some points have trickled down in the public domain. It is said that 13 issues affecting the national interests have been identified and possible threats to all these interests have been discussed.

Mention has been made of interference in the internal affairs by external powers. It is said that no country has been named. Does India figure in this ? One observation that needs to be made here is- that in the foreign policy narrative, efforts to balance relations with China- a rising super power and the USA are being discussed and India does not figure. This is good in a way now as in the past, anything going wrong in Nepal, India was being blamed!

There is of course mention of the five-month blockade and the vulnerability of Nepal being a land locked country. Misuse of law is seen as a major tendency to be avoided and there appears to be a mention of “authoritarian trends to maintain political control”. Does it allude to the present Prime Minister Oli who wants to make himself very powerful?

One of the top leaders of the Nepali Congress- General Secretary and a member of the Koirala family dropped a bomb in proposing a referendum to get the view of the people of making Nepal a ‘Hindu State’ as opposed to the current status as federal republic. He said that he stood for a Hindu nation because many of the voters in Nepal are Hindus and it is important to pay attention to their call for a Hindu Nation. At the same time, he called for freedom of religion.

This call for a ‘Hindu State’ is unlikely to die soon and one can see many more politicians coming out openly for a Hindu State.

One redeeming feature in Oli’s administration is that the economy is doing well. Latest ADB report projects a GDP growth of 6.2 percent going up to 6.3 percent in 2020. A good monsoon is expected with agricultural sector going up from 2.8 to 4.5 percent and inflation fairly under control rising to 4.4 from 4.2 percent.

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