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## Nepal: PM Oli's Many Challenges:

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Despite having an overwhelming majority in the House, Prime Minister Oli appears to be facing many challenges-

The breakaway faction of the Maoists led by Netra Bikram Chand continues to be active and is gaining ground.

The Trigger happy Police force supported by his Home Minister appear to be a law unto themselves.

Bills are being introduced without proper scrutiny or adequate preparation for implementation.

It is now public knowledge that there was a written commitment /understanding between Oli and Dahal that the post of Prime Minister ship will be shared half way through. There is as yet no sign of Oli giving up his post

. Less said the better on "transitional justice". Except for the victims no one else appears to be interested in completing the peace process!

There were two cases where the Home Minister continues to be adamant in not letting a proper Probe Commission as is being insisted upon by the opposition.

The first is the case of a so-called encounter where the district chief of Chand's party Kumar Paudel was killed. It is said that Paudel was killed by the trigger-happy Policemen after he was taken into custody.

The second was the killing of a Terain Saroj Narayan Mahatao again in Sarlahi. In this case, Saroj was killed when the Police opened fire on

a group of villagers who were protesting against illegal mining operations. The Home Minister maintained that the Police only opened fire in the air and that it was the dead man's fault. Unless the victim was flying, there was no chance of Mahatao being killed if the Police had really fired into the air. If by firing in the air the victim was killed while on the ground, it speaks volumes of the shooting skill of the trigger-happy Policemen!

At any rate, in both cases the Home Ministry has not come out clean with the facts,

PM Oli's Staff does not seem to make proper research and prepare the ground before introducing bills. We saw earlier the thoughtless action of the Government in introducing the Guthi Bill only to be withdrawn when it was realized that the entire populace of the valley for historic and cultural reasons were totally opposed to nationalization of Guthis.

A month ago, the Government issued a directive requiring agricultural produce imported from India to be tested for pesticide before bringing into Nepal. The idea was laudable and perhaps it was meant to incentivize local production. But the Government neither explained the reason nor did they make sufficient preparations for implementing the order. In the absence Lab facilities to test the produce coming from India, the agricultural produce coming India were allowed to rot. Nepal imports over 44 percent of vegetables from India.

A month later, these orders of the Government were rescinded and the Press has given a twist that it had been done because it could not resist the pressure from India. The real reason was that the Government did not have ready infra structural facilities at the border to test the agricultural produce coming from India for pesticide!

In an earlier paper we had discussed how the Government had earlier hastily withdrawn the Guthi Bill when Kathmandu witnessed unprecedented protests the like of which had not been seen since the Jana Andolan days!

There are many other controversial bills waiting to be introduced and it is almost certain that the Government will be facing more protests. The problem appears to be total absence of a dialogue or informal consultations between the Government and the People.

Some of controversial bills that are pending to be introduced will include-

1. The media bill over which protests are building up. (This was discussed in another paper in this site).
2. The Public Service Commission Bill: This was registered 6 months ago in the PM's office and is yet to see the light of the day! This empowers the Centre to take over the transfer of staff of Public Service Commission.
3. The Bill giving sweeping powers to the CDOs over the heads of the provincial administration to mobilise all security forces, order Police to open fire for controlling violent protests and impose curfews in the districts concerned. This is a retrogressive measure going against

the principles of federalism where the law and order is in the domain of the provincial administration.

4. The Security Council Bill that empowers the Prime Minister to mobilise the Army without the endorsement of the Security Council and the President!

There are many other reports that are still pending scrutiny. The victims of conflict in the ten years of civil war are still awaiting justice. The report of the “Eminent Person’s Group” on the question of the revision of Indo Nepal 1950 Treaty is still in cold storage. There is no word of the many promises made by Oli on the eve of the elections

Meantime, it has become public knowledge that Oli agreed to hand over the post of the Prime Minister ship to Dahal half way through. While Oli has said nothing about it, his own old colleague Madhav Nepal of former UML has said in one of the meetings that the agreement should be honoured.

The former UML Colleagues of PM Oli, particularly Madhav Nepal appear to be bent upon embarrassing Oli by joining hands with Dahal on many of the critical issues facing the Government.

The two factions of the Ruling Party- the UML and the Maoist factions have not really merged and there appears to be many problems at the ground level. There is little hope that the problems will be solved during the convention to be held later in the year. While the Government will not fall what is distressing to see is that Oli is not getting a free hand to run the government.

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