

Nepal: Massive Demonstration in Kathmandu for restoration of Monarchy: Its Significance

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By Dr. S. Chandrasekharan

For the first time since the promulgation of federal Constitution of 2015, Kathmandu witnessed a major demonstration on 5th December demanding the restoration of monarchy. A week before that, a similar much smaller demonstration took place in the City.

The demonstrators numbering hundreds gathered in Mathighar and moved past Babbar Mahal, Bijli Bazaar and finally reached New Baneshwar where the new Parliament building is situated.

The demonstrators carried the national flag and placards carrying the picture of Prithvi Narayan Shah, the founder of Nepal 240 years ago.

The slogans shouted included a call for unity and well being of the people. Other demands in the slogans were-

1. Restoration of Monarchy
2. Reinstatement of Constitutional Monarchy (there is a difference between the first and the second, They are not yet ready for absolute rule of the Kings) and abolition of the Federal Republic
3. Nepal to be declared a Hindu State again.

The demonstration was held under the auspices of the Nagarik Andolan Samiti 2077 (National Civic Movement Committee of 2020). This appears to be a recent organisation that has sprouted all of a sudden though one would have expected the Political Party RPP that consists of erstwhile Royalists to lead the procession. As of now, the RPP has very insignificant presence in the national legislature.

Most surprising was that the demonstration was allowed at all amidst the spread of Wuhan Virus and when earlier non political demonstrations were dispersed with force.

Prior to the demonstrations in Kathmandu Pro King rallies have taken place in many parts of Nepal and these included the ones in Hetauda, Butwal, Dhangadi, Nepalgunj, Mahendranagar, Nawal Parasi, Pokhara, Ranikhet and Biratnagar. This is indicative of a wide geographic spread though it does not cover the higher Himalayan region.

The demonstrations were coordinated by an outfit called -Rashtriya Shakti of Nepal and helped by other constituents like Goraksha Nepal, Bishwo Hindu Maha Sangh, Rashtriya Sarovar Manch, Shiva Sena, Nepal, Bir Gorkhali and Mathrubhumi Samrakshan Nepal. The titles of these outfits indicate their leanings and appear to be recent outfits but have the potency to become relevant sooner or later if Nepal continues to be misgoverned by Oli's Government. Their agenda is said to be restoration of Constitutional Monarchy, Re instating Nepal as a Hindu State and scrapping of Federalism.

Some have remarked that all they are demanding is replacement of "King Oli" with a genuine King. Oli has so far behaved like an "absolute Ruler" and has been taking decision unilaterally without consulting his colleagues or the senior members of his own Party.

The internal fight that is going on within the Party has come out in the open with the leaders of the Ruling Party have been openly trading accusations against each other. More important issues like economy, prevention of the spread of Wuhan Virus, justice for the victims of a decade long civil war have all been forgotten.

Oli has failed generally in dealing with the Wuhan Virus. Corruption continues to be rampant and True to form, he did not attend the Standing Committee meeting on the 6th of December claiming to be having a "busy schedule" and the existing high risk of Wuhan Virus.

While it should be conceded that a sizeable number of the population would desire the restoration of the Hindu State, the demand for restoration of Monarchy is more out of disillusionment with the present Government. There was hope for stability, prosperity and an inclusive Government. This has not happened.

It is easy for Oli and his Party to take a disdainful view of the demonstrations and carry on with his "business as usual". But he will be mistaken. He needs to have an introspection as what has gone wrong in the last two and a half years when many promises were made at the beginning. The people are disillusioned and disenchanted. His party with a clear majority in the Parliament is no longer a solid force as it was thought to be.

Oli is yet to come to terms with the federal units - the provinces and there was considerable criticism when he described the provincial

Governments as “Administrative Units.” He needs to change his mind set.

Can one imagine a State Government going to the Supreme Court for cancellation of orders of the Federal Government that strictly came within the purview of the State? This happened when Province No. 2 of Terai filed a case in the Supreme Court on interference of the Centre of a subject that is under the jurisdiction of the State Government. The case called for annulling of a tender floated by the Federal Government under the name of “Prosperous Nepal-Madhes Irrigation Special Programme” and also cancellation of orders from Kathmandu to hand over all the assets including the building vehicles and physical equipment currently used by the Provincial Government!

Oli seems to be accountable to no one. There is however a lingering doubt among the people that a split may take place sooner or later in the Ruling Party. Oli is said to be having secret negotiations with Opposition leader Sher Bahadur Deuba.

Stability is the last issue in the minds of the leaders now.

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