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Caretaker Prime Minister continues with his antics in addressing every public meeting that the election is the only way out and it will happen on schedule not realising that the matter is subjudice.

The Supreme Court has continued with the proceedings and one of the judges recused himself as he was an Attorney General for Oli's first term. There is a demand for a Full Bench of Supreme Court and not just five.

The Chinese delegation left empty handed but not without requesting its favourite leader Bam Dev Gautam to continue to look for reconciliation between the two sides. He may not succeed as no body trusts him.

Former King, Gyanendra used the 299th anniversary of Prithvi Narayan Shah in referring to the untoward incidents in the country and referred to unnamed foreign forces forcing a change. Was he referring to China?

And finally to cap it all, the person who is known to be anti Madhesi and who by stoutly refusing to amend the constitution for the Madhesis despite a last minute dash of Indian Foreign Secretary has turned himself to be a champion of the Madhesis. He conducted a "dhoti rally" in Kathmandu to the amusement of all political commentators.

Foreign Minister Gyawali is in Delhi to negotiate the purchase of Indian vaccine for Nepal. What happened to the offer of Sinovac from China which is considered to be harmless and no side effects as the vaccine is said to be pure distilled water is not known!

On 8th of January, Prime Minister Oli in a meeting at Dhangadi said that the scheduled elections will happen and there is no chance of

revival of the House. Earlier, Oli has already addressed three gatherings in Kathmandu and claimed that the House cannot be restored and urged all his supporters to prepare for the elections. A well-known Professor of Political Science Krishna Pokhrel said “It is strange that the Prime Minister has turned his focus to elections when the matter is sub judice in the Supreme Court.” But Oli thinks that he is above all laws including the Constitution!

On 8th January again, four former Supreme Court Judges opined that Oli’s move of dissolving the House was “unconstitutional.”

Some Advocates have already demanded a full bench in the Supreme Court to decide on an issue that has far reaching consequences. One Advocate Gyawali on behalf of the Plaintiffs said that five member Bench will not do.

One of Judges of the Bench, Justice Karki has recused himself from the Bench. Some Senior advocates questioned the presence of Karki as he was the Attorney General during Oli’s first tenure. Another controversy has also risen about the presence of the Chief Justice Rana who is also a member of the Constitutional Council. According to them Justice Rana cannot decide on a case as he is a member of the Council. But the point is - there is no full bench without the Chief Justice presiding over it.

On the issue of dissolution, Article 76 (7) allows the dissolution of the Lower House when no party holds a majority and there is no option for forging a Coalition Government. Oli claims that he had the majority in the House and once that is gone, dissolution is the only way of testing the public confidence by way of fresh elections. What is left unsaid is that no effort was made by the President to look for an alternative arrangement.

The Chinese delegation left Kathmandu after failing to patch up the differences within the top leadership of the Nepal Communist Party. As I have said before it is a great failure of Chinese diplomacy. Unwilling to accept the ground realities they seem to have asked top leader of the NCP who shifts regularly from one group to the other- Bam Dev Gautham to continue with reconciliation efforts between the two groups. Too late and further Bam Dev Gautham is not trusted by either party.

Chinese have invested heavily with the BRI projects and party to party relations in Nepal. On September 26, 2019 the Nepal Communist Party and the Chinese Communist Party International Department team led by Sung Tao organized a joint ideological dialogue on the Xi Jinping’s Thought. A few months later on June 21, 2020 amidst the pandemic, the two parties had a “video discussion” on the same subject. The crowning piece was the visit of Xi Jin Ping himself in October last year when 18 MOUs and 2 Exchange of letters were signed. These were intended to reduce Nepal’s dependence on India!

Not to be outdone, former King Gyanendra issued a statement on the eve of the 299th Anniversary of Prithvi Narayan Shah. He said that his biggest worry was how to keep the country safe in the current situation? He said “Nepalis have felt that untoward incidents are taking place and the country’s history, civilization, culture and national unity are being sabotaged in the name of change according to the will of the

foreign forces. One wonders as to what he meant as Foreign Forces.” Did he talk about India, US or the more active Chinese?

Oli arranged a “Dhothi Rally” on 9th January in the streets of Kathmandu. Volunteers were brought into Kathmandu the previous night and it looked like Oli was trying to show to the rival group that he has the support of the Madhesis. The use of term “Dhothi” was itself unfortunate as it is used in a pejorative sense by the Pahadis mainly in the valley. Who can forget the merciless killing of over 50 persons at the time of agitation of the Madhesis against the 2015 Constitution? Who can forget the betrayal and promise Oli made to amend the constitution to ensure that the Madhesis equal rights, dignity and identity when he had no intention of implementing the promises? He let down the Madhesi leader Upendra Yadav with promise of amendments hoping to buy him off with a Deputy Prime Ministership. The list is endless.

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