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## Nepal: Violent Demonstrations Against Dissolution throughout the Country by Dahal Faction:

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An impressive “Nation wide” protests against dissolution of the House took place on 4th February.

The protests erupted into violence at many places. In Chitwan a large number of vehicles were burnt. Life in Kathmadu came to a standstill. Surprisingly some of the provincial authorities joined the demonstrations. The Chief Minister of Karnal and a few other ministers joined the protestors! Markets remained closed for most of the day at many places.

Surprising that the Police did not open fire which the normally trigger happy Police men would do. But it was not a “Madhesi Protest!”

In the meantime Oli got into another mess by letting the appointees to the Constitutional bodies to take the oath of secrecy without going through the due process of the Parliamentary Hearing Committee endorsing the appointments.

On December 15, recommendations were made for appointments to the Constitutional bodies and the Parliamentary Hearing Committee gets 45 days time to endorse the recommendations. But here, Oli had already killed the Parliamentary Committee by dissolving the House on the 20th of December. In the absence of the Committee’s recommendations, Oli allowed the appointees to take the oath of secrecy just after the expiry of the mandatory 45 day period. One analyst called this move as a Machiavellian fraud on the Constitution. But Oli does not seem to care as he was keen to get two of his men to the important posts of Chief of the anti corruption unit and that of the Election Commission. One analyst commented that Oli by now regards himself as one representing the State and so does not have to bother about the Constitutional validity for his actions.

As expected, two cases have been filed in the Supreme Court and these may take a long time to decide as the Court is busy hearing the Case against dissolution of the House.

32 of the 38 appointees recommended have already taken charge. Here the opposition party- the Nepali Congress is equally guilty and it is suspected that Nepali Congress Chief Deuba was also keen to get his favourites into the Constitutional bodies before the elections if the Court Cases go in favour of Oli!

After hearing the deposition of the petitioners, the Supreme Court began to hear the Case of the Government. It is said that the Attorney General floundered in the first two days of hearing in making out a cogent case for dissolution. He continued to stress that the decision was purely political and is therefore not justiciable by the Court. He could not provide any constitutional provision for the action taken to dissolve the House.

Earlier in his written submission Oli had argued that he had two thirds majority that provided stability and since he lost the support of such a majority he had to go for a fresh mandate. Strangely, Oli's Government had argued that the Constitution of Nepal is not fully based on the Westminster model.

Finally it had to come- as Oli had been going about telling people to prepare for the elections as he was sure to win the case against dissolution. The Supreme Court on the 28th of Jan. summoned Oli in person within seven days with a written response as to why he should not be punished for contempt of Court of an issue that was pending before the Court.

The Court also issued similar notices to 4 former Chief Justices who had issued a statement that the House dissolution was unconstitutional.

Oli appears to have lost the patronage of the Chinese too once he refused to accommodate his rival Dahal and other leaders. It is now learnt that an informal blockade has been going on the two functional trading points- Kodari-Jangmu and Rasuwa Jilong and by China giving the excuse of danger of spread of Wuhan Virus. China has not relented so far to allow the goods stranded on both sides of the border. Many appeals to Beijing from the Nepal Government have remained unanswered.

What surprises me is that the Nepali Press that is so vociferous in condemning Indian actions has so far been silent though some Indian media mentioned this issue! Finally, the Minister in charge of trade has to come out with an open statement on the "informal blockade."

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