

President advises Oli and Dahal to share power

President Bidhya Devi Bhandari today intensified her efforts to effect unification between the CPN-UML and CPN-Maoist Centre suggesting that UML Chair KP Sharma Oli could be the prime minister and CPN-MC Chair Pushpa Kamal Dahal could be the unified party's chairman.

President Bhandari had held a luncheon meeting with Oli and Dahal at Shital Niwas yesterday which lasted for five hours where she said that Oli could be the prime minister and Dahal the unified party's chairperson, said left alliance sources.

Oli and Dahal are under intense pressure to take a decision on who will get the posts of president, vice-president, prime minister, speaker, deputy speaker and chairperson of the unified party as the date for formation of the new government nears.

As per sources, President Bhandari told the two leaders that the unified party could synthesise UML's multi-party people's democracy and the CPN-MC's People's Republic in the new party's ideology.

According to a source, President Bhandari told the two leaders that people had already endorsed the UML and CPN-MC's unification process and left alliance leaders should keep in mind the people's verdict.

President Bhandari also showed keen interest to become the president again during the meeting. She was elected president two years ago in 2015 after the new constitution was promulgated.

Vice-president Nanda Bahadur Pun has also shown keen interest to become the vice-president again. He had gone to meet Oli at his residence in Balkot, Bhaktapur recently. President Bhandari had hosted a dinner party for Dahal's family last month.

Dahal has been saying that Oli can choose the post he wants, but Oli has not said anything about what post he would offer to Dahal. Oli and Dahal had told the president that they would hold meetings to narrow down differences.

Sources said Oli and Dahal had reached understanding that they would resolve all issues before formation of the government, but announce the parties' unification after formation of the government.

"If the two posts — prime minister and the party's chair — are divided between the two leaders, it will give positive message to the cadres and leaders," Chairman of All Nepal National Independent students Union-Revolutionary Ranjit Tamang quoted Dahal as telling the party's sister wing leaders today.

"The president has been suggesting that we share the post of prime minister and chairman of the unified party," Tamang quoted Dahal as saying. According to him, Oli and Dahal have been discussing issues of ideology, organisational structure and leaders' roles and responsibilities and they will reach understanding on these issues by the second week of February.

Dahal has said that anti-unity national and international forces are trying to prevent party unification and that they had tried to play with him earlier and they were now trying to play with Oli.

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“There is common understanding between Oli and Dahal that roles and responsibilities should be as before as both are leaders committed to adopting the people’s verdict and preventing anti-unity forces,” Tamang quoted Dahal as saying.

Dahal has said it will be better to finalise unity before forming government as that will make the party and the government stronger. If this is not possible then government formation and party unification should go simultaneously, according to a student leader. Oli and Dahal plan to make 500,000 people participate in the party unification announcement programme in Kathmandu to make it a historic moment.

Source: The Himalayan Times, 4th February 2018