

‘Left to remain intact regardless of unity talks outcome’

The alliance between the CPN-UML and CPN (Maoist Center) would remain intact even if the current efforts to unify the two parties before the formation of the new government failed to materialize.

Leaders said that the two parties are working to seal a power-sharing deal for the new government regardless of how the ongoing talks on the planned merger turn out.

“Since party merger and power-sharing are two different things, we are dealing with them separately. Our focus would be to finalize both issues together. But delay in party unification will not affect the power-sharing talks,” said CPN (Maoist Center) spokesperson Pampha Bhusal. UML and Maoist Center have already forged a deal to form a coalition government in six of the seven provinces, while efforts are underway to determine the share of power in the new government and key constitutional bodies.

Remarks by the left leaders come at a time when the planned unification between the UML and the Maoist Center is failing to get expected success. The talks came to a sudden halt after differences cropped up over the leadership, organization and management of senior leaders, according to leaders privy to the ongoing development.

After multiple unsuccessful attempts, a joint taskforce comprising UML and Maoist Center leaders has entrusted the top leaders to settle the contention over party unification.

One key difference is over leadership of the new party. Maoist Center has said the party leadership should be rotated together with premiership. UML has shown willingness to rotate the government leadership but has maintained that the issue of leadership of the unified party is non-negotiable. UML leaders have offered to create a special portfolio for Maoist Center Chairman Dahal which would be the second highest position in the party structure, a proposal rejected by the former rebel party.

‘Left to remain intact regardless of unity talks outcome’

Despite little progress in talks, leaders from both sides remain hopeful of a merger. Last week, Maoist Center Chairman Dahal said that the merger would take place within the next few weeks. Leaders ruled out the possibility of a merger before the formation of the new government but said that there is still enough room for consensus.

UML Vice Chairman Bamdev Gautam, a key architect of the left unity, said that the merger will take place as planned unless the ongoing process flounders.

“We were able to come to this point after spending a lot of time and efforts. If the unification fails now, everything will go to waste. It will take many years to realize the dream of communist unity,” Gautam said while addressing a function in the capital on Saturday.

“The merger of two parties is not as simple as some of us think. Leaders from both parties are trying to forge a deal. I remain extremely hopeful that the merger will take place,” said.

Source: My Republica, 5th February 2018