

Uncertainty remains over formation of a new govt



Uncertainty continues over the formation of a new government as incumbent Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba appears determined to stay in office at least until the election of the upper house of parliament.

A coalition of leftist parties is expected to form the new government following their historic win in the parliamentary and provincial assembly elections. But it is still unclear when this will happen.

The ruling Nepali Congress (NC) has said that the transfer of power would take place after the election of the upper house, now scheduled for February 7. The government has also announced that it is going to fix the interim capitals of the seven provinces and appoint the provincial governors before it steps down.

Once the date for the National Assembly election was announced, many had hoped that would pave the way for the formation of a new government before the end of February. But the ongoing delay in announcing the provincial capitals and governors has raised fresh doubts over the government's intentions.

"The government is citing one excuse after another to remain in office. It is undermining the people's verdict," said Maoist spokesperson Pampha Bhusal.

Despite its announcement that it was to appoint the governors last week, it has not done so, citing a lack of political consensus. NC leaders said that the government is seeking a guarantee that the newly appointed heads of provinces would not be sent packing after the formation of the new government at the center. Some UML leaders have said that they will replace the governors with new faces.

Prime Minister Deuba on Sunday said that he would hand over the government once the necessary procedures and steps are completed. He said he is in talks with leaders of the major parties to sort out differences over the choice of governors and interim capitals and that he would hand over the reins of government once the election results are out in full.

The Election Commission has not yet released the proportional representation results for the parliamentary polls.

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Even as some remain doubtful, some others have expressed hope that the government would hand over power after the completion of the National Assembly elections.

"There should be a new government in the country within one month," UML senior leader Jhal Nath Khanal said while addressing a function on Monday.

Notwithstanding all the hue and cry however, this is not the first time an outgoing government has delayed the handover of power. Past governments including the ones led by the late Girja Prasad Koirala, Madhav Kumar Nepal and KP Sharma Oli had clung to office even weeks after they had lost the popular mandate.

Source: My Republica, 16th January 2018