

THE RISING NEPAL

ALL BE HAPPY, ALL BE WELL

PM stresses orgwanised action to make federalism successful



Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' addressing the Inter-Provincial Chief Ministerial meeting organised in Pokhara of Kaski district on Friday.

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, June 30

Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' has called upon the Chief Ministers of all seven provinces to take prompt and organised action for the implementation of federalism.

Addressing the Inter-Provincial Chief Ministerial meeting in Pokhara on Friday, the Prime Minister acknowledged the challenges associated with the transition from a unitary state system to a federal governance system while ensuring smooth operations based on the principles of cooperation, coexistence, and coordination outlined in the constitution.

The Prime Minister highlighted the gradual institutionalisation of the federal democratic republican system,

attributing it to the active roles played by elected representatives at all levels of government in fulfilling the aspirations of the people and effectively utilising the limited resources for development initiatives.

He also mentioned the notable achievements made in the nearly seven years since the promulgation of the Constitution.

"Successful elections at all three levels of government were conducted, all seven provinces have been named and their capitals have been designated. The government has made progress in organising financial transfers at the provincial and local levels based on the recommendations of the National Natural Resources and Finance Commission," he said.

Additionally, 89 laws pertaining to federalism implementation have been passed, and amendments were made

to 165 laws. Ongoing efforts to draft important laws further strengthen the system, the Prime Minister said.

The Prime Minister highlighted that the Federation, Province, and Local Level (Coordination and Inter-relationship) Act-2022 is being implemented to ensure effective coordination among the three levels of government.

As per the provisions of this Act, coordination structures have been activated to facilitate smooth functioning and collaboration, he added.

He also mentioned that regular discussions and interactions are being held at the Prime Ministerial level with the chief ministers, and a system has been developed for conducting meetings of the National Development Problem Solving Committee.

Prime Minister Prachanda emphasised that with the institutionalisation of the system and the end of the

political transition, no one has the freedom to hinder economic and social development in the name of transition.

He acknowledged the prolonged period of political transition in Nepal, which overshadowed the agenda of the country's economic and social development.

"However, with the completion of elections at all levels, the political transition has come to an end. The collective aim now is to build a better Nepal by prioritising good governance and development. Coordination and cooperation between the three levels of government are essential for achieving this goal," he added.

This goal could not be achieved without coordination and cooperation between the three levels of government, he added.

"We must work to accomplish

'Govt doesn't look profile while taking steps against corruption'

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, June 30

Minister for Communication and Information Technology Rekha Sharma has said that the government will not look into the profile, position, designation and gender of any person while trying to maintain good governance by controlling corruption.

Minister Sharma, who is also the government spokesperson, made this remark while speaking at a press conference organised to make the Cabinet decisions public at the ministry on Friday.

"The government is fully committed to quality service delivery and maintaining the rule of law," Minister Sharma said.

The government has proceeded according to the law to control corruption and the investigation agencies are also doing their job according to the law, Minister Sharma added.

In another context, Minister Sharma said that the federal government was coordinating with the provincial government to normalise the situation in Koshi Province after some ethnic groups took to the street protesting against the naming of the province.

"Although every citizen has the right to hold assemblies and protest, Minister Sharma urged the protesting groups to make their movement civilised and peaceful.

The right to name the province solely lies with the authority of the concerned province, the federal government would like to urge the protesting groups to start lobbying the provincial government and sit for a dialogue to reach a consensus on the issue, Minister Sharma said.

Various Cabinet decisions

Although the cabinet meeting held on June 27 decided to form a delegation team led by Vice-Chairman of the National Planning Commission Dr. Min Bahadur Shrestha to take part in the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development to be held by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations in New York, USA.



CABINET DECISIONS

Likewise, the Cabinet endorsed the visit of Vice-Chairman of the National Planning Commission Dr. Shrestha to take part in the Forum on Global Action for Shared Development to be held in Beijing from July 9 to 10.

Similarly, the Cabinet meeting allowed the Minister for Energy, Water Resource and Irrigation to take part in the 5th Regional Committee meeting of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) to be held in Abu Dhabi of the United Arab Emirates from July 24 to 26.

Similarly, the government has given approval in principle to the Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport to draft a new law according to the bill prepared for new Public Roads by amending the previous Public Roads Act-1973. The government has also endorsed Motor Vehicle and Transport Management Regulation 1997 (9th Amendment) after its endorsement from the Bill Committee of the Cabinet.

Foreign Minister to visit Baku

Meanwhile, the government has approved the visit of Minister for Foreign Affairs N.P. Soud to Baku, Azerbaijan, to participate in the ministerial level meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), a forum of 120 countries that are not formally aligned with or against any major power block, to be held from July 6 to 8.

Further, the Cabinet meeting endorsed the visit of Minister for Federal Affairs and General Administration Amanul Haq to Busan of South Korea to take part in the Global South-United Nations Ministerial Meeting to be held there from July 5 to 7.

Poor revenue poses challenges to public fiscal management

BY MOONDHAKHAL
Kathmandu, June 30

Although government expenditure has caught a worse trajectory for the last three years registering poor yet identical achievements, income has been severely disturbed in the current fiscal year. The government could achieve only 48 per cent of its income target by Thursday, June 29, according to the Financial Comptroller General Office (FCGO). Through the budget of the

current fiscal year 2022/23, the government had announced to raise a total revenue (including non-tax income) of Rs. 1,516.6 billion but it could collect only Rs. 892.7 billion.

This poor revenue performance has a detrimental impact on the overall budget performance as the public expenditure in the same period has reached Rs. 1,229.8 billion creating a gap of Rs. 330.1 billion which has posed a threat to the government to manage its operations for the remaining period of the current fiscal year.

The challenge is likely to be

aggravated further with the clearance of the dues to the contractors involved in the public construction and development works. According to the Federation of Contractors' Association of Nepal (FCAN), the government has a liability of about Rs. 50 billion to the contractors.

FCAN's President Rabi Singh said that only Rs. 20 billion has been paid to the contractors in the past couple of months. According to him, the government agencies have cited the lack of funds as the main obstruction to clearing the contractor's bills.

Poor fiscal management

The FCGO statistics showed that revenue mobilisation has remained the poorest this year compared to the past few years. This is worse even compared with the FY 2020/21, and FY 2021/22, the years when the business and economic activities were severely disturbed by the Coronavirus pandemic.

In the last FY 2021/22, the government collected Rs. 1,025.5 billion in revenue by the end of the second week of the last month of the fiscal which was 82.67 per cent of the total annual target of Rs. 1,240.5 billion.

Koshi CM Hikmat Karki loses trust motion

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Biratnagar, June 30

The CPN (UML)-led government of Koshi Province collapsed after 174 days on Friday after Chief Minister Hikmat Kumar Karki failed to win a vote of confidence in the Provincial Assembly (PA).

Chief Minister Karki needed at least 47 votes in the PA to stay in office. However, only 45 assembly members voted in favour of his confidence motion, 43 voted against it.

The PA has 90 members, of whom 89 were present in Friday's meeting. Among those absent were Nirmala Tawa Limbu of Janata Samajwadi Party-Nepal (JSP-N), Narayan Burj Magar of CPN (Maoist Centre) and Mamata Tamang of the Nepali Congress.

With this loss of confidence, Karki has been relieved of his post. The ousting of Karki has collapsed the last UML-headed provincial government of the country.

Karki was forced to seek a confidence vote after his coalition partner JSP-N withdrew its support for his government.

Mutual concerns be taken into account for expanding bilateral ties: DPM Shrestha

RSS
Chengdu (China), June 30

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Home Affairs Narayan Kaji Shrestha asserted that the special attention should be paid to matters of bilateral interest so as to further strengthen Nepal-China relations. DPM Shrestha, who is currently in Chengdu in China under his five-day official visit, said so delivering his remarks in a programme organized by Sichuan University today.

Stressing on 6 Cs namely critical thinking, creativity, credible policies and actions, commitment and collaborative approaches among others to make Nepal-China relations further deeper in the years to come, Shrestha viewed that Nepal-China relations demanded more vibrant, result-oriented and pragmatic cooperation to further vitalize the synergy between the two countries.



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Home Affairs Narayan Kaji Shrestha presenting a souvenir to Guo Lin, General-Secretary of Communist Party of China, Sichuan University Committee at Sichuan University, Chengdu of China on Friday.

DPM Shrestha, who arrived in Chengdu on last Wednesday leading

Rise of voluntary childlessness poses a demographic challenge in Switzerland

BY MANJUMA DHAKAL
Bern (Switzerland), June 30

In Nepali society, there is a general assumption that couples must have children after marriage. Due to societal pressure couples seek different medical treatments if they are unable to conceive naturally. Being childless or declaring that one doesn't want children is very rare in Nepal. However, in another part of the world, Switzerland, the younger generation is increasingly choosing voluntary childlessness, sparking discussions about demographic challenges.

The desire among young people in Switzerland to remain childless (or child-free as some would call it) has grown significantly, prompting debates about the potential consequences of this decision. Some Swiss women are even expressing their intentions to be child-free as early as their teens.

One such woman is Celine Rohrer, a 27-year-old Swiss citizen who has been

in a relationship with her partner for a decade. Celine made the decision not to have children when she was just 12 years old due to the fear of the physical changes pregnancy brings. Celine and her partner have firmly decided to prioritise living a fulfilling life rather than being consumed by family responsibilities.

Similarly, 33-year-old Jessica Thomet, who married a divorced man six years ago, has chosen not to have children as her husband already has two from his previous marriage. Jessica considers her pet dog as her child and believes that concerns about the declining population should not be a priority, given the global issue of overpopulation.

Elise Dottrens, a journalist in Switzerland, has also decided to remain childless due to concerns that becoming a mother would hinder her professional career.

Many Swiss women are now announcing their decision to be child-free. According to the 2018 Families and Generations Survey by the Federal Statistical Office of Switzerland, 24.8 per cent of men and



Embracing Choice: Celine Rohrer (27) on the right and Jessica Thomet (33) with her pet dog on the left, proudly celebrate their decision of voluntary childlessness during a candid interview.

20.7 per cent of women between the ages of 30 and 80 have neither biological nor adopted children. Another survey conducted by the same office in 2018 revealed that 8 per cent of men and 7 per cent of women aged 20-29 do not want children, along with 17.4 per cent of men and 26.4 per cent of women aged 30-39, and 68.6 per cent of men and 88.3 per cent of women aged 40-49.

The latest data on the fertility rate indicates that Swiss women are more likely to choose voluntary childlessness compared to foreign-born women residing in Switzerland. The 2021 survey by the Federal Statistical Office shows that the overall fertility rate in Switzerland is 1.32. For Swiss women, it is only 1.42, whereas foreign-born women in Switzerland have a fertility rate of 1.70.

Stakeholders have initiated discussions on the implications of this trend in the future.

However, Celine and Jessica find solace in their decision to remain childless as they believe that Switzerland's social security system provides ample

'BALANCED AND OBJECTIVE NEWS SHOULD BE PRIORITISED'

BY BIJAYA KUMAR SAH
Dhokar, June 30

Bharat Prasad Sah, former Minister for Home Affairs and Communications of the Madhes Province Government and Member of the Provincial Assembly has said that journalists should offer balanced and objective news.

Speaking at the closing programme of the two-day orientation for Gorkhapatra journalists in Madhes Province, organised by the Mass Media Authority of Madhes Province and coordinated by the Gorkhapatra Corporation at Lalagali in Dhanusha on Friday, Sah highlighted the significant role played by Gorkhapatra in the glorious history of Nepal and urged its journalists to give continuity to that.

Former Minister Sah expressed concerns over the current focus on negative aspects, with less attention to the positive works carried out by the federal government, provincial government, and local government. He urged journalists to fulfil their role in addressing this imbalance.

SHOW CAUSE NOTICE ON LALITA NIWAS LAND SCAM

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, June 30

The Supreme Court has issued a show cause notice in the name of the government in the writ petition filed by those arrested in the Lalita Niwas land case.

A single bench of Justice Dr. Kumar Chudal issued the notice. The Supreme Court has given this order in the writ of habeas corpus filed by the three out of four persons arrested in the land scam case.

The SC has also ordered government to submit the reasons along with proofs and documents within 24 hours through the Office of Attorney General.



RISKY JOURNEY: People crossing a bamboo made temporary bridge over Heva Khola River in Panchthar as the concrete bridge over the river was swept away by the swollen river due to monsoon rains.

Photo: RSS

NC ensures participation of Aadiwasi Janajatis in all state organs: Deuba

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, June 30

Nepali Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba has said that his party will engage in assuring the participation of Aadiwasi Janajatis in each and every organ of the state.

Speaking at Nepal Democratic Aadiwasi Janajati Federation's training programme that kicked off on Friday at the party's central office, Sanepa, Lalitpur, he said the party has strongly raised the issues of inclusiveness for a long.

He also inaugurated the training programme.

Deuba said his party was seriously taking the participation of Janajatis in each and every state organ.

He said that the country would be benefited and tourism would expand from the preservation of the languages and cultures of Aadiwasi Janajatis.

NC vice-president and Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Dhan Raj Gurung said that the government would not back from its mission of freeing the country from corruption and would continue opening one corruption file after another.

He said the anti-corruption move

would not weaken the government even though some persons were spreading rumours that the anti-corruption acts would lead to the collapse of the government.

NC leader Bhismaraj Anglambe suggested that one of the vice presidents should have managed the party instead of both becoming ministers.

He said it seemed that staffers were running the party's Central Working Committee. Meanwhile, NC leader Arjun Narasingh KC said that the NC should move forward correcting itself.

He urged journalists to write against wrongdoing in the party that would help correct the party itself.

Speaking at the office assuming programme of the newly elected committee of the Nepal Press Union, Valley and Corporate Province Committee on Friday, KC said the NC should correct its working style and thought.

NC Central Working Committee member Ajay Babu Siwakoti said the party was not holding its CWC meeting for long although the party statute has provisioned that the meeting should be convened every two months.

"It has sent a bad message to people," he said. CWC member Prakash Srehi said that he was worried whether his four-year tenure would conclude without attending a CWC meeting.

Rise of voluntary childlessness poses...

support for older individuals. With confidence in the country's well-established benefits, they feel assured that paying taxes now will ensure a secure future in their old age.

Jessica blamed the government for promoting childbirth to increase future tax revenue. In response, a spokesperson for the Federal Social Insurance Office stated via email that while the birth rate does play a role in pension finances, it is not the sole determining factor due to dynamic changes caused by migration movements that impact cohort size beyond fertility and mortality rates.

Dr. Valerie-Anne Ryser, a senior researcher at the Swiss Centre for Expertise in Social Sciences (FORES), explained that women often chose to be childless due to strained relationships with their partners, a desire to pursue creative and personal endeavours, and even a sense of disillusionment with society. Concerns about climate change and ecological anxiety, such as water scarcity for future generations, also contribute to the decision.

The strong perception of the overwhelming responsibility of parenthood

in Swiss society has led some couples to remain childless. While the overall rate of women choosing not to have children is 20 per cent, it rises to 30 per cent among highly educated women. The researcher emphasizes that the various reasons for not having children are individual psychological perceptions specific to Swiss society. Additionally, Switzerland's traditional family model, where women often work part-time and shoulder most of the childcare responsibilities, differs from other European countries and can discourage women from starting families.

Dr. Valerie-Anne suggests that the Swiss government should introduce schemes like parental leave if they genuinely aim to address the demographic challenges posed by voluntary childlessness.

Meanwhile, the government encourages respect for individual choices regarding family planning and refrains from passing judgment on this matter.

So, finding a balance between societal expectations and individual autonomy remains a complex issue in the context of evolving social dynamics and changing demographics.

PM stresses prompt, organised...

these tasks by maximising available resources," he said.

He also expressed the government's commitment to reviewing the work detail report through its policy and programmes for the next fiscal year, incorporating recommendations and suggestions from provincial and local governments.

The Prime Minister emphasised that once work details had been clarified, the organisational structure and institutional arrangements would be adjusted accordingly, eliminating any duplication of tasks.

He also highlighted the government's priority in developing crucial laws, including the Federal Civil Act and the Federal Education Act, to facilitate the effective implementation of federalism. He also highlighted significant accomplishments made by his government in the six months since its formation in December last year.

"With as strong will, honest efforts, and proactive initiatives, any challenge can be transformed into an opportunity for progress and success," he claimed.

"The duration of six months is insufficient for a comprehensive evaluation of the government's performance. However, significant strides have been made in promoting social justice, fostering governance, and advancing prosperity within the period," he said.

The Prime Minister noted positive improvements in macroeconomic indicators, including a substantial rise in remittances, increased tourist arrivals, a favourable business environment achieved through reduced bank interest rates, long-term initiatives to address microfinance and cooperative issues, and a qualitative boost in foreign exchange reserves.

He said the government's endeavours to combat corruption and promote good governance had sparked a renewed sense of hope among the general public.

The Prime Minister emphasised the importance of this gathering, the second of its kind since the Constitution was promulgated, in strengthening the federal democratic republic and fostering inter-provincial relationships.

The conference concluded in the evening by issuing a 17-point Pokhara declaration. Addressing the concluding ceremony, the PM said the federal government would seriously discuss the common conclusions of the conference.

He also admitted the delay in formulating the required laws for the effective implementation of federalism. The Declaration has stressed the need for addressing the policy, legal and practical issues.

Poor revenue poses challenges to...

Likewise, in 2020/21, the collections were Rs. 82.45 per cent - Rs. 883.1 billion of the annual estimate of Rs. 1072.2 billion.

Seizing the inability to meet the annual revenue target, the government had revised the revenue estimates by 11.29 per cent of the total target of Rs. 1403.1 billion to Rs. 1244.7 billion this year. Economists and financial experts said that the poor revenue mobilisation was the result of poor fiscal management and authorities' failure to gauge the impact of internal and external factors.

Former member of the National Planning Commission, Dr. Dilli Raj Khanal, who also led Public Expenditure Review Commission, said that the worse scenario in the revenue sector was the result of multiple factors like import restrictions, tight monetary policy, high inflation and shrinkage in industrial production.

Owing to the depleting foreign currency reserves during the economic boom in the recovery period after the

pandemic, the government imposed a moratorium on the import of luxury vehicles, liquors and other items and imposed a provision of maintaining each margin while opening letters of credit for dozens of items.

Likewise, tight monetary policy and the tough stance of the government on real estate caused a debacle in multiple areas. Meanwhile, the Russian invasion of Ukraine further disturbed the international supply chains affected by COVID-19 and sent the price of goods up.

Similarly, high inflation decreased the demand and industrial production reached a record low with large industries operating at 30-40 per cent of their capacity. "In addition to these, the black economy flourished during the difficult period this year. The perpetrators of the black economy are trying to influence the government to wash their wealth," said Dr. Khanal.

He maintained that the government announced an 'unnecessarily large' budget and revenue target for this year. Capital expenses remain low

The government has mobilised only 43.46 per cent of the capital budget so far. With only 17 days remaining to conclude the current FY, it has a burden to spend Rs. 148.5 billion - the size adjusted during the mid-term review of the budget in February this year.

During the mid-term review of the budget for the current FY 2022/23, then Finance Minister Bishnu Prasad Paudel lowered the budget by 14 per cent to Rs. 154.96 billion.

The recurrent budget was brought down to Rs. 102.9 billion (66.37 per cent) from earlier Rs. 118.2 billion and capital allocation of Rs. 380.3 billion was revised to be Rs. 313.8 billion which is 82.51 per cent of the earlier allocation.

The capital expenditure was 39.76 per cent of the annual target last year and 45.18 per cent two years earlier. However, total expenses have reached 68.56 per cent which is higher than the previous two years - 67.65 per cent in 2020/21 and 66.07 per cent in 2020/21.

Mutual concerns be taken into account...

a seven-member delegation, further opined, "Nepal-China relations are enriched with a plethora of instances of historical and civilizational links as well as the foresight and visions of our leaders. Yet, much is to be done."

He argued, "To elevate our relations to a new stage, we can lay due emphasis on comprehensive development partnership, connectivity, commerce and investment, cultural exchange, cultural exchanges and collaboration in community level and other bilateral issues among others for shared prosperity."

Despite attaching high priority and emphasis on economic development, he said, Nepal had been facing difficulties in poverty alleviation and economic development due to lack of enough resources and quality infrastructures.

He, thus, sought China's more support in the areas of agriculture, industries, and physical infrastructures among others.

Stating that Nepal had a huge potential for hydropower, DPM Shrestha indicated towards possibility of Nepal exporting hydropower energy to China. "For this, China can make investments in Nepal for generating hydropower electricity and import it by creating proper infrastructures like cross-border transmission lines."

According to him, Nepal-China relations were not only linked by common mountains and rivers but also by

shared cultures and ethos of life. Thus he suggested that in order to revive and give further impetus to cultural relations between the two countries at people-to-people level, two countries could encourage each other's citizens to learn others' languages, political and social system, lifestyles, cultures and arts among others.

DPM Shrestha expressed his confidence that religious tourism could be promoted between the two countries since the people of both countries had high regard for Lord Buddha's teaching and philosophies and Nepal being the birthplace of Lord Buddha.

He recalled how the two countries maintained trade relations in the historic era by establishing the Consulate General of Nepal in Lhasa before Nepal and China established diplomatic relations in 1955.

"China is the second largest trading partner of Nepal accounting for more than 14 per cent of its total trade. China has become the largest FDI provider to Nepal," shared the DPM, indicating towards the immense potential for two countries to deepen its cooperation in trade and investment.

Stressing on enhanced level of connectivity between the two countries, he urged the Chinese side to consider operation of commercial flights to Pokhara and Bhatbhatara.

Expressing his happiness over Sichuan Airlines conducting maiden

international commercial flight in Pokhara International Airport last week, he said, "We have duly emphasized the need to air connectivity between the Kathmandu and different cities in China, apart from Beijing, Chengdu and Guangzhou. We are confident that there would be regular commercial flights between Pokhara and Chengdu."

Recalling that the Nepal and China had focused on trans-Himalayan multifaceted connectivity under the Belt and Road Initiatives (BRI), Shrestha asserted, "We have focused on railways, highways, airways, transmission lines, ports and all other types of communication networks between the two countries."

On a different note, the DPM said that both countries had deep faith in the principles of peaceful co-existence and principles of non-interference in each other's internal matters, he said, "Our two countries respect each other's sovereignty, territorial integrity and national independence."

He reaffirmed Nepal's commitment towards China's One-China policy and maintained that Nepal had been exercising the policy of not allowing its soil to be used against our neighbours.

Towards the end of his speech, DPM Shrestha reaffirmed Nepal's willingness to cooperate with China for a common prosperity and better shared future.

PM VISITS BIRTHPLACE IN ANNAPURNA OF KASKI DISTRICT

RSS
Kaski, June 30

Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' on Friday visited Lewade in Kaski where he was born on December 11, 1964. The Prime Minister who landed in Pokhara in the morning to attend the Inter Province Meeting, 2000 BS and a meeting of the National Coordination Council, managed time to reach Lewade first time since assuming the office three time last December.

According to Annapurna Rural Municipality-2 Chair Pitambar Bhandari, during the interaction with locals, the head of the government enquired about the development of Mahendra Basic School from where Dahal completed his primary education and the overall development of the village.

During the visit, the Prime Minister was concerned about the development of Lewade and adjoining areas.

According to Annapurna Rural Municipality-2 Chair Pitambar Bhandari, during the interaction with locals, the head of the government enquired about the development of Mahendra Basic School from where Dahal completed his primary education and the overall development of the village. He said, locals were elated to see the Prime Minister together with them. The interaction with him centered on the education, health and roadway development of the village.

On the occasion, the Prime Minister was also acquisitive of the overall situation of the village, crops farming and the weather. The ward chair urged the Prime Minister to assist in upgrading the roadway connecting Nagdaha to Pokhara via Fame. The Prime Minister also interacted with the people of Hemja concentrating on the needs of locals.

Koshi CM...

However, even though the Karki government has fallen, it is not clear what the next government of Koshi Province will be like. Since the PSP has remained neutral for now, the opposition alliance only has 46 PA members with it. So, it has to get at least one more member on its side to have a majority in the assembly and be able to form a new government.

The PSP-N has demanded that the province's name 'Koshi' be reconsidered and has put it forward a condition to obtain its support for government formation. The opposition is planning to bring JSP-N on board, and also get back from the Rastriya Prajatantra Party, and seek to form the next provincial government.

"A process has ended today. Now the opposition parties will take the initiative to form a new government," said Indra Bahadur Amge, leader of the Maoist's parliamentary party in the PA. He also expressed his confidence that Province Chief Parshuram Khapang would invite the parties to submit claims for the provincial government in line with Article 188(2) of the Constitution of Nepal. "The possibility of forming a coalition government with the support of two or more parties is still alive," he said.

But, UML has stated that there is no possibility of forming a majority government and has called on the Province Chief to appoint the leader of the largest party in the PA as the chief minister. Immediately after his unsuccessful confidence vote, Chief Minister Karki, with other UML leaders, met Province Chief Khapang and requested him to form a provincial government as per Clause 3 of Article 188 of the constitution.

"That clause states, 'In cases where the Chief Minister cannot be appointed under clause (2) no later than 90 days after the date of declaration of the final results of the election to the Provincial Assembly or the Chief Minister so appointed fails to secure a vote of confidence, the Province Chief shall appoint as the Chief Minister the parliamentary party leader of the party which has the highest number of seats in the Provincial Assembly.'"

UML argues that the opposition coalition cannot include the Speaker of the PA as a 'seat holder' to prevent their claim for a majority government in the province. "We have told the Province Chief that it is not possible to include the Speaker in the calculations for government formation," Rewati Raman Bhandari, UML's chief whip, told *The Rising Nepal*, adding that Ch. Khapang did not present any responses to the party's requests.