

Sushil Koirala resigns as Nepal PM, Parliament to elect new premier

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Kathmandu: Nepal Prime Minister Sushil Koirala today resigned even as Parliament prepares to elect a new premier tomorrow after parties failed to forge a consensus amid continued protests and blockade of a key border trade point with India over the country's new Constitution.

Koirala submitted his resignation to President Ram Baran Yadav who accepted it and asked him to conduct daily administrative functions till a new government is formed.

As Parliament is all set to vote to elect the new premier tomorrow, Koirala's resignation is just a formality as he himself is in the race to become prime minister again.

Koirala has filed his candidacy for the premiership from his Nepali Congress (NC) party. He is running against CPN-UML Chairman K P Sharma Oli.

Both Koirala and Oli filed their nomination papers. Former prime minister and senior NC leader Sher Bahadur Deuba proposed Koirala's name.

Oli's name was proposed by Unified CPN-Maoist chairman Prachanda and seconded by Rastriya Prajatantra Party chairman Kamal Thapa.

Oli is seen as the frontrunner to become prime minister with a majority as more than a dozen parties including Prachanda's UCPN-Maoist have extended support to him.

After filing his nomination papers, Koirala said that he had decided to contest the election on his party's directive.

He said he would pursue the politics of cooperation and collaboration whether he wins or loses the election.

The election of the prime minister comes even as the new Constitution, which was unveiled on September 20 after seven years of negotiations, is being opposed by Madhesi groups.

Yesterday, Nepal formed a three-member team headed by the Foreign Minister to ease a diplomatic standoff with India over the supply of essential goods, including petroleum products, which has been hit due to blockade of trade points with India by Madhesi people protesting against the new Constitution.

The agitating Madhesi Front claims that the Constitution does not guarantee enough rights and representation to the Madhesi and Tharu communities residing in southern Nepal.

Madhesis are Indian-origin inhabitants of the Terai region bordering India who are opposed to splitting Nepal into seven provinces.

They are against splitting Nepal into seven provinces.

The continued blockade of border trade points with India has halted the supply of essential goods from India.

At least 40 people have died in over a month of clashes between police and protesters from the Madhesi and Tharu

communities and ethnic minorities.

- PTI