

## **Nepal government in minority after Prachanda's party withdraws support**

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**Kathmandu:** Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda'-led CPN (Maoist Centre), a key coalition partner in Nepal's government, today withdrew its support, reducing KP Sharma Oli government to a minority.

### **KP Sharma Oli**

The decision to withdraw support to the barely nine-month-old Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxists-Leninists) -led government, which came to power shortly after the adoption of a new Constitution, was taken at a meeting of the party's senior leaders.

"I have decided to withdraw support from the government," Dahal in a statement later, accusing the PM of failing to honor past agreements.

Dahal said the party decision has been conveyed to President Bidhya Devi Bhandari, Prime Minister Oli and Pratinidhi Sabha (Lower House of the Nepali Parliament) Speaker Onsari Gharti. But an official said the politically unstable nation's leader would not immediately resign.

While receiving the letter of withdrawal of support, Prime Minister Oli congratulated Dahal for "the new government", sources said conjecturing that the comment was perhaps made in a sarcastic vein.

The rift between Pushpa Kamal Dahal's CPN (Maoist Centre) and Oli's CPN(UML) has been growing since May when the Maoists found support in the country's main Opposition, Nepali Congress. Dahal had then asked Oli to join the government under his leadership.

However, a day later, Dahal changed his mind and decided not to break the "Left-led and Left-dominated government" thus giving Oli "a reasonable amount of time to quit with dignity" and subsequently support Dahal as his successor.

With political parties now engaged in talks to form a new alliance, the developments were being keenly watched by observers as the decision to withdraw support to the incumbent government by CPN (Maoist Centre) was ostensibly to clear the path for the formation of a consensus government in the country.

Prachanda, in his abortive May 5 quit-notice to the Oli government, had also won the support of the United Democratic Madhesi Front (UDMF) that had launched a five-month-long protest movement against the Oli government after the promulgation of the Constitution on September 20 last year.

In case Oli decides to resign, it will pave the way for Prachanda's return as Prime Minister, seven years after he quit following the President's "veto" upsetting his decision to sack then Nepal Army chief Rukmangud Katawal.

- With IANS Inputs