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It is generally believed both inside Bhutan and outside that Indian action in withdrawing subsidies at the crucial moment was responsible for the change of regime that was unexpected. This may not be true but this perception is widespread.

This view is also strengthened by the fact that as soon as PDP won, India with alacrity restored the subsidy on gas and kerosene, excise refund regime and declared that the Chuka tariff will not be changed. This was done without any explanation either and one wonders why it was necessary at all for India to take such drastic steps in the first instance at a time when the country was poised to go through the second general elections.

The restoration of subsidies was soon followed by a visit of the Indian National Security Adviser with the Foreign Secretary in tow, assuring the new regime of Indian assistance to the 11th plan.

I find it still difficult otherwise to believe that the PDP could have won so overwhelmingly in the final round with 32 seats while in the preliminary round it lost convincingly to the DPT. But there have been no major complaints in the mode of elections and the transfer of power to the PDP has been smooth. As I had said earlier, it does not matter whether the DPT or the PDP had won -for there is not going to be any major change in the policy. What is important to see is that the people and democracy have won.

The media in Bhutan is full of stories of how the individuals fared in the elections and why the results went in favour of one or the other.

Some analysts believe that the social media had played a major role in PDP's success and that the DPT realised this too late in the

electioneering campaign. It is believed that the PDP contacted every postal voter individually, which the DPT did not do. It is seen that the overall turnout for the final round was 66 percent against 55.2 percent earlier. It is said that this with the addition of individuals of the two other political parties not contesting this time to the PDP could have made the difference. It could be a reason but it does not tell the whole story.

There was a firm commitment from India for the new regime. The Indian Prime minister in his message reiterated India's undiminished commitment to Bhutan in preserving their unique and special traditional ties and that India would remain sensitive to Bhutan's interests.

There was an invitation to the new Prime Minister Tobgay to visit India and this was accepted.

A cabinet with ten members was sworn in on 27th July and it has for the first time in the history of Bhutan a woman cabinet minister. Of the ten ministers, four are from the east, three are from south, one from the central region and two from the west. A larger representation for the east was one promised by the PDP during the elections.

The immediate task for the new regime would be to revive the economy. An economic stimulus is required and more important, the ever worrying rupee shortage will have to be addressed. Another pending issue would be the fine tuning of the 11th plan and this may not be difficult once Indian assurance has been given.

Before and during elections, there have been many election promises and the new PM will be hard pressed in getting them through within the first hundred days as promised. These have been listed by the media itself very accurately. The list is long and some would require more detailed study. But the new regime has to make a beginning at least. The list includes

1. Revise pay for the civil service and local government leaders
2. Introduce 20 percent housing allowance for civil servants
3. Revise Tenancy Act
4. Revise National Minimum Wage Rate
5. Table the Right to Information (RTI) Bill
6. Do away with Pedestrian Day
7. Prioritise solving census issue
8. Initiate an annual grant of Nu 2m for every Gewog
9. Extend maternity leave for working mothers, also introduce additional nine months of flexi time
10. Do away with preliminary exams
11. Do away with taxes for small and rural businesses

12. Launch allowance for senior citizens above 70 years
13. Guarantee full employment for youth
14. Lift vehicle import ban for rural businesses and farmers to buy utility vehicles
15. Negotiate with the relevant state governments of India to restart Bhutan lottery business
16. Review proposal to increase electricity tariff, try best to ensure not to increase

The DPT though reluctant initially, had no choice but to sit in opposition. In the post election convention of the party on 19th July, members listed fifteen issues that need to be clarified and had formally decided to present it to the King before accepting the role of opposition party.

These points related to the election process, favoritism of officials and some even in HM's Secretariat and mischievous statements of PDP candidates who claimed that they were contesting the elections on the command of the King etc. At any rate no serious breach of election laws has been reported or filed before the Election Commission.

It is a pity that Jigme Thinley the leader of the DPT has put in his resignation on August 5 from the assembly. He should have continued and with his experience and knowledge would have been an asset to the country. Perhaps he wanted to accept the moral responsibility for the unexpected defeat.

Finally, I managed to meet last month one of the resettled Bhutanese refugees in Phoenix Arizona working in one of the resorts. He was carrying a name badge along with the word "Bhutan." I asked him why he was displaying that he is from Bhutan. He said that he did for two reasons. One, he is not to be mistaken for an illegal immigrant. Two. He wanted to show that he is from Bhutan and does not want to forget his country. People are also sympathetic when they come to know the circumstances under which he was expelled from his country.

He is from Gelephu and has only a vague remembrance of his country as he was 5 years old. But yet he wants to visit Bhutan when he has enough resources. His country did not want him and yet he wants to visit his country later! I found him to be happy and serious about his job. As expected, he did not want to remember the years when he was languishing in the refugee camp in Nepal.

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