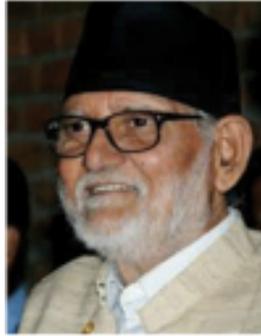


Tribute to Shushil Koirala



1936-2016

President of Nepali Congress (NC) also the former Prime Minister Sushil Koirala apparently peacefully passed away at the resident of Shashankta Koirala in Maharajgunj, Kathmandu at 0:50 am on Tuesday, February 9, 2016 at the age of 80. He was born in Biratnagar in 1936 but he move to Nepalgunj along with his father. He was the last elected Koirala prime minister of his generation after BP Koirala, and Girija Prasad Koirala.

Talking to the anchor of the Radio Nepal morning program on Tuesday, February 9, 2016, Koirala's personal physician Dr Karbirnath Yogi said that Sushil Koirala had been suffering from four strong diseases such as cancer, tuberculosis, chronic bronchitis, and pneumonia. Koirala had been on oxygen for the last month. He had taken Koirala to the Gangalal Cardio Hospital at Maharajgunj to check up the status of his heart, and to other hospitals to ascertain the status of his health. Koirala had been as usual given his health condition but suddenly his health had been deteriorated since 9:00 pm Monday, February 8, 2016; and no time to call an ambulance to take Koirala to a hospital, Dr Yogi told the Radio Nepal anchor.

I told my spouse, "Sushil Koirala had passed away." She said, "He was lucky." He might be lucky in the real meaning of the word. He did not need to worry about the elections to a new president of his party to be held by the Thirteenth General Assembly meeting. In fact, he was supposed to address a cadre of his party of the Kathmandu district assembly on Monday, February 8, 2016 but he could not show up, as he did not feel well. He was one of the candidates in the presidential contest of his party, according to the local media.

Sushil Koirala was lucky because he had the golden opportunity of adopting a new constitution in 2015. He won the elections to a new constituent assembly from two constituencies: one from Nepalgunj and another from Chitwan in the constituent assembly elections held in 2013 but he lost the constituent assembly elections held in 2008 at the Nepalgunj constituency. He was twice elected to the previous parliaments from the Nepalgunj constituency but he never took the office of any minister but opted to work on strengthening the NC party.

He entered the active politics in 1953 after the Nepalese people led by the NC tore down the autocratic Rana family rule in 1951, and the NC turned over the mandate to another newly emerged ruler Tribhuvan (He had been a dormant monarch). NC party had been carrying the monarchy on its shoulder forever until 2008 but the monarchs had always seen the NC leaders as their enemies. After killing democracy in 1960, repressive Mahendra made a target on a cadre of NC and its leaders. He killed as many NC activists as possible believing that they were the main rivals posing the threat to his mandate to rule as a despot.

After the death of democracy in Nepal, Sushil Koirala took refuge in India. He spent almost fifteen years in exile, and five years in jail in Nepal. He was the chief architect of hijacking the plane taking a load of Nepalese currency of the Nepal Bank from Kathmandu to Biratnagar. They took the plane to the nearby-unused airstrip and took the money out of the plane for running the NC party.

Ultimately, Sushil Koirala was elected to the president of NC by the Twelfth General Assembly meeting, and finally to the office of prime minister by the parliament after his party won the highest number of slots in the constituent assembly-cum-parliament elections held in 2013. He led a coalition government of a number of political parties including the second largest CPN-UML on the understanding that Koirala would quit the office in favor of the Chairman of CPN-UML after the adoption of a new constitution.

Along with other political parties particularly CPN-UML, UCPN-Maoist, RPP, and other minor political parties Sushil Koirala fortunately adopted a new constitution in September 2015. It placed him in the history of Nepal as the prime minister that presided over the crating of a new constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal despite the opposition of the Madheshi and ethnic people as the new constitution did not adequately provided them with the legitimate rights. The Madheshi and ethnic people launched the protest movement. The Madheshi front blocked the southern border entry points stopping the supplies trucks coming to Nepal from India causing tremendous hardships to the common folks. Ironically, the Madheshi front had opened the blocked only one day before the demise of Koirala.

After the promulgation of a new constitution by the president, Koirala was supposed to leave the office but he did not. He failed in keeping the understanding reached with the CPN-UML. That gave the opportunity to all other political parties excluding the NC and the Madheshi parties to form a common platform for electing a new prime minister and forming a new government.

Rather than cooperating on forming a new consensus government after the adoption of a new Federal Democratic Republican constitution, Sushil Koirala went head-on collision with other political parties and filed his candidacy for the second-term office of prime minister with the clear backing of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi that did not want Chairman of CPN-UML winning the office of prime minister. Modi made all the Madheshi leaders flock to Kathmandu voting for Sushil Koirala but Koirala was short of getting elected to the second-term of office of prime minister, and conceded the defeat. He did lose not only the second-term office of prime minister but also the prestige and reputation of his party. His party had to stay in the opposition. His greed for the second-term office of prime minister brought a great shame on him and on his party in fact on the NC politicians in general taking the support of Indians.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has expressed heartfelt condolence on the demise of Nepali Congress President Sushil Koirala stating that he was pained by Koirala's demise, according to "The Rising Nepal" of February 9, 2016. "NC has lost a big leader who served Nepal for decades and India lost a valued friend," Indian PM Modi tweets. Expressing condolences to the Koirala family and Nepalese in this hour of grief, Modi has added that Koirala's simplicity holds lessons for all of us, the RSS said.

Prime Minister Sushil Koirala had a great opportunity of being the most generous prime minister of Nepal giving necessary compensation to the quake victims on their loss of their loved ones and property, and to build their lives anew but his stingy finance minister and he did not take the opportunity leaving the quake victims high and dry and he wasted the chance of building his historical image. He, however, distributed a large sum of money to a cadre of his party and his colleagues before leaving the office. Nobody knew from where he

got the money if it were not from the prime minister's fund intended for the disaster victims.

Speaking to the anchor of the Radio Nepal morning show, Chairman of UCPN-Maoist Prachanda regretted the demise of Sushil Koirala, saying Koirala had gone at the time when his need was there for enforcing the new constitution. Prachanda said that Koirala and he had worked very closely for resolving the Madheshi movement. Prachanda had said almost the same thing when Girija Prasad Koirala passed away. At that time, Prachanda said that the death of Girija Koirala was a great blow to the crafting of a new constitution.

Prime Minister KP Oli told the Radio Nepal anchor on the Tuesday morning that the enforcement of the new constitution was a continuous process; absence of any individual would not hinder it. The enforcement process had already been started off; nothing would stop it; it was also not the time of talking about something Koirala did not do but it was time to say what good things he had done, Oli said.

General Secretary of NC Prakashman Singh said that the untimely death of Sushil Koirala had caused the distress in his party. He told the Radio Nepal anchor on the Tuesday morning that the body of Sushil Koirala would be taken to the party main office in the morning and then the Central Working Committee of the NC would sit for a meeting to make the cremation schedule.

Sushil Koirala had left the legacy of the NC presidency to his rivals-cum-successors such as Sher Bahadur Deuba and Ramchandra Poudel if any of the Koirala progeny were not to claim the NC presidency. If the high-sounding Koirala dynastic political activists such as Sujata Koirala (daughter of Girija Koirala) and Shashankta Koirala (son of BP Koirala) were not be able to grab the NC presidency then the Koirala dynasty might lose its dynastic rule in the NC party, which might emerge a democratic party in the real sense of democracy thereafter.

February 9, 2016

Siddhi B Ranjitkar