

# Two Maoist parties ‘in bid’ to mend fences

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Around a year after the party split, the [UCPN \(Maoist\)](#) has approached its breakaway faction, the [CPN-Maoist](#), for [unification](#). The party has also floated another option—forging an election alliance with the Mohan Baidya-led party, which is opposing the Constituent Assembly (CA) elections.

The [CPN-Maoist](#) has, however, ruled out the possibility of the two parties re-uniting. Instead, it has said it could work together on ‘common issues.’

[UCPN \(Maoist\)](#) Vice-chairmen Baburam Bhattarai and Narayan Kaji Shrestha are holding consultations with top leaders of the [CPN-Maoist](#), including Baidya, in

this regard, [UCPN \(Maoist\)](#) leaders said.

Citing differences over the party line taken by Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal, Baidya left the [UCPN \(Maoist\)](#) and formed a separate party in June last year.

According to a leader, Bhattarai proposed to Baidya that the two parties unite and go to the polls. “If the two parties are united, there is a possibility of ethnic federal forces securing a two-thirds majority and, if that happens, we can draft a new constitution as desired by the party,” a leader quoted Bhattarai as telling Baidya. In reply, Baidya put forth a pre-condition to re-uniting with the mother party—that Dahal should embrace the principles of the “people’s war,” issues of national independence and other social and economic issues raised by his party, according to leaders.

Bhattarai’s close aide Devendra Poudel confirmed that the [CPN-Maoist](#) has been approached for [unification](#) before the elections. “We are convincing Baidyaji into re-joining our party, but no conclusion has been reached yet. Relations between the two parties are improving of late,” Poudel said.

The [UCPN \(Maoist\)](#) has also proposed that they can go for an election alliance if total [unification](#) is not possible. This option, according to leaders, is meant to defeat the Nepali Congress and the CPN-UML in the polls.

[UCPN \(Maoist\)](#) Vice-chairman Shrestha is also holding talks with Baidya and another leader Ram Bahadur Thapa. Shrestha held consultations with Baidya on Monday and Thapa on Tuesday to bring the breakaway faction on the election track. He said that as the possibility of the two parties uniting in the near future is bleak, he is trying to bring the Baidya party into the election process.

“Some demands of the [CPN-Maoist](#) , such as increasing the number of seats under the proportional election system and inducting the party into the High-level Political Committee, can be addressed immediately,” said Shrestha. According to sources, Dahal and Baidya are preparing to hold intensive discussions on the issues. According to a leader, Baidya has demanded that such talks be kept highly confidential.

Dahal and Baidya were scheduled to meet two weeks ago, but the meeting was cancelled at the 11th hour after the Dahal faction in the [UCPN \(Maoist\)](#) leaked information about the talks. [CPN-Maoist](#) leaders say Dahal’s [unification](#) proposal is aimed at “stealing our leaders and cadres who are in favour of elections.”

“There is a large section in our party that want the two parties to unite and Dahal is trying to catch those sentiments,” said a leader close to Baidya. A leader close to Dahal confirmed the claim that the party’s strategy is to bring more leaders and cadres from the Baidya party and the CPN-UML into the [UCPN \(Maoist\)](#) fold.

[CPN-Maoist](#) Politburo member Hari Bhakta Kandel said Dahal is talking about party [unification](#) “just to be in the good books of foreign power centres.”

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