

UCPN (Maoist) General Convention: Fight over posts, not ideology

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KATHMANDU, JAN 20, [2013] - Ahead of the seventh general convention (GC) of the [UCPN \(Maoist\)](#), filling key positions in the party's organisational structure has been a contentious issue between Chairman [Pushpa Kamal Dahal](#) and Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai, who is the party's senior vice-chairman.

The two leaders have, however, tried to keep the differences on internal power-sharing within themselves and not allow them to be public as in the past. Party insiders say no ideological clash will be witnessed during the general convention as Dahal and Bhattarai do not have any ideological differences. The convention is slated to begin on February 2 in Hetauda, Makawanpur district.

“Now that there are no ideological differences, the fight is likely to centre on a reasonable share of party organisation positions,” said a top leader close to Dahal.

After the party split on June 18, key positions in the seven-member office bearers' body—one vice-chairman, general secretary and a secretary—are vacant. Similarly, there are many vacancies in the party's Standing Committee and the Politburo.

Dahal plans to bring in close aide Krishna Bahadur Mahara as the general secretary. Mahara has been “purposefully” entrusted with the responsibility of the party's organisational department recently. Mahara is considered to be a close confidante of Dahal and is also known as a bridge between Dahal and CPN-Maoist Chairman Mohan Baidya. Even though Bhattarai is against pointing Mahara as the general secretary, leaders say his elevation is almost sure.

Though Bhattarai is effortful to get the general secretary post for one of his supporters, he lacks deserving candidates in his faction. According to a leader, Bhattarai is making efforts to bring Finance Minister Barsha Man Pun to his faction and recommend him for the post. Pun has hinted at joining the Bhattarai camp but has not come out openly.

According to leaders, if Pun openly comes to the Bhattarai faction, he is sure to get the post of secretary, instead of general secretary. Bhattarai's ardent supporter Top Bahadur Rayamajhi is senior to Pun. However, according to a leader, Bhattarai will not recommend Rayamajhi for the senior post as he lacks “leadership quality” and influence in the party's organisational structure. Since the party provisions multiple secretaries, Giriraj Mani Pokhrel from Vice-chairman Narayan Kaji Shrestha fold and leader Haribol Gajurel from Dahal camp are likely to be secretaries.

Incumbent Secretary Post Bahadur Bogati is almost sure to be elevated to the vice-chairman's post, after Bhattarai and Shrestha.

In addition, Bhattarai has demanded 40 percent share while selecting GC representatives from the 75 districts. The district-level convention has begun from Rolpa and Dahal and Bhattarai are in continuous consultation to settle the row over GC representatives. To show unity inside the party, both Dahal and Bhattarai are participating in district-level conventions.

The Bhattarai faction believes that time is ripe for the PM to bargain with Dahal and solidify his position in the party. Bhattarai sympathisers said as the party adopted Bhattarai's ideological line since the 2005 Chunwang meet, their faction should get respectable positions in the party.

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