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Nepal's biggest party in the parliament Nepali Congress's 13th National General Convention kicks off (?p=7527)

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Nepal's biggest party in the parliament Nepali Congress's 13th National General Convention began Thursday with fanfare amid a grand function at the Khulla Manch in the capital Kathmandu.

Khulla Manch witnessed presence of thousands of Congress supporters, leaders of political parties, including those from neighbouring countries.

NC leaders Ramchandra Paudel, Sher Bahadur Deuba, general secretaries Prakash Man Singh and Krishna Prasad Sitaula and treasurer Chitra Lekha Yadav addressed the function.

Prime Minister and CPN-UML Chairman KP Sharma Oli and Unified CPN Maoist Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal were among those present at the inaugural session of the NC's 13th National General Convention.

Chief Minister of Bihar Nitish Kumar, Bharatiya Janata Party leader Bhagat Singh Koshyari, General Secretary of Indian National Congress BK Hariprasad, Information Minister of Bangladesh Hasanul Haqinu and General Secretary of Socialist International Luis Ayala, were some of the foreign leaders present in Khula Manch for NC's jamboree.

The candidates wishing to fight for the party's Central Working Committee's elected posts will have to file their candidacy by noon today.

The party's close session to begin at 2:00pm at Bhrikutimandap will discuss party's policy and programmes for the next term. Election for the CWC posts are slated for March 6.

Three leaders, including two from the establishment side and one from rival faction, have announced their panels. Ramchandra Paudel and Shashanka Koirala have announced candidacy for the party president and general secretary, respectively. Krishna Prasad Sitaula and Gagan Thapa have also announced candidacy for the two vital posts, with Umakanta Chaudhari vying for treasurer's post from Sitaula panel. Both the panels from establishment side did not file their nomination yesterday and will do so today.

Senior leader Sher Bahadur Deuba and Chitra Lekha Yadav filed their nomination for party presidency and treasurer, respectively, at the party headquarters in Sanepa on Thursday. Arjun Narsingh KC will file nomination for general secretary's post from Deuba's side today.

A candidate for party president should garner more than 50 per cent of the over 3,200 votes to get elected. But for the posts of general secretary and treasurer, first-past-the-post system will be followed, according to NC Election Committee.

Seventy-five members, including Kul Bahadur Gurung, Khum Bahadur Khadka and Mahesh Acharya, filed nomination papers today for CWC membership under open competition and province-wise representation, according to party sources.

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