

# Nepal Rebels and Political Parties in Accord Aimed Against King

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**By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

KATMANDU, [Nepal](#), Nov. 23 (AP) - Nepal's Communist rebels and seven main political parties say they have reached an agreement to strengthen opposition to King Gyanendra, who seized absolute power earlier this year.

Under the agreement announced Tuesday, the two sides called for a return to democracy and pledged to reinstate a parliament, conduct elections and draft a new constitution - a condition set by the rebels.

"It is our clear understanding that unless the autocratic rule is ended and full democracy is restored, there will be no peace or progress in the country," the agreement said.

The king has said he assumed total control of Nepal in February to curb corruption and quell a Communist insurgency that has claimed more than 11,500 lives in nine years. He suspended civil liberties, including freedom of the press, and imprisoned hundreds of politicians and activists.

The king's actions drew condemnation from the country's political parties and many nations, including allies like the United States, Britain and India.

Since then, the political parties have organized frequent street protests against the king, and rebel activity has increased. In response, the royal government set a tentative date for municipal elections in February 2006.

The parties have pledged to boycott any elections held under the king's rule. The rebels are also likely to oppose the move.

The rebels said in the accord with the political parties that they could give up their campaign of violence and surrender their weapons under international supervision if elections were held under a new government.

The parties said they would not form an alliance with the rebels as long as they continued to use weapons or force in their campaign to topple the king.

"This is only an understanding we have reached with the Maoists," said Girija Prasad Koirala, president of Nepali Congress, the largest political party in Nepal. "We are not forming any alliance or coalition with them. We will be fighting the monarchy from separate fronts."

Gyanendra assumed the crown in 2001 after his brother, King Birendra, was killed in a palace shooting apparently committed by Birendra's son, the crown prince, who also died. Ten members of the royal family were killed.

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