

Nepal to join SCO

China to support inclusion of Nepal

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Nepal's interest in getting the membership of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) for its oil and energy needs is bolstered by China having supported it.

Chinese Ambassador to Nepal Sun Heping has assured, Dr Suresh Chandra Chalise, Foreign Affairs Advisor to Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, of China's decision to back Nepal's quest for SCO membership.

"He (Heping) said China would back membership for Nepal," Dr. Chalise was quoted by Kantipur, as saying.

"It (SCO membership) helps when there is an oil and energy crisis in Nepal," he added.

Dr Chalise further said: "Nepal should acquire its membership and we should be trying to import oil from these countries".

"The Prime Minister (Koirala) has already been convinced (to acquire the membership). It's only a matter of time," he said.

Nepal is likely to apply for the membership during the Sixth SCO conference scheduled for June 14-16 in Shanghai.

During his visit to China later this year, Koirala is expected to discuss the issue with Beijing.

According to officials, the SCO membership would end Nepal's complete dependency on India for oil.

Leaders of China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan founded the SCO in June 2001. Many perceive SCO as a counter organisation to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO).

India, Pakistan, Mongolia and Iran have observer status in the SCO. Mongolia, Pakistan and Iran have also applied for its full membership.

The SCO is primarily centered around its member nations' Central Asian security-related concerns, often describing the main threats it confronts as being terrorism, separatism and extremism.

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