

## China proposes oil and rail link to Kathmandu

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(Bernama) As India's Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, is on official visit in China, the Chinese Ambassador to Nepal, Cheng Xia Ling, has confirmed his country's intention to establish a rail link to Kathmandu and has offered to supply oil to Nepal. *"The China-Tibet railway link will not end in Lhasa, as we have plans to expand it up to the Nepalese border"*, the Press Trust of India (PTI) quoted the Ambassador as saying. Mr Cheng said China also wants to establish road links to *"promote regional peace and development"*. He also said China wants to supply petroleum products to Nepal. *"We are working towards developing a permanent and long term mechanism to supply petrol to Nepal from China"*, he said. Nepal is currently facing severe shortages in its petrol supply due to the government's lack of cash. China is itself is a net importer of oil, with nearly 40% of its oil coming from overseas and this figure is certain to grow in coming years. Apart from the technological challenges, the establishment of a pipeline across Tibet required to supply Nepal would mean a huge investment that would be unlikely to prove economically viable for the foreseeable future. Mr Cheng also condemned the American government's plan to resettle Tibetan refugees in the US. *"Tibet's problem is an internal affair of China, so we don't want any kind of interference in it"*, he said.

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