Finally the days of Monarchy are over in Nepal; nearly two and half century long reign of Shah Dynasty came to an end when first sitting of Constituent Assembly meeting on May 28, 2008, overwhelmingly voted to abolish royal rule. Now Nepal has become the world’s newest republic, ending 240 years of monarchy.

The election of CA has changed the role of key players in Nepali politics. As per popular vote and the seats in CA, the then first party –Nepali Congress is pushed to 2nd position and the then 2nd and most expected winner party- the Communist Party of Nepal (UML) to 3rd position. However ex-rebel the CPN (Maoist) declared the tallest party in CA. Since then, a new “political gamble” has been sparked. Much political complexity has emerged in the peace process.

Initial debate was linked to psychology of “loser-winner” theory. The CPN (Maoist), undermining all power structure both domestic and external, dreamt to be sooner not later ruler of the country. The Maoist claimed both of the executive positions- the President of Republic and the Prime Minister.
Realising misappropriation in the CA election, UML and the NC felt crisis of confidence- whether Maoist will rule according to law or it will impose a totalitarian regime by misusing the state power! In order to maintain check and balance, both of the parties in ruling coalition showed their stand- i) amend provision of interim constitution- 2/3 necessary to form and dismiss government by simple majority and ii) let Maoist choose either ceremonial President or the Executive prime minister. This debate was lingered about 1 month up to May 28; Maoist favoured the post of executive prime minister and accepted "majoritarian" formula to elect it.

Sceptic with the Maoist consistency and credibility; the UML put forth a proposal for package dealing in every political understanding and suggested- i) it’s not a proper time for creating political polarisation as left and non-left, consensus is necessary within main actors (Maoist-NC-UML), ii) Maoist must correct their behaviour and should end immediately barracks system and Para-military character of their notorious youth wing- the YCL, iii) while Maoist opted executive PM, the President should go for NC. And if there is no way consensus between Maoist and NC- the UML suggest altering position between NC and UML (that is- President of republic to UML and president of CA to NC).

However, Maoist played another gamble against this "understanding"; they fielded their own candidate for President denying NC leader G.P. Koirala. They proposed to UML for President but the name of their choice, where UML insisted on the name of Madhav Kumar Nepal, which they accepted and at the last moment of nomination, they denied. And then political "gambling" took another interesting turn. A new alliance (NC-UML-MJF) was created at the evening of July 17 against Maoist betrayal distributing three major posts- Prez to NC, Vice-prez to MJF and the Chairperson of CA for UML, thus, elected accordingly, which ended the relevancy of NC-UML-MJF coalition.

In order to form new government, three different trends had been surfaced – i) excluding Maoist, make centre-left coalition government of NC-UML-MJF ii) form a new government between Maoist and the UML and iii) Form a Government of National Unity led by Maoist.

The long-time coalition partner- UML and the NC choose opposite direction in this very point. What ever reasons made public, the NC was not ready to join any forms of government under Maoist. However, the UML’s position was- "Neither the Maoist push till to stay it out from the government, nor it has to give an ‘uncheck’ access to lead sole government". Thus, The UML favoured the ‘Third

The achievements and the challenges of Nepali Politics
- Over 1600 years long monarchy and 240 years long Shah Dynasty came to an end; people has been declared sovereign and supreme source of power
- Nepal has emerged first republic with federal democratic nature in 21st century
- The CA is elected as most inclusive; first time in Nepal’s history and remarkable in even South Asia- women participation is ensured 1/3rd in the parliament
- Nepal is passing through a unique but complex process of restructuring of Nation-State; now Nepal is in a cross road- which way labour-friendly or capital-friendly or neutral? If neutral, how?
- After decade long insurgency and the rebellion, the peace process is waiting a logical end. Integration of armies, land reform and promising of food-employment-shelter-health-education for general people, reintegration of displaced population, end of impunity and formation of previously committed Truth and Reconciliation Commission as well as Commission for Disappeared persons are the main agendas in this regard
- The Herculean job is, making up of a new Constitution. For which there are 601 CA members and they have just one and half year time.
- Prolonged political transition is fueling lawlessness and rampant anarchy in society in general and world of work in particular.
- Political recognition to fringe "trade union" groupings is diluting true essence of unionism and has undermined the social dialogue as well.
option": formation of a Government of National Unity despite Maoist inconsistency, incredible and conspiratorial character.

The election of PM took place at August 15; candidate was Maoist supremo Pushpakarmal Dahal alias Prachanda from major coalition. Interestingly this time the NC was out and the Maoist was in, in the UML-MJF coalition. All fringe parties supported this coalition during record vote in CA against NC candidate ex-PM Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba. Prachanda was elected by 2/3rd majority.

However, this alliance is fickle and fragile as the alliance partners are neither politically nor ideological close. Even CPN-UML and CPN-Maosits, though both are communists, have ideological differences. However, MJF is a party organised on the basis of regional sentiment not any political ideology. But it will be bit early to predict future of the Coalition government in Nepal.

A Brief History of Monarchy in Nepal

Though emerged in the first millennium, Nepal, only in the 18th century, developed as a country of the present size. Archaeological remains suggest that areas of Nepal have been inhabited for more than 10,000 years. The early dynasties were- the Gopala, the Mahishpala, but Nepal's recorded history began with the Kirats. And, Kirats arrived in the 7th to 8th century BC from the east. It was during this period that Buddhism came in the scene. By 200 AD, Buddhism was replaced by Hinduism, brought by the Licchavis, who invaded from northern India and overthrew the last Kirat king. Major dynasties ruled over Nepal were the Lichhabi, Malla and the Shah.

Lichhabi Dynasty

The Lichhabis are said to have migrated into Nepal from north India around 250 A.D. The first Lichhabi king of historical importance was Manadeva- I. Another important Lichavi monarch was Anshuverma who opened trade routes to Tibet. Narendradeva- I another Lichhavi king, initiated friendly relations with China and his successors laid the foundations of friendship with India by entering into matrimonial alliances with the Indian royal families. The Lichchhavi rule spanned over a period of about 830 years.

Malla Dynasty

Then after, the Malla rule started with Ari Malla in the 12th century and over the next two centuries grew into a large empire before disintegrating into small principalities which later became known as the Boisí (i.e. the twenty-two principalities) and the Chaubisi (i.e. twenty-four principalities) rajya.

Jayasthiti Malla, with whom commences the later Malla period in the Kathmandu Valley, reigned towards the end of the 14th century. Yakshya Malla, the grandson of Jayasthiti Malla, ruled the Kathmandu Valley until almost the end of the 15th century. After his demise, the Valley was divided into three independent Valley kingdoms – Kathmandu, Bhaktapur and Patan – in about 1484 A.D. This division led the Malla rulers into internecine wars for territorial and commercial gains and by the time of King Prithvi Narayan Shah's invasion of the Valley, they had by themselves reached the brink of political death. The last rulers were Jaya Prakash Malla, Tej Narasingh Malla and Ranjit Malla of Kathmandu, Patan and Bhaktapur respectively.
Shah Dynasty

Prithvi Narayan Shah (1769-1775), with whom we move into the modern period of Nepal's history, was the 9th generation descendant of Dravya Shah (1559-1570), the founder of the ruling house of Gorkha. Prithvi Narayan Shah succeeded to the throne of Gorkha in 1743 AD. Gorkhali King Prithvi Narayan Shah launched the campaign to unify the 63 small principalities including three Kathmandu Valley kingdoms, the Baisi and Chaubisi principalities which ultimately gave birth of present Nepal. In 1769, Prithvi Narayan Shah declared Kathmandu as the capital of modern Nepal.

The history of monarchies, as of various countries of world, is full of conspiracy and murder. One of the infamous conspiracies was the Kot Massacre in the first half of the 19th century. This massacre, where a high-powered favorite of the queen was assassinated dragged Nepal into instability. Jung Bahadur, key plotter of the massacre seized control of the country emerging as a new leader with strong backing of British Empire. He declared himself prime minister and began the Rana rule by making the Shah King a nominal figure-head. They also made the office of the prime minister hereditary.

After 104 years of continuous tyrannical rule, the Rana Oligarchy was ended at 1950 through a first ever popular movement. Mohan Shumsher was the last Rana ruler who later named first prime minister of newly born democratic Nepal. However, political power again snatched out by Shah king instead of making people sovereign. King Tribhuvan became first constitutional monarch in 20th Century Nepal.

King Mahendra succeeded his father and crowned in 1955. Due to his ambitious hunger of political power, the newly introduced multi-party system didn’t last even a decade. King Mahendra dismissed the government and suspended parliament. Declaring that parliamentary system is unsuited to Nepal, the king proclaimed a new constitution in 1962 that banned over the political parties and mass organizations including trade unions. He imposed the one-party autocratic rule known as Panchayat, which lasted for 30 years under the absolute monarchy. This was ended by 1990 popular movement; at a time his son Birendra was in throne since 1972.

In 1990, a new constitution providing for a multiparty system was adopted. The Nepali Congress party won the country’s first democratic election in 32 years, and the party’s general secretary, Girija

The Shah Dynasty of Nepal (1768-2008)

1. Prithvi Narayan Shah (25 September 1768 - 11 January 1775; ruler of Gorkha from 1743)
2. Pratap Singh Shah (11 January 1775 - 17 November 1777)
3. Rana Bahadur Shah (17 November 1777 - 23 March 1799) (abdicated)
4. Girvan Yudha Bikram Shah (23 March 1799 - 20 November 1816)
5. Rajendra Bikram Shah (20 November 1816 - 12 May 1847) (abdicated)
6. Surendra Bikram Shah (12 May 1847 - 17 May 1881)
7. Prithvi Bikram Shah (17 May 1881 - 11 December 1911)
8. Tribhuvan Bikram Shah (11 December 1911 - 7 November 1950; in exile in India from 7 November 1950 until 7 January 1951 and 7 January 1951 - 13 March 1950)
11. Dipendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev (1 June 2001 - 4 June 2001) (three days, incapacitated)
Prasad Koirala, became prime minister. Koirala resigned in July 1994, and the king subsequently dissolved parliament and set new elections, in which the Communist Party of Nepal (UML), became single largest party in parliament. Man Mohan Adhikary was sworn in as the first elected communist prime minister in 1994. It was one of the popular governments in Nepal's political history. However, the UML government was pull-downed within 9 months without any reasons. The king sworn-in Sher Bahadur Deuba of the NC as prime minister coalition government. Sadly this laid foundation for chaotic political departure in Nepal. That same year, a Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), declared armed rebellion which claimed over 13,000 lives within a decade long insurgency.

June 1, 2001 midnight history mid-19th century's history repeated in Nepal. As infamous as Kot porba massacre, similar massacre took place at Narayanshri Royal palace. King Birendra and his entire family along with some royal relatives gunned down. It was alleged that frustrated Crown Prince Dipendra killed his very own family members, who then reportedly attempted suicide. Dipendra initially survived his gunshot wounds in a coma. His subsequent death paved clear-path to his uncle Gyanendra Shah enthroned as the new monarch of Nepal.

Gyanendra Shah followed similar path practiced by his father Mahendra in 1960s. He dissolved parliament and dismissed elected prime minister unconstitutionally. In Feb 1, 2005; he captured all power and introduced for the last time in Nepal history the absolute monarchy.

Through peoples' uprising of 2006, primarily Gyanendra wings were clinched through the historical proclamation of reinstate parliament. After Comprehensive Peace accord between 7-party alliance and the CPN (Maoist) he was virtually suspended. From the 1st meeting of newly elected Constituent Assembly at May 28, 2008 the Monarchy finally abolished from Nepal. Gyanendra Shah, who resumed throne twice in his life recorded as the last King of Shah Dynasty as well as Nepal.

State Restructuring and Social Transformation in Nepal

Social Transformation that we need

The need of State restructuring is for Social Transformation in Nepal. In a classical sense, social transformation is understood as ‘revolution’. A revolution causes the deconstruction of existing institutions, and creates a foundation for structural transformation towards a positive end. The word transformation refers to the change not only in ‘form’ but also in ‘content’.

Social transformation requires the identification of root causes of social problems, including its structural complexity, and calls for the change in the existing social worldview, as well as in the power balance in political, economic, social and cultural spheres. Social transformation contributes to enhancing people’s level of social and cultural awareness of their situation, especially of the exploitative relations around them, and ending the existing inequality amongst people in terms of access to ‘resources, power and opportunities’.

Social transformation is the positive change in individuals, institutions, culture, and social & physical structures. Increased awareness in individuals and their conscious involvement in social issues bring about changes in the policy of the government and other institutions. Such changes trigger reforms in social norms, traditions, belief systems, religious practices and the functioning of family and community. The modus operandi of social, educational and political institutions; the way media operate; the way recreational industry works and behaves; and the way techno-physical infrastructure (for example,
farming, transportation and town planning) is designed also provide a benchmark against which the nature and state of social transformation can be gauged.

The old Nepal and the Structural problems

The pre-transition Nepali state, society and economy were fraught with structural problems. The politics after the change of 1990 was limited to a formal democracy. The systems it developed and adopted promoted the interests of the elites. Those who were seen by the people as their exploiters for years became their new rulers.

The democracy that people got following 30-year long struggle got reduced to a political ritual in which every five years people gathered to cast a vote and got, as a result, a force announcement that a name which they detested became their representative. The resultant centralised state turned, in the eyes of the people, to a mechanism in which it made general people pay taxes to serve the interest of city centres, while the state as a whole limited its functions to serve the interest of the capital. Even in the changed context, people were made to behave like passive subjects. Despite the 1990 Constitution directing the state to serve as a welfare state, it adopted a policy of ‘serving the rich by the poor’. Social relations remained as unequal as before, and continued to reinforce the pyramidal hierarchies created by ancient regimes.

A multidimensional conflict emerged from this structural problem, having basically embedded in two broad issues of class exploitation and social oppression. By social transformation, in our context, is to alter the existing social structure and enable all people, to whom it matters, to have equal and just access to resources, powers and opportunities. Thus need to address economic inequalities through class-based approach and social oppression through the identity & rights related concerns of conflicting social groups.

The Restructuring of State and Transformation from below

Transformation for the establishment of equitable and just society should address issues at three levels: state, society and economy. The current debate is centred on state restructuring as a means to transformation. And, state restructuring has focused on federalism, participation and inclusion.

Nepali state is centralised, rather ‘heavily centralised’ when it comes to exercise of power. Even the privilege of sovereign people to make decision on crucial matters has been craftily centralised by the ‘representatives’. Everything is capital-centred, even the decision-making at the local level. So far the Nepali state has remained a long way from the people.

The other meaning of transformation is to address the issues generated by the conflict. The first imperative towards this end is to eliminate the tradition of ruling on the basis of dynastic influence. The right of people to participate in governance and law-making processes should not be manipulated in any pretexts. They should have an opportunity to participate in decisions about matters affecting them, their families, communities and environment.

The dimension of social oppression has now been an issue of hot debate. Social oppression is being defined as oppression of women by men in, and of, all castes, classes and communities, of ‘Dalits by the framework of caste prescribed as per Hindu-religion’, of ‘ethnic groups and communities by ‘advanced’ caste groups’, of Madhesi people by those of Hill origin and of ‘outlying rural areas by urban areas’.

The solution to this complex is prescribed to inhere in ‘transformation though social inclusion’ or inclusive transformation, one that contributes to the establishment of gender conscious, local language promoting and regional issue promoting society thereby ending the existing unitary and divisive social
relation. This formulaic prescription seeks to promote inclusion along caste and regional lines, which in fact is not an appropriate prescription for the sole reason that inclusion and representation should in a plural system be sought from the frame of political parties.

A party is a representative of a class. Without a class bias, a party turns to be a clique of a few individuals worried simply to get their vested interests addressed. Class is an ‘ideological-theoretical’ construct. Ethnic/regional/gender issues are concerned with identity. ‘Class’ connects a whole nation together. ‘Ethnic/regional/gender’ divisions simply draw a line of identity amongst communities and regional inhabitants.

Social transformation calls for the end of social oppression, and change of existing social and cultural attributes and practices.

Today, those with power and influence have access to all rights and privileges. They have a complete control over means and resources. Those without power and influence are completely deprived of basic opportunities and resources. This unequal social and economic pyramid needs to change to ensure transformation of economy, a transformation that ends elitist control over means and resources and guarantees that the poor and workers have their basic human rights promoted and respected.

The establishment of a welfare state based on the principles of social justice is in fact the transformation of economy. This is possible only through redistribution of national income. Progressive tax should be levied on those with high income to expand national reserves with which to build a package of social security. Such package should guarantee basic needs, and relief and welfare support to low-income groups of people. The nature of transformed economy will be to extend social support to those in need.

This we can call ‘economic inclusion’. Just as social inclusion represents and addresses gender, ethnic and regional issues; economic inclusion addresses and represents class issues and concerns. Economic inclusion is also to transform the existing unequal economic relations to make sure that the working people have an equal access to means and resources. It is also to establish a balance between labour and capital. Those working on a wage basis are workers, despite having been a few income-specific sub groups within themselves.

**Federalism and class plus three**

Nepal is now declared a Federal Democratic Republic. Unless the ‘class’ factor is taken into consideration economic transformation is not possible regardless of the nature of the state. A worker cannot feel any fundamental change unless broader issues of economy and work organisation are transformed. An inclusive and participatory loktantra enables people to access to resources, power and opportunities. It is to be noted that the word “inclusive” is understood in different ways. ‘Representation’ is inclusion in formal democracy; ‘Proportional participation’ is inclusion in loktantra or full-fledged democracy; ‘Class representation and proper tackling of associated issues’ is inclusion in economy and ‘Representation and tackling of gender-ethnic-regional issues’ is social inclusion. Identity is answer to marginalisation; where as equality reciprocates economic exploitation. Thus, inclusion in true sense means addressing gender-ethnic-regional issues based on class perspective. It can be described through formula of Class plus Three.
Major labour disputes in brief

This whole year Nepali labour market too, confronted with different types of odds. In the threshold of CA election, southern part of lowland of Nepal was boiling. This region is the place for dense industries including historical industrial capital- Birtamod, where all kinds of business came in standstill. It’s an irony that the business community led by the apex body of employers- FNCCI organised general strike several times, in total around 60 months. Dramatically, unions’ industrial action was as low as compare to transport strikes and other blockade made by various political groupings.

However, this year as well many workers became victim of boss’s exploitation. Among the worst incident, two GEFONT members have been shot-dead and over dozens injured by police action at Bara districts, the Central South of the country. It has happened in the eve of formation of left dominated first Government of FDR. The incident broke when the police mercilessly attacked at the picket line in one of the iron-steel company- the Narayani rolling mills. It is known that the incident which took place afternoon of August 29 was in behest of the management of company.

The workers in the Narayan Rolling Mills who were members of GEFONT affiliates NICIWU, which is one of the largest ICEM affiliates in Nepal, were on strike with 7-point demands including permanent status to their jobs and minimum wage. The clash between the management and the workers had started on 28 August against the fire of 21 workers. Police had baton charged on the protesting workers, which caused injuries to dozens of workers. Naturally, furious workers resumed demonstration against police brutality from early morning of August 29.

Protesting GEFONT member Com. Kebal Raut, 40, an employee of oldest multinational company- Surya Nepal, was seriously injured by brutal rifle-boot attack on his sensitive organ by the police. He immediately passed away and more than 50 workers were injured in the violence. After this incident, workers blocked highways along the Pathlaiya corridors and closed down industries in Bara, Parsa and Rautahat districts.
The situation became worse and police had charged batons, fired tear gas and shower leather bullet over the agitating workers. Meanwhile, another GEFONT member Com. Hare Ram Yadav, 28, an employee of Tribeni Textile, was shot in head and was seriously injured. With the worsening condition after 6 hours of improper treatment, he was brought to Kathmandu. But he passed away while undergoing treatment.

The agitation was suspended only after a tripartite agreement between local administration, factory owners and the trade union. According to agreement; NRs. 1 million each to the family of slain workers was provided as compensation, free and proper treatment to the injured persons, formation of fact finding commission and action against the person involved to suppress workers and reinstatement 21 dismissed workers.

June 18 - Local Body Employees Association (LBEA) has announced shut down of the offices of all local bodies--- 3,915 VDCs, 58 municipalities, and 75 District Development Committees--protesting against the ‘inhumane’ treatment of a government official by Maoist leader and the then Minister Matrika Yadav; who locked Local Development Officer of Lalitpur district, Dandu Raj Ghimire, inside the toilet of his office for over one and half hour.

The Government abolished the Haliya system- a forced labour practice in agriculture on Sep. 6, 2008. This is another achievement to implement ILO convention 29 and 105. Haliya are those who plough land to the landlords and peasants. Haliya system is different than the Kamaiya system which was abolished few years back.

Few major disputes can be summarised as following:

- Hotel workers affiliated to NIHWU-GEFONT have gone on a strike, shutting down all resorts in Chitwan from Feb 25 demanding 10% service charge in their service packages and it was withdrawn from March 13 following a dialogue between the union and the employers organisation- HAN held under the aegis of the Government
- ANFTU the union inclined to CPN (Maoist) made a deal less than national minimum wage at Gurunse Tea Estate, in Eastern Nepal. Similarly, the Tea Estates under NTDC (on of the PEs) privatised few years back are also denying minimum wage

ITUC Opposes Nepali Government:

Protest letter by ITUC General Secretary Guy Ryder

Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

Further to our previous letter of 8 September 2008, the ITUC is writing in order to convey to you additional information concerning the events which preceded 3 September and in which two unionised workers were killed by the Nepali police, and to correct any discrepancies in our earlier communication.

In fact, the two workers, whose actual names were Kebal Raut, employed by Surya Nepal, and Hare Ram Yadav, a worker at Tribeni Textile, were shot by the police in an incident which occurred after workers from various factories in the Bara District had joined workers from the Narayani Rolling Mills factory in their action against the company management. This action had been launched by the Nepal Independent Chemical and Iron Workers’ Union (NICIWU), which is affiliated to both the International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers’ Unions (ICEM) as well as the ITUC-affiliated General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions (GEFONT), and was later on joined by workers from other unions, including the Nepal Trade Union Congress-Independent (NTUC-I), which is also an ITUC affiliate.

While reiterating that we hope the newly established Nepali Government would ensure that the police refrains from the use of such excessive and blind violence against peaceful protesters, we hope you would take this additional information into account when referring to the issue.

Deceased - Hare Ram Yadav
Nepal: Trade Union Rights at Transition / 10

November 2008

- In Indian joint venture-UTL workers are still fighting for appointment letter since 7 months; the management is denying it despite union’s joint agitation.
- Nepali TV- another Indian invested enterprise has compelled to accept mass retirement to 176 workers. They were fighting for their rights over years
- India Airlines in Nepal is still denying labour rights. After fighting long legal battle the workers won the case, however it is yet to be implemented.
- Whereas GEFONT members working at Thai Airways International able to achieve salary increment on an average NRs. 8,000 -15,000 per month

Lawlessness and anarchy is rampant in Nepal. Due to this problem, work stoppage and transport strike has been called-on in various occasions. Followings are leading examples-

1. Protesting against the recent spate of lethal attacks against businessmen, the employer’s organizations held a public assembly on March 3 and demanded that the government should provide effective security and bring the culprits to justice. The FNCCI, NCC, CNI and different commodity organizations jointly arranged the demonstration.

2. Bikram Prasad Saha, manager of the Rajbiraj branch of Agricultural Development Bank, was shot dead on Jan 27; this caused all government office closed for 6 days

3. Asking personal security to the Secretaries of Village Development Committees, VDC Secretaries Rights Protection Centre called on 8-day strike from January 6, which was called-off by government's assurance after 1 day strike

Casino: Should Nepali permitted to gamble?

Casino business is always at controversy in Nepal. The management of Nepali Casinos are defamed for allowing Nepali citizen in gambling, which is restricted by law and even blamed for not paying taxes. In following days it is allegedly blamed providing Maoist YCL muscleman shelter with employment. In such background the government tightened the screw against casino operators.

On Oct 24, Casino Anna first time spotted by the police, which was countered by management instigating Casino staffers all of them affiliate with Maoist All Nepal Hotel and Restaurant Workers’ Union (ANHRWU). The violent clash with the police lasted till mid Night. Whether Nepali citizen should be permitted in the casino? A public debate surfaced based on “employment verses maintaining of law and order” issue.

The “show” was shut down with arrest of Ram Krishna Chakradhar, the general manager of Casino Anna on Nov 2; he was released after making commitment to obey the law and general strike called by the ANHRWU was fully neglected by the public.

It is to be noted that GEFONT affiliates- Nepal Independent Hotel Workers’ Union clearly show its stand against the management.

Time limit on “Dance-bar and Cabin-restaurant” operation

On Sept 15, the police raided dance bars on the charge that they were showing naked dances and engaging in public offence activities. The government also asked the dance restaurants to resume their business till 11 pm. The Night Business Operators countered with government decision claiming that the decision will make just impossible to run businesses and it would render thousands of employees jobless.

On Sept 23, the employer together with few workers staged a demonstration. Agitating employees and entrepreneurs involved in night life establishments threatened to launch a more stringent protest if the Home Ministry did not withdraw the decision to shut down their businesses. However, the government didn’t back tracked by its decision arguing- night life business is escalating illicit activities.

Crack down against Street Vendors in Kathmandu

From the second and third week of September, the policy made unexpected crackdown against street vendor in Kathmandu Valley. The activists of GEFONT affiliate- Nepal Street Vendor Trade Union (NEST) clashed with police demanding alternative place to run their business for livelihood; however the police was rigid in the name of clearing the streets to avoid traffic jams in Kathmandu.

With Dashain knocking on the door, the NEST members picketed KMC to pressurize authorities to fulfill the demands. The home ministry finally agreed to form a taskforce to find a permanent solution including union representatives. After long discussion the taskforce agreed to allow them to use Khula-manch [open theatre] during the festival.

It is a great opportunity for low-income street vendors,” said Kumar Sapkota, secretary of NEST. “The place proposed by KMC is inconvenient for customers.”

KMC estimates there are over 5,000 street vendors operating in inner city areas.
4. Transport workers organised strikes while a bus helper Keshav Basnet at Jorpokhari Bazaar of Panchthar had severely beaten up on January 10.

5. On Feb 23 drivers of tankers carrying fuel launched strike demanding security after one of the Kathmandu-bound tanker was seized by irate group of people of Gorkha district and forced it to go to their district.

6. Transportation services have come to a halt in the eastern region due to an indefinite strike called by ITWAN-GEFONT demanding NRs 1 million compensation to the family of Krishna Khawas, a driver who was killed by an unidentified gang while struggling for the protection of bus passengers in Sarlahi on Aug 3.

7. Unilever Nepal Limited, a leading MNC remained closed for 3 weeks from January 27, after local youths forced company to provide jobs to them.

8. On Jan 20, 2008, Himalayan Snacks and Noodles Private Limited closed down due to stoppage of work at the factory in Kavre district by ANFTU members. They were intending to scrap agreement made between management and GEFONT local affiliate one year back.

9. ANFTU hotel sector affiliate forced guests to leave hotels more than a dozen and locked on Jan 17. Their demand was of minimum salary of Rs 3,500, Rs 5,000 and Rs 10,000 categorising into three grades respectively. But the union made agreement without any achievement.

10. On January 01, the management of an Pokhara Foods dismissed 12 workers affiliated with GEFONT in Pokhara. While a GEFONT delegation along with human right activists was holding talks with the management, the ANFTU men attacked. It sparked strike at January 2 and it was called off after bilateral talk.

11. The nationwide indefinite strike called by transport entrepreneurs ended at June 24 following the agreement with government. The strike was related to hike transport fare by 28 percent.

12. Workers in Dabur Nepal have resumed after month-long strike on September 26 after an 11-point agreement with the management. Bonus was the demand of the workers based on Labour Act and Bonus Act.

Implement declared minimum wage immediately;
Increase salary by NRs.1300 across the board

After long debate-discussion-argument and counter argument, unfortunately the trade unions and employers organizations failed to reach into the consensus to periodic review of the minimum wages. Based on the discussion the Minister for Labour and Transport Management declared new monthly minimum wage NRs 4,600 from 3300; daily wages NRs 190 from 125 and NRs 150 for agricultural workers. In spite of the unanimous demand of unions at NRs. 5,000, the government decision came into public through Gazette.

Any way, this decision has increased NRs 1300 monthly for all workers working in private owned businesses contrary to NRs 2,000 for employees of Government and Public Enterprises. This decision has also ended the previous 4 categories of minimum wages.

On the contrary, challenging this government decision, surprisingly the apex body of the employers’-FNCCI has issued a public notice through broadsheet dailies not to implement it. It indicates that the employers have taken a wrong stand which ultimately invites unrest in the world of work. GEFONT 67th National Executive Committee meeting directs its affiliates to mobilise all structures and members in order to pressure for implementation of increased salary across the board. Moreover, the JTUCC, through National Trade Union Conference has also declared common position of trade unions to implement increased salaries.

ITUC-AP adopts resolution condemning employers

Meanwhile the second ITUC-AP General Council held in Bangkok on 4-6 Nov 2008 calls upon the government of Nepal to effectively implement declared wage rate across the board and condemns the employer’s attitude which may derail the on going process of labour law reform in Nepal.
National Labour Commission: A new Proposal as part of Labour reform in Nepal

On the eve of the process of drafting new constitution, the exercise to insert basic rights of workers in the New Constitution is speeding up through joint initiatives of trade unions; a parallel process to revise labour legislations is also going on.

As the issue of Labour Law reforms was a big debate between unions and employers since 2000, it is narrowed down later on in seven areas: (1) the introduction of social security system (2) attaining labour market flexibility (3) streamlining informal sector (4) addressing workplace gender issues (5) improving trade unions and collective bargaining process (6) strengthening labour administration and labour court and (7) designing exit policy for the entrepreneurs.

Based on this, in the coordination of ILO the social partners in Nepal agreed to deal this issue in basket which would cover amendment in existing Labour Act, Trade Union Act including introduction of New Social Security Act and the new system of Industrial relation.

Proposal of National Labour Commission

The Interim Constitution of Nepal has incorporated a provision of Labour Commission. Trade unions jointly raised voice for the establishment of National Labour Commission and finally Nepal Government setup a tripartite task force to design the terms and condition of the Commission on 2007. After long discussion, arguments and consultation, the social partners of world of work reached on consensus and submitted the final draft, which would ultimately establish a structure to fulfil demand of new types of industrial relation system.

Thus, it is felt necessary to establish a free and autonomous commission to protect and secure the right, interest and benefit of all workers and employees of formal and informal economy. By establishing this, it will create additional industry-friendly environment for the employers and it will be helpful to settle the industrial disputes promptly and immediately.

The Structure

Central there will be a Commission headed by a President. The president and the members of the commission shall be appointed by the Head of the State. Two members should have special knowledge of Labour law. One third women should be appointed compulsorily. The Commissioners will be appointed on the recommendation of tripartite committee, which is composed with trade unions, employers’ organization and the government representatives. The tenure for the President and members shall be five years from the date of appointment; however, they may be re-appointed once again.

The Jurisdiction of the Commission

The commission should have power to provide conciliation service for the settlement of disputes. In case of failure of conciliation, it may inter into arbitration. However, in essential services, compulsory arbitration shall be applied.

The Commission shall have authority to interpret the labour law and arbitral award. It has power to make effective enforcement of decisions- orders- agreements. The Commission shall monitor whether collective bargaining is based on good faith; whether unfair labour practice exists. In such cases the Commission may issue the appropriate order.

The Commission shall have right to provide the education and training to the stakeholders on decision made by Commission. The commission will correct the erroneous matter & the issues committed by the trade unions, employer organization and the government.

The Commission shall make a recommendation on appointment of ‘accredited labour inspector’ for the promotion of labour inspection system at workplace. However, the inspectors shall enjoy limited rights only.
Together we will Achieve Decent Work and Better South Asia

The South Asian Regional Conference of Women Trade Unionists Concluded

With the theme Together we will Achieve Decent Work and Better South Asia, GEFONT-CWWD organized South Asian Regional Conference of Women Trade Unionists on September 20-22, 2008 in cooperation with 3F Denmark. It was an advanced edition of South Asian Women trade unionist conference of 2003. With the objective of full support to the Decent work Campaign of ITUC; this conference was focussed on rights at work, ending poverty & inequality and review of achievements after 2003 in a gender perspective. Not only South Asian women trade unionists participated, but also from other Asian countries as well as from Europe and South Africa participated and shared experiences. The Inaugural session was addressed by Chairman of the Constituent Assembly Rt. Honorable Subhash C. Nemwang as the guest of honour.

The first plenary on the second day of the conference was chaired by Siv Mjaaland (ILO-SRO). The session dealt with the progress that has been made in South Asia in the past five years. Jyoti Mackwan General Secretary of SEWA (Self Employed Women’s Association), India, gave an overview of some gender based indicators in South Asia.

Mamiko Kastumato, of RENGO, Japan, was chairperson of the second plenary. Umesh Upadhyaya of GEFONT presented a paper on Ending poverty and inequality. Stating that poverty is global, and that poverty goes hand in hand with inequality, he called them “the devil twins” and gave facts and figures to illustrate his statement. Moving on to what can be done, Umesh Upadhyaya stated that a process of redistribution is essential – growth alone is insufficient. The Decent work strategy, supported by the trade union movement, is a device that can be used to put pressure to governments.

He also emphasized the need for the “Class+3 approach”: There is both economic and social discrimination. Therefore it is important to focus also on gender, caste/ethnicity and regional discrimination – not only class, which is only about economic factors.

Growth should be combined with a class-oriented distribution system and broad based welfare schemes. Umesh Upadhyaya mentioned the example of China, where a high level of economic growth has been achieved, but coupled with growing inequality.
CONCLUSIONS

From 20 to 22 September 2008, trade union leaders from South Asia as well as other participants and officials of the International Labour Organization, joined in solidarity to share their experiences and aspirations for the future. The participants came from 28 Federations, 5 Global Union Federations (Nepal Chapters), trade unions from 14 countries were represented.

The objectives of the Conference were: to share and revisit women workers situations in the entire South Asia to compare and evaluate the progress from the previous conference held on the same issue in 2003, to develop a common understanding on Decent Work for women in South Asia, and to agree on solidarity initiatives to achieve common goals at national, regional and global levels.

The Conference was also an initiative to create common engagement on World Day of Decent Work (WDDW) under the campaign of ITUC at the Global Level.

The Conference emphasized the importance of the ILO Global Campaign on Gender Equality at the Heart of Decent Work and its relevance to South Asia, and the crucial need to strategize towards ensuring that the burning issues faced in the region be taken up within the campaign and at the International Labour Conference in June 2009.

The Conference was organized by GEFONT with support from the United Federation of Danish Workers (3F).

The Conference was opened by the Right Honorable Chairperson of the Constituent Assembly of Nepal, Mr. Subash Chandra Nembang; speeches were made by Mr. Mukunda Neupane, Chairperson, GEFONT; H.E. the Ambassador of Denmark to Nepal, Mr. Finn Thilsted and Director of the ILO Subregional Office for South Asia, Ms. Leyla Tegmo-Reddy as well as Ms. Annelise Rasmussen, Gender Adviser from 3F, Denmark and other solidarity unionists. It was chaired by Sister Beena Shrestha, Coordinator, Central Women Workers Department, GEFONT.

The Conference reflected on achievements made since 2003 when a South Asian Regional Conference of women trade unionists was held, focusing on identifying a common agenda for a better South Asia. The participants also discussed the key issues of rights at work and ending poverty and inequality. The Conference highlighted the need to work closely and prioritize the most pressing areas for action and the key strategies required.

Diagnosis of the achievements the last five years

Using a set of background papers which reviewed key challenges and achievements for women workers in South Asia for the last five years, a common ground for discussion was set during the Conference. This produced an image of the current challenges and progress in the region.

Other papers focused on rights at work and poverty and inequality analyzed the current situation with basic emphasis on women workers. The papers highlighted the extreme difficulties and disparities faced by women workers and pointed out a number of solutions and practical recommendations.

Individual country presentations were made by the participants both from South Asia and from other countries.

From this platform, the Conference further established two working groups to discuss a common agenda to achieve decent work for women in South Asia and solidarity initiatives which should be launched at national, regional and global levels.

The participants recognized the strengths and skills of women trade union leaders in South Asia, to raise the issues and demands of women workers to struggle for the creation of an equal world.

Common Agenda on Decent Work for Women in South Asia

The vast majority of workers in South Asia (particularly women) are in the informal economy. Decent work, and the four pillars upon which it is based, need to become a reality for all in South Asia. This requires that Governments, Employers, Trade Unions and others commit resources and focus initiatives particularly in relation to decent work deficits faced by informal economy workers.

The burning priorities to achieve Gender Equality in South Asia are:

1. Recognizing the work performed by women, ensuring pay equity and decent wages.
2. Giving value to the unpaid work performed by women (e.g. Venezuelan case where poor women housewives now receive a minimum wage including housework, child care, care of elderly and disabled relatives).
3. Extending social protection to all, with an emphasis on maternity protection, health protection, old age and survivor pensions and food security;
4. Ensuring that reproductive health is a key element of occupational safety and health initiatives;
5. Sharing of family responsibilities of children and the elderly;
6. Ensuring the existence of quality and accessible child care facilities;
7. Ending violence against women, including trafficking, sexual harassment, forced and bonded labour;
8. Providing access to quality education, skills and adult literacy;
We need to march forward with solidarity initiatives at the national, regional and global levels. The importance of these initiatives cannot be overstated as they address both economic inequalities and social discrimination.

At the national level for solidarity initiatives are:
1. Recognizing women's contribution to national economic growth and to expand recognition of women's work, to build a positive image of women in South Asia becomes a reality.
2. Implementing strong initiatives to link the issues of class, caste/ethnicity and gender to address both economic inequalities and social discrimination.
3. Campaigning for equal distribution of resources between women and men.
4. Engaging in, or continuing with, cooperation between women's committees.
5. Providing issue-based unity at work place level, issue-based and political concerns at the national level.
6. Initiating local and national level meetings, conferences and seminars focusing on ILO procedures, the agenda item for the ILC and seeking technical assistance from the ILO, particularly the Subregional Office for South Asia and Country Offices in South Asia, when arranging such conferences and seminars.
7. Ensuring the recognition of women's contribution to national economic growth.
8. Coordinating for strong demand of women's adequate (at least 33%) representation in decision-making bodies including social dialogue institutions.

At the regional level:
1. Putting pressure on South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) nations to prioritize, promote and implement Decent Work initiatives for all Trade Union rights and a positive image of women workers;
2. Lobby and advocate for unity among ITUC and non-ITUC affiliates to work with all women trade unionists in different Trade Union federations on various issues;
3. Facilitating women trade unionists to influence national and local policies;
4. Building issue-based campaigns on the rights of women workers, focusing on the burning issues identified at this Conference.
5. Engaging in training, exposure and exchange programmes and sharing of good practices, both within and between countries.

At the global level:
1. Women trade unionists interests should be represented at various international meetings and conferences, such as the International Labour Conference (ILC);
2. Pressurize for gender balanced delegations to the ILC in 2009 and beyond;
3. Lobbying and advocating towards the national delegations participation on the ILC in order to ensure that issues concerning women workers rights and gender equality in the region are brought to the core of the discussions;
4. Making active use of the ILO’s competence related to various tools, research, analysis and deficits, and lessons learned, and the sharing of international experiences;
5. Ensuring an agenda mirroring the South Asian challenges for the ILO’s policy, research and technical assistance work with regards to Gender Equality with the aim of contributing to the overall goal of Gender Equality;
6. In the context of globalization and the moving of production to countries with cheaper labour; seeking understanding and solidarity from partner trade unions all over the world to ensure that they, within their national contexts, push for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) which actually benefits women workers and involves trade unions in decision-making, and ensure workers rights throughout the full value chain.
Finally, designing actions is not enough, he concluded. Actions have to be backed up by effective mechanisms of implementation and monitoring.

Pat Horn of Streetnet International delivered her presentation on Rights at Work in the context of the informal sector - the right to organise, recognition of our organisations, collective bargaining rights, protection from discrimination, protection against forced labour and child labour, and a healthy and safe working environment.

The world of work is changing, said Pat Horn, pointing out that traditional types of work more and more give way to a-typical, informal work. And workers in the informal sector face a different set of problems. In the informal economy, some earn a wage, some are own-account workers or self-employed. Women are usually at the bottom of the pile. Many forms of vulnerable work are the preserve of women, for example home based production, street vending, domestic work etc. In patriarchal societies "women's work" is that which has a lesser value, is less secure and less paid. It has been said that two thirds of the work in the world is done by women, but women only earn 10% of the income.

Some problems are common for most informal workers. They usually have low and irregular income, little or no social security, unhealthy and unsafe working conditions. They face a lack of respect by society, and they are often ignored by trade unions.

Informal women workers suffer from discrimination, unequal access to credit etc, lack of health care for self and family, absence of maternity benefits and child care, insurance, physical security and safety and protection from sexual harassment.

Different problems dominate in different sectors of the informal economy. Organise, organise, organise! That is still the main message, Pat Horn said. Women have to be organised both as women and as workers, and building women worker leaders to lead the struggles is important.

However, there are many challenges in organising informal workers. The trade union leadership must have the political will to prioritize organising women and informal workers. Legal changes may be necessary – the law doesn’t always permit organising informal workers. Trade unions also need new organising strategies to find and organise workers that are not in a traditional workplace. They have to interact with new types of negotiating partners – not traditional employers, but other authorities that have the power to change, such as the police or municipalities. It is important to promote women leadership and women negotiators.

All presentations were followed by in-depth discussions. After the discussion focus was targeted on solidarity strategies at national regional and global level. Finally Conclusion of the conference were derived and issued as well.
JTUCC Formalises finally

National Trade Union Conference (October 27-28, 2008) organised by Joint Trade Union Coordination Centre (JTUCC) has been concluded in Kathmandu. Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' inaugurated the Conference as the chief guest.

"You have began healthy culture" the prime minister said- there is dialectical relation between labour and capital on the issue of more wage vs more benefit.

Participated by senior leaders from JTUCC coalition Conference adopted Code of Conduct of JTUCC, Contemporary labour issues, workers agendas in Constituent Assembly and proposal of ongoing process of labour law reform.

The conference has issued 11-point declaration.

JTUCC is a platform of major trade unions confederation having different political inclinations which includes, NTUC-I, GEFONT, ANFTU, CoNER ANTUC, NTUF, FINEPT and NDCONT.

Full text of Declaration is as following:

We, the representatives of 8 Trade Union Confederations of Nepal, representing the entire labour force of the nation organised the National Trade Union Conference on 26-27 October, 2008 in Kathmandu.

With the objective of promoting the unified Trade Union movement uniting all the workers affiliated to various Trade Union organisations throughout the nation, all the Trade Union Centres affiliated to the Joint Trade Union Coordination Centre (JTUCC) formed in mutual understandings on December 1, 2007, hereby issue the conclusions of the conference as the joint declaration:

1. Fully committed to democracy (loktantra) and socialism, we have decided to institutionalise the Joint Trade Union Coordination Centre (JTUCC), formed as a coordination centre of Nepali Trade Unions with democratic norms and values. We unanimously agree that the Trade Unions agreeing with the proposals, code of conducts, and declarations adopted by the conference can be affiliated to the JTUCC.

2. All the Trade Unions have agreed to establish the following rights under the fundamental rights of the new constitution:
   i. Rights to organising, conducting trade union activities, collective bargaining and rights to go on strike if there are no alternative solutions to their problems.
   ii. Rights to decent work, fair labour practice and unemployment insurance system for the protection of the workers who have lost job.
ii. Freedom of movement and residence in course of employment throughout the nation.

iv. Social security as old age protection, maternity protection, protection of the disabled and the helpless members of the deceased worker’s family.

vi. End of discrimination in providing social security and other facilities under any forms of employment.

vii. End of child labour and guarantee of child rights to education.

viii. Abolition of bonded and forced labour.

ix. Rights to justice for the implementation of rights and interests provided by labour law and collective bargaining.

3. We are unanimous that the representation of the workers must be ensured at the national level of policy making like that of ethnic, regional and gender identity. 10 percent worker representatives must be ensured in national and state bodies to be established by the constituent assembly. We are also unanimous that the representation of workers must be ensured in the commissions like national planning commissions, human rights commission, commission for women, commission for Dalits etc, and in the national mechanisms in which the representatives of the employers are involved.

4. We declare that we jointly agree on demanding for the formation of national labour commission as a constitutional body with judicial authority immediately and effectively.

5. We are unanimous on timely revision of existing labour laws as per the norms of the democratic republic Nepal. We emphasize on the guarantee of social security, while revising the laws.

6. We are unanimous on emphasizing on the economic revolution to enrich and make workers’ life decent through creation of employment.

7. We emphatically demand that the government implement the salary increased by the national budget from the first Shravan 2065. We also demand that the labour inspection system be effectively implemented to resolve the existing problems of the labour market.

8. We jointly call for a wide political conference to reach a high level of understanding among political parties of the nation to protect democracy and nationalisms, to build the constitution within the timeframe, to maintain sustainable peace by leading the peace process to the logical end, to start immediately the process of social transformation as per people’s desire, to end corruption and to control market price.

9. We pay cordial homage to the martyrs of all democratic movements, 19-day mass movement and the 10-year people’s war. We appeal all political parties and social partners to protect the achievements from the movements.

10. Extending deep sorrow for the loss of life and property in the eastern and western parts of Nepal caused by devastating floods, we emphatically demand that the government immediately provide adequate packages and rehabilitation.

11. We are thankful for the inauguration speech at the opening ceremony and encouragement to the joint efforts to the Chief Guest of the programme Rt. Honourable Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda.

Date: October 27, 2008; Signed by all Chairs of eight trade union centres
Jointly Towards Common Destination

Exercises for single unionism in Nepal have now completed 8 important years of struggle & difficulties and of hopes-frustrations-hopes. From the 3rd National Congress of GEFONT in the year 2000, we appealed for single union initiatives to other recognised national Centre – NTUC, which immediately was responsive to our appeal. And then we started a series of efforts with continuous flow of financial resources, human power, thought and practical initiatives. International community also promoted our efforts; particularly financial-technical support was by LO-FTF Council Denmark.

Joint efforts moved forward in various levels simultaneously. GEFONT and NTUC in one level with formation of Taskforce and then through joint board and secretariat as a step forward working on various issues ranging from OSH to political work, whereas GEFONT-NTUC-DECONT another level of issue based work. Similarly during the April Uprising of 2006, Joint struggle was launched by GEFONT-NTUC-DECONT-CoNEP covering the grand 19 days of general strike through massive mobilization of workers nationwide. After the success of the popular movement known as Jana aandolan II various ‘trade union groupings’ got political recognition. During the process of declaration of democratic republic and pre & post Constituent Assembly election, in order to smooth carrying-on of joint initiatives; we have been successful to create new alliance of eight national centres developing Joint Trade Union Coordination Centre (JTUCC).

From Policy conference on Challenges of Trade Union Movement in Nepal organised by NTUC/GEFONT Joint Board in September 24-25, 2006, the concept of single unionism started to become concretised. Moreover the MOU signed by GEFONT and NTUC opened the door for others to join hands for Joint Trade union umbrella. Lahan Declaration signed by GEFONT, NTUC, DECONT and ANFTU was first formal agreement among trade unions with the involvement of Maoist union targeted towards industrial peace and employment. However GEFONT has taken high initiatives prior to Lahan Declaration to mainstream ANFTU and to minimize violent attack against GEFONT members by ANFTU musclemen. Agreements between GEFONT and ANFTU were also signed to put an end to the violent encounters and injuries in workplaces. In order to translate these initiatives into real practice, joint trade union workshop was organized, which pushed the initiatives towards new height. Resultantly, JTUCC could be established and efforts for single unionism could be directed towards a direct track.
Formation of JTUCC is also the outcome of efforts based on MoU between GEFONT and NTUC; the MoU has tried to define the concept of single unionism and various phases and stages of development, which created conceptual background for JTUCC. However even after the establishment of JTUCC, fast development of the process could not become possible. The initiatives formalised through signatures in various declarations could not be translated into practice. The relevance of JTUCC has increased in the new context as a common position and significant joint work has become a must in order to make the new constitution pro-worker and to formulate/amend labour laws.

The May Day declaration 2008 has the clear commitment – “Although there are various Trade Union centres with different political ideologies in Nepali Trade Union movement, we express our commitment to raise jointly a class-based voice on common labour agenda... We are trying to make our joint initiatives more effective from this May Day. We also express our commitment to lobby and pressurize for the workers' issues to be addressed in the new constitution.”

Since the contemporary Nepal is in a hot debate of identity issue of various caste ethnic, regional social groups, class issue is ignored by political parties and other stakeholders including policy thinkers and think. Because of provoked identity voice and even violent type of offensive activities, unity of the nation is at stake. Trade unions can play a concrete role of uniting the nation through mobilization of working masses in class-based track and save the nation from separatist forms of sentiments. But commitments only in principle is not sufficient and need is of practical go ahead.

Common Minimum Labour Agenda has been signed and declared on August 2007 with the slogan "Sustainable Peace and federal democratic governance, Class-inclusiveness and guarantee of Trade Union rights"

However the thought of most of the partners is still in the same old track of political unionism and in isolated form of working style. Principally they agree with the relevance of JTUCC and need to work together, but the problem is in implementation of the commitments. Recently through the national trade union conference on October 25, 2008, a code of conduct for the operation of JTUCC has been adopted. If the Code of Conduct could be effectively implemented, unification of trade union movement will speed up and conflicts among trade unions based on differences in ideologies or practical egos will come to a minimum. GEFONT as the initiator and promoter of ‘one union one voice’ directed towards single unionism in the country is honestly working for the goal and is in endeavour to convince other partners to join hands with equal seriousness.
CA Election onwards:
Major Milestones of Nepali Politics

April 10
Election of Constituent Assembly; 813 Women and 3580 Men candidates contested for 240 seats in FPTP (First-post-the Post) method; Total voters 17,609,895 including 8,729,290 woman Voters; Polling Centers 20,888 and voters turnout around 60%

April 21
PR (Proportional Representation) counting scoreboard: Maoists, NC and CPN (UML) in top three positions

April 22
UML Ministers quits from government citing moral ground on loss in Constituent Assembly Election.

April 26
Election Commission declares PR results; Maoists bags 100 seats, NC 73 and UML 70

April 29
Nepal and Bahrain sign labour pact between two countries

May 1
GEFONT and CoNEP jointly organised May Day Rally all over the country

May 22
Administration, Law and Judge’s Office of Labour Ministry of US declared to pay compensation to 9 families among 12 killed in Iraq

May 28
First Meeting of CA open; Nepal declared Federal Democratic Republic

June 04
Fifth Amendment in Interim Constitution with the provision of establish new Government and opposition party; Government decided to give Nagarjuna Palace to ex- King Gyanendra Shah

June 09
Doctors go on nationwide strike due to insecurity; Constituent Assembly Meeting resumes after two weeks disturbance made by Madhesi Parties

June 11
Ex King Holds press meeting accepted the decision made by constituent Assembly Election, leaves Narayanhiti Palace and headed to Nagarjuna Palace.

June 15
Prime Minister GP Koirala inaugurates Narayanhiti Palace as Narayanhiti Palace Museum hoisting National Flag

June 19
The local bodies across the country remained closed on Thursday protesting ‘harsh and unbecoming’ action by Minister Matrika Yadav against a Local Development Officer. Local Development Minister Dev Gurung requested Forest Minister for apology

July 21
Dr Ram Baran Yadav elected First President of Federal Democratic Republic

July 23
President Dr. Ram Baran Yadav and Vice President Parmananda Jha sworn-in; Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala tenders his resignation to President

July 27
President Dr. Yadav addressed to the nation for the first time

July 28
President invited CPN (Maoist) to form new government within 7 days time to

Aug 03
General strike entered fourth day in Eastern region due to murder of ITWAN member (driver) by unidentified group.

Aug 11
Nepali Congress decided to stay out from coalition government as an opposition; CPN (Maoist), CPN (UML) and MJF decided to lead the coalition government

Aug 15
CPN (Maoist) Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal (Prachand) elected as first Prime Minister of FDR.
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug 18</td>
<td>Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal sworn in</td>
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<td>Aug 21</td>
<td>CPN (Maoist), CPN (UML) and MJF agreed on division of Ministries</td>
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<td>Aug 28</td>
<td>Two protesting workers' of GEFONT shut by policemen at Bara.</td>
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<td>Aug 29</td>
<td>Koshi barrage collapsed, flood displaced hundreds of thousands peoples people were displaced</td>
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<td>Aug 31</td>
<td>Prime Minister expanded cabinet adding 15 Ministers, CPN (UML) refused to sworn in due to protocol problem</td>
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<td>September 06</td>
<td>Government abolishes Holiya system.</td>
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<td>September 11</td>
<td>President Dr. Yadav addressed the legislator parliament, presented 90 points Government policies programmes</td>
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<td>September 16</td>
<td>Prime Minister Prachanda met Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Indian PM ready to review 1950s Peace and Friendship Treaty and decided to established High Level Committee.</td>
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<td>September 20</td>
<td>Prime Minister Prachanda addressed General Assembly of United Nation</td>
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<td>October 03</td>
<td>Cabinet formed Committees for peace talk with armed groups in Terai</td>
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<td>October 08</td>
<td>CPN (UML) 2 days national cadres gathering concluded; 8th national Congress to be held on February 16 to 21.</td>
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<td>October 10</td>
<td>Finance Minister met US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Richard Boucher and urged for 34 hundred million donations.</td>
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<td>October 14</td>
<td>UK Court decided to provide citizenship along with permanent residency to Gurkha Army</td>
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<td>October 24</td>
<td>Nepal Sambat recognised as National Era by Government</td>
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<td>November 11</td>
<td>Legislature Parliament adopted Government Budget for the current fiscal year</td>
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**Obituary**

September 22: **Com. Agni Shikha**, the member of GEFONT Central Planning Commission untimely passed away at 2 am today. He was a well-known Journalist and the progressive writer.

This morning he felt uneasiness and rushed to the hospital, however he was unaware that he had heart problem. While reached in a private hospital, the physician advised him for heart checkup immediately in the Gangal Heart centre. He felt urgency however, it was already late. He passed away at the gate of heart centre.

Com. Agni-Shikha had edited various vernaculars weekly and currently was working as a co-editor of Naya Patrika, one of the popular daily tabloids. He was well-known columnist, and inking his write-up on international revolutionaries.

He has written over dozen books and also has written books on labour. He was associated with GEFONT magazine- Sramik Khabar or Workers’ News. He has edited and translated 2 sets of ILO manual regarding how trade unions should combat against child labour.

GEFONT National Executive Committee feels profound sorrow on his untimely demise. GEFONT pays homage to Com. Agni Shikha and Condole the bereaved family.
Acronym & Definition

ANFTU  All Nepal Federation of Trade Unions
ANHRWU All Nepal Hotel and Restaurant Workers Union
ANTUC All Nepal Trade Union Congress
CA  Constituent Assembly
CNI  Confederation of Nepalese Industries
CoNEP Confederation of Nepalese Professionals
CPN (Maoist) Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)
CPN (UML) Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist)
EPZ  Export Processing Zone
FINEPT Federation of Nepalese Progressive Trade Unions
FNCCI  Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry
GEFONT General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions
ICEM  International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers’ Unions
ILO  International Labour Organisation
ILO-SRO International Labour Organisation, Sub-regional Office
ITUC  International Trade Union Confederation
ITUC-AP International Trade Union Confederation, Asia Pacific region
ITWAN Independent Transport Association of Nepal
KMC Kathmandu Metropolitan city
LBEA Local Body Employees Association
MJF Madhesi Janaadhikar Forum
MNC Multi National Companies
NC  Nepali Congress
NCC Nepal Chamber of Commerce
NDCONT National Democratic Confederation of Nepal
NEST Nepal Street Vendors Trade Union
NCIWU Nepal Independent Chemical-Iron Workers Union
NIHWU Nepal Independent Hotel Workers Union
NTDC Nepal Tea Development Corporation
NTUC-I Nepal Trade Union Congress- Independent
NTUF Nepal Trade Union Federation
RENGO Japanese Trade Union Confederation (ITUC-Rengo)
SAARC South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SEWA Self-employed Women Association, India
SEZ Special Processing Zone
ULT United Telecom Limited
VDCs Village Development Committees
WDDW World Day of Decent Work
YCL Young Communist League

Contributing Team
Bishnu Rimal
Umesh Upadhyaya
Kabindra S. Rimal
Ramesh Badal
Jeny Pujari
Bidur Karki
Mahendra Shrestha
Kiran Mali
Glorious two decades of continuous struggle has been completed with many ups and down.

We declared our existence at time when tyrannical rule of absolute monarchy was counting its last days.

We won multiparty democracy, but bad governance together with insurgency caused extreme adversities…

A final battle we fought; monarchy abolished and we are welcoming our country as New Federal Democratic Republic.

Time has come to update, correct and reengineer our unionism, which our supreme body- the National Congress can do!

Now it is all set to conduct 5th National Congress … date has been set April 4-7, 2009; Kathmandu

Let us make it grand success, show our solid unity and solidarity!!