

# Nepal Abroad

Published weekly from Washington D.C.

Nepal Abroad

Saturday Baishak 07, 2064 B.S. / April 19, 2008

Year 3. No. 14

## All Nepalese Women's Team To Scale Mt. Everest



Photo: Sundar Shrestha/NS

The jubilant women from across the country forming an all women's team to scale the Mount Everest this May are seen together before flying to the Everest base camp on Thursday April 17 in Kathmandu. They plan to reach the top between mid to end of May 2008.

## Tibetan Refugees in Nepal Face Emotional Brunt of Crackdown in Tibet

Tibetan refugees in Nepal could only look on when violent protests erupted in their homeland last month, and then were crushed by Chinese authorities. Some refugees worry that conditions will not improve in Tibet, and that growing frustration could lead to more violence. Ron Corben recently visited one Tibetan community in Nepal and has this report.

Five hundred students sing Tibet's national anthem at the Tibetan school in the Nepalese city of Pokhara.

On a day usually marked by celebration as students receive their awards, the mood is sombre. Protests in Tibet and nearby provinces in China have cast a pall over this refugee community.

Chinese officials say about 20 people died in the riots, but exiled Tibetan leaders say 150 died in the protests and the police crackdown.

Students, teachers and parents join in a chant to remember the dead.

Nepal is home to about 20,000 Tibetan refugees. Thousands

each year attempt to flee Chinese rule and slip into Nepal or India.

Much of the land for this community was donated and aid agencies have built houses and schools.

Neat lines of cottages look out over a football field that in the late afternoon is shared by Tibetan and Nepalese children alike.

Refugees, many here five decades, run businesses, teach at the Tibetan school, or work in the tourism industry.

D. Wangyal was three years old when his family fled Tibet. Now an official at a camp in Pokhara, he says news of the recent violence traumatized the community.

"The current situation or crisis or the rather unpleasant development in March - it's unbelievably torturing us," he said.

China has ruled Tibet for nearly 60 years. In 1959, Tibet's spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, and thousands of others fled after a failed uprising. Beijing blames the Dalai Lama for the recent unrest, and

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## Ambassador Chalise In CA, Amidst Friends And Expatriates

During his week long trip starting April 12 to the western state of California, Ambassador Dr Suresh C Chalise talked to the Nepalese expatriates, entrepreneurs and friends of Nepal.

'In contemporary Nepal, peace and democracy are intimately associated with each other. With the accomplishment of the Constituent Assembly (CA) election, it now provides a fundamental underpinning to the full-fledged democracy and lasting peace to the Nepalese society', said Dr Chalise in an interaction program organized by the Department of South Asian Studies



Dr. Suresh C. Chalise

to discuss the contemporary Nepalese politics at the University of California, Berkeley on Monday April

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## World Food Program Appeals For More Aid Money

By Kent Klein,

Washington DC April 18 (VOA): The World Food Program is making another urgent appeal for donations. The U.N. agency is asking for an additional \$256 million, after requesting \$500 million in March. VOA's Kent Klein reports from Washington on the crisis caused by soaring world food prices.

The executive director of the World Food Program, Josette Sheeran, says the convergence of factors driving up food prices has put the world in the eye of a storm. The U.N. agency chief says the cost of food that the WFP buys for distribution has risen by more than 50 percent in less than a year. She says that is forcing the

WFP to either raise more money or cut its services.

"Without increased donations, all of WFP's work is threatened with a 40 percent reduction in coming months," she said. "This is why we've put out an emergency appeal to the world, an extraordinary emergency appeal."

In Washington, Sheeran said sharply higher food prices are causing human misery and are jeopardizing the stability of countries around the world.

"The World Bank estimates that these rapidly accelerating prices will drive 100 million people into even more extreme poverty, and places 33

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**Editorial:**

## Reason Over Dogmatism: Need Of The Hour

There is now no denying that the result of the current election was for a REAL change, embedded with a hope that things would be better for all citizens and not just the ruling elites.

Those leaders and their party's that made several claims, since 1990 with tantalizing assurances to the general public are all flushed out from the scene, a befitting lesson to these individuals who took for granted that the Nepal's affairs were their sole prerogative. Although the current victors may not be the choice of many for variety of reasons, the vanquished group would have dragged the country into the state of prolonged confusion, chaos, uncertainty and dependent on foreign actors. The result of this election also reflects people's concern towards eroding national sovereignty, and the need to unite all nationalist forces to check aggression against our territory and national integrity.

The defeat of the (self assumed) all time representatives of the people suggests that common people are tired of listening their arguments and stories, and the way they handled the country's politics. They'd seen virtually every political leader rushing to Delhi to seek benefits, even at the slightest change in the domestic political environment, suggesting people that they're incapable to think and work for Nepal's interests independently.

There is now a hope, renewed energy and expectation among the population, with the emergence of the former rebels into the country's main stream politics,

vowing to change Nepal in certain timeframe. While every body would not agree on their political and social ideology, the Maoists have to take into confidence other groups while effecting any major changes to the state's structure. Without the popular support, no changes can be durable, and thus, would lasts till the effecting groups remain in power.

The election is only but the will of the majority and one can be in majority with a difference of a single digit number one (1). Therefore, while arguing that the majority of people voted for Maoists also means there are equal or more number of people who disagree with their ideology and hence, voted different candidates.

Therefore, one has to recognize the feelings and aspiration of those groups too that voted other than to the Maoists, even though their preferred candidates didn't win. Any unilateral attempt to impose a purely (party's) political agendas that affects the nature of the State may not be productive and durable. If the voting trends, context, the days before election and the role of Young Communists League (YCL) are to be analyzed, it would certainly bring annoyance to the victors. Many argue that people were desperate for political change; there are also a few denials that the current shift to the Communists Party of Nepal Maoists is only temporary, as people could find no suitable alternative.

Therefore wisdom should prevail over aggressive agendas, globally compatible reason should prevail over dogmatism, and reconciliation should prevail over vengeance to ensure permanent peace and stability.

## World Food Program...

*Contd. from page 1...*

nations at risk of instability due to soaring prices," she said.

The World Food Program chief blames five factors for the spiraling prices. First, she says an economic boom in developing countries has increased global demand for food. Second, record-high

oil prices are driving up the cost of producing and transporting food. Third, Sheeran says rising demand for food-based fuel is also causing demand for food to explode. Fourth, she says recent severe weather has shrunk harvests. Finally, she says food export bans and hedging on futures markets have made food less available.

## First CA Meeting To Convene At BICC

Kathmandu, April 15 (HNS): The first Constituent Assembly meet will convene at the main hall of Birendra International Convention Centre at New Baneshwor. The meeting of the 601-member assembly is due to convene 21 days after the final results of the election are declared.

The BICC was chosen for the CA meet as no other suitable place is currently available to accommodate all 601 CA members. Even the Gallery Hall of the parliament in Singha Durbar can accommodate at most 400 people.

"The Ministry of Physical Planning and Works will formally recommend to the government within a day or two to hold the CA meet at the BICC as no other appropriate hall that could accommodate all 601 CA members is currently available," secretary at the ministry Umakant Jha said today, adding the government

has already started homework to rearrange the main hall to hold the CA meeting.

Acting General Secretary of the Parliament Secretariat Manohar Prasad Bhattarai consulted the ministry on the assembly venue as soon as the offices resumed today after eight days of election holidays.

Bhattarai said as the BICC hall is already furnished and equipped, only a few adjustments like rearrangements of seats, microphones, recording systems and arrangements for

media persons and visitors are required.

Asked if all the House panels would be shifted to the BICC premises, Bhattarai said the plan so far is to set up a few offices related to the CA at the BICC while most of the House panels could be retained inside the Singha Durbar.

## YCL Cadres Seize Truck Of UML Activist

Cadres of the pro-Maoist Young Communist League seized a private truck belonging to a CPN-UML activist from Agrakhola in Thankre VDC of Dhading district two days ago and have refused to return it unless compensation is paid for the damage caused to their vehicle on April 4.

YCL cadres led by their district committee member Deepak Bidari seized the truck (Na 3 Kha 3357) and drove off with it to the Maoists' liaison office at Dharke in Naubise VDC. Since then, the truck is parked there.

The CPN-Maoist district unit said the truck, belonging to UML cadre Krishna Panta of Thankre VDC, was taken under control to press the CPN-UML to pay compensation for a truck carrying Maoists that was damaged by UML cadres six days ahead of the April 10 constituent assembly poll.

On April 4, a group of 100 Maoists led by the Maoists' Thankre VDC secretary Gyanendra Bidari attacked a team of UML leaders and cadres.

Fifteen persons, including UML district member Shankar

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To address the crisis, President Bush this week released \$200 million in emergency food stocks, and the U.S. Congress is considering a supplemental spending bill to meet urgent food needs.

French President Nicolas Sarkozy says his country will double its emergency food aid to developing countries, to an estimated \$100 million this year. He also asked governments, private industry and banks worldwide to work together to fight spiraling food prices.

### Nepali Calendar

Sun April 20 / Baishak 08 '65	Poornima
Mon April 21 / Baishak 09 '65	Pratipada
Tue April 22 / Baishak 10 '65	Dwitiya
Wed April 23 / Baishak 11 '65	Tritiya
Thu April 24 / Baishak 12 '65	Chauthi
Fri April 25 / Baishak 13 '65	Panchami
Sat April 26 / Baishak 14 '65	Khasthi

## NEAJA's Annual Meet On May 3

The annual meeting of Nepal America Journalists Association (NEAJA) has been scheduled for Saturday May 3 2008 at Aagan Restaurant in Harrisburg PA. This day coincides with the World Press Freedom Day. Throughout the world, May 3 serves as an occasion to inform the public of violations of the right to freedom of expression and as a reminder that many journalists brave death or jail to bring people their daily news.

The first meeting of NEAJA was held in Arlington VA on April 21-22 2007, thus announcing the formation of NEAJA. Individuals working in the Nepalese media in United States and Canada, and those who have either (earlier) worked in different medium in Nepal or are working as representatives in US attended, the program last year. Girish

...contd.to page 6

## Central US Hit by Magnitude 5.2 Earthquake

A 5.2 magnitude earthquake has shaken part of the central United States.

The U.S. Geological Survey says the epicenter of Friday's earthquake was about seven kilometers northeast of the town of Belmont, in the central state of Illinois.

There were no immediate reports of injuries but police departments across the region say they were flooded with calls to their emergency lines from worried residents.

The earthquake shook skyscrapers in Chicago (Illinois), hundreds of miles to the north of the epicenter, and rattled windows as far west as the state of Iowa's capital of Des Moines.

The U.S. Geological survey says the earthquake hit in what is known as the Illinois basin-Ozark dome region.

It says the largest earthquake to hit the area was a 5.4 magnitude earthquake that damaged southern parts of the central state of Illinois in 1968. (VOA 4/18)

## Mahanta Thakur Also Looses To MJF

The chief of Terai Madhes Loktantrik Party (TMLP) lost the election to Shiva P Yadav of Madhesi Janadhikar Forum (MJF) in the constituency 6 of Sarlahi District with 272 votes. Nepali Congress (NC) candidate was third in the race.

Thakur was a senior member of the NC and deserted to pen a new party in the South.

TMLP so far have nine representatives, while MJF 28

representatives and Sadbhawana Party have four representatives for the Constituent Assembly (CA) that would draft a new constitution of Nepal.

Letter to the editor can be emailed to [print@nepalabroad.com](mailto:print@nepalabroad.com) with your name, and contact no to verify the sender.

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## Calendar of Events

**April 19:** The Kentucky Nepali Society has scheduled Saturday April 19 to celebrate Nepali New Year 20065 BS at the Great Hall of Unitarian Universalist Church of Lexington, 3564 Clays Mill Rd, Lexington KY 40503. The details would be updated later.

**April 19:** The America-Nepal Society of California Inc invites community members and friends to celebrate Nepali New Year 2065 on Saturday April 19 from 6pm to 12:30pm at Raaga Indian Cuisine, 10110 Topanga Canyon Blvd, Chatsworth CA 91311. Ambassador Dr Suresh C Chalise will be the chief guest. For details visit [ansca.org](http://ansca.org)

**April 19:** The Association of Nepalese in Minnesota (ANMN) is organizing a cultural program to celebrate Nepali New Year 2065 on Saturday April 19 from 5.30 pm at Sheridan Global Arts and Communications School 1201 University Avenue NE MN 55413. For details visit [anmn.org](http://anmn.org)

**April 20:** The Nebraska Nepalese Society (NNS) invites all to celebrate Satya Narayan Pooja on Sunday April 20 from 4.00pm at the Hindu temple. For details visit [nnsociety.org](http://nnsociety.org)

**April 20:** The Baltimore Association of Nepalese in America (BANA) is celebrating New Year 2065 on Sunday April 20 from 8.00pm to 1.00 am at Charles Evering VFW 8777 Philadelphia Rd Rosedale MD 21237. Also the General Meeting is scheduled to be on the same day from 4.00 pm to 7.00 pm. For details visit [nepalhorizons.com](http://nepalhorizons.com) and [banaonline.com](http://banaonline.com)

**April 20:** The Nepalese Society Texas has scheduled 7pm on Sunday April 20 to celebrate Nepali New Year 2065 BS at Ramada Hotel DFW South, 4440 Airport Fwy, Irving TX 75062 from 7.00 pm. The program will include multicultural dance along with Nepali cultural dance and dinner. For details visit [nepalesesociety.org](http://nepalesesociety.org)

**April 27:** Radio Dovaan the communiyt radio in Washington DC is presenting Nepali feature Film Kagbeni North America Premiere on Sunday April 27 from 1.00 pm at Loehmann's Twin Cinema 7291 Arlington Blvd fa;;s Church VA 22042. For details visit [nepalhorizons.com](http://nepalhorizons.com)

**May 02:** Nepalese Association of Journalists in America (NeAJA) is organizing its first annual convention on Friday May 02 '80 and Saturday May 03 '08 at 1800 Driftstone Dr Harrisburg PA 17110. For details visit [nepalhorizons.com](http://nepalhorizons.com) or call Girish Pokharel 202 468 6910

**May 10:** The America Nepal Women's Association of Greater Washington DC (ANWA) is organizing its bi-annual fund raising event 'Yard Sale For The Education' on Saturday May 10 from 7.00am to 3.00pm at 6481 Little River Turnpike Alexandria VA 22312. For details visit [nepalhorizons.com](http://nepalhorizons.com) or call Ambika Gurung 703 992 5882 Madhavi Karki 703 609 7165 Rita Tiwari 703 532 2343

**May 11:** The Nepalese Communiyt in DC and Arlington invites all to attend community event to support Nepal Educational and Cultural Center (NECC) and share and interact the ideas on Sunday May 11 from 1.00pm to 4.30 pm (sharp) at Arlington Central Library 1015 North Quincy Street Arlington VA 22201. the program will be followed by light cultural program and Bhajan Kirtan. For details visit [nepalhorizons.com](http://nepalhorizons.com)

**May 18:** In coordination with Khasskhas.com, Arlington Central Library, Arlington VA 22201 has scheduled Sunday May 18 from 2pm to 3:30pm for Nepalese presentation as part of their celebration of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month. Shyam Khadgi, Navin KC, Luna Shrestha and Saranga Shrestha

**May 25:** The NOA is organizing its 7th Annual Convention and General meeting on memorial day weekends starting from Saturday May 25at Washington DC from 2.00pm to 11.00pm at Richard Ernst Cultural Community center. for details visit [nepalhorizons.com](http://nepalhorizons.com)

**Nepali Class in MN:** The Nepali language classes in Minneapolis MN would be held on the following dates at Mt. Olivete Church 5025 Knox Ave S, Minneapolis MN. Saturday Jan 12, Jan 26, Feb 9, Feb 23, Mar 8, Apr 5, Apr 19, May 3 and May 17. For more information contact any executive members at [anmn.org](http://anmn.org)

**ANMA/NASeA Convention 2008:** The 2008 ANMA/NASeA joint convention would be held in Omaha, NE. For more updates, stay tuned.

To list the scheduled event(s) of your organization on the Community Events above, please email us: [enews@nepalabroad.com](mailto:enews@nepalabroad.com)

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## 'Vishwaparikrama'

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## Democrats Mobilize America's Youth Vote

By Jela De Franceschi, Washington

Many pollsters say the U.S. presidential primary elections have turned out younger voters in record numbers. A large majority of them support Democratic Party presidential contender Barack Obama. What has energized the youth vote and why are most young adults supporting Senator Obama?

When Caroline Kennedy threw her support behind Illinois Senator Barack Obama for the Democratic Party's presidential nomination, she said her three teenage children made her realize that Obama was the president the country needed. She was among the first of an increasing number of prominent Democrats who back Senator Obama and claim their children prompted them to endorse him.

But many young Americans are not just telling parents to support their favorite presidential contender, they are voting in record numbers in this year's Democratic primary elections. According to a recent Pew Research Center public opinion study, in 18 Democratic primary contests held earlier this year, young adults accounted for 14 percent of the total vote, up from nine percent in 2004.

Pew polling over the past few years has shown that young voters constitute an important constituency for the Democratic party. A majority of registered voters ages 18-to-29 say they are Democrats or lean toward the Party, while about a third identify with the Republican Party.

### A Galvanizing Issue

Harvard University's election analyst Thomas Patterson says young voters have been mostly mobilized by their opposition to the Iraq war. It began, he notes, during the Democratic primaries in 2003, when many young people rallied around presidential contender, Howard Dean. "We forget now that in the summer of 2003 that Howard Dean rocketed upward in the polls and had a lot of youthful volunteers and his message was anti-Iraq. You go back to 1992, 1996 and 2000, the youth were barely there. Barely more than a third of them participated. In 2004 it was nearly 50 percent. That's a huge turnaround," says Patterson. "And when you look at young people and what was on their minds, Iraq was the upper most issue."

Professor Patterson says nearly five million more young adults voted in 2004 than in 2000. He adds that in the current Democratic primaries, a majority of the youth voters are supporting Senator Barack Obama, who has been a long-time opponent of the war in Iraq. "Since the start of this campaign in early 2007, I think what we've seen is a second source of energy for young voters and that's the Obama campaign. They were attracted to him in the first instance by his early opposition to the war in Iraq. At the same time, he happened to have the kind of personality, the kind of message that appealed to them," says Patterson.

"Part of it is generational identification," says William Galston, an expert in governance at

the Brookings Institution in Washington. "Many of today's young people have grown up in a multiracial, multiethnic context in part because of the enormous surge of immigration in recent decades. Senator Obama's internationalism is consistent with that. In addition, Senator Obama believes that people of good will with different views can get together around the table and solve problems. There are a lot of young Americans, who would like to believe that's true."

### A Fountain of Youth

The youth surge is not a new phenomenon, say other analysts. Curtis Gans, Director of the Washington-based Committee for the Study of the American Electorate, points out that every generation of Americans produced its idealism and its hope. "Young people were moved and came out for John F. Kennedy. A different group went into the civil rights movement. A different group went into the anti-war movement [during the Vietnam War era]. A different group was moved by Ronald Reagan. They were moved briefly by [Bill] Clinton and [Al] Gore and [Ross] Perot," says Gans. "They were moved in large numbers to oppose George [W.] Bush and support John Kerry in 2004. They are looking for in each case a transforming figure in American politics, something that is different."

Scott Keeter, public opinion survey expert with the Washington-based Pew Research Center, says young people in

America today are much more diverse and more liberal than in the past. "They are very tolerant of interracial dating. They don't have hang-ups about gay marriage. They are welcoming to immigrants, more so than other age groups," says Keeter. "All of this, I think, makes them very distinctive and points to the fact that they are less supportive of the Republican Party, which is much more the socially conservative party in the U.S."

The Republican Party's presidential contender, John McCain, offers a solemn election message, says political scientist William Galston. "McCain speaks an older political language. It's the language of duty and obligation and responsibility, rather than choice and liberty. He is calling the citizens of the United States to a kind of citizenship that they haven't been urged to embrace for decades. And it remains to be seen just how potent that appeal will be."

Some election analysts, including Curtis Gans, caution that the energy and enthusiasm of young voters could still fizzle out. "Whether it can be sustained will really depend on whether Obama wins the nomination, whether he wins the Presidency and whether to some extent, when he is in the Presidency, he can fulfill some of the hopes and continue with eloquence and transparency."

Gans adds that young people are likely to stay involved in politics as long as they feel they are a part of something larger than themselves. (VOA)

## Study Estimates Huge Need for US Military Mental Health Care

By Jela De Franceschi, Washington

A prominent research organization estimated Thursday that 300,000 of the 1.5 million U.S. troops who have served in Iraq or Afghanistan have symptoms of post traumatic stress disorder or major depression, and a similar number may have suffered traumatic brain injuries, mainly from explosions. The Pentagon welcomed the study, and says it is working on the issues. VOA's Al Pessin reports from the Pentagon.

The co-leader of the study by the Rand Corporation, Terri Tanielian, calls the situation "a major health crisis" that could have "long-term consequences" if it is not addressed. Among her findings are that only about half of the Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans who have symptoms of post traumatic stress disorder, depression and traumatic brain injury have sought treatment, and only half of those received adequate treatment.

"We were able to assess when those folks did get care, what type of care they got and whether it met criteria for what we would define as an adequate dose of treatment," said Terri Tanielian. "And too few were getting what we would define as a minimally adequate set of services."

Tanielian's 500-page study - based on interviews with 1,900 service members - says mental health problems are particularly prominent among combat veterans who are

women or members of the reserves. It also estimates that the mental and brain disorders from the wars could cost the U.S. economy more than \$6 billion over the next two years. But it says \$2 billion of that could be saved if treatment is improved.

Colonel Loree Sutton of the Pentagon's Center for Excellence on post traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury says the Rand study confirms research the military

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## New Year 2065 BS Celebration In Los Angeles, CA



Photo: nepalhorizons.com

The America Nepal Society of California Inc organized a program to celebrate the Nepalese New Year 2065 BS on Saturday April 19 2008 in Chatsworth CA (Los Angeles Suburb). The program was attended by over 200 Nepalese people and friends of Nepal. Veda Joshi- the founder President introduced the objective of America Nepal Society of California Inc to the audiences, while the greeting of Dr Deepak Simkhada was read by Bhushan Pradhan - Vice President II of ANS-CA. Ambassador Dr. Suresh C Chalise was the chief guest of the program. Arjun Tripathi is the current president of ANS CA. Seen on the left image above (L-R)-ANS/CA 1st VP Anuj Pradhan, Secretary Ms Stephanie K Ano, President Arjun Tripathi, 2nd VP Bhushan Pradhan, Dr Suresh C Chalise and Treasurer Vergil Day.

### Immigration / USCIS Update:

## USCIS To Allow F-1 Students Opportunity To Request Change of Status

Washington April 18 (USCIS): U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced today that it would allow F-1 students who are the beneficiaries of selected H-1B petitions for fiscal year (FY) 2009 to request a change of status in lieu of consular notification.

This short-term measure follows an April 8, 2008 interim final rule that, among other actions, automatically extends the F-1 status of qualifying students who are the beneficiaries of approved H-1B petitions to cover the gap between the expiration of a student's F-1 status and the H-1B employment start date of October 1. To obtain the automatic extension, a student must be the beneficiary of an H-1B petition filed for the next fiscal year (with an October 1 employment start date) and have requested a change of status. For F-1 student beneficiaries of petitions that USCIS subsequently rejects, denies, or revokes, or for those who violate their status, the automatic extension terminates at that time.

Since the rule was published after the filing period had closed for new FY 2009 H-1B petitions, many petitioners of F-1 students did

not include a request for a change of status with the H-1B petition. Instead, petitioners requested consular notification based on the assumption that these students would have been required to leave the United States to obtain an H-1B visa at a consular office abroad.

USCIS has determined that it will allow petitioners of F-1 students whose H-1B petitions were randomly selected to receive an H-1B visa number for FY2009 following the closure of the filing period, to now request a change of status on behalf of qualified beneficiaries, if such requests are received within 30 days of the issuance of the receipt notice.

To request a change of status in lieu of consular notification, petitioners (or authorized representatives) should send an e-mail with the request to the USCIS service center where their petition is pending within 30 days of the issuance of the receipt notice. Special email addresses for each service center have been established specifically for this purpose. These addresses are listed below and are posted on USCIS' website. Petitioners should e-mail

their requests for change of status in lieu of consular notification upon receipt of the notice so the agency has the request before completing H-1B petition adjudication. The requests should include the receipt number and both the petitioner's and beneficiary's name, date of birth, I-94 (Arrival/Departure Record) number, and Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) number. Please do not contact the service center about requesting a change of status until after receiving the receipt notice.

E-mail addresses for requesting change of status are:  
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CaliforniaService Center Premium Processing cases:  
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NOTE: If an F-1 student, who is the beneficiary of a selected 2009 H-1B petition, has a pending request to

change to a status other than H-1B but now wants to file under the process outlined above, he or she should withdraw the previously filed change in accordance with established regulations.

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## Ambassador Chalise In CA...

*Contd. from pg 1...*

14, 2008. The program was attended by the experts on Nepal, the Department Chair Dr Alexander Von Rospatt, and Dr Raka Ray, Associate professor in the Department and others.

He further said, since the new constitution for a New Nepal has yet to be promulgated and the peace process has yet to reach its logical conclusion, Nepal still faces a number of challenges. Challenges such as unity among the pro-change forces, broad agreement to promulgate a new constitution through CA, re-integration of nineteen thousand People's Liberation Army (PLA) into the society, re-habilitation of hundreds of thousands of conflict affected people, and sharing of resources and power between centre and federal governments are the major challenges.

During his stay, he also met with Nepalese expatriates in northern and southern California,

and participated in several programs organized by the local Nepalese organizations like Nepalis and Friends Cultural Association (NAFCA) in Davis CA, Nepal Association of Northern California (NANC) in San Francisco, and America Nepal Society of CA (ANS) in Los Angeles. Ambassador Chalise discussed the programs of embassy in order to promote tourism, Nepal's cultural identity, economic promotion and strengthening US Nepal relations at the people level. While elaborating on several reasons, Ambassador opined that in ten years time Nepal would be an emerging economy provided stability, peace and democracy reign the Nepalese society.

Ambassador Chalise also learnt several issues and problems faced by the expatriates, including their request to establish a consular office in California.

He'll resume his regular schedule in embassy from Monday April 21 2008.

## NEAJA's Annual Meet...

*Contd. from page 3...*

Pokharel was elected first president of NEAJA.

Through its press communiqué NEAJA invites all general members and aspiring non-member journalists to congregate by May 2. Treasurer Gunaraj Luitel is coordinating the

accommodation arrangements for all participating members.

Since its formation NEAJA has conducted a comedy program by popular comedian Manoj Gajurel in Washington DC metro and a literary program in Baltimore MD to release Pearl Regmi's collection of poems.

## YCL Cadres Seize Truck Of

*Contd. from page 2...*

Tamang, three women and a child were seriously injured.

UML cadres later blocked Prithvi highway demanding action against the assailants. The Maoists followed it up by attacking more UML cadres at different places.

Fed up with the escalating attacks on UML

cadres, locals vandalised a truck carrying Maoist cadres.

UML district secretary Guru Prasad Burlakoti said the Maoists had let loose a reign of terror and were seizing the private property of individuals. Meanwhile, the Maoists have said they won't release the truck until the compensation is paid. *(Courtesy: HNS 4/19)*

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## Tibetan Refugees in Nepal...

*Contd. from pg 1...*

accuses him and exile leaders in India of seeking to separate Tibet from China.

Communist Party officials say they freed Tibetans from what they call "the dark ages" of feudal serfdom. Since the late 1990s China has poured investment into Tibet and nearby provinces to reduce the region's poverty.

But refugees say the benefits are not being shared. Tibetans, Wangyal says, face discrimination at school and work in their homeland.

"Over the last 60 years Chinese say we are doing all our best to the minorities - including Tibet and we are spending a lot of money for the development of what? ... This five-star building constructed by us, or this airstrip constructed by us, this electrical wiring... they fail to win the hearts of the Tibetan people in their policies," he said.

Refugees and rights groups allege that China has tried to crush allegiance to the Dalai Lama and dilute Tibetan culture. They accuse Beijing of detaining thousands of Tibetan dissidents.

Many exiles say Buddhist monks are discriminated against, and that China has closed many monasteries and temples in Tibet.

Some Tibetans in Nepal worry about rising frustration among younger refugees. There are fears these young adults may turn to violence to try to improve conditions in Tibet once the elderly Dalai Lama is gone.

This Buddhist lama shares that worry, but says Tibetans must protect their culture.

"Actually, this kind of protest and the violence is not needed

and such things are very unnecessary but we need to protest against the Chinese, we need to fight for our rights otherwise we will not get what we want in life," he said.

Dolma Tsering is a Tibetan businesswoman and social worker in Pokhara. She hopes China and the Tibetan government in exile will talk, and conditions in Tibet will improve.

"The majority of the Tibetan who lived here, even more than 40 years, still everybody thinking that one day we definitely go back to Tibet," she said. "Everybody feels we are refugee here - not that we are citizen here - so everybody have a great hope and expectation to go back to Tibet one day."

Many refugees hold no hope that China's leaders will negotiate with the Dalai Lama to improve conditions in Tibet. Some, such as the lama, note the Dalai Lama and other Tibetan leaders long ago gave up calls for independence, yet China has not responded. "He [Dalai Lama] has sent six or seven delegations to Beijing to find peaceful solutions to the Tibetan problem," he said. "So far there has not been any fruitful result which has compelled the Tibetan monks and Tibetan people to be very frustrated and angry over the issue."

Some say there is a groundswell of support for a referendum within the exile community to ask the Dalai Lama to end his support for China's influence over Tibet. Instead, they say, he should seek full independence. Such a move, however, others warn, could bring a harsh reaction from Beijing.

## Mixed Reaction To Collapse Of Seto Machhindranath Chariot

Kathmandu, April 15 (HNS): After the chariot of Seto Machhindranath tumbled down on Sunday, priests claimed that misfortune may strike the country and its citizenry in the near future, while some people ruled out such forecasts.

Priest Ratna Harsha Shakya, who was also injured in the incident, said they would organise shanti and chhayama puja — prayer for peace and pardon — to appease the God. "It is essential to protect the country and countrymen," said Shakya, the second oldest priest.

Since the chariot of Seto Machhindranath had fallen down before

the Royal Massacre in 2001, many people believe that the collapse of Seto Machhindranath chariot could bring disaster in the nation, especially for the Royal family.

Priests said the collapse of the chariot on Sunday could invite unfortunate consequences to the nation, while others said that it is just a superstitious belief.

At least 12 persons were injured when the chariot, being pulled to Lagan from Teen Dhara Pathshala, had fallen down after it lost balance while

... *Contd. on page 7*

## Broad Gauge Railway Line Construction Complete

Biratnagar, April 17 (HNS): The broad gauge railway line construction and expansion has been completed from Katihar of India to Jogbani of Biratnagar.

The service expected to boost trade in the eastern region will start officially from the first week of May. The test operation is now being carried out by the Eastern Railway Department of India. Though the technical works began in 2004, the railway track construction started only four months ago.

President of the Industry Association Morang, Dinesh Golchha said that the Indian railway officials are busy consulting with the entrepreneurs in the eastern region on how to bring it into operation. He also said that the broad gauge railway will bring in 80 per cent of the raw materials.

The line will also link direct railway line service to Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata. It will be a boon for Nepalis travelling to India for study, pilgrimage, medical treatment, business and

other various purposes. In the absence of the broad gauge railway line, the entrepreneurs are importing the raw materials through Kolkata's Shyaldaha by trucks and tankers.

"The entrepreneurs will benefit a lot, both, in import and export, and they can reduce the production cost once it comes into operation," industrialist Rakesh Surana said.

Nepal had proposed India for the construction of broad gauge railway line in 1974. According to the general manager of the Eastern Railway Department of India, Mehatab Singh, it will start from the first week of May.

The Indian railway officials have also said — at the recent meeting with the entrepreneurs in Biratnagar — that the broad gauge railway line will come into operations from the first week of May.

India spent Rs 1.5 billion for the construction of a total of 108-km broad gauge line from the bordering town Jogbani to Katihar in India.

## Oil Prices Hit All-Time Highs

By Michael Bowman

Washington April 17 (VOA): Oil prices have continued their meteoric rise, hitting new all-time highs above \$115 a barrel. From Washington, VOA's Michael Bowman reports.

Just weeks after topping \$100 a barrel, light sweet crude rose above \$115 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange amid further weakness in the U.S. dollar, as well as tight gasoline inventories reported by the U.S. Energy Department.

The constrained fuel supply comes as Americans prepare for the summer months, a time when gasoline consumption typically rises due to increased vacation travel. This year, summer demand could be tempered, however, by a slowing U.S. economy and the sharply higher gasoline prices.

Experts say a variety of factors are contributing to the long-term rise in oil prices, including increased demand in large developing countries like China and India.

"The demand numbers coming out of Asia, although slower than a year or two ago, have certainly

put into the fore [shown] that the U.S. is not the big, big driver in demand that it used to be," said Ray Carbone, who heads the New York-based energy trading firm Paramount Options. "And even though there is all this bearish news as far as demand in the U.S., we have to keep in mind that the emerging market demand is robust and has taken up the slack. And that seems to be what people are having trouble coming to grips with, I think."

While global consumption of fossil fuels continues to rise, the world's largest oil cartel, OPEC, has resisted calls to boost production. Experts say, so long as demand exceeds supply, oil will become evermore costly.

The current surge in oil prices is a continuation of a trend that has seen crude rise relentlessly from less than \$25 a barrel as recently as 2002. During the past 10 years, oil prices have risen by more than 800 percent. When adjusted for inflation, however, oil prices remain lower in real terms than the highs recorded in the late 1970s and early 1980s

## Mixed Reaction To Collapse...

Contd. from page 6...

being rolled in an uneven surface of the road at Ratnapark.

Priest Swyambhu Ratna Bajracharya claimed that the incident occurred due to the power of the God. He accused Guthi Sanstha of using low quality materials to build the chariot. The bad condition of the road also might have resulted in the incident, he added, saying that this could bring unfortunate consequences in the nation.

Babu Kaji Shrestha of Ason said like in the past, some unfortunate event may happen in the country in near future. However, some people dismissed such claims.

Ratna Tandukar of Basantapur said that unfortunate events

as claimed may or may not occur in future, adding that it was only a superstitious belief that has been existing from a long time.

Nikita Karmacharya, a student, said that such assumption involves no reality as the development of science and technology is against such beliefs.

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## Garment Exports To US Plummet

Kathmandu, April 15 (HNS): The exports of the Nepali readymade garments (RMG) to the US, which is the single largest market, witnessed a whopping drop of 66 per cent in terms of value during March.

It is the second straight month this year that the exports of the Nepali textile and apparel products have lost its beat. The RMG exports to the US has been suffering for the last couple of years but had slightly recovered in January with exports up by a mere two per cent. The exports had suffered a loss of 30 per cent in 2004, 41 per cent in 2005, six per cent in 2006 and 48 per cent in 2007. As the US alone absorbs more than 80 per cent of the total exports, the single country concentration is blamed to be one of the major reasons for such a huge and continuous plummet.

The industry is already in doldrums for the last couple of years with the crisis deepening further following a complete phase out of quota regime under the Agreement on Textiles and Clothing from January 1, 2005. During the peak time, total number of

industries had crossed 1,200 but today over 95 per cent of them have already shutdown bringing down the figure to only 40 units.

The RMG products valued over \$998,820.70 were exported to the US in March, whereas the garment products worth over \$2.89 million were exported in the corresponding month last

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### Exchange Rates in Nepal

Currency	Buying (Rs)	Selling (Rs)
US \$ 1	63.85	64.45
Canadian \$1	63.30	63.89
Euro 1	101.74	102.69
Pound Sterling 1	127.51	128.71
Australian \$1	59.90	60.46
Swiss Franc 1	63.52	64.12
Singapore Dollar	47.23	47.67
Japanese Yen 10	6.23	6.29
Chinese Yuan 1	9.13	9.21
Indian Rupees 100	160.00	160.15
Swedish Kroner 1	10.80	---
Danish Kroner 1	13.64	---
Hong Kong Dollar 1	8.19	---
Saudi Arab Riyal 1	17.02	---
Qatari Riyal 1	17.54	---
Thai Bhat 1	2.03	---
UAE Dirham 1	17.38	---
Malaysian Ringgit 1	20.27	---

[Source: Nepal Rastra Bank, April 20 08]

# Hindi Folk Opera Comes to California

By Lonny Shavelson, Hayward CA

Throughout the world, indigenous rural music is fading out. It's overwhelmed by a modern, urban sound that propagates worldwide through web downloads and MP3 players. But sometimes, music that fades in one part of the world, say, remote parts of India, shows up again surprisingly far away. From Hayward, California, Lonny Shavelson brings us the sound of Indian nautanki.

Picture a rural Indian landscape of plowed farmland. The sky grows dark. Thousands of farmers and their families relax on the ground. Others sit on nearby rooftops or in trees. At ten at night, the crowd pushes back to make a circular clearing. Gas lanterns are lit, a dozen or so opera singers, actors and dancers prepare to perform until dawn — and you have a nautanki, a Hindi folk opera once wildly popular in northern India.

Devendra Sharma, now a professor of communication at California State Fresno, grew up in India, where his father was a famed nautanki performer. "You can imagine if you have to throw your voice so that thousands of people around you can hear each word, how much power you have to have in your voice," he says, adding that he's been smitten by nautanki since he was a boy.

But nautanki is dying out in rural India, giving way to

Bollywood cinema and cable TV. Sharma says his calling is to keep nautanki alive...in part by bringing it to the U.S.

But in a modern American theater, with its plush carpet and cushioned seats, he admits that nautanki isn't quite the same as back home. "I understand the audience ambience is not the same. It's more formal. But that's the challenge of modern times," Sharma says. "And as a member of the newer generation of nautanki artists, I want it to thrive. So I'm kind of experimenting with different spaces. So what I want to present to audiences is the melody of nautanki, how beautiful nautanki tunes sound."

Adapting the performance to an indoor theater wasn't the only challenge Sharma faced. While he had no trouble finding actors in the area's large Indian community, none had ever sung a nautanki. "Most of these people who are here in the Bay Area are engineers or doctors, software professionals. And they have been brought up in cities in India," he explains. "So these young people here, they love Indian culture, but they don't know much about their traditions, particularly the rural folk traditions. So it has been an eye opener, because they're now for the first time knowing about nautanki."

He says he jokes with them that they are machines during the

day, and only become alive in the evenings when they are performing nautanki. And they now consider themselves artists.

It took three months for Sharma to teach his actors to sing the nautanki style and present the opera Sultana Daku. He says the lead character, which he plays, is based on a real person born in northern India in the early 1900s, a bandit.

"He used to rob rich people and help poor people, like Robin Hood. But then he became very famous because he challenged the British," Sharma says. "So all the rural people, even though he was a bandit, they thought of him as a hero because he was challenging authority... Ultimately he was caught by British and he was hanged so he became a big symbol for Indian resistance in a very local and colloquial way.

Nautankis were originally performed for farmers, laborers and others in the poor countryside. At the opening in Hayward, the audience was decidedly more educated and affluent, but just as appreciative.

One woman observed, "Sound quality and stage direction is a lot better here because of the tools they have available but it's very close to the original nautanki they did." Her friend admitted it was hard to understand at first, "because I've

seen a play before but never a play sung. But once I got into the hang of it, it was good fun." Another audience member marveled, "Truly only in the Bay Area [can] you get to do this! It's awesome!"

Director Devendra Sharma calls the production a metaphor of the immigrant experience. He points out that he's bringing indigenous theater from India to Indians who've been in the United States for years, sometime decades. "Some of them behave as if this is a foreign thing. And slowly, they got like round-eyed, and they were so happy that they did this. Because it's the first time that they're being introduced to this musical tradition of India."

## Garment Exports To...

*Contd. from page 7...*

year, reveals the figures provided by the Garment Association of Nepal.

The continuous fall in exports indicates that the Nepali readymade garment industry is gradually on the verge of a 'collapse', as the global markets have already been opened for all the competitors without quota restrictions. An industry insider stressed the need of enhancing competitive strength in terms of price and quality of the Nepali products to compete with big suppliers from India and China and other fervent players like Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Cambodia.

## Study Estimates Huge Need for US Military ...

*Contd. from page 4...*

has done. But she is concerned about the allegation of inadequate care.

"Clearly, that's a finding that concerns us," said Colonel Sutton. "It's very consistent with the civilian literature, as well as with our own assessment of the challenges in this area. Closing that gap between knowledge and practice is really one of our very top priorities."

Colonel Sutton says the Rand study confirms that part of the problem is that some soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines are reluctant to seek treatment, in part because of fear it will affect their security clearances and their future careers. Her office is trying to spread the word that symptoms of stress are normal, and seeking treatment is a sign of strength, not weakness.

"For the folks who experience post-traumatic stress, that's a much larger number of folks than actually develop the disorder," said Sutton. "And so part of our challenge is to help families help individuals, warriors, help communities understand what are the normal reactions, the human responses, to stress."

The colonel, who is a psychiatrist, says the issue of traumatic brain injury from explosions and accidents is somewhat different. She says most concussions are minor, and resolve themselves naturally over a fairly short period of time.

The Rand study's co-leader, Terri Tanielian, agrees, and says while some brain injuries are clearly serious and have long-term

consequences, some combat veterans may think they are suffering the aftereffects of such an injury when they are not.

"There are a significant number of service members that may be concerned about that exposure and attributing problems or difficulties that they're having today with that brain injury, even though, based on the civilian literature, the majority of those cases are likely to be very mild forms, such as concussions, and that most of the symptoms associated with that type of injury would have resolved by now," said Tanielian.

The researcher calls for more extensive screening and treatment to ensure brain injuries and mental disorders are properly diagnosed and treated, but she also acknowledges there is a nationwide

shortage of people qualified to do that.

The military has said mental health problems are particularly acute among troops assigned to long and multiple deployments to war zones, as many U.S. combat brigades have been. Colonel Sutton says the military has hired or contracted with thousands of practitioners to prepare for the return of tens of thousands of troops from Iraq in the coming months as the surge of U.S. forces ends.

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