

Nepal Abroad

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Nepal Abroad

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Nepal's Development Linked With Two Gold Mines: Dr. Chalise



Dr. Suresh C. Chalise

On Saturday February 2, 2008 the Nepalese Ambassador to the US Dr Suresh C Chalise invited a group of Nepalese people representing various organizations in the DC metro area to discuss his plans, policies and actions that he'd be pursuing during his tenure.

During the discussion he dwelt on several topics, like developing Nepal-US relations, Economic Diplomacy, promoting NRN's concerns and the future of Nepal.

He felt the need to establish 'Nepal US Foundation' that would work to enhance the bilateral ties

through different level of diplomacy. He identifies all former Peace Corps volunteers who've served Nepal as a great resource in developing an understanding and promoting Nepal at the grass root level in the US. He also invited all community members to help integrate the adopted children's from Nepal in their quest to understand their socio-cultural roots. In this process, the parents of the adopted children's would also be involved in learning more on Nepal and the Nepalese culture; the knowledge gained would pass on to their peer groups and co-workers, ultimately benefiting Nepal in different ways.

He expressed excitement on how several universities approached him in developing collaboration with universities in Nepal, so that there is an exchange of ideas, students and faculty in their learning process.

Encouraging high level bilateral visits and lobbying for creating Nepal caucus in the US congress would be one of his several priorities, which

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US Congress Passes Economic Stimulus Bill

By Deborah Tate, Capitol Hill

The U.S. Senate Thursday passed a package of tax rebates for millions of Americans and business tax cuts aimed at reviving the sluggish economy. The measure was quickly approved later by the House of Representatives by a vote of 380 to 34. President Bush is expected to sign the bill shortly. VOA's Deborah Tate reports from Capitol Hill.

The 81 to 16 vote came after Senate Democrats and Republicans reached a deal to include rebate checks to disabled veterans and retired Americans who receive social security - two groups who were left out of an economic stimulus package approved by the House last week.

The measure, which would give checks of up to \$600 to American

taxpayers, is aimed at heading off a recession this election year.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid is Nevada Democrat: "The best way to stimulate the economy is to get money into the hands of those who will spend it immediately," said Harry Reid.

Democrats dropped their demands to include home heating assistance and expanded unemployment benefits after Republicans blocked the proposal Wednesday.

After days of partisan wrangling on the package, Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky praised the compromise.

"We were able to put aside our differences, not only here in the

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Maoists Flout EC Code of Conduct

Morang, February 9 (THT): The Maoists are writing election slogans on walls at different places in Morang district in violation of the election code of conduct.

Such wall paintings could be found on culverts and shops along Biratnagar-Rangeli road and Jhurkiya-Urbari road.

Clause VIII of the EC code of conduct restricts poll graffiti, pasting posters and hanging up banners. No authority, however, is preventing the Maoists from doing such illegal activities.

"Party cadres in the rural areas are ignorant of the code of

conduct and therefore they may have done this out of ignorance," Maoist Morang deputy in-charge Sushil said, adding, "The party will stop the act immediately if it is against the code of conduct."

The Maoists have intensified publicity for the polls in different places including Jhurkiya, Diniya, Rangeli, Sijuwa, Sautha, Rajghat, Urbari and Pathari in the district.

"If anybody files a complaint against the violation of code of conduct, we will initiate the process of taking action against it," chief at Morang district election office, Mahesh Timilsina said.

UNMIN To Seek Clarifications From Maoist

Biratnagar Feb 7 (RSS): Spokesperson of the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN), Kieran Dwyer has said UNMIN is in the process of seeking clarifications from the CPN (Maoist) for reactivating the Maoist People's Council.

Speaking at a press conference organised by the UNMIN Regional Office, Biratnagar today prior to returning to Kathmandu after completing the on-site visit to different districts of the Eastern Region, Dwyer said further comments on the topic can be made only after receiving the clarification of the CPN (Maoist).

He said as per the Comprehensive Peace Agreement it would

be against the agreement for any political party or group to reinstate any local body.

UNMIN spokesman Dwyer said that in course of the interactions he held with the people of the Terai during his visit to the different districts in the Eastern Region he found that they felt insecure and have not received relief from the government and the administration.

Stating that UNMIN Chief Ian Martin has already said the Constituent Assembly election on 10 April would practically take place, Dwyer said the law and order situation in the central and eastern regions was serious and the gap between the Madhesis, the

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Editorial:

Who is against CA election, then?

Much has been talked about the need and the urgency to hold the Constituent Assembly (CA) election by the political leadership in Nepal on time as scheduled; however, the developments unfolding in the country also makes one wonder-do they- the internal and external stakeholders really want election to happen? Developing actions of the two stakeholders of the country's politics gives ample room for people to be sceptic about the country's future.

Nepali Congress camp is virtually divided over the issue of monarchy, even though some may pretend to disagree. The elevation of Sujata Koirala as the *de facto* Prime Minister does have political connotation, as she earlier, overtly championed the retention of the institution of monarchy. Hence, one cannot but suspect a Grand Design in the making.

The Maoists contradicting words and actions have created confusion to all. While they (Prachanda) claim domestic / regressive and foreign forces conspiring against the CA elections, on the other, their party cadres continue to disrupt political gathering of others. It's been little difficult to understand as to which forces, as claimed by their commander, the YCL

represents? If there are external forces, they should be brought into light at the earliest so that a people understand who's behind denying them the CA election. You cannot just float a rumor otherwise to create a panic and confusion among the people, if substantiating is not possible.

As seen on the screen by the general public, they do not allow other parties to hold political gatherings and have resorted to physical attacks. However, all such incidents are unaccountable to the State, and leadership denies any responsibility by merely arguing the incident as 'exception', 'small jolts for a big change' and 'against their policies', etc. Forceful collection of donations can be interpreted as a 'voluntary' gesture of assistance by the people; one can imagine their style of democracy and the new Nepal they're planning to build.

Democracy also means tolerance for opposing views, right to life and property, right to express, and many more. Any attempt to deny these fundamental rights to the people will have negative consequences for the responsible stakeholders, leading up to the confiscation of all (election) security deposits.

MPs Have Withdrawn Money From Fund

Hetauda Feb 8 (RSS): Three members of the parliament had already withdrawn a part of the money from MPs' development fund in Makwanpur before the Supreme Court decided not to dole out money to MPs from the fund on Wednesday.

MPs Krishna Prasad Dahal had withdrawn Rs 509,000, Kumari Moktan has withdrawn Rs 50,000 and Bir Bahadur Lama has withdrawn Rs 25,000 from the fund on February 1, accountant at the Hetauda DDC Bhuwan Prasad Kafle said.

Earlier, after the decision to dole out money to MPs drew controversy, the seven parties had recently decided not to release the amount to MPs before the CA polls.

The government had released Rs 3.6 million for the fund in Makwanpur in two installments. With six MPs in the parliament from Makwanpur, the fund in the district development committee would have received Rs 6 million if the decision to provide Rs 1 million to each parliamentarian were not scrapped by the SC.

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Girls Sold By Parents For Domestic Labour

Kathmandu Feb 3 (IRIN): Punita Chaudhary was barely eight when her impoverished parents sold her for US\$50 to a local middleman who worked as an agent finding domestic servants for families in Kathmandu and other Nepalese cities.

Chaudhary ended up with a family in Kathmandu where she had to work for 18 hours a day and was allowed just a few hours sleep. "I did all that for the sake of my family and now I regret it," Chaudhary told IRIN in Kathmandu.

For nearly six years, Chaudhary, 16, had to endure verbal abuse, mental torture and physical abuse at the hands of her employers, a married couple who were working as teacher and doctor, said Chaudhary. She also had to work for dozens of her employers' relatives and friends in different houses, she said.

"One day I decided to flee and now I am safe," said Chaudhary, who is now going to school with the help of local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) like Nepalese Youth Foundation (NYOF) and Friends of Needy Children (FNC). NYOF and FNC are involved in rehabilitating indentured domestic workers through their Indentured Daughters Program (IDP).

Over 20,000 indentured domestic workers

According to NYOF, there are over 20,000 indentured domestic workers, also known as 'Kamlari'.

The 'Kamlari' system originated nearly 50 years ago when poor families belonging to the Tharu community, an indigenous ethnic group in southern Nepal's Terai region, provided daughters as domestic servants in exchange for cash.

The practice is still prevalent and activists have started to call it "internal trafficking" of girls who are literally sold off by their parents with the help of local middlemen.

The young Tharu girls, aged 6-10, are taken mainly from the districts of Dang, Bardiya, Kanchanpur, Kailali and Banke, all about 600km west of the capital.

Most of the girls are brought to households in Nepal's cities and towns where employers include politicians, bureaucrats, local NGO workers, teachers, journalists, human rights activists, teachers and government officials, according to NYOF.

"This is a dreadful practice and we should help to rescue as many girls as possible," said NYOF's executive director, Som Paneru, who initiated the plan to rescue and rehabilitate the indentured domestic workers.

In the last eight years, NYOF and FNC have helped to rescue over 4,000 girls, all whom have now joined schools or informal education programs.

Abused

Besides the labour exploitation, the girls also suffer from sexual abuse, rape, physical torture, starvation and neglect of education, and there are also many cases of the girls being trafficked for prostitution both in Nepal and to India, according to FNC. In addition, many girls also disappear once they are purchased by the middlemen.

"It's difficult to rescue most of these young girls as their whereabouts are mostly unknown and most of the time the parents do not cooperate," said Man Bahadur Chettri from FNC. He explained that NYOF and FNC have filed court cases against the agents and the parents to successfully get them to cooperate.

Nepal has laws against employing children under 16 but they are yet to be strongly implemented, said NYOF's Paneru.

Nepali Calendar

Sun Feb 10 / Magh 27' 64

Tritiya

Mon Feb 11 / Magh 28' 64

Saraswati Pooja / Panchami

Tue Feb 12 / Magh 29' 64

Khasti

Wed Feb 13 / Falgun 1' 64

Saptami

Thu Feb 14 / Falgun 2' 64

Asthami

Fri Feb 15 / Falgun 3' 64

Nawami

Sat Feb 16 / Falgun 4' 64

Dashami

Norwegian PM in Nepal



Photo: Rajesh Dhungana/TRN

Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg meets PM G P Koirala at Baluwatar on Friday February 08'08. Besides talking about the impending CA election, he also stressed on the need to deal with the effects of climate change in the Himalayas.

Dr Horror Pleads Innocence; Nepal Police Say Ready To Hand Him Over

Kathmandu, Feb 8: The Nepal police today indicated that the mastermind behind the multi-crore kidney racket, Dr Amit Kumar, who was arrested here yesterday, could soon be handed over to Indian authorities even as he claimed he was innocent.

"I am just a doctor and not a kidney dealer. I will reveal all the truth after my release... I have not committed any crime," Dr Kumar said, when Nepal police presented him at a press conference here.

Nepal police said the doctor can be handed over to Indian authorities once he is presented to the court on Sunday.

"He can be deported (handed over) to India once he is presented before the court," television reports quoted Senior Superintendent of Police of the Metropolitan Police Crime Division Upendra Kant Aryal as saying.

Nepal police said they plan to lodge three cases against the kidney scam kingpin, including charges under the foreign exchange regulation act.

Cases will be filed against Dr Kumar on Sunday after carrying out necessary procedures for the charges relating to human organ transplant and the Interpol red-corner notice against him, Mr Aryal had told mediapersons at Ranipokhari Dr Kumar -- widely called Dr Horror by the media -- was arrested with a close aide Manish Singh from a Sauraha-based hotel in Chitwan district about 60 km from the Indian border town of Raxaul. Rs 9,36,000 in Indian currency, 1,45,000 euros and 18,900 US dollars were seized from the Indian doctor's possession. (New Kerala)

Condolence

Our heartfelt condolence to the family of Late Pradip Thapa (33) who lived in Vienna VA. He was from Jhapa, Nepal. May his soul rest in peace



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Calendar Of Events

Feb 9 '08: The Northwest Sherpa Association is celebrating Sherpa Lhosar (new year 2135 Chiwa-Lo (year of mice) Night on Saturday Feb 9 from 5pm at The Rocking Horse Dance Barn, 11820 150th Ave SE, Renton WA. For details visit nepalseattle.org

Feb 10 '08: The America Nepal Society (ANS) is screening a successful feature film 'Pyari Bahini' on Sunday Feb 10 at Loehmanns Plaza 7219 Arlington Blvd Falls Church VA from 1pm. Artists include Dilip Rayamajhi, Bipana Thapa, Arjun Shrestha, Uttam Pradhan and others. For details on tickets, call Kabindra Sitoula 571 259 3984/ Khem Bhattachan 571 242 5510/ Netra Ghising 703 597 4098 and other ANS members.

Feb 17 '08: The Tamang Society of Greater Washington Presents Lochhar Sanjh 2844 (New Year Eve) on Sunday Feb 17 from 6pm at Holiday Inn 2101 Wisconsin Ave NW, Washington DC 2007. Raju Lama, Mongolian Hearts, Kumar Basnet, Renowned Folk Singer, Angels Band and other emerging local talents would be performing. For details, visit nepalhorizons.com

Feb 17 '08: For the first time, the Nepalese community in Gaithersburg-Germantown cordially invites all to attend a program to support the Nepalese Educational & Cultural Center (NECC)'s vitalizing action committee (VAC) on Sunday February 17 from 1pm to 5pm at Gaithersburg Library 18330 Montgomery Village Ave., Gaithersburg MD. More at nepalhorizons.com

Feb 26 '08: The Minnesota Council of Non-profits is organizing a workshop - 'Starting a Successful Nonprofit', designed to provide all the information needed to start a successful non-profit organization and other available opportunities, on Tuesday Feb 26 from 9am to noon, at 2314 Univ. Ave W, St Paul MN. mncn.org has details.

Mar 6 '08: The Nepal Educational & Cultural Center (NECC) cordially invites all to celebrate MAHA-SHIVARATRI at Pashupati-Buddha Mandir in Lanham MD on Thursday March 6. Pundit Sridhar Gyawali will be performing the Puja (from 7-9pm) and Rudri Abhishek. For details call 301 552 2299.

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

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

India Rejects Binding Commitment to Cut Green House Gas Emissions

New Delhi Feb 7 (VOA): India is sticking its position that it cannot make any binding commitments on reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Anjana Pasricha reports on an international conference on sustainable development being held in the Indian capital, New Delhi.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh says India will ensure that its per capita emissions of greenhouse gases never exceed those of developed countries.

Since the country's per capita emissions are far below those of richer countries, that essentially means that India will not commit to reducing carbon dioxide emissions, which many people see as key to slowing climate change.

Prime Minister Singh was addressing a conference on sustainable development in New Delhi Thursday. He says India still needs to pull vast sections of its population out of poverty.

"I am sure participants at this summit will endorse India's stand because you are all concerned about poverty eradication and reducing

global disparities in income and wealth. We cannot continue with a global development model where some countries continue to maintain high carbon emissions while the development of options available for developing countries get constrained," said Mr. Singh. "We therefore need to ensure an acceptable standard of living for all our people, but would choose a sustainable path for that development."

Mr. Singh says India will prepare a national plan to tackle issues of climate change by June.

India is the world's fifth largest emitter of greenhouse gases, which many scientists think contributes to global warming. New Delhi has repeatedly rejected demands for specific reduction targets, saying they would hurt its economy. Along with China, India wants Western countries to bear the burden of reducing emissions since they are far larger emitters.

Greenhouse gas emissions come from burning fuels such as oil

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The U.S. Dollar Losing its Luster?

- Jela De Franceschi, Washington DC

Many analysts contend that the dollar's decline has tarnished its reputation as the world's soundest currency. Many countries, including the oil-rich states of the Persian Gulf, are increasingly eyeing alternatives to the dollar. But other experts counter that American economic leadership and the dollar's dominance as the principle reserve currency are likely to last for many years to come.

When news spread in September that Saudi Arabia, the world's biggest oil producer, might not peg the riyal to the dollar, the dollar declined in world markets. Oil-rich Kuwait had already freed its dinar from the dollar, tying it to a basket of stronger currencies. The United Arab Emirates and Qatar hinted they might soon follow. Many experts say that because most Persian Gulf states hold large dollar reserves, any change in their monetary policies could weaken the dollar further.

Most of the countries in the Persian Gulf, including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman and Bahrain, tied their currencies to the dollar years ago. Local currencies gained credibility from their link to the dollar and it helped the region reap the benefits of America's strong dollar policy throughout the 1980s and 1990s.

U.S. Monetary Policy

But many experts contend that U.S. monetary policy no longer meets local needs. They say the booming economies in the Persian Gulf, where oil prices have quadrupled during the past five years, need higher interest rates to fight inflation. But the U.S. has taken looser monetary action aimed at fending off recession.

David Taylor is a Middle East expert with Oxford Analytica, an international consulting firm, headquartered in Britain. "Their economies and that of the U.S. are increasingly out of sync," says Taylor.

"The falling U.S. dollar and the cuts in U.S. interest rates are designed for an economic cycle in the U.S., which is totally different from the economic cycle in the Gulf," says Taylor. "Also,

they are being obliged to defend the peg and to discourage speculation more or less following the U.S. interest rate cuts, which isn't what they need at all. And that's the basis of the problem and the main deleterious effect is the fact that it is helping to push up inflation."

Pressure on Persian Gulf Economies

According to the International Monetary Fund, most Persian Gulf economies are experiencing their worst inflation in years. Last year, inflation averaged 12 percent in Qatar and about ten percent in the United Arab Emirates. In Saudi Arabia, it doubled to about five percent.

Debate is growing across the Persian Gulf over the dollar's slide, which is diminishing oil-export earnings and raising the cost of imports from Europe and Asia. The pinch is being felt by business and consumers. The erosion of local currencies has also heightened tensions among the large number of immigrants working in the region's expanding construction sector who send their savings home to countries such as India and Pakistan.

Oxford Analytica's David Taylor says some of the Persian Gulf states still have strong political and economic reasons to peg their currencies to the dollar. He says Saudi Arabia, the largest economy in the region, for example, wants to protect its large dollar investments abroad.

"If it did break the peg, it might well cause a loss of confidence in the dollar, which would diminish the value of these assets. There are also some question marks about causes and effects. I think quite a lot of the inflation is actually domestically generated and therefore would not necessarily be affected by a change of this sort," says Taylor.

"The other thing is the United States guarantees the security of Saudi Arabia," says Peter Morici, who teaches international economics at the University of Maryland. Saudi Arabia is a very sparsely populated country, which can hardly defend itself. And the Saudi royal family looks to the United States to sustain

its stability. It's not about to tweak the United States by endorsing a basket of currencies. Those kinds of choices and discussions are as much political and ideological as they are grounded in sound economics," says Morici.

The U.S. Economy and the World

Morici adds that the U.S. economy is the locomotive that pulls the world. "If we are losing our edge, why are Asian markets panicking right now? The answer is: They rely on the Americans for leadership and when the Americans misstep, which we have done, they get very frightened. If the dollar is no longer a reserve currency, then Asian markets would view the recession in the United States as 'ho-hum,'" says Morici. "People who invest worldwide are frightened about the future of the U.S. economy, which itself is an indicator of its importance."

According to Christian Weller, an expert on international finance at the Center for American Progress in Washington, "Countries, because of the slide of the dollar, have experienced the painful adjustment in their reserves and they would like to diversify into other currencies."

"The problem is always where would they go? You want to invest in a country that actually has a transparent, large, liquid financial market and financial system. I think that makes it

harder to invest in China or to invest in India, where the markets are fairly small and very illiquid markets. You can go to the euro, but there is no one euro market," says Weller. "You can buy euro assets in Germany, in Italy, in Denmark, but there is no one market. And I think that speaks very much for investing in the U.S. because it is the largest and the most liquid financial market."

Furthermore, argues Irwin Stelzer, a senior economist with the Washington-based Hudson Institute, the U.S. economy, unmatched in size and vitality, is well equipped to weather any slowdown.

"We have learned how to manage monetary policy. We have learned how to manage fiscal policy and we have an economy that is enormously varied and resilient — where people change jobs, where they move from depressed states to states where there are more opportunities, or capital moves around the system with great speed from industries that are dying to industries that are growing," says Stelzer.

Many experts, including Stelzer, say that America's economic preeminence rests not on the value of its currency, but its ability to lead regions like the Persian Gulf to a stable and sustainable 21st century global economy. (VOA 2/1)

New Madheshi Alliance Announces Protest Program

Kathmandu Feb 9 (HNS): Three major agitating Madheshi parties today agreed to form a new alliance called Joint Democratic Madheshi Morcha and announced their protest programs.

The new alliance of the three parties – Sadbhavana, Party, Tarai-Madhesh Democratic Party and Madheshi Janadhikar Forum – today said that they would start their protests from today. First two days they plan to publicize their programs. On February 11-12 they plan to organize protest rallies with torch rallies in the evening.

From February 13 the parties will be organizing indefinite strike and demonstrations throughout Nepal. From February 16 they plan to shut down all government offices and from the next day they said they would impose blockades and stop paying taxes to the government.

Leader of Tarai Madhesh Democratic Party, Mahanta Thakur said that this program has been announced so that Madhesh get their rights before CA elections are held.

NPRCA-NY Organizes Free Legal Counseling Program In NY



Photo: NPRCA -NY

On Sunday February 3, 2008 the Nepali Public Relations Committee America (NPRCA) - New York Chapter organized a free legal counseling program to the interested community members at Sunnyside NY by advocate Binod Roka. The Nepali Congress leader Trailokya P Sen was the chief guest in the program. Somath Ghimire (second from Right) is the President of NPRCA - NY Chapter. The program was attended by the community members from the NYC area.

Immigrating to Canada

(Courtesy: Citizenship and Immigration Canada)

Coming to Canada as an immigrant is an exciting opportunity. However, there are several things you should consider before you apply to be a permanent resident.

*In most cases, you must apply at a Canadian visa office outside of Canada. In some cases, you can apply to become a permanent resident after you arrive in Canada. For example, live-in caregivers or people granted refugee protection can apply from within Canada. If you want to immigrate to Canada, there are a few different ways to apply. You will need to decide which immigration program will work best for you and your family. Find out about the requirements and the steps to apply in each category: 1. Skilled workers and professionals; 2. Investors, entrepreneurs and self-employed persons; 3. **Sponsoring your family**; 4. Provincial nominees; and 5. Quebec-selected skilled workers.*

... Continued from the previous week

3. Sponsoring Your Family:

Eligible relatives

Frequently asked questions:

What is different in the sponsorship process if I live in Quebec?

Under the Canada-Quebec Accord, the province of Quebec has a role in determining the eligibility of sponsors living in Quebec. The Quebec process begins after Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) has reviewed your sponsorship application. CIC will advise the province of the results of its review so the Quebec process can start. If you meet Quebec's eligibility criteria, then the Quebec ministry that handles immigration (ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles) will issue an Engagement and Certificat de sélection du Québec (Agreement and Certificate of Selection) to you. A copy of each document will be sent to the visa office in your relative's home country to be included in the process.

Can my relative get an up-front medical examination?

The up-front medical examination process is only available to spouses, common-law partners and dependent children. If any other members of the Family Class (for example, parents and grandparents) use the up-front medical examination process, the medical results will not be valid and the examination will have to be redone.

Canada's Immigration and Refugee Protection Act changed the medical requirements for spouses, common-law partners, conjugal partners and dependent children, but these changes have not, so far, been extended to other members of the Family Class.

How do I find someone to represent me or help me complete my application?

You do not need a representative to help you apply to immigrate to Canada. The use of a representative is a personal choice. There are also organizations that can help you fill out the application forms.

Can I cancel my application once it has been approved?

If you change your mind about sponsoring your parents, grandparents, adopted children or other relatives, you must write a letter to the Case Processing Centre of Citizenship and Immigration Canada in Mississauga, Ontario, before the permanent resident visas are issued. Once permanent resident visas are issued, however, the promise that you and, if applicable, your co-signer made to support your family is valid for the term in the application.

The application is an unconditional promise of support. For example, if your relative is granted Canadian citizenship, if your relationship breaks down or if your relative moves to another province, the application will not be cancelled. Even if your financial situation changes and you can no longer afford to support a relative, the application remains in effect. You must support the relative financially for the full term of the agreement.

What if I can't afford to sponsor my relative? Can they come to Canada as a refugee instead?

Your relative is only eligible under the Private Sponsorship of Refugees program if they are in a situation where they may be subject to persecution in their home country. For more information, see The Refugee System on the left-hand side of this page.

...to be continued next week.

UNMIN To...

Contd. from page 1...

marginalised communities, indigenous nationalities and the government in the Eastern Region was where it was before and that this was the main challenge.

He stressed the need for resolving the Terai problem through talks and called on the different Terai groups to hold talks with the government.

Responding to a query, UNMIN spokesman Dwyer made it clear that whether or not to hold the election is in the hands of the political parties of Nepal and not the UNMIN.

Answering yet another query, he said the United Nations Organisations can not do anything on the question of whether or not to retain the king and clarified that the right to decide on this topic was solely in the hands of the Nepalese people.

Thousands of Bhutanese Refugees Ready To Resettle In Third Countries

Kathmandu Feb 5 (IRIN): The international community is working actively with the Nepalese government to help resettle thousands of Bhutanese refugees in Europe and North America, with the USA alone accepting at least 60,000 refugees, according to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR).

In addition, thousands of refugees will also get the chance to resettle in Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands, New Zealand and Norway, which have indicated their willingness to accept the Bhutanese refugees, said senior UNHCR officials.

"Now finally, here is our new chance of living with dignity," refugee Ashok Gurung told IRIN in Kathmandu on 4 February. He said most of the 107,000 Bhutanese refugees are enthusiastic about resettling in third countries and many have already started applying for resettlement.

Since 1990 Bhutanese citizens of Nepalese origin - also known as 'Lhotsampas' in Bhutan - have been living in refugee camps in Jhapa District, nearly 500km southeast of Kathmandu, after they were evicted from their homes by

the Bhutanese government which introduced a law stripping them of citizenship and civil rights due to their ancestry.

New confidence among refugees

"The refugees are no longer in a dilemma over the options offered to them by the UNHCR," said another Bhutanese refugee, Thakur Prasad Mishra, who is also editor of the Bhutan News Service, an independent news agency run by Bhutanese refugee journalists.

Mishra said there was new confidence among refugees that they would be allowed to leave their camps easily, after the recent announcement by the Nepalese government that it would issue exit visas to Bhutanese refugees who voluntarily opted for resettlement.

"There is also less fear of applying for resettlement because the number of applicants is growing a lot," said Mishra explaining how the refugees are constantly living in fear of being attacked by those who oppose resettlement and who are campaigning for repatriation to Bhutan.

These groups include Communist Party of Bhutan,

Marxist-Leninist-Maoist, Bhutan Tigers Force and Cobra whose leaders are all underground and operate from outside the camps, according to refugees who requested anonymity.

Refugees told IRIN that while they may not be totally happy about resettling in foreign countries this seemed to be the only immediate solution to easing their difficult and hard lives. "This is just one step for us but not always a durable solution," said Mishra.

"I'm ready to go"

The UNHCR said it had already submitted details of nearly 10,000 refugees for consideration by resettlement countries; all were in various stages of the process, from interviews to extensive medical screening and cultural orientation before departure.

"I'm ready to go and so are thousands of other Bhutanese refugees as this could be our only solution to the humanitarian problems that we are currently facing," said Gurung.

Refugees suffer from health problems, depression, financial hardship, lack of jobs and are dependent on humanitarian aid for everything, they told IRIN.

US Congress...

Contd. from page 1...

Senate, but with our colleagues in the House as well and the administration, to make an important statement that we are concerned about the slowing of our economy, and that we want to do something significant about it very quickly," said Mitch McConnell.

The legislation also makes clear that no rebates are to be provided to illegal immigrants. (VOA 2/7)

US Economic Slowdown...

Contd. from page 7...

"and if we can't go on then it's better to go back to our countries to see if we can make a living there."

And many have moved on, hurting the businesses that rely on their spending.

At the El Portal restaurant, owner Manuel Arbaiza is in danger of losing his \$400,000 investment. He says he saw an immediate change after the county passed its anti-illegal immigrant measures. "Before July, a good day for us was anywhere from \$2,000 to \$3,000, on weekends," Arbaiza said. "And now we have days of \$80. I mean, it costs us more money to open up the restaurant than if we were to close it."

Closing would mean letting go more workers, further worsening the already deteriorating economy. For businesses, including those owned by immigrants, tough times seem to lie ahead. (VOA 2/7)

Nepal's Development Linked...

Contd. from page 1...

would benefit Nepal during the transition period, argued Dr Chalise.

He was also very eloquent on conversation about the economic diplomacy he'd be undertaking. He talked about his discussion with the potential investors in the US and their interest in Nepal's natural water resources, and how he's been inviting them to harness the available resources.

While attending the final State of the Union address by President George W Bush in Washington DC on Monday Jan 28 '08, Ambassador Chalise observed things, *inter alia*, like 'clean energy' and 'buying foods supplied to the third world countries directly from the farmers in those country so that local farmers benefit...', that can be of interest to Nepal. He argued that Nepal's abundant water resources

can be exploited to meet the clean energy needs, which would positively influence the regional and international (energy) world order system. Buying foods directly from the farmers in Nepal, undeniably leads to economic prosperity at the grassroots level in the country, which would ultimately impact the Nepal's peace process, the transition and the future days, should there be a democracy and peace.

Nepal's future is very bright, as it has the best human capital in the world, claims Ambassador Chalise. The Nepalese people are in the UN Peace Keeping process across the troubled region in the world; they're in the Middle-East as a labor force and have been diligently defending territories of global powers. They have been serving the international communities in various capacities and at different levels. He further argued that in 10 years time,

Nepal can be a progressing economy should the peace and democratic stability reign the country.

Situated between the two gold mines India and China, Nepal can tremendously benefit from their emergence as an economic power. Hence, a proposal has been made to develop Nepal as a transit point between these two countries, and the response has been very positive from both sides. Prosperity in the neighbor undeniably will have positive impact in Nepal, stated Dr Chalise.

Identifying the greater role of the Non-Resident Nepalese (NRN) in promoting and preserving the Nepalese culture and identity in this country, he assured all possible cooperation to promote their interests and facilitate their concerns with Nepal government.

He's talking to another group of community members today.

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Tax Returns from Seven States Go to Different Centers

Washington Feb 7 (IRS): As some taxpayers begin to prepare their paper tax returns, the Internal Revenue Service notes that some may be sending their returns to a different service center than last year. Those who received a tax instruction booklet from the IRS in the mail and use the labels included with the booklet can be assured that their tax returns will go to the correct address. Taxpayers who e-file are not affected by these changes.

For tax year 2007, the mailing changes affect returns, with or without payments, from seven states: Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. Taxpayers should send:

Returns from Iowa, Kansas, Oklahoma and Wisconsin to the IRS center in Fresno, California.

Returns from Kentucky to the IRS center in Austin, Texas.

Returns from Pennsylvania and West Virginia to the IRS center in Kansas City, Missouri.

For taxpayers who file paper returns, the correct center addresses are on labels inside the tax packages they receive in the mail. Taxpayers who do not receive a package should refer to the back cover of the instructions to Form 1040, 1040A or 1040EZ.

Taxpayers who e-file will not be affected by these changes. Last year, 57 percent of all individual income tax filers chose to e-file their tax returns.

India Rejects Binding ...

Contd. from page 1...

and coal, and from deforestation. As countries such as India, China and Brazil become industrial powerhouses, their emissions are rising rapidly. By some accounts, China already has the largest emissions, though its per capita figures are well below those to developed nations.

The United States and some other developed countries say that any international agreement to curb global warming by cutting emissions must include the largest developing nations.

Officials from several countries are attending the Delhi Development Sustainable Summit, organized by the Tata Energy Research Institute.

Norway's Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg called for industrialized nations to transfer technology and funds to help developing countries switch to cleantechologies.

He said the rich world must play a leading role in reducing the effects of climate change since its emissions are so large.

The conference also heard a fervent appeal from one of the world's tiniest countries for quick action on climate change.

The president of Maldives, Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, says his country is already being hurt by changing weather patterns.

"Our fishermen used to predict local weather and ocean current patterns with some accuracy," said Gayoom. "That is no longer the case. The calendar is no longer able to predict weather patterns accurately in either monsoon. Fishermen therefore go out to sea not knowing when the next severe storm would threaten their boat."

The Maldives, a chain of low-lying islands in the Indian Ocean, could be hit hard if warmer global temperatures melt Arctic ice and raise sea levels.

The International Panel on Climate Change said in its latest report that low-lying islands and coastal regions could be inundated by rising sea levels brought about by rising temperatures.

US Economic Slowdown Hurts Small Immigrant Businesses

By Bill Rodgers, Washington DC

The slowing U.S. economy and rising unemployment are affecting a wide range of businesses across the country, including those owned by immigrants. Small immigrant businesses in Prince William County, Virginia, outside Washington, are among those hard-hit — not just by the economic slowdown but by county ordinances targeting illegal immigrants or undocumented workers. VOA's Bill Rodgers visited the county and has this report.

On the Route 1 corridor, Club Video Mexico has been in business for 19 years, but co-owner Pablo Vargas has never seen business so bad.

"Nobody wants to buy anything. They'd rather save money than spend it!" Vargas said.

Even larger immigrant businesses are affected. Carlos Castro owns three supermarkets, catering mainly to Latinos. He explains, "When it comes to food, even though it's said we have to eat every day, it has dropped considerably. In this store, we are down about 15 percent from the previous year, and in Alexandria it is about 22 or 25 percent."

Asian-owned businesses are affected, too. Yong-jae Park is the manager of the Korean-American Hanmi Bank office in northern Virginia. He says he is making fewer loans to his Asian clients. "The number of inquiries has substantially declined in the last couple of months and then the number of loans I am processing, I see there is some slowdown," he says.

Prince William County, near Washington, DC, has grown substantially in recent years, and now has a large immigrant population.

But it, too, has been affected by the nationwide housing downturn, the credit crunch and financial uncertainty.

At the county's Chamber of Commerce, Chairwoman Joanne Bell and President Laurie Wieder have noticed the change.

"A large portion of the members who do not renew their membership are businesses that are going out of business," Wieder said. "That happens every year. But this

year, certainly, there were more of those who closed the doors of their businesses."

The renewal rate was down between two and three percent, though more new members joined the chamber in 2007.

Chamber member Julie Do is worried. She is a Vietnamese immigrant who owns a nail and tanning salon. She says, "People have not come in as regularly as they used to. Instead of every two to three weeks, they prolong to a month and some people decide not to get [their nails] done because they don't have the money to spend, so they cut back."

The slowdown in construction and home sales in the county is only partly to blame for the business falloff. A county ordinance targeting illegal immigrants also has hurt business. Among other things, it will allow police to check the immigration status of anyone who breaks the law.

This has scared undocumented workers, who are finding less work anyway because of the slow economy.

Many are thinking of leaving the area, says one man who did not give his name. "We'll keep struggling as much as we can," he said in Spanish,

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For latest News / Views / Information & More...from Nepal

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Exchange Rates in Nepal

Currency	Buying (Rs)	Selling (Rs)
US \$ 1	63.25	63.85
Canadian \$1	62.69	63.28
Euro 1	92.52	93.40
Pound Sterling 1	123.84	125.02
Australian \$1	56.48	57.01
Swiss Franc 1	57.64	58.18
Singapore Dollar	44.50	44.93
Japanese Yen 10	5.95	6.01
Chinese Yuan 1	8.80	8.88
Indian Rupees 100	160.00	160.15
Swedish Kroner 1	9.77	---
Danish Kroner 1	12.41	---
Hong Kong Dollar 1	8.11	---
Saudi Arab Riyal 1	16.86	---
Qatari Riyal 1	17.39	---
Thai Bhat 1	1.92	---
UAE Dirham 1	17.22	---
Malaysian Ringgit 1	19.58	---

[Source: Nepal Rastra Bank, 02.07.08]

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America Still Draws Lessons from an Era when Humans Were Property

- Ted Landphair, Washington DC

As Americans observe Black History Month this February, considerable attention is being focused on a single stroke of a pen, 200 years ago. 2008 marks the bicentennial of a law that banned future U.S. participation in the international slave trade. VOA's Ted Landphair reports, that historic measure was the topic of a day-long symposium at the National Archives in Washington.

Over the span of three centuries, millions of Africans were abducted by slavers, transported in chains to the Americas, and sold as commodities no different than the cotton and sugar and rum then being loaded onto American ships and carried to Europe. Considered subhuman, African slaves became the economic underpinning of the southern U.S. economy.

Howard Dodson, director of New York's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, emphasizes that the slave trade was by no means clandestine. It was aboveboard, completely legal. "All of the activities that people were engaged in were considered to be legitimate economic enterprise," he notes. "The passage of the law actually raised questions about that in a fundamental way."

Ali Mazrui, a native Kenyan who is a professor of

humanities at Binghamton University in New York State, likens the trafficking in humans as chattel to today's terrorism, and the Slave Trade Act as the first assault in a long war on that terror.

"Just as terrorists in our military sense today devalue human life, in those days of enslavement, you might devalue that person and throw [him or her] overboard and then claim insurance," he observes. "On the other hand, enslavement, unlike destruction of people, puts a value on the labor of those who survive. So the ultimate terror is on the other side [of the Atlantic], when people arrive at their destination and spend the rest of their lives captives, and sometimes sold from one slavemaster to another." In 1807, Britain outlawed transatlantic slaving. A few days earlier, by a surprisingly wide margin, the U.S. Congress had voted to end American participation in the trade. But the American Slave Trade Act did not take effect until the first day of the following year, 1808.

At last, these actions put to paper the notion that enslaving human beings is immoral. Even southern members of Congress supported the measure, not always on ethical grounds. University of Maryland history professor Ira

Berlin says the transatlantic trade had outlived its usefulness. "Southern planters, southern slaveholders, now have a labor force that is reproducing itself," he points out. "So they don't need to import slaves."

The southerners also saw the impact of a long, brutal slave insurrection in nearby Haiti, which ousted the French and left thousands of slaveholders massacred. The South had enough problems controlling its existing slaves without bringing in more.

Howard University historian Joseph Harris, who organized the National Archives conference, notes that word of the passage of the Slave Trade Act spread quickly among the enslaved in the South. "Many of them developed aspirations, seeing this as making the end of enslavement more imminent than it was," he says. "[It encouraged] the African population in the United States to seek a closer identity with Africa. And that in itself was huge, because the enslavers had done so much to dehumanize African people. You see emerging out of that a more intensified antislavery movement in this country."

And Joseph Harris says the re-examination of the slave trade

today has prompted descendants of those involved — white as well as black — to reflect on how otherwise thoughtful and rational people could have so blithely engaged in human trafficking. He spent an evening with Thomas DeWolf, who has written a book about an ancestor, a New Englander who was the largest slave trader in America.

"Several of the people of European descent came to me and said, 'You know, we do have old documents that our family never wanted to talk about. And I'm going to go now and look to see if we can do what the DeWolfs have done,'" he says. "These are things that we need to know about as a part of the way in which our country developed. Then we can communicate better. We don't feel so guilty about withholding what we know happened. Let's address it. Let's get on about the business of being citizens. Let's get on about the business of being human beings."

Despite congressional passage of the Slave Trade Act of 1808, some illegal slaving continued for decades, and naval squadrons were seldom dispatched to seize slave vessels. In the United States, it took a civil war, more than half a century later, to finally put an end to slavery. (VOA 2/4)

Government of Canada Announces Funding To Help Newcomers Settle In The City of Toronto

Toronto Feb 8 (CIC): The Honourable Diane Finley, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), today announced funding to help 16 organizations deliver settlement services to an estimated 10,000 immigrants in Toronto.

The funding of over \$30 million is expected to help newcomers to Canada access settlement services in the city including language training, translation and interpretation, referrals to community resources, and counseling.

"The Government of Canada is committed to helping newcomers succeed," said Minister Finley. "Toronto has long been an important destination for immigrants. With this funding, thousands of new immigrants, particularly internationally trained immigrants, will have access to language

training, community services, and help with finding a job. Their success is good for Toronto and good for Canada as a whole."

"Thanks to the support from CIC, through the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement we are able to provide internationally trained newcomers with real employment options for their future," said Jane Cullingworth, Executive Director of Skills for Change. "This new funding allows us to offer increased services for those newcomers who choose the Toronto area as their new home."

Settlement services are an essential part of the federal government's immigration program. Through the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement (COIA), the

Government of Canada has increased settlement funding for Ontario by a total of \$920 million over five years. Under COIA, Citizenship and Immigration Canada works with the province and immigrant-serving agencies to make a real difference in the lives of immigrants.

Newcomers to Canada can also look to the Foreign Credentials Referral Office (FCRO), which helps internationally trained individuals find the information they need to get their credentials assessed and recognized more quickly. The FCRO was established in 2007 to provide information, path-finding and referral services to help internationally trained individuals use their skills in Canada. There are now 320 Service Canada Centres across Canada

offering in-person services to newcomers.

CIC funds a number of programs that help newcomers settle, adapt, and integrate into Canadian society. These programs are delivered in partnership with provinces, territories and service-providing organizations and include the Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program, which provides orientation, referral and counseling services; Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada, which provides basic language training for adults; and the Host Program, which helps newcomers connect with volunteers who help them access services, establish contacts in their field of work and participate in the community.