

# Nepal Abroad

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## Obama: Action Needed Now on Stimulus

-By Michael Bowman White House Jan 30 2009 VOA

President Barack Obama says America's sharply contracting economy underscores the need for swift action to create jobs and spur growth. At the White House Friday, Mr. Obama launched a task force focusing on the needs of the nation's middle class.

One day after news that the number of Americans receiving jobless benefits has reached a record high, the Commerce Department reported the U.S. economy shrank at a 3.8 percent annual rate in the last three months of 2008. It was the sharpest contraction in more than a quarter century, and yet another sign of the dire economic conditions confronting Barack Obama at the start of his presidency.

"This is a continuing disaster for America's working families," he said.

Mr. Obama said the deepening recession - now more than a year in duration - is affecting every sector of the economy.

"Families making fewer purchases, businesses making fewer investments, employers sustaining fewer jobs," he said. "The recession is deepening, and the urgency of our economic crisis is growing."

The president once again urged swift congressional passage of his economic recovery plan, currently under consideration in the Senate.

But he said the \$800-plus billion package of tax cuts and federal spending is not sufficient to restore America's economic vitality. Mr. Obama said a multi-pronged approach is needed, including a concerted effort to resuscitate America's ailing middle class.

"We know we need to create jobs, but not just any jobs," he said. "We need to create jobs that sustain families and sustain dreams. Jobs in new and growing industries. Jobs that do not feel like a dead end, but a way forward and a way up. Jobs that will foster a vibrant and growing middle class."

To that end, the president unveiled his administration's Task Force on Middle Class Working Families, aimed at raising living standards for wage and salary earners. Specific goals include expanding educational opportunities, strengthening labor standards, and protecting retirement income.

Joining Mr. Obama for the event was Vice President Joe Biden, who will head the task force. Biden said America's middle class was struggling long before the overall economy turned sour.

"Even when our economy was growing, and there was very solid ground on which to build, the middle class found itself slipping," he said. "Productivity went up almost 20 percent between 2000 and 2007, yet income for working families fell by two thousand dollars a year. And now with our economy struggling, the pain is significantly worse."

U.S. labor leaders immediately hailed the task force. America's largest business federation, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, had no immediate comment saying it was carefully reviewing the initiative.

At the close of the event, President Obama signed executive orders strengthening labor standards for private contractors that work on federal projects.

## Govt Reserves 45 pc Public Service Seats For Disadvantaged

Kathmandu, Jan. 28: A meeting of the Council of Ministers Tuesday decided to promulgate two different ordinances namely the Investment Board Ordinance-2065 and the Special Economic Zone Ordinance-2065.

The meeting has also agreed in principle to promulgate two other ordinances related with setting up of a commission for the investigation of the disappeared persons and another one for improving social practices.

Government spokesperson and Minister for Information and Communications Krishna Bahadur Mahara informed that the cabinet meeting ratified the third amendment of Scholarship Regulations.

"Today's cabinet meeting decided to promulgate ordinances on Investment Board and Special Economic Zone," spokesperson Mahara informed.

He said that the meeting also decided to operate single account fund system to manage the government public account properly and transparently. "As a part of experiment of its operation, this system will

be operated first in Lalitpur and Bhaktapur districts."

Minister Mahara further informed that the meeting also decided to reserve 45 per cent of public service appointments to the Madhesis, Dalits and people from backward regions. "This decision is aimed at making the public service sector inclusive and proportionate in its composition. The decision is based on the existing laws for the reserve according to which the Madhesis have 28 per cent, the Dalits have 15 per cent and the backward regions 5 per cent."

He said that with a view to bringing improvement in social practice of organising parties and conducting different ceremonies like wedding, the meeting also decided to implement existing laws on the issues.

Minister Mahara said that the meeting agreed to receive the aid from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to build South Asian level sub-regional information highway. "The highway will consolidate information and IT based relation of the coun-

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## NRNA To Offer Suggestions To The Constituent Assembly

In response to the requests from Public Relations Committee of the Constituent Assembly Nepal, through the Nepalese missions in various countries to provide suggestions in the process of making a new constitution, the Non Resident Nepalese Association (NRNA) has proposed the formation of a group under the leadership of Prof. Surya Subedi consisting of Kul C Gautam, Naresh Koriala, Prof. Alok Bohara, Dr. Jugal Bhurtel, the 45 Presidents of NRN National Coordinating Councils (NCC), NRNA Lawyer Dinesh Tripathi, and Dr. Hemant Dabadi. The PRC of the Constituent Assembly decided to seek opinions from the Nepalese expatriates in a discussion program organized in Kathmandu on January 11, 2009.

NRNA - International Coordination Council (ICC) has also requested all NCCs to collect suggestions from Nepalese Diaspora in respective countries and furnish their recommendations to ICC. To this effect, the Nepalese Americas

Council (NAC), the NRNA-NCC of America has also constituted a Task Force (TF) with specific mandates under the leadership of Khagendra Chetry.

NAC, the NRNA National Coordination Council of America represents the interests of NRN in America and asks all Nepalese expatriates in the US to help the Task Force by providing ideas and suggestions concerning their interests as NRNs. The Task Force would solicit ideas and suggestions from the Nepalese American communities, develop a set of recommendations and present them to the Board of Directors of NRNA-NCC of America for endorsement. Upon approval by the Board, the final set of recommendations will be submitted to the NRNA-ICC with a copy to local resident missions of Nepal.

The TF has broadly identified numbers of areas to guide the process and has divided the responsibilities among the TF members accordingly. The

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**Editorial:****Sovereignty Reaffirmed in SL**

While Sri Lankan army appears to be in a final stage of ending the three decade plus insurgency lead by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the sinister move to discredit the government and the army is also progressing by the circulating false stories about the war casualties by vested interests groups in the Island nation. The fight between the LTTE and the government forces have claimed thousands of innocent lives in the Island and this insurgency had virtually paralyzed the northern Sri Lanka for a long time.

Being a country hit by the longest insurgency, Sri Lanka was also watched by the global community in their dealing with the terrorism. The strategies used by these rebels to put pressure in the government were met with global criticism, and forced many civilized countries (except its supporter,

known to all) to recognize them as a terrorist organizations.

The progress made by the Sri Lankans troops have made people in Sri Lanka and their friends outside hopeful about the beginning of a new era - the peace reigning in this war torn island. President Mahinda Rajapaksa have also made a timely move in appealing the country men to foster communal harmony, tolerance and equality; to consider all a children of sovereign mother Lanka. His goal is also to see the country emerge from its communal hangover of the past and emerge as a sovereign nation rich in race, religion and ethnic tolerance and diversity.

His address to the countrymen in Tamil also suggests a reassurance to all that Tamils are as equals as other ethnic groups, and are also equal participants in rebuilding this nation. Hopefully, Sri Lankan experience can prove a lesson for other warring groups in the region.

**NRNA To Offer Suggestions ...**

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subcommittees will solicit ideas and suggestions from members of Nepalese Diasporas across America and come up with recommendations. The TF as a group will finalize them and submit to the Board for final action.

The broadly identified areas and members assigned to coordinate the work include: 1. Dual Citizenship – Girija Gautam, Suman Timsina; 2. Investment related laws, such as commercial bench, tax treaties, arbitration laws, time bound issues, etc – Mukesh K Singh, Ambika Adhikari and Ratan Jha; 3. Women Inheritance

Rights – Madhavi Karki, Sharda Thapa; 4. NRN's Inheritance Rights – Madhavi Karki, Nembang Sherpa, Amrit Sunar; 5. Constitutional Provisions for gender, employment and age discrimination – Mukesh K Singh, Madhavi Karki, Sharda Thapa; 6. Issues related to human rights, and any other issues concerning the right of NRN's to be secured in the new constitution of Nepal – Khagendra G.C., Ratan Jha, Suman Timsina.

The TF also invites feedback on issues and interests listed above and those not represented in the category listed above to [nrmacc@gmail.com](mailto:nrmacc@gmail.com) by February 22, 2009.

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**Darjeeling Today**

- Swaroop Chetry, India [Chetry\\_swaroop@rediffmail.com](mailto:Chetry_swaroop@rediffmail.com)

Contd. from the previous week...

The genesis of this uprising dates back almost a century when the Nepali speaking population resented the move of the then East India Company to en-bloc the Hill tract and its adjoining areas to what is present Bihar for an administrative unit, which was later incorporated into the State of West Bengal this too with much reluctance of the then Leaders of All India Gorkha League, Kalimpong and parts of Dooars fostered from Bhutan. The present case of people's movement in Darjeeling is primarily because of total failure to bring about desired change by Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC) and its autocratic chief Subhas Ghising, the West Bengal Government also seems to miss out an opportunity to consolidate largely because of its inept handling and internal bickering within the communist party and the writers building about the healing touch which the people of Darjeeling needed most after the Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) struggle for statehood ended.

With the DGHC accord, people's expectation ran high but the paradigm shift eluded and remained a far fetch dream, the quality of living and basic services did not change for good, majority of people were pushed to the brink of suffocating poverty, compounded by the cultural isolation of the people in the Hills. All of it can act as super catalyst to ignite chain reaction which is now evident in the Darjeeling Hills.

In the last quarter of a century India has emerged as one of major Global Economic power house and this had in fact multiplied people's aspirations, the idea to better achieve in life has also become a near reality for thousands of Nepali speaking Indians of Darjeeling and Dooars and more so if Governance is brought to their door steps. It may sound little absurd but the fact is people's aspiration and development today in the Indian democratic context depends to an extend to the state which a person hails from, as state boundaries are all drawn on linguistic parameters, therefore the demand for a separate state of Gorkhaland becomes pronounced, the Gorkhas and the Nepali speaking

population otherwise remain vastly unrepresented in every spheres of decision making even in the state of West Bengal. The window of better hope and future is what fuels the present agitation of separate statehood.

In the realm of this demand there seems a section of the media and vested interest who would like to play the card of pan-Nepali movement which again is only a figment of imagination as is obvious that to cave out a state of greater Nepal out of superior India is a bogey, one has to agree to cultural integration and cultural exchanges, but again cultural integration always transcends national and international boundaries as is seen in many vibrant cultures of India.

History has it, the treaty between the East India Company and the Raja Vikram shah of Nepal of 1815 lead to cessation of land between river Meitchee and river Teestah, from the Rajah of Nepal along with its subjects residing in this area. Census of 1871 shows the predominant population of Darjeeling are Nepalese. True that a small section of this population is migrant almost two century and beyond, it is also believed that a section of the Nepali speaking people once migrated from the princely state of Rajasthan and Maharastra during the Mughal invasion and forth, but one has to also examine the circumstances that propelled this migration, like all other migratory behavior of mankind this is no difference, in search of greener pastures and in case of Darjeeling the same people were amongst the first settlers.

The British and the East India Company, knowing the tenacity recruited the Nepali speaking people as foot soldiers to serve them

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**Nepalese Calendar**

Sun Feb 01/ Magh 19 '65

Panchami

Mon Feb 02 / Magh 20 '65

Astami

Tue Feb 03 / Magh 21 '65

Nawami

Wed Feb 04 / Magh 22 '65

Dasami

Thu Feb 05 / Magh 23 '65

BhimaEkadashin

Fri Feb 06 / Magh 24 '65

Duadashin

Sat Feb 07 / Magh 25 '65

Trayodashin/Pradoshbratam

## Nepal: On Alert Against Bird Flu

KATHMANDU, Jan 27: The authorities in southeastern Nepal are stepping up anti-bird flu measures after the first case of a bird found to have the deadly H5NI virus was discovered earlier this month. There have been no reports of humans affected.

To date 26 out of 75 districts in the densely populated Terai region in the south of the country bordering India have been placed on high alert.

The move follows the virus's detection in the town of Kakarvitta, Jhapa District, bordering on the Indian state of West Bengal, nearly 450km southeast of Kathmandu, on 16 January.

"We are taking all measures to prevent further infections among birds," said Manas Kumar Banerjee, coordinator of the Health Ministry's Avian Influenza Control Project (AICP).

An emergency cabinet meeting on 19 January ordered the culling of all birds within 3km of Kakarvitta. As of 26 January, more than 23,000 had been culled. All poultry meat, eggs and production facilities in the area were to be destroyed.



Photo: Naresh Newar/IRIN

Health workers have culled more than 23,000 chickens and ducks in southeast Nepal following the first reported case of the virus

### Ban on Indian products

Nepal has been concerned about a possible outbreak since India reported its first case in 2006: Large amounts of poultry were imported from the Indian states of West Bengal and Bihar, but Nepal has now banned the import of all poultry products from its neighbour.

The World Health Organization (WHO) described a January 2008 outbreak of bird flu in West Bengal as the worst ever in India.

The decision to ban poultry products would remain in tact unless international institutions

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## Raute Population Is A Secret As Head Counting Is Tribal Taboo

Surkhet, Jan. 28 : Call it tradition or social stigma, nomads known as Rautes of the Mid and Far-West regions of Nepal do not reveal their number in their families and communities.

Generally, communities keep records of their people. But not the Rautes. They fear "if they count their heads in the family, they will die early."

It is said that except Rautes themselves everyone else knows how many people are there in their community and in what conditions they live.

When asked about their exact number, Main Bahadur Shahi, the Raute leader, locally called mukhiya, makes guesswork that there might be up to 300 members of the community living in different forests of the country.

"I have never ever counted the number of my community people, nor I will do it in future," Shahi said.

Living for five months near Karnali riverbank of Kalekanda in Achham district, the nomads have erected 36 different huts. Usually, seven to eight people take shelter in a single hut.

Although Rautes are Nepalese, they never liked the idea that the government should issue them citizenship certificates.

"We are part of Nepal and should be allowed to have independent and free movement in the forests of the country and for this, why do we need citizenship?" Shahi counter queried.

Assistant mukhiya Dil Bahadur Shahi said that taking citizenship would require head count of every Raute family, which was against the norms of the community.

The government has announced an allowance of Rs. 500 to each Raute, because the community is on the verge of extinction. But the budget remains with the District Development Committee of Dailekh because none of them approaches the office for allowance.

Members of the community recently met with Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', President Dr. Ram Baran Yadav and

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## Calendar of Events

**January 31:** The NRN – Canada, National Committee of Language, Literature and Culture and the Nepali Literary Society Toronto have jointly scheduled the celebration of 5<sup>th</sup> Basanta Panchami Poetry Recitation Program on Saturday December 31, 2009 at Wellesley Community Center (Library), Toronto ON. For details contact Govind S Rawat 416 671 3747.

**January 31:** Vishawaparikrama Fortnightly has scheduled to organize Akchhyarambha Utsav celebrating Basanta Panchami on Saturday 31st Jan from 12.30 pm to 3.30 pm at Fairfax County Regional Library 10360 North street Fairfax VA 22030. Contact Govinda Giri Prerana @ 703 587 0795 . View details at nepalhorizons.com

**January 31:** NICE Noble Initiative for Community Empowerment is organizing an interactive program on "Power Of Persistence and Hope: A Pathway To Success" at Fairfax Regional Library 10360 North Street Fairfax VA 22030 on Saturday January 31 from 12pm -5pm. Contact Prakash nepal 703 864 4141 Jiwan Giri 703 965 4134 Bikash Acharya 571 224 6505 Details at nepalhorizons.com

**March 15:** California Sherpa Lhosar 2136 has been scheduled on Sonoma Vetreans Memmorial Hall 126 First Street west Sonoma CA 95476 on Sunday 15th March from 4.00pm to 12.00am. Visit nepalhorizons.com for details.

**Thursdays:** The Shri Sai Baba of Shirdi Bhajan / Kirtan is conducted at Durga Temple 8400 Durga Place, Fairfax Station VA every Thursdays from 7pm to 8pm. Sai Satsang in Dallas, TX: Sri Shirdi Sai Baba Satsang is held every Sunday between 4pm and 6pm CST in remembrance of Sri Sai Baba and Sri Babuji at Center for Spiritual Living, 4801 Spring Valley Road, Suite 115, Dallas TX 75244

**Saturdays:** The Durga Temple & Chinmaya Mission welcomes everyone to **Bhagavad Gita Satsangh** every Saturday at the Durga Temple 8400 Durga Place, Fairfax Station VA from 10:30am to noon. For further information contact coordinators at 703 793 8855 / 703 646 5924.

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

## Govt Forms Panel To Define Madhesis

Kathmandu, January 28: The cabinet meeting today formed a task force headed by Minister for General Administration Pampha Bhusal to define the 'Madhesi' community.

The task force, which includes Madhes-based ministers, will prepare a list of Madhesi castes after a study within few days, said Dev Prasad Gurung, Minister for Law, Justice and Constituent Assembly Affairs. The castes included in the list will be specified as Madhesis in the Act on Inclusiveness, he informed. The groundwork to draft the Act is on, he said.

Defining 'Madhesi' has been the subject of controversy, as there are certain castes, which are from both the hilly and Madhes areas. There is conflict among some Madhesi communities on the issue of who is the real Madhesi.

The task force includes Education Minister Renu Kumari Yadav, Minister for Commerce and Supply Rajendra Mahato and Minister for Local Development Ram

Chandra Jha.

"Up to 40 castes have been recorded as Madhesi, but there are more Madhesi communities. All the people living in Tarai are not Madhesis," said Mahato.

The cabinet meeting today issued two ordinances on Investment Board and Special Economic Zone. The ordinances have been issued nine days after the end of the fourth session of the parliament.

The meeting also approved in principle the ordinance on disappeared people which will be passed by the next cabinet meet, probably on Friday, said Minister for Information and Communications Krishna Bahadur Mahara.

He said the cabinet also endorsed in principle the amended draft of Social Behaviour Reform Act. It will be approved by the next meeting.

The Act promulgated some 32 years ago was never implemented. It bans inviting more than 51 persons to a wedding procession. But the new

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# Obama and the World: Time to Deliver

*From Middle East to Asia, intractable problems await the new president's bold initiatives*

Bruce Stokes YaleGlobal, 28 January 2009

WASHINGTON: Barack Obama's inauguration as the 44th president of the United States was watched by a record number of people outside the country, hopeful that he would guide the world towards peace and stability. Euphoria created by the Obama feel-good-factor will soon be sorely tested as the new administration confronts the thorny Bush legacy in Gaza, Iran, Afghanistan and North Korea. Obama must transform US foreign policy from spurts of interventionist moves and short-term fixes to a well-thought out global approach that encourages long-term cooperation with others on many pressing issues.

The gushing headlines and random man-in-the-street interviews are deceptive, transitory snapshots of emotional moments. Temporarily disregarded amid post-inauguration Obamamania are widespread pre-election doubts around the world about the new American president's ability to effect meaningful change in US foreign policy.

Before the election, only a small minority of Egyptians, Jordanians and Lebanese thought the next White House resident could make a difference in US foreign policy, according to the Pew Global Attitudes Survey. That is hardly fertile ground for an Obama-led Israeli-Palestinian peace initiative.

Obama faces a similar credibility challenge in dealing with Afghanistan and Pakistan. Last year only one in five Pakistanis thought replacing George Bush would prove a change for the better in US foreign policy. And in 21 of 23 countries Pew surveyed, a majority or plurality of those questioned wanted US and NATO troops out of Afghanistan as soon as possible.

Obama's diplomatic test is no less daunting in Northeast Asia. The new administration's top regional foreign policy priority is likely to be restarting nuclear talks with North Korea. But the Japanese people are more concerned about the return of their citizens allegedly abducted by Pyongyang than they are about North Korea having nuclear weapons, according to the Japanese cabinet office's recent annual survey of Japanese public opinion on foreign affairs. And a majority of Chinese, Japanese

and South Koreans told Pew they doubt that a new US president will make much difference to American foreign policy.

The advent of a new administration in Washington provides a window of opportunity for the United States to overcome these doubts and to re-inspire faith in American leadership in the Middle East and in Southwest and Northeast Asia. To demonstrate to skeptics around the world that his election signals more than a feel-good moment, Obama needs to make a series of significant gestures in his first months in office.

The Middle East: Reestablish Washington's image as an honest broker in the decades-old Arab-Israeli confrontation by being tough with Israel on almost any topic. The substance is less important than the effect of being seen on the Arab street as defying the Israeli lobby in Washington and taking the Arab side occasionally. Cairo, Amman and Damascus need this shift in public sentiment to give them domestic political space to compromise with Israel in future negotiations. Obama's appointment of former Senator George Mitchell as his special envoy to Middle East is a first step. Mitchell has a reputation for fairness and balance.

Challenge regional Arab actors to put up or shut up by offering US support for the Syrian-Israeli negotiations suggested by Turkey, the Hamas-Fatah talks that Egypt has been trying to broker and the Arab-Israeli initiative proposed by Saudi Arabia. Convince the Europeans, and possibly the Japanese and the Indians, to police the Gaza-Egyptian border and the Gaza coastline to interdict weapons shipments. An embargo will diminish Hamas' ability to attack Israel and deny Israel an excuse for reoccupying Gaza.

Open negotiations with Tehran. The generation-long US cut-off of diplomatic relations and economic embargo have failed. Washington stands alone. Europe, China, India and Japan need Iranian energy and will not support a policy of continued isolation. Pursue US engagement through tourism, student exchanges, trade and investment. Accept that Tehran is going to have nuclear weapons and develop non-proliferation

controls. Support a regional dialogue between Iran and its neighbors. But don't be a pushover. Demand quid pro quos from Tehran.

Southwest Asia: Reverse Obama's bellicose campaign rhetoric about Afghanistan and signal Washington's intention to eventually disengage. Afghanistan is a quagmire. Ask the British or the Russians. Most of America's allies want out. Washington cannot expect more European troops to back up the GIs in Afghanistan. So challenge the Europeans and the Japanese to put their money where their mouths are and boost their economic redevelopment assistance. Spend some of the billions Washington will save drawing down forces in Iraq to provide education, health care and job opportunities for Afghans. Publically warn Afghan President Hamid Karzai that America's withdrawal timetable depends on his crack-down on corruption. The more honestly and effectively he spends economic development assistance, the longer Americans will stay. And make it clear that Afghani sovereignty will not get in the way of the United States defending itself. Washington will strike back from the air and with special forces' operations if terrorist training camps reemerge in Afghanistan. Richard Holbrooke, Obama's new special envoy for Pakistan and Afghanistan, is a blunt-spoken realist who can deliver this message loud and clear.

Focus on Pakistan as the long-term threat to regional stability because of Islamabad's inability to control its own territory, Pakistan's nuclear arsenal and the ever-present danger of war between Pakistan and India. Offer a 90-day pause in US drone bombing of suspected terrorists living on Pakistani territory, which is alienating Pakistani public opinion, in return for meaningful Pakistani military action against terrorist operations. Challenge the Europeans, Japanese and Chinese to counter the fundamentalists' appeal by building schools, clinics and factories to afford Pakistanis a better life. And restrain New Delhi. Whatever the provocation, war will only make conditions in Pakistan worse. Pressure Islamabad to turn over suspected terrorists to Indian authorities and launch back-channel efforts to reduce tensions in Kashmir.

Northwest Asia: Restart discussions with the North Koreans by sending an American team of non-governmental experts to Pyongyang to begin a dialogue on how to have more effective negotiations about the North Korean nuclear weapons program. Tell Tokyo that it is free to pursue its own diplomacy with Pyongyang about the abductees. But the nuclear talks with North Korea will eventually continue, with only five parties if Japan cannot participate for domestic political reasons. Challenge Beijing to ratchet up its pressure on Pyongyang as a sign of Chinese willingness to work constructively with the new US administration. And pass the US-Korea Free Trade Agreement as a signal of continued US engagement in the region.

There is a palpable, collective relief around the world that the Bush era is over. And the excitement that a young African-American has now become president of the United States is genuine. But Obama should not confuse the enthusiasm of the moment with support for American foreign policy in the long run. Rebuilding trust in the United States requires Washington to break with the past.

No one expects Obama to resolve longstanding problems overnight. But his first few months in office are a time to set the tone for his foreign policy by offering bold initiatives to address stalemated crises in hotspots around the world. He will never have this opportunity again.

*Bruce Stokes is the international columnist for the National Journal*

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## Laid Off Migrant Workers...

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cant 25 per cent. There are 2.1 million foreign workers in Malaysia, of which 0.4 million are Nepali.

The Nepali mission in Malaysia had requested the MoLTM not to issue new permits for Malaysia due to job insecurity for workers. More than 50,000 Nepalis left for Malaysia through official channels during 2007-08. (*The Himalayan Times*)

## IRS Offers Tips to Avoid Recovery Rebate Credit Confusion

Washington Jan 30 (IRS): In response to errors showing up on early tax filings, the Internal Revenue Service today urged taxpayers and tax preparers to make sure they properly determine eligibility for the recovery rebate credit before they file their 2008 federal tax returns.

Some individuals who did not get the economic stimulus payment, and a smaller number of those who did, may be eligible for the recovery rebate credit. However, most taxpayers who received the economic stimulus payment last year will not qualify for the recovery rebate credit on their 2008 federal income tax return.

An early sampling of tax returns shows about 15 percent have errors involving the recovery rebate credit. Some tax returns erroneously claim the credit, do not claim the proper amount of recovery rebate credit or mistakenly enter the amount of the stimulus payment they received on the recovery rebate credit line.

To avoid delays in tax refunds, it is critical that taxpayers

know the correct amount of the stimulus payment they received last year, if any, to help determine whether they qualify for the recovery rebate credit now.

The amount of the stimulus payment will not be entered directly on the tax return. For people using a paper tax return, the stimulus payment amount will be required when completing a related worksheet. For people using tax software, the stimulus payment amount will be needed as part of the return preparation process.

### How to Get the Recovery Rebate Credit Right

The IRS sent taxpayers nearly 119 million stimulus payments last year. There are three ways individuals can find out how much they received:

- ▶ Check the amount listed on Notice 1378, which the IRS mailed last year to individuals who received the economic stimulus payment.

- ▶ Go to the How Much

Was My Stimulus Payment? tool that is available on the IRS Web site, IRS.gov. This can provide the correct amount in a matter of a few seconds.

- ▶ Individuals can call the IRS at 1-866-234-2942. After a brief recorded announcement they can select option one to find out the amount of their economic stimulus payment. They will need to provide their filing status, Social Security Number and number of exemptions.

With the amount of last year's economic stimulus payment in hand, the taxpayer can then enter the figure on the recovery rebate credit worksheet or in the appropriate location when tax preparation software requests it.

If the taxpayer or preparer is using tax software, the amount of the recovery rebate credit will automatically be calculated and reported properly. If the taxpayer is using the paper method, the recovery rebate credit, as determined through the worksheet, should be reported on Line 70 of Form 1040, Line 42 of

Form 1040A or Line 9 of Form 1040EZ.

For most taxpayers, the correct entry for the recovery rebate credit will either be blank or zero.

If there is any question at all as to the amount that should be reported for the recovery rebate credit, the taxpayer or preparer should enter a zero on the appropriate line above, and the IRS will determine whether a recovery rebate credit is due, and, if so, how much.

Some of the major factors that could qualify you for the recovery rebate credit include:

- ▶ Your financial situation changed dramatically from 2007 to 2008.

- ▶ You did not file a 2007 tax return.

- ▶ Your family gained an additional qualifying child in 2008.

- ▶ You were claimed as a dependent on someone else's return in 2007 but cannot be claimed as dependent by someone else in 2008.

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## TRIPS And Nepalese Intellectual Property Law: Existing Differences

Nepal applied for admission to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in May 1989. Five years later after the end of the Uruguay Round, GATT transitioned to what we now know as the World Trade Organization (WTO). Whereas GATT was mainly a treaty relating to goods, WTO also covers intellectual property via its Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). TRIPS has five key groups of requirements: general obligations of IP international law under TRIPS, how to protect each of the five "classes" of IP rights (patents, industrial designs, copyright, trademarks, trade secrets, geographical indications), enforcement and remedies, dispute settlement, and special transitional provisions. In 2000 during its pre-accession procedures, Nepal noticed the WTO that it had the following enhancements to be added to its IP laws to achieve full TRIPS compliance:

### A. General Obligations Deficiencies, TRIPS Part I

- Unfair competition law needs to be created to meet the requirements of Articles 1(2), 10bis

- Foreigners charged double fees for registration and renewal or trademarks, and is discriminatory under Article 2

- Right of priority needs to be added in 2022 to meet Article 4 Compulsory licensing provisions need to be added per Article 5(A)(2-3)

- Cause of actions and remedies needs to be added for seizure of trademarked imported products without authorization per Article 9

- Need to add provisions for the false indications of goods per Article 10

- Legal remedies for trademark violations per Articles 9, 10, 10bis need to be added to meet requirement of Article 10ter, including temporary protection afforded to goods/designs/trademarks that are exhibited as required by Article 11

### B. Copyrights and Neighboring Rights, TRIPS Part II, §1

Provision must be added to protect compilations of data per Article 10

### C. Trademarks, TRIPS Part II, §2

- Fair use exception needs to be added per Article 17

- Need to amend period of

non-use resulting in abandonment to 3 years to meet Article 19.1

### D. Geographical Indications, TRIPS Part II, §3

Nepal has no IP law for Geographical Indications. This body of law needs to be created to meet Articles 22-24

### E. Patents, TRIPS Part II, §5

- Rights of process patent owner against imported products manufactured offshore which infringes the process patent needs to be added per Articles 5quater, 28.1

- Need to add burden shifting to defendant for substantial likelihood of process patent infringement Article 34

### F. Integrated Circuit Layout, TRIPS Part II, §6

Nepal has no IP law for Integrated Circuit protection. This body of law needs to be created to meet Articles 35, 36, 38

### G. Trade Secrets, TRIPS Part II, §7

Nepal has no IP law for Trade Secret protection. This body of law needs to be created to meet



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Article 39, including protecting data submitted for marketing approval of pharmaceuticals

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## On Alert Against ...

contd. from pg 3...

certified that an epidemic no longer existed in India, according to Dalaram Pradhan, director-general at the government's Department of Livestock Services (DLS).

The authorities have also warned Nepalese traders against illegally importing birds, promising firm action against violators.

Police and health officials have started checking vehicles suspected of carrying birds or poultry meat from India, and more than 50 families with coughs or respiratory problems have been investigated.

Kathmandu has sought New Delhi's help in controlling the spread of bird flu, as well as stopping the illegal export of birds.

### Preparedness

Since 2006 when bird flu was detected in India, the AICP has

been supported by the UN and World Bank, and the latter has provided a grant of more than US\$18 million for the AICP over four years.

Although there have been bans by the authorities on the import of Indian poultry and eggs, they were very poorly implemented, said a local public health expert.

In the past the UN has warned that Nepal was vulnerable, given the large number of migrating birds.

According to the WHO, since 2003 there have been 399 confirmed human cases of avian influenza worldwide, of whom 251 died.

WHO remains concerned that the H5N1 virus might mutate or combine with a highly contagious seasonal influenza virus to spark a pandemic that could kill millions of people. *[IRIN News]*

## Govt Reserves 45 pc...

contd. from pg 1...

tries," he said.

Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' on Sunday in his address to the nation had focused on economic and social changes as the main agenda of the incumbent government.

The cabinet had ratified the

terms of reference of the investment board and special economic zone last week. Minister Mahara informed that the next cabinet meeting would decide on the issues agreed upon.

The meeting also decided to preserve 45% in the public service for the oppressed and marginalised people. *[The Rising Nepal]*

## Raute Population Is A Secret...

contd. from pg 3...

Finance Minister Dr. Baburam Bhattarai. The leaders requested the nomadic people to accept citizenship like every other citizen.

They instead asked for permission to freely roam in the forests, foraging for food and firewood.

When they returned from the capital, the government increased their allowances from Rs. 500 to Rs. 1,000.

There, however, was a big challenge to distribute the money, Bhakta Bahadur Shahi, who has spent most of his time with Raute community, said.

Meanwhile, Diwash Rai, a researcher on Raute Community with the National Academy of Indigenous and Ethnic Empowerment, said that due to lack of citizenship and ID it was difficult to study Rautes.

This community's another notable tradition of not mentioning their children's name until they are 10 years.

"Our guardians do not

like to mention our names before we become 10 years," teenager Shiva Ram Shahi said. "They believe calling names at early age might invite early death," he informed.

Raute community members are descendants of Kalyal, Samal and Raskoti ancestors.

The nomads neither care to be educated or seek medicines. Nor do they show any interest in farming or living in permanent shelters, sources said. *[The Rising Nepal]*

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## Darjeeling Today...

contd. from pg 2...

and take control of all hostile territory, bringing them under a single administrative umbrella. Many were roped in as laborers to build new roads and cattle grazers, to cultivate crops primarily Tea in the Darjeeling and adjoining areas. With the socio economic fabric slightly improving the same people also started to participate in India's freedom struggle. To name a few Dal Bahadur Giri, Bhaktabir Lama, Agam Singh Giri, Dambar Singh Gurung, Paras Mani Pradhan, and Ari Bahadur Gurung who later became the member of the constitu-

ent assembly of free India. The war memorial at Batasia Loop speaks volumes of those decorated soldiers who laid their life for the nation.

The cry for a homeland for majority of the people irrespective of caste and creed in Darjeeling is high pitched, but what remains to be seen is will the Government of West Bengal and Government of India agree to carve out a new state from the present map of West Bengal, ask Bimal Gurung and GJM, they are confident, only time will tell, but for the people of Darjeeling it is in their heart soon to be addressed.

## Govt Forms Panel To ...

contd. from pg 3...

provision has extended the number to 101, said a cabinet source.

Today's cabinet meet also decided to allocate 45 per cent reservation to women, ethnic and indigenous groups, Madhesis, Dalits and marginalised groups while filling vacant posts in all public services. "This decision has come under the existing law and the parliament will discuss whether

to increase the quota or not," said Mahara.

Mahato said, "The PM has agreed to follow the principle of inclusive and proportional representation even in political appointments." The government has also decided to launch Single Account Fund System as an experiment which will be initiated in Lalitpur and Bhaktapur. *[The Himalayan Times]*

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## Laid Off Migrant Workers To Be Compensated

Kathmandu, Jan 29 :Migrant workers returning from the Gulf countries and Malaysia due to job cuts there will get compensation.

"The compensation can be paid after a worker provides enough proof that the lay-off was due to global economic recession," said Sthaneshwor Devkota, executive director of the Employment Promotion Board (EPB).

The recruiting company or Nepali embassy in that country should give in writing that the worker had to return due to economic recession and not due to other reasons, he said adding that the compensation will be borne half by the government and half by the man-power agency that had sent the worker.

The government will provide compensation from the welfare fund set up to protect the migrant workers' rights. "Around Rs 24.5 million is put aside from the welfare fund for compensation," he said adding that if a worker returns after six months, 40 per cent of the expenses would be compensated. Similarly, if a worker returns after a year, 25 per cent of the expenses would be compensated.

However, a three-member committee headed by Devkota, an undersecretary from the Foreign Ministry and the president of Nepal Foreign Employment Agencies' Association Tilak Ranabhat will decide on the compensation claims.

Meanwhile, a study team headed by Minister for Transport

Management and Labour Lekh Raj Bhatta will leave for Sri Lanka and the Philippines to study the crisis. Another team headed by Labour Secretary will visit Dubai, Qatar and Saudi Arabia to study the ground realities.

Last friday, the government stopped issuing new work permits to Nepali jobseekers for Malaysia until further notice following an announcement by the Malaysian government to stop recruitment of foreign workers.

Qatar has also reduced its foreign workforce after it felt the heat of economic recession. The Gulf country and the East Asian country have more concentration of Nepali workforce, especially in manufacturing and service sectors.

The suspension of new work permits for Malaysia will hit remittance that had kept the Nepali economy afloat even during the conflict period. Of the total remittance, that from Saudi Arabia tops the list followed by Qatar and Malaysia. The total contribution of remittance to the GDP is 17.4 per cent. If remittance drops by half, the forex and foreign trade will also be hit. The spiralling effect will then hit financial institutions.

Every month, 3,500 Nepali job-seekers used to leave for Malaysia. Of the total foreign workforce in Malaysia, Nepalis comprise a significant...

...Contd. on pg 4

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## IRS Offers Tips To Recovery...

contd. from pg 5...

### Stimulus Payments Not Taxable; Reports of Extensive Refund Delays False

The IRS has received a number of recurring questions involving stimulus payments and the recovery rebate credit. Here are some important tips to keep in mind:

► **Taxability.** The economic stimulus payment is not taxable and it should not be reported as income on the 2008 Form 1040, 1040A or 1040EZ.

► **Refund delays.** IRS personnel are aware of reports that errors in claiming the recovery rebate credit could delay tax refunds for as much as eight to 12 weeks. These reports are false. As the IRS detects and corrects return errors concerning the recovery rebate credit, refund delays are currently no longer than about one week.

► **One payment.** In addition, the IRS notes taxpayers will receive a single refund that includes any recovery rebate credit to which they are entitled. The IRS will not be issuing separate recovery rebate credit payments.

► **Refund amounts.** The IRS reminds taxpayers they should

not use their regular refund from last year in calculating the recovery rebate credit. Some taxpayers may be confusing their regular tax refunds with the economic stimulus payment they received when completing their 2008 tax return.

► **Direct Deposit Requests.** Taxpayers who request a direct deposit will receive the refund in the form of a direct deposit even if errors are detected.

For more information, visit the Recovery Rebate Credit Information Center as well as the rebate questions and answers.

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## Exchange Rates in Nepal

Currency	Buying (Rs)	Selling (Rs)
US \$ 1	78.60	79.20
Canadian \$1	63.56	64.04
Euro 1	101.39	102.17
Pound Sterling 1	107.09	107.91
Australian \$1	51.12	51.51
Swiss Franc 1	67.63	68.15
Singapore Dollar	52.05	52.45
Japanese Yen 10	8.87	8.94
Chinese Yuan 1	11.49	11.58
Indian Rupees 100	160.00	160.15
Swedish Kroner 1	9.55	---
Danish Kroner 1	13.60	---
Hong Kong Dollar 1	10.13	---
Saudi Arab Riyal 1	20.96	21.12
Qatari Riyal 1	21.59	21.75
Thai Bhat 1	2.25	2.27
UAE Dirham 1	21.40	21.56
Malaysian Ringgit 1	21.65	21.82

[Source: Nepal Rastra Bank, for Jan 28 '09]

# Need Of Industry Based Curriculum On Nepalese Universities In ICT Education

Sudeep Khanal, skhanal.86@gmail.com / Shailendra Jha, sail.tech@hotmail.com Kathmandu.

There are five universities in Nepal; Tribhuwan University, Kathmandu University, Purbanchal University, Pokhara University and Nepal Sanskrit University (formerly known as Mahendra Sanskrit University). All universities, except Nepal Sanskrit University, are providing ICT education. There are many colleges affiliated to these universities that have curriculum in IT education. These institutions are providing education from Intermediate Level to the Master's Level. This paper is basically deals with the Baccalaureate level of studies in this field. The number of students' enrollment is increasing rapidly. The numbers of faculties are also introducing alternative electives to select course as per their choice. ICT education covers faculties such as Bachelor of Engineering (BE) in Computer, Electronics (and Communication) and Information Technology, Bachelor in Information Technology (BIT), Bachelor of Science in Computer Studies (BScCS), Bachelor of Computer Applications (BCA), Bachelor of Information Management (BIM), Bachelor of Computer and Information System (BCIS), Bachelor of Business and Information System (BBIS). Every year, large amount of capital is being invested in this sector. The curriculums provided by the universities are not enough to meet the required demand of the market. As a result, Nepalese students are facing the problems of Skilled Unemployment and are increasing every year. Some-

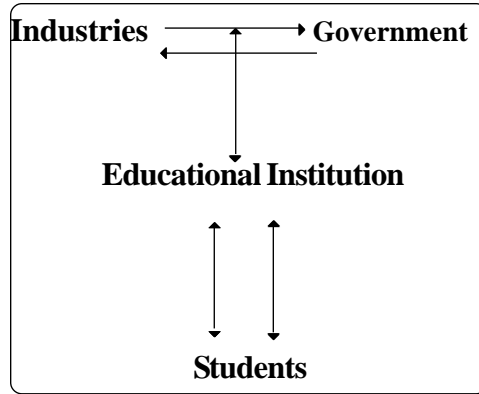
thing is lacking in the curriculum. This paper deals with the problems associated with the curriculum that are to be addressed at earliest.

**Designing a Curriculum in ICT**  
ICT can light up learning, empower communities, and unlock social development. It can reach to the remotest areas, the most challenged educational systems and make transformative advancements on a national scale. Policy makes the fundamental difference regarding how a country is able to take advantage of the technical opportunities available to them and exploit them for good.

While designing a curriculum in ICT, there must be a balance between national interest and those of employers and academics. The most effective ICT curriculum development plans are those which establish a clear educational vision for the future (at least for the next 10 years) and are based on a careful analysis of the present picture. Industry-academia program must be launched. There must be a good mutual understanding between these two folds so that the educational institutions will try to understand industrial requirement better. The curriculum should be developed according to the requirement of the industry.

From our perspectives, we saw four primary stake holders: first one being the students, second – the educational institutions, third – the

industries and the last but not the least – the Government. The target groups of the second stake holder are basically the teachers and the faculty members of the academic institution.



56Fig 1. Stake holders and their relationship  
Present Scenario: Full of Threat

## Skilled Unemployment and Industries

At present, the curriculum is not designed to meet the industrial requirement. There is a distinct line drawn between the educational institutions and the industries resulting for Skilled Unemployment. Government is not able to deliver employment opportunities to the graduate pass-outs. Students after getting graduation degree are either under-paid or unemployed. The numbers of skilled-unemployed are increasing day by day which is resulting frustrations among the new graduates. There is no other alternative except accepting the under-paid

appointments under compulsion. **Four Different Universities; Four Curriculums**

The other problem is that, four different universities imparting ICT education has different curriculum for the same subject. The government should step forward to correct this issue. Strictly speaking, in Nepal, nowadays most employers compare the degree awarded by the universities, though the degree has equal footings. If the curriculum remains same and the grading system is also made same, then the deserving candidate will get the job.

In the context of Nepal, let us have a simple example of Computer Engineering Course. The computer engineering curriculum in Tribhuwan University includes Communication system (which comprises of both analog and digital communication), but this is lacking in Pokhara University's curriculum. If Tribhuwan University feels this subject as one of the important course for their products in computer engineering then why did not Pokhara University include this course in the curriculum? There are many other subjects that are present in one university's curriculum but not included in others. If both the universities have the target of producing the computer engineers of equal footings, why did not they match the curriculum? ...Contd. next week

# The Dalits in Nepal: Past and Present

Contd. from the previous week...

## Dalits Population in Nepal

In view of the still unsettled system of classifying Dalit caste groups, estimating the Dalit population is difficult. The census data of Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) for 2001 reveals 13.08 percent Dalit population. However, Dalit civil society organizations reliably project that Dalits make up more than 20 percent of the population and have been excluded socially, economically and politically throughout Nepal's history.

Indicators of Human Development Index show that the condition of Dalits is far beyond the satisfactory level.

Indicators of Human Development Index			
S. No.	Subject	National Average	Dalit
1	Population	23.2 Million	13% Claim 20%
2	Life Expectancy	59 years	50.8 years
3	Mortality under 5	104.8	171.2
4	Infant Mortality	75.2	116.5
5	Fertility	4	4.7
6	Use of Contraceptives	44%	28 %
7	Literacy above 6 years	54%	33.8 %
8	SLC and above	17.6	3.8
9	Bachelor and above	3.4	0.4
10	Poverty	31%	47 %
11	Average Income	Rs. 20689	Rs 13340
12	Landlessness	44% Terai Dalit	15% Hill Dalit
13	Legislatures	574	7+43(8.71%)
14	Empowerment and Inclusion Index	0.4	0.3

Source: Hira Vishwakarma, "Towards a New Constitution in Nepal"

The economic divide between the urban and rural areas of Nepal is enormous. Rural people still live the same way they have for hundreds of years and maintain traditional

attitudes. Dalits living in the countryside suffer from the same injustices their ancestors did centuries before. In the past, Dalits were considered to be intrinsically unclean, and social mobility was almost impossible. Dalit men were forbidden to even look at high caste women, and sexual intercourse between a Dalit male and a Brahmin woman resulted in

the Dalit's execution, torture, or dismemberment. On the other hand, intercourse between a Brahmin man and Dalit woman was considered to be a "good opportunity" for the woman to advance, and even now, girls from certain Untouchable castes in Western Nepal are born into prostitution, earning their living by sweeping temples and sleeping with priests and other men.



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...Contd. next week