

Nepal Abroad

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Tharus Stick To Their Guns

Kathmandu Mar 14: The talks between the government and the agitating organisations of the ethnic nationalities, mainly that of the Tharus in the southern plains, ended for the third times inconclusively Friday over the nomenclature for the southern plain.

The agitating groups stated that they would continue with the general strike across the country starting from Sunday and sit for next round of talks only with the Prime Minister.

"We clarified to the talks teams of the agitating organisations that the government was ready to make any provision to establish the independent identity of the ethnic nationalities and indigenous peoples. But they stuck to the demand that the southern plains be named as Terai," Janardan Sharma 'Pravakar',

coordinator of the government talks team and minister for Peace and Reconstruction, told the journalists after the failed negotiations at Friday midnight at his ministry in Singh Durbar.

He said that the government was ready to rename the region as Terai Madhesh so that none of the communities would feel devoid of their identity in the naming of the region.

Following the Madhesh Movement two years back, the term Madhesh was used in the Interim Constitution to name the region alternatively called Terai or Madhesh.

Minister Pravakar stated that except the demand for the removal of the term Madhesh from the IC, the government addressed all the other demands including the amendment of the recent ordinance for making the public services inclusive to recognise

the identity to the ethnic nationalities along with declaring the people killed during the 13-day long Tharu Movement as martyrs.

"The government is prepared to arrange for constitutional provision to clarify the identity of all the ethnic nationalities and other marginalised groups. Yet they are not ready to withdraw the ongoing agitation. I doubt if it is a movement for identity," he said.

He, nonetheless, stated that the government would try to resolve the issues through dialogues.

On Wednesday, the government had reached agreement with a faction of the agitating groups, Tharuhat Joint Struggle Committee, to ensure proportionate representation of the ethnic nationalities in the state organs with provisions for their independent identity.

The talks had failed that day because the agitating groups demanded that a provision be made in such a way that there is absolute representation on the basis of the caste-based population.

Laxman Tharu, coordinator of the talks team of the Tharuhat Joint Struggle Committee, however, said that the negotiations failed without entering even a single point today.

"We in fact did not discuss any points. Our demand is that the term Terai Tharuhat should be used to name the southern plains instead of the Madhesh," he said, adding, "We are going to enforce a general strike from Sunday and next round of talks will be with the Prime Minister himself."

Raj Kumar Lekhi, general secretary of the Tharu Welfare Council, who talked with the media persons before the talks formally ended, said

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China Calls Dalai Lama 'Political Exile'

China has issued its strongest recent criticism of Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama - calling him a political exile who directly heads an illegal theocratic government. The comments came Friday in Premier Wen Jiabao's press conference at the end of the annual session of China's legislature, the National People's Congress.

Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao discussed a host of issues in a news conference that stretched for more than two hours.

These topics ranged from the global economic crisis, to the Central Asia-focused Shanghai Cooperation Organization, to debt relief for developing nations in Africa.

The issue that the Chinese Premier spoke about most forcefully, though, was Tibet, which he stressed was an inalienable part of China's territory.

Wen says Tibet-related issues are completely China's internal affairs and that Beijing will accept no foreign interference on the matter.

The Chinese leader also had strongly critical words for Tibet's ex-

iled spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, who fled to India after a failed uprising against Chinese rule in his homeland.

The premier said Beijing considers the Dalai Lama a political exile, not a religious figure.

Wen pointed to the Tibetan government in exile, which is based in Dharamsala, India. He called that government theocratic and illegal, and said it is under the direct leadership of the Dalai Lama.

This comment preceded his recitation of what has become a standard phrase - Beijing wants to see what the Dalai Lama does, not what he says.

Premier Wen accused the Dalai Lama of misleading political figures around the world, but added that some western leaders are also trying to use him for their own purposes.

The Chinese leader had a much different approach to Taiwan, a separately-governed island Beijing considers a renegade province and has been trying to woo.

Mr. Wen called Taiwan a

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Tarai Bandh Hits Supplies In Hilly Districts

Pyuthan, Mar 12: The effect of indefinite Tarai bandh called by different Tharu organisations is not limited only to Tarai districts. Even the hilly districts have been bearing the brunt of the bandh.

Pyuthan, a hilly district in the Mid-West, has been facing a shortage of petroleum products, LP gas and other essential commodities, which used to be supplied from the Tarai districts.

With the shortage of petroleum products, the price of fossil fuel has escalated in the district and traders have started selling fuel in the black market. Transport entrepreneurs say they have been compelled to pay as much as Rs 125 for a litre of diesel.

"We are compelled to pay more than the normal price for petroleum products," transport entrepreneur Dadharam Bhandari said.

Only a few vehicles are leaving for Pyuthan from Bhaluwang in Dang, according to Sworgadwari Public Transport Entrepreneurs' Committee. "Earlier, around a dozen of ve-

hicles used to ply on the Bhaluwang-Pyuthan road and more than 30 vehicles on local routes. Now, hardly one or two vehicles can be seen plying on the road," it said. The committee further said all the vehicles would remain off the roads if the agitation in the Tarai was further extended.

The price of essential commodities has also gone up in Pyuthan. However, the Pyuthan Chamber of Commerce and Industries maintained that the traders had neither increased the price nor were involved in black marketing. "There will be scarcity of daily commodities if the bandh extended for some more days," Manoj Shrestha, general secretary of the the chamber, said.

Kedarman Kachhyapati, a shopkeeper, said their stocks were running dry. "Only a truck of food has entered the district since the bandh began," he added.

Students in the district said the shortage of petroleum products had seriously affected their studies. "Stu-

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Editorial:

The President's Son

Another family affair in politics has surfaced recently, and this time it's the son of President of Nepal – Chandra Mohan Yadav, a medical doctor by profession, who recently arrived from Kuwait where he was making his living. Dr Yadav is making his political debut apparently by contesting by-election vacated by his father before becoming the first president of the republic.

Last year a weekly newspaper from Kathmandu had revealed how the families converged in Kathmandu after Dr. Rambaran Yadav became a president, who otherwise had deserted him for his continued association with Nepali Congress and frustrated with the developing politics in Nepal.

Very little is known and is made public about the contribution, if any, made by Yadav for either Nepal or the Nepalese expatriates while in Nepal or abroad. Voters in his constituency in Dhanusha District in particular deserves more information about him than only being the son of the President.

While there may be serious disagreement and dissatisfaction about his candidature given the large number of available individuals in the waiting list, junior Yadav would have to go extra mile to demonstrate his relations, commitments and familiarity in the district. President being his father is itself, a strong case for him to influence the voters. Unlike the present vice-president

who is still challenged in understanding his position, President Yadav has always been succeeded in demonstrating that he's the President of Nepal and not of any particular group. His limited expressions often advocate strong and united Nepal that respectfully represents aspirations of population across the country. While remaining in the Nepalese attire, country's affairs can be comfortably handled, a befitting example for those pseudo reformists whose promise of new Nepal has until now been limited to western attire over Nepalese dress, playing one country against another, and have failed to provide the basics to the people.

It would be natural have several dissenting voice against his candidature in Nepali Congress, but it should be taken as normal since no political party in the country exercise democratic means to nominate the candidate any way. In addition, he faces voter's approval before he can assume any public position, definitely a democratic way of assuming public office, a lesson for Nepal's Prime Minister Pushpa K Dahal. President could have waited for good days when he could exercise his influence to offer him other good position of influence, but instead had him seek popular approval.

Country would benefit if junior Yadav win election, and practices similar political values his father believes in, but the ultimate SAY is with the voters in his constituency.

Concerns Over Worsening Food Security

KATHMANDU March 9: Agricultural experts are expressing concern that people in already food-insecure Nepal will have to further tighten their belts unless food, transport and other costs can be curbed.

Local food traders told IRIN that in 2008 prices of the main staple, rice, had increased by 24 percent, cooking oil by 30 percent and wheat flour by 18 percent.

High dependence on imports during a year of rapidly rising global food prices, an Indian export ban on key food commodities, and increased transport costs were the main reasons for the price rises. Natural disasters and civil unrest had made matters worse.

"My biggest concern is for people living on the margins and caught up in a situation where inflation is severely impacting them," Richard Ragan, Nepal country representative of the UN World Food Programme (WFP), told IRIN.

According to the government's national bank, Rastriya Bank, food inflation outpaced that in India last year, reaching 17 percent compared to only 10 percent in India.

"Many people are skipping meals and eating less nutritious food," said Ragan.

Malnutrition

According to WFP, the price increases had seriously affected people in western hill regions, with worsening child malnutrition rates in many areas.

Nepal has one of South Asia's worst malnutrition rates, with almost 50 percent of children under five stunted and suffering from chronic malnutrition, according to the government's Demographic and Health Survey (DHS). Acute malnutrition rates start increasing after six months of age and peak at 12 months; the main reason for this is poor feeding, according to the DHS.

Floods and landslides in several districts throughout the country had affected summer crop production in 2008, damaged farmland and severely cut crop yields, particularly of rice and millet.

For example, Jumla, Mugu, Humla, Bajura and Dailekh districts in the northwestern hill region had suffered at least 30-50 percent crop losses due to excessive rainfall, landslides and strong winds, WFP told IRIN.

Worse to come?

According to a February 2009 report by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the food security situation is expected to deteriorate in western areas. It said Nepal was one of 32 countries with food crises requiring significant external assistance.

"There has been erratic rainfall and the coping mechanisms have become challenging," said local agricultural adaptation expert Dinnanath Bhandari.

At the beginning of 2008, Nepal became vulnerable due to drought, over-reliance on rain-fed cultivation, heavy dependence on food and oil imports, poor transportation infrastructure, and a high percentage of average household income - 60 percent - spent on food, according to WFP. (IRIN News Service)

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Nepalese Calendar

Sun Mar 15 / Chaitra 02 '65
Chaturthee
Mon Mar 16 / Chaitra 03 '65
Panchami
Tue Mar 17 / Chaitra 04 '65
Khasti
Wed Mar 18 / Chaitra 05 '65
Astami
Thu Mar 19 / Chaitra 06 '65
Nawami
Fri Mar 20 / Chaitra 07 '65
Dashami
Sat Mar 21 / Chaitra 08 '65
Ekadashin

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Washington DC Metro, USA. info@mnhbs.net

Publisher / C Editor: Sujeet Aryal (Arjel) **Assistant Editor:** Sabina Aryal **Representatives:** Sirjana Pokhrel-Texas, Shreeram Khanal-Nepal, **Mailing address:** 10750 Main Street #202 Fairfax VA 22030. Email: print@nepalabroad.com Tel: 202 375 9700.
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Delegation Visits Office of Sen. Bob Casey

- Suman Timsina, PA



Washington DC, March 13: A Delegation of Nepalese Americans and the friends of Nepal led by the President of Nepal Foundation Mary Carroll, Mallika Sakya, Pramesh Shrestha, and the NAPAC team comprising of Dr. Shyam Karki (President, NAPAC), Kris Ghimire, Bishnu

Thapa and Dr. Bheem Kattel, visited the office of the Senator Bob Casey who is the Chair of the South and Central Asian Affairs Subcommittee of the Foreign Relations Committee. The delegation had an extensive discussion with Jofi J. Joseph,

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Long-term IDPs Still Living In Poverty

Kathmandu, 13 March : Eight years ago, Kamrik Gharti Magar had a secure income, a large farm, dozens of cattle, a comfortable house and a happy family.

But that changed after he and his family were forced to flee their home in the face of Maoist death threats during the 1996-2006 "People's War".

Magar, aged 60, now lives in a tiny, one-room shack with his five children and wife near the polluted River Bishnumati in Kathmandu. A stench of garbage pervades the air, and his younger children often get sick because of the unsanitary conditions in which they live.

The neighbours constantly badger Magar to vacate the government land on which he has built his shelter. He gets not just verbal abuse but is also sometimes physically assaulted, he said, adding: "Where can I go? Who will help us?"

Magar is too old and weak to find a strenuous labouring job - the only kind of work available to an illiterate person like himself.



Photo : IRIN

Many Nepalese IDPs do not want to go home to their rural communities for fear of reprisals from Maoist cadres or because their land has been seized and they will have no livelihoods.

Over 50,000 displaced

Life for thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs) like Magar is grim. Many are crowded into fetid slums in Kathmandu and other cities where they are totally neglected by the government, according to local NGOs.

In a mid-2008 IDP report produced by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the number of IDPs in Nepal was estimated to be 50,000-

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Calendar of Events

March 15: California Sherpa Loshar 2136 has been scheduled to celebrate on Sunday March 15th 2009 at Sonoma Veterans memorial Hall 126 First Street west sonoma Ca 95476 from 4.00pm to 12.00am. For ticket contact Kasa dawa Sherpa 707 332 3614 Nima Sherpa 707 815 6964 Pasang temba Sherpa 415 637 8615 Mingma Dorji Shepra 415 519 5087 Lakpa Shepra 707 292 3304 for details visit nepalhorizons.com

March 15: The Nepal Eductaional and Cultural Center (NECC) invites all and Nepalese community in Chantilly, Centerville Henrdon and South Riding area to attend a community event and celebrate, share and interact to support NECC son Sunday March 15th 2009 at Community hall 5101 Sequoia farm Dr Centerville VA 20120 from 4.00pm to 8.00pm. For details visit Nepalhorizons.com

March 21: Nepalese Students' Association (NeSA) at New Mexico State University is organizing symposium entitled "Development Issues, Challenges, and Strategies for Nepal." and invites all to participate. The symposium is scheduled on Saturday, March 21, 2009 at Colfax (210), Corbett Center, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, NM 88003 from 9.00am to 5.00pm. Abstracts Submission deadline March 17, 2009. Key Speakers **Prof. Dr. Alok Bohara** University of New Mexico Albuquerque NM, **Prof. Rachel Stevens** New Mexico State University Las Cruces NM, **Dr. Rajat Rajbhandari** Texas Transportation Institute El Paso TX. Contact Desh Raj Sonyok program co-ordinator @ drsonyok@nmsu.edu. for details visit <http://web.nmsu.edu/~nesa>.

March 22: The The Newah Organization Of America Language Center (NOALC) has scheduled to host an intercation program on Sunday March 22nd 2009 as a part of feedback program on its effort to improve and expand spoken and written Newah language at the City of Fairfax Regional library 10360 North street fairfax VA 22030 from 12.00pm to 4.00pm contact Ishwar Rajbhandari 202 550 4839 Eros Tuladhar 703 757 0193 Rajesh Shrestha 703 996 6476. For details visit nepalhorizons.com

March 29: The dallas Everest Lions Club (DELCL) has scheduled the fund raising event "An evening in Nepal 2009" on Sunday March 29 2009 at United methodidt Church 3700 W. Northgate Drive irving 75062 from 6.00pm. Contact Shashi bhattarai 817 501 7557 Shoyambhu Shakya 562 212 4264 Shiva kifle 682 597 2075 Mahendra Poudyal 972 971 3398 Pam C pokhrel 682 521 7475 Makar Bajracharya 214 517 6341 Binita J Shrestha 817 805 1318. for details visit dallaseverestlions.org and nepalhorizons.com

April 04: NASO Community, an organization to support the cause of backward Communities of nepal has scheduled an interaction program on "Constitution Of New Nepal And Questions Of Social Inclusion" on Saturday April 4th 2009 at Arlington Contu Library 1015 North Quincy Street Arlington VA 22201 from 1.00pm to 4.00pm. Contact Dharma Bishwokarma 443 690 5677. For details vVisit nepalhorizons.com

April 11: The Association of Nepalese in Minnesota (ANMN) has scheduled to celebrate Nepalese New Year 2066 on Saturday April 11th 2009 at University of Minnesota (U of M) Student Center St Paul MN. For details update contact info@anmn.org.

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.

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Despite Rhetoric, Offshoring Won't Stop

A global recession is the time for outsourcing some tasks and reducing costs as well as anxiety

Dinesh C. Sharma YaleGlobal, 9 March 2009

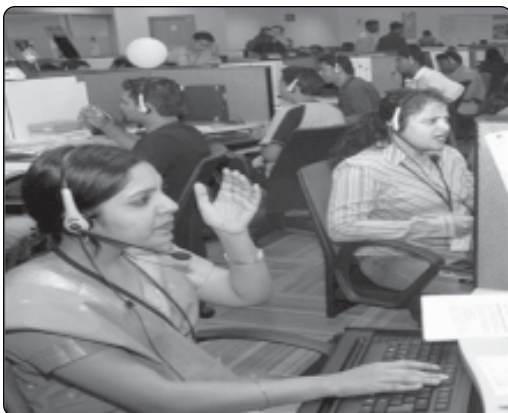
NEW DELHI: Ever since taking over as US president, Barack Obama has caused some nervous moments for India's gigantic outsourcing industry, which depends on American corporations for the bulk of its business. First, it was the issue of curtailing the number of H1B visas that allow foreign workers to take up employment with US companies. Then came the announcement about "ending tax breaks for corporations that ship our jobs overseas" in his February 24 speech to Congress.

So, is India's outsourcing industry in trouble? A closer look at India's information technology sector where US involvement is the deepest shows it to be a storm over an Indian teacup.

The latest pronouncement of Obama is continuation of the political rhetoric on this subject that he indulged in throughout the presidential campaign last year, following the footsteps of Democratic candidate John Kerry in the 2004 campaign. So, in effect, Obama is trying to send a message that he's ready to deliver on his election promise relating to offshoring. For an economy facing its worst crisis in recent history, any semblance of protecting jobs would offer some much needed relief.

However, if one examines closely what Obama is projecting as a major stride to tame the tide of offshoring, it would appear that it's not even half a step. American firms that transfer jobs overseas or outsource work to distant locations do not get any tax break as such. They are only entitled to a concession in the US tax code under which they are allowed to defer income tax payments on offshore profits until they are repatriated back home. Obama wants to eliminate this and tries to present it as a tax break, making it palatable to beleaguered Americans.

India reacts to this along expected lines: Some in the business and government circles call it a protectionist measure, while others feel it may not have any significant impact. In any case, the Indian outsourcing industry has been under pressure since the downturn began in US financial, banking and insurance markets last year as this segment constitutes a large chunk of its business.



India calling: Need to cut cost could make outsourcing of backoffice work indispensable. (Photo: KPN Photo)

The industry also suffered an image problem in wake of large-scale fraud unraveled in one of its star firms, Satyam, a few months ago. These two factors are bound to affect bottom lines of major Indian outsourcing firms in coming quarters.

But all this does not change the fundamentals of outsourcing business. Most companies outsource parts of their non-core operations to cut costs, remain competitive and offer good value to shareholders for their investments. All this becomes far more important when there is recession. Simple economics suggests that one should further cut costs when the going is bad. If American companies wish to remain afloat in these bad times, perhaps it is prudent to outsource more rather than do the reverse and add to costs. It is likely that corporations will outsource more and more of their business processes to India or elsewhere as the recession deepens.

Yet another reason why companies outsource is to bring new products faster to markets. This happens in two ways. By outsourcing routine functions of their businesses to offshore locations, they have the room to deploy their workforce in core business areas such as getting new customers and developing new products. In some cases, they may outsource segments of the product development process also. Development of chips is a classic case of this phenomenon. In the past few years, the entire design chain of a semiconductor chip has been unbundled. This allows American chip makers and con-

sumer electronics companies to farm out segments of chip design, fabrication and testing to different locations in the world, in order to slash development lead time and achieve faster time to market.

There are other reasons, too, why offshoring makes economic sense to America. For every dollar spent on outsourcing, the US economy receives \$1.12 to \$1.14 in return, according to estimates made by McKinsey a few years

ago. Outsourcing results in far more indirect benefits than direct cost savings to corporations. As head of an Indian information technology firm had said famously that "we use American hardware, software and networking devices; young people who work in our companies buy all American labels – shoes, jeans, watches – see American movies, eat at McDonald, Pizza Hut and Papa John, drink Pepsi and Coke. All this leads to growth of American corporations and that country's economy."

The American public is not aware of this magnitude of the outsourcing business. The brouhaha over job loss is mainly due to highly visible operations such as overseas call centers, where US customers directly interface with foreign agents. And this is only a small part of the offshoring pie.

The outsourcing business is so deep that it would be impossible to reverse the trend in a short period of time. It operates at different levels and in complex ways. Even a seemingly simple job of application software development can happen in different ways – fully developed in India or partly onsite and partly offsite, or handled by subsidiaries of Indian companies in US or in a third country where Indian companies have offshore operations. Alternatively, US corporations may get the job done at their own captive units in India, China or the Philippines. It would be difficult to make out which job is getting shipped where and to whom. Some people like to call this global sourcing.

Similarly, the business of

outsourced research and development has also grown tremendously in recent years. According to some estimates, nearly 200 Fortune-500 companies have set up R & D centers in India. These companies belong to sectors ranging from chip makers to aviation companies. Firms like General Electric have invested several hundred million dollars in large facilities that employ thousands of research workers. Such units produce substantial numbers of patents and commercial products. The intellectual property generated by these units in India belongs to parent American corporations and so they earn all the royalty earned through commercialization and related products ultimately sold in mass consumption markets like India.

The US benefits from outsourcing in other unseen ways, including the outsourcing of talent from Asian nations like India and China. A constant flow of talent and skilled manpower comes to the US in the form of students arriving at institutions like the Massachusetts Institute of Technology as well as trained professionals such as doctors and nurses. Most students who study tend to stay and contribute to the US economy. Innovation hubs like Route 128 and the Silicon Valley are populated by companies floated by such outsourced talent. These companies hire local people and generate billions of dollars in revenue every year. So, in effect, the American economy gains at the cost of taxpayers' money spent on training such workers abroad.

In a globalized world, the flow of people, services and jobs will follow a natural trajectory determined by market forces. Tax breaks, trade barriers, legal restrictions and political posturing play only a limited role in affecting this trend. Political pronouncements notwithstanding, the case would not be different with US companies outsourcing work to India.

Dinesh C. Sharma is science editor of Mail Today and the author of "The Long Revolution: The Birth and Growth of India's IT Industry," published by HarperCollins Publishers, India. Click here to read an excerpt from his book.

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ANWA Celebrates International Women's Day In D.C



Photo: nepalhorizons.com

The America Nepal Women's Association of Greater Washington DC (ANWA) organized a program on Sunday March 8, 2009 to celebrate the International Women's Day in Arlington Central Library, Arlington VA. Discussion focused on Women's rights and the drafting of the new constitution in Nepal. Nepalese expatriates from around the Washington DC metro area attended the program. Madhavi Basnet Karki is the coordinator of ANWA.

Politics and Sports

- By Sushil Thapa Fairfax VA sushilthapa@verizon.net

The dastardly attack on the national cricket team of Sri Lanka by terrorists in Pakistan is a shameless and cowardly act. The well coordinated attack resulted in the death of more than half a dozen security personals and a driver.

It was sheer luck that the team escaped casualty. The prompt security drill the players and officials resorted to inside the bus upon the ambush like attack saved the day for them.

Nonetheless, seven players and an assistant coach were injured in the shoot -out. Had the grenades lobbed by the heartless terrorists at the bus carrying the team exploded it would be a tragic story.

The nature of the attack clearly indicates that it was well orchestrated and organized. It looks though the attackers tracked every move of the team and ultimately timed their attack to perfection.

Apparently, it was a case of security lapses and failure to provide the visitors tight security on part of security agencies despite the high level threat posed by terrorists.

The Pakistani government did give a clean chit to the security agencies responsible for safeguarding the visitors but several media outlets reported that over all security was not as it should have been.

From security stand point it is fair to doubt Pakistan's ability to

host international sporting meets. By deciding not to hold the 2011 World Cup Cricket matches in Pakistan the International Cricket Council (ICC) did the right thing.

ICC's decision is a big blow to cricket enthusiasts in Pakistan who have been keenly looking forward to the competition. In addition it is a big loss to Pakistan Cricket Board who were hoping to make the most of the competition.

Over the years, Pakistan has been a citadel for terrorists who have been engaging in unlawful and destructive activities at the cost of innocent lives.

We have witnessed a wave of insane killings, including high profile political assassinations. They often target innocent lives and public places to cause panic and mayhem.

Also they have been routinely crossing borders to inflict human suffering and destruction as seen in Mumbai last year. As a matter of fact , the kind of international network they have in place makes them extremely lethal, venomous and unpredictable

No wonder they are able to strike with clinical precision and colossal impact. More than their political ideology, it is their personal biasness and conviction that drives them to extremes.

Overwhelmed by their beliefs ,they

tend to forget or intentionally ignore the fact that rest of us are just like them with a different view point or whatever. At such they have no respect or affection for others.

Rigid in their belief they rejoice, celebrate and justify every action they undertake or execute in the name of their cause. Long as they are on their mission in pursuit of their self proclaimed belief they are a bunch of trigger- happy lunatics.

One thing we all agree is that they are unstoppable and unflinching. They ruthlessly pounce on every opportunity that comes by to let know the world that they exist and what they are capable of.

What more can we say about individuals or groups who are willing to sacrifice themselves for their cause. We have seen enough of them and it would be very foolish on our part to undermine them even if we have scored some success against them.

What is true about them is that they are unyielding and uncompromising and ready to fight till the last bullet. The only way to keep terrorists at bay is by resorting to high level security measures, including effective intelligence network and international support.

The brutal killing of Israeli athletes by Palestine gunmen in the 1972 Olympics in Munich, Germany (then West) for political purpose

jolted the sporting community across the globe.

For the first time terrorists targeted athletes to gain political mileage. Since then sports has been used as a tool by governments to address and further their political agendas.

We have seen Olympics boycotts (led by the USA and then Soviet Union), nations barred from international participation, sporting tours scrapped, athletes denied visas because of his/her nationality and so on.

As a matter of fact, politics is steadily destroying the fabric of sports. Most of us are passionate advocate of clean sports and firmly believe that sports and politics never go hand in hand. Why should sports and athletes suffer in the name of politics ?

Spare sports from the shackles of politics, allowing athletes to put aside their differences and engage in a healthy competition. Forgetting not that sport is a medium to build and foster relation between nations, even foes.

Coming back to the Sri Lankan team we have to constantly remind ourselves about the eminent danger we face from terrorists in our daily lives.

The wave of terrorist attacks, specially in the Indian sub-continent has led to a blame game between countries for their alleged role. Arch rivals India and Pakistan share a history of putting their political interest before

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Long-term IDPs Still ...

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70,000, and UN officials say these numbers will not have changed since then.

"There is virtually nothing for them to return to. They have no house or other resources to generate income," said Geeta Gautam, an official from the Informal Sector Service Centre (INSEC), a local human rights NGO.

The Nepal Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction, which is responsible for the welfare of the IDPs, is still in the process of setting up poverty alleviation, health care and employment programmes, but has been unable to make much progress due to a lack of reliable data, officials said.

Children, women most vulnerable

Activists and experts working on the IDP issue are concerned about the growing vulnerability of women and children - the worst victims of displacement-induced poverty.

"Children's education has been severely hampered and the women have great difficulty supporting their families," explained Gautam.

The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) said there was an urgent need for national IDP policy to be implemented: IDPs should be able to return to their former villages, and get reintegrated and resettled. NRC country director Phillippe Clerc said he

was concerned by the apparent lack of government interest in the matter.

Even two years after the launch of the national IDP policy, a large number of women are still seeking information on civil documentation, widows' allowances, property restitution, children's education and shelter, said Clerc.

Typical example

The plight of women is typified by 45-year-old displaced woman Dharma Maya in Kathmandu. "I can't even provide enough food for my children. I don't know how long we have to survive in this way," she said.

"This is my youngest daughter, Meena, who was born a 'bisthapit' [displaced person] in this miserable condition," she explained.

Maya is the only breadwinner in the family. She is forced to work 12 hours a day in different houses as a domestic servant. She supplements her income by selling wood she collects from the forest, a three-hour trek away.

"It's a very dangerous job because often I have to run away from the local community, and the army has banned outsiders from entering the forest. But what choice do I have?" asked Maya. *(IRIN News Service)*

Nepalese American...

cont'd from pg 3 ...

Foreign Policy Legislative Assistant and David V Salvo, Congressional fellow on US policies to Nepal. The meeting was also attended by the legislative assistants of the congressmen and some of their foreign policy advisers.

They briefed their congressional counterpart on the latest developments in Nepal and stressed the need for the US policy to be positively engaged with all political parties in Nepal to foster the democratic process and to help Nepal's economic development in every possible way.

They emphasized that tourism is one of the main industries of Nepal and removing the travel advisory on Nepal will have real immediate positive impact. The congressional group was very supportive of the proposal.

The delegation stressed the need for the US to work with Nepal government and its political establish-

ment to help in establishing democratic institutions and democratic culture by promoting reciprocal visits of public officials and people to people contact. They also stressed the need for reviewing the US aid policy to Nepal and emphasize the projects that will promote skill/technology transfer by providing aid to Nepalese educational institutions in the form of visiting professors and cooperation between private enterprises in high technology sectors.

Both parties agreed on the need for Nepali Americans and the US policy makers to maintain an effective communication link so that inputs and feedback will lead to optimization of US Nepal relations to mutual benefit of both countries.

NAPAC had successfully lobbied in the past to mobilize congressional support for the Democracy struggle and its delegation

Reckless Rowing Business...

cont'd from pg 8 ...

If one wants to run a rafting business – same like a boating business in the river or lake literally, the company has to go through so many legal procedures. The ministry of tourism sends an officer to inspect the equipment and find out whether the about-to-be-registered company complies with minimum safety standard. Upon the recommendation of that officer only, the registration process moves forward.

Whether it is a canoe business or raft business, both carry equal level risks on the life of travelers. It should thus be made necessary for the canoe operator(s) to comply with the same rule that applies to the rafting company at least partially – safety precautions. The passengers should be provided with life jackets so that if something goes wrong they (passengers) wouldn't have to bet their life.

China Calls Dalai...

...cont'd from pg 1

"treasure island" and said he has a long-cherished hope of going to visit it someday.

In the only comments that elicited apparently spontaneous applause, Mr. Wen said he is already 67 years old, and even if he could no longer walk, he would crawl to get to the island.

On other issues, the premier said he is "a little bit worried" about China's "huge amount" of U.S debt, which totals about \$1 trillion. He urged

the United States to continue to be what he called "a credible nation" that can "ensure the safety of Chinese assets."

Meanwhile, he said China is working very hard to cope with the negative effects of the global economic downturn. He said China is aware that no country can overcome these economic difficulties alone. But at the same time, he said his country's view is that "we would rather dig a well for ourselves than beg for water from others." VOA03/13

Tharus Stick To Their...

cont'd from pg 1...

that they would bring in some 20,000 Tharus in the capital to bar the start of the sixth session of the Constituent Assembly scheduled to open on March 29.

"Our next movement will be a hurricane, we will bring everything to a halt, even the CA on March by bringing 20,000 Tharus in the capital, we will blockade the PM's office," he said.

He demanded that the southern region be named as the Terai and not the Madhesh.

Besides Minister Pravakar, Bishnu Paudel, Minister for Water

Resources, was present in the talks from the government side. Similarly, from the agitating groups, among others, Laxman Tharu, Raj Kumar Lekhi, Nagendra Chaudhari and Pasang Sherpa, chairman of National Federation of Indigenous Nationalities, participated in the negotiations that started at 8pm and ended at midnight.

Meanwhile, the Muslims organised a rally in Kathmandu and Limbuwan State Council enforced a general strike in support of the ongoing Tharu movement. (The Rising nepal)

meets congressmen at regular intervals to discuss issues of mutual interest and mobilize congressional support for the interests of the Nepalese community members.

Tarai Bandh...

cont'd from pg 1...

dents in rural areas haven't been able to prepare for their exams due to the lack of kerosene," Bishnu Kumar Giri, district president of Nepal Students' Union, said, adding that final exams in schools began on Wednesday. (The Himalayan Times)

Politics and ...

cont'd from pg 5 ...

sports. This has further led to acrimony and heightened tension between the two neighbors.

Essentially governments must refrain from acts detrimental to sports. Most importantly sports has to be distanced from politics.

'Vishwaparikrama'

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Americans Queue Up for Low Income Housing

By Carolyn Presutti Washington March 13 2009 VOA

U.S. President Barack Obama on Thursday spoke to state representatives about how to spend their portion of the \$787 billion stimulus plan. Many Americans hope the money trickles down to their communities to create jobs and ease financial stress.

The line stretches down a city block and around the corner. Residents clutch applications for affordable apartment rentals. Jessica Burnett stood in line overnight with her baby.

"This is the only subsidized place, low income place open in God knows how long," she said. "I got out here at nine last night with my baby and I'm just praying that I get a place."

But the wait doesn't guarantee an apartment. It simply gives qualified applicants a place on the waiting list for apartments that might become available. A spokesman for the management company says right now, none of the 460 units is vacant.

Marina Iraheta and her brother are both unemployed. They live with their father. Rent would be based on his income.

"Right now we're living in an apartment, but it's very expensive now," Marina said.

Harvie Dukes wants a place close by to take care of his 74-year-old mother.

"Only thing I need right now, is to just get me an apartment," he said. "Get my place of my own

where I have my own keys and everything. That way I can call it home."

This is what can happen in the inner city as the United States suffers through an economic crisis.

President Obama on Thursday greeted representatives of the 50 U.S. states who are learning about their share of the \$787 billion stimulus package approved by Congress. The plan contains grants to finance construction and modernization of low income housing.

"I think you guys will do extraordinary work with using these precious tax dollars that the American people have given up in order to deliver on the kind of economic growth - short-term and long-term - and job creation that's going to be so important. But we're going to need to work really hard and we're going to have to make sure that every single dollar is well spent," President Obama said.

It's money that gives these residents hope.

"It will mean a lot to me, me and my family," Marina said. "[To] finally have a place to be at, it will be nice."

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Economy In Sound Condition

Kathmandu, Mar 13: The government Thursday claimed that all the economic indicators were favourable.

Speaking at a press conference on mid-term evaluation, Finance Minister Dr. Baburam Bhattarai said all the economic indicators in Nepal were positive despite an economic crisis in the world.

He, however, conceded that the country failed to see an expected economic growth and contain inflation.

The government projected a growth rate of 7.0 per cent and 7.5 per cent inflation in the current fiscal year's budget.

According to the figures compiled by the Central Bureau of Statistics during the last six months, economic growth in this year would stand at 3.8 per cent while the inflation this year, according to Nepal Rastra Bank, would be at 12.5 per cent.

He said that the Koshi floods, bird flu, energy crisis, strikes and other obstructions hampered the economic growth.

Dr. Bhattarai informed that the government would adopt different measures to control the price hike

in the country. The government would go for additional market interference to control the inflation, Dr. Bhattarai said.

He further said that the government would use government's mechanism for supply management and punish those who were involved in black marketing to minimise inflation.

He also informed that the government would run low-priced shops for minimising the inflation.

Dr. Bhattarai said that that the government had exceeded its revenue targets due to good governance. According to the report, the revenue collection increased by more than 36 per cent till mid-February compared to the last fiscal year.

The flow of remittance had increased by 65.3 per cent and reached around Rs. 94.3 billion in the first six months of the current fiscal year, the report said.

Similarly, the exports increased by 18.6 per cent and the reserve of the foreign exchange increased by 5.5 per cent amounting to \$ 3.27 billion. The foreign assistance had increased by 81.3 per cent compared to the last fiscal year. *(The Rising Nepal)*

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Exchange Rates in Nepal

Currency	Buying (Rs)	Selling (Rs)
US \$ 1	82.55	83.15
Canadian \$1	64.48	64.95
Euro 1	106.61	107.39
Pound Sterling 1	114.80	115.64
Australian \$1	54.05	54.44
Swiss Franc 1	69.47	69.97
Singapore Dollar	53.51	53.90
Japanese Yen 10	8.42	8.49
Chinese Yuan 1	12.07	12.16
Indian Rupees 100	160.00	160.15
Swedish Kroner 1	9.61	---
Danish Kroner 1	14.30	---
Hong Kong Dollar 1	10.65	---
Saudi Arab Riyal 1	22.01	22.17
Qatari Riyal 1	22.67	22.84
Thai Bhat 1	2.29	2.31
UAE Dirham 1	22.47	22.63
Malaysian Ringgit 1	22.25	22.41

[Source: Nepal Rastra Bank, for March 14 '09]

Reckless Rowing Business In Saptakoshi

Laxman Adhikari "Roshan" San Francisco, CA Email: adhikariros@yahoo.com



men were charging people to cross the river on their fishing wooden canoes. A canoe would carry as many as 70 people and thereof loaded belongings. The fare would range from Rs. 10 to Rs. 20, depending on which fork you are in. To make it transparent and systematic, most of the canoes were to queue up to load the passengers. The equal numbers

of boatmen were sneaking the passengers either charging less or bullying other boatmen.

Boat was quaking left and right, and all a passenger could do was remember Lord Shiva holding the side if he/she thought to cross the river safely. From one side to other side of the fork was at least 5-10 minutes rowing distance – fairly good swimming distance for a professional swimmer. The depth of the river was incredibly deep. A few but all people seemed to me wearing casual dress –

women had sari cholo and men had pant or suruwal. To be precise, none of them were sporty and could swim in the need.



Why didn't the government cite the October 16, 2005 Harkapur Incident (precedent) to prevent the unprofessionalism in Saptakoshi? While traveling to Khotang and Okhaldhunga via Tokshelghat, confluence of Dudhkoshi and Sunkoshi rivers, we used to try to save some time by riding a canoe instead of walking up

to the suspension bridge of Sunkoshi. The boatmen there would operate the business (at that time) in the same manner

the businesses are being handled in Sunsari (Saptakoshi) today. One of the survivals of that ferry crash was my relative who was returning along with his friend to Kathmandu. The boatman (majhi) loaded over forty people in that ill-fated canoe and when they were halfway through, the boat collided with another rushing boat and capsized with none of the people left abroad. The grandmas,

aunties and sisters had sari on, and the gentlemen of all ages were of course on Nepalese casual dresses. More than twenty people were killed in that incident. The government halted that kind of business right away. Subsequently, the Majhis there were required to have life jackets for all passengers with appropriate size (as far as I heard correct). ...Contd. on pg 6

"Oh Daju idar aannus, idar sasto chha pari jane ke lie." This cocktail language was an extraction of a boatman that I saw in my last visit to the Saptakoshi Koshi chaos in October 2008. I crossed two minor river-forks on wooden canoes. I was very exhausted to further up my attempt to cross the one and the only major fork.

It was totally unexplainable scenery of the flood refugees and their lives. However, I found so many jobs being generated by that flood chaos. Dozens of local unprofessional boat-

FELT - A struggling Immigrant's Requiem

...continued from previous week

"I hurt my knee today" I repeated. "I am so sorry; I really wanted to dance with you, perhaps some other time?"

She looked at me in disbelief, rolled her eyes and snickered. She instantly distanced herself rejoining her group of friends who were now dancing in a small circle.

With a little idea of what transpired in between, I, all of a sudden see all her friends looking at me in with an apparent derision - laughing hysterically.

I knew I had made a big fool out of myself not following the etiquette of a gentleman. But there were few things that crossed my mind before dancing with her. For one, I was married, and dancing with someone at an intimate level was something I considered blasphemous. Second, she was a little too pretty for a guy like me, and third, I really do not know how to dance well. Therefore, I could not find a better lie than a hurt knee. It kept her appeal intact and my integrity as well.

I got myself a Bud light, took a long swig and belched aloud – some liberty you enjoy amidst earsplitting music and drunken crowd;

no one seems to hear or bother. This was already my fourth drink and I was debating the wisdom between driving back home or sleeping in my car for the rest of the night. There was a restroom in the second floor and also a plenty of pool tables. I dragged myself up the stairs, drank the remnants of the beer, tossed the bottle in a trash can and joined the long line of people that led to the rest room. As expected, the restroom was alike any other nightclub, the caustic smell of urine reeked the moment I entered inside. Also visible were toilet papers galore, thrown all over the wet floor.

I then played pool with a guy called Mark from Boston University and his girlfriend who was too good-looking to introduce herself. They played in turns, and defeated me mercilessly. I admitted defeat with grace, I had played pool only twice before, and was not any better. It should have caused me a huge embarrassment for not being able to connect the cue ball with the stick half the time (let alone scoring) but I still smiled vigilantly as the game ended. God bless alcohol!

"You play worse than I work" – an oriental twang rang my ears as I turned around to see Jessica smiling.

"Well, it is just that I am really drunk tonight" I smiled awkwardly.

"Yeah right", she scoffed, she was not carrying the plastic bin anymore and she got rid of the black apron she was wearing as she collected the glasses.

"It seems like you are done for the day."

"Well yeah, the manager told me I had worked enough; I do not know if that means I really worked hard or screwed up beyond recovery."

It was almost 2 am in the morning and the club was about to close. I was waiting for the last call so I could swill a shot of Patron before calling it a night – one for the road, what the hell, it was valentine's day weekend after all, I was drinking my wife's share too. I looked at Jessica and surmised she needed a drink too. She had been working on a crazy night without tips, and I guessed a free drink would settle scores.

"I am going to get myself

a drink, what do you want?" I asked her frivolously; almost sure she could use one.

"Uh, thanks, but I have a lot to do tomorrow, and that is why I have refrained from drinking. I could have bought myself one if I really needed."

"But tomorrow is Saturday, and relax, I am not asking your number or address, it is just a friendly gesture, nothing else." I was suddenly embarrassed that it sounded like a Hail Mary pass, trying to get her drunk.

"Thanks again" she smiled, and I instantly understood she was not pretending to be modest. "... but see I have to prepare for a job interview on Monday and that needs a lot of attention. I had graduated last May from Boston College and still could not land a job so far, with this economy it is a far cry and I only have three more months before I have to force myself fly back to Taiwan."



Anurag Sharma -
Boston, MA
bobby_eiu@yahoo.com