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Obama: Administration Off To 'Good Start' in First 100 Days

U.S. President Barack Obama, marking his 100th day in office, says his administration is off to a "good start," but that he is still not content because Americans are struggling economically.

At a Wednesday night news conference, Mr. Obama said millions of Americans are still without jobs and homes, and that more will be lost before the recession ends.



in emergency funding from Congress to address the situation.

He said it is a cause for deep concern,

but not for panic and said he has been advised there is no need at this time to close the U.S. border with Mexico, where the worst outbreak has been reported. He said the United States has ramped up screening efforts and sent additional supplies to the border.

Mr. Obama said he is consulting extensively with public health officials, and said the federal govern-

ment is doing all it can to identify new cases and allocate the appropriate resources.

He also said he was pleased Congress has passed a budget resolution.

On foreign policy, he noted that in his 100 days, he has moved to end the war in Iraq and close the Guantanamo Bay detention facility.

Auto companies

Mr. Obama said he is very hopeful that a resolution can be found to allow Chrysler Corporation to remain as a viable automotive company. But he said the details of such a plan have not been finalized.

The administration has given Chrysler a Thursday deadline to make drastic cost cuts and form an alliance with Italy's Fiat auto company, or else lose further government financial support.

The president said another auto giant, General Motors, is still in the process of presenting the administration with its plan for staying in business.

He said the administration's goal is to have viable and strong U.S. auto companies.

Mr. Obama spent part of Wednesday in a suburb of St. Louis in the midwestern state of Missouri, where he warned that the U.S. still faces many obstacles.

He said there that the country must find ways to make sure the current financial crisis is never repeated, and that it must reduce growing health care costs that are hurting businesses and families.

President Obama has undertaken an ambitious agenda since becoming the nation's first African-American president on January 20. He

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Swine Flu

On other topics, President Barack Obama said his administration is closely monitoring the emerging cases of the swine flu virus, saying it is a very serious situation.

He said every American should know the entire government is taking precautions and is prepared. He said schools with confirmed or suspected cases should consider closing. He says he requested \$1.5 billion

Army Chief Row To Be Resolved With Consensus

Birendranagar (Surkhet), May 01: Minister for Information and Communication Krishna Bahadur Mahara said the dispute of the Chief of Army Staff (CoAS) would be resolved on the basis of political consensus.

At a press conference organized here today by Revolutionary Journalists Association (RJA), Bheri-Karnali Committee, Minister Mahara informed that the process to remove Army Chief Rookmangud Katawal has been already started and the issue would be settled based on consensus.

The government is holding discussions with other political parties to quit Army Chief from his service as per the mandate given by the secretariat meeting of unified CPN (Maoist), he said, adding the row is to be ended soon.

Responding queries, he said there has been no base that the Army could stage 'Coup' in the country.

Making it clear that the situation came to terminate Army Chief when he worked beyond the directives of the government, he

further said, "it is wrong to speculate that the "Coup" would be staged from this dispute".

Minister Mahara added that the Army should accept civilian supremacy. "The process of drafting pro-people constitution would be stalled if the Army did not abide by people's supremacy".

On another query, the Minister said the Army Integration Special Committee (AISC) is undertaking its works regarding the integration of army and it would be accomplished within the stipulated time.

The Working Journalist Act (WJA) has been already implemented in government media and stressed that it would be enforced in other private media, said Minister Mahara. (RSS/TRN)

Whether at home, or at work

Telegraph Nepal
telegraphnepal.com

We May Take 'Other' Route To Revolution: Dr Bhattarai

Kathmandu, May 01: Finance Minister and senior leader of UCPN-Maoist, the main ruling party, Dr. Baburam Bhattarai Friday warned of taking a different route for revolution if the status quoists and reactionary forces obstructed his party's utmost efforts to follow the peaceful ways.

Addressing a mass meeting organised to mark the 120th International Labour Day Dr. Bhattarai said his party had opted for peaceful means for achieving the revolutionary goal even as some forces were bent on impeding the process.

"Our sole objective at present is to take the revolution ahead with peaceful means writing the new constitution in time, completing the army integration and restructuring the state and to carry out social and economic transformation simultaneously," he said, "If this is obstructed, we will take an alternative way."

Referring to his party's decision and the government's step to take action against the army chief for his defiance, he said that some regres-

sive elements were pressing Dr. Ram Baran Yadav to go against the decision of the government and take a step similar to that of February 1, 2005.

"I know our right honourable and intellectual president knows well what fate Gyanendra had following his step on Feb 1," the Finance Minister said speaking to the gathering organised by the Federation of All Nepal Trade Unions at the Open Theatre.

He argued that taking action against the army chief was related to whether to maintain civilian supremacy or not, whether to keep the peace process intact or not and whether to safeguard a lively democracy or not."

Referring to his recent visits to different districts where the army had constructed roads, he praised the army and said that he had a great respect for the institution. "Who can say we have no belief in the army when my bodyguard is an army personnel?" he said. "Army chief Rookmangud Katawal is an interesting person. We have no personal en-

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Editorial:**Maoists, Still The Losers**

The decision of the Maoists government to dismiss the Nepal Army Chief Rukmand Katwal from his assignment may please few Maoists affiliated institutions and individuals, but this unilateral decision will have more visible and perceived consequences than they'd have even imagined while deciding on this issue.

The NA Chief Katwal would have retired in another five to six months, but the incumbent government's hasty decision to release him early has more political-motivation than doing real good for the country. Katwal is often accused by these Maoists and their ministers in the government of killings during the people's movement, but they forget the fact that he and his institutions were only executing decisions of the government of the day. If he needs to be punished for executing the government orders, what should be done to the Maoists leadership who are accounted for over 13,000 deaths? To accuse him of not abiding to the present government's decision is an open agenda to weaken one of the strong institutions – Nepal Army, and to replace the position with their 'yes' man would facilitate the entry of rebels into the National Army stationed in the camp, even without meeting the minimum required conditions. This integration, if happened as per their plan, can create a chaos within the Army, and under such chaotic conditions, Maoist may dare to make adventure of capturing the state.

But before contemplating such a scenario, it should not be ignored that the present government, formed after the election to the Constituent Assembly (CA), was expected to facilitate the constitution making process and not indulge in redoing institution favorable to the Maoists and their supporters only. The present government lead by Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal with their coalition partners never demonstrated any adherence to the norms and values expected from a ministerial position, always expressed views contradicting those of Prime Ministers or the cabinet

decisions, and never showed a collective responsibility. Each came out independently, roaring in public the challenges facing their government, and the kind of response they're getting from other political groups.

NA chief Katwal may go or stay will have to be watched. However, this incident has given another opportunity for all to understand the real intention of the Maoists, their bogus talk on nationalism, sovereignty, respect for fundamental rights of all citizens and more. This government is also considering banning political groups that oppose federal setup of the country. Under the present government, and through kind courtesy of their pressure groups like Young Communists League (YCL) and trade unions, they have ensured insecurity in general life, insecurity in the media, paralyzed the industries and everything that would have ensured the country move towards normalcy.

Now that their true face has been coming to light, and the common people have had enough with them, situation is such that common men and women could take to the street demanding the new government be formed. The YCL, the Maoists affiliated trade unions, their unilateral way of doing things, fake commitment to democracy and press freedom, and more, all contributed

Government Inaction Exacerbates Insecurity

Kathmandu, April 15: A failure by Nepal's Maoist-led government to address security issues has exacerbated lawlessness, violent political strikes and growing disenchantment with the government, according to human rights groups.

Most incidents have occurred in the southern Terai region, but there are indications the violence is spreading to central, western and eastern areas.

According to the rights group Informal Sector Service Centre (INSEC), the most affected areas have been the Terai districts of Ilam, Jhapa, Morang and Sunsari, as well as the hill districts of Pachthar, Sankuwasabha, Tehrathum, Taplejung, Surkhet, Gorkha, Kaski and Mugu.

Even the media is afraid to report on cases, resulting in an increased culture of impunity for the perpetrators.

"There's a lot of self-censorship among journalists when reporting on political parties, street protesters or criminal gangs," said

to their disapproval, and the dismissal of Army chief can be attributed to the downfall of the Maoists government. Their outdated philosophy can be held responsible in bringing more misery to Nepal, and ultimately the case for their own downfall.*



Photo Courtesy: IRIN

Maoist cadres continue to be involved in violent activities, say activists

Gopal Guragain, director of Ujyalo Network, which runs a network of 45 FM radio stations across Nepal. He said journalists were increasingly being assaulted.

"If journalists are attacked, you can only imagine the state of the ordinary citizens," a young civilian, Ravi Chettri, told IRIN in Kathmandu.

Human rights activists also expressed concern about the increasing number of road blockades, strikes, and attacks on public transport by various groups - in both the capital and other major cities.

Violence

Incidents of abduction, killing and assaults have been growing and the government keeps silent and is virtually doing nothing

From 10 March to 10 April, INSEC documented more than 50 po-

...cont'd from pg 4

Letter To The Editor

Ref: Nepal Abroad Sat April 11'09, 11th Edition

Dear editor,

You may have noticed Dr. Bhattarai's Fury against the court he expressed yesterday. Its dangerous sign for our democracy and democratic process. Thanks for keeping constant watch.

Best,

Subodh Raj Pyakurel.

G P O Box-2726, Kathmandu, Nepal.

Chairperson:

FORUM-ASIA, Bangkok, Thailand. www.forum-asia.org

INSEC, Nepal. www.inseconline.org

Human Rights Home, Nepal. www.hrhnepal.org

NEMA (Nat'l Election Monitoring Alliance) Nepal.

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Nepalese Calendar

Sun May 03 / Baishak 20'66

Nawami

Mon May 04 / Baishak 21'66

Dashami

Tue May 05 / Baishak 22'66

Ekadashin

Wed May 06 / Baishak 23'66

Duwadashin

Thu May 07 / Baishak 24'66

Trayodashin

Fri May 08 / Baishak 25'66

Chaturdashin

Sat May 09 / Baishak 26'66

BoudhhaPoornima

Maternal Health Goal Way Off, Say Experts

Kathmandu, April 30 : With only six years left to achieve its Millennium Development Goals (MDG), Nepal, like many other Asian countries, is lagging behind and must make further efforts, say local and international health experts.

A top priority is the maternal mortality ratio (MMR), which Nepal's government hopes to reduce to 134 women per 100,000 live births from its current level of 281 per 100,000 live births, according to the government's Demographic Health Survey 2006.

Put another way, this means one woman is dying every four hours (six women a day) due to pregnancy-related complications.

"It will be a big challenge for Nepal to really achieve the maternal health goal," said reproductive health expert, Ava Darshan Shrestha,



Photo Courtesy: IRIN
Access to healthcare in Nepal's remote areas remains a key challenge

vice-president of the Safe Motherhood Network Federation (SMNF).

Skilled birth attendants are not present at nearly 81 percent of deliveries, something that is putting thousands of women at risk, according to SMNF.

There is a severe shortage

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Calendar of Events

May 09: Nepal Educational and Cultural Center (NECC) cordially invites all to celebrate Buddha Jayanti on Saturday May 09 from 4.00pm to Pashupati Buddha Mandir Lanham MD For details visit nepalhorizons.com

May 24: The Newah Organization of America (NOA) has announced its 8th Annual Convention and General Meeting on Sunday May 24 from 2.00 to 10.00pm. Venue yet to be decided. For details visit nepalhorizons.com.

June 19-21: The America Nepal Medical Foundation has scheduled its 13th Annual Conference in Columbus Ohio from June 19 to June 21 2009 with the theme "Oral Helath in Nepal" at Hampton Inn & Suites Easton 4150 Stelzer Rd Columbus OH 43230 from 5.00am to 12.00am. For details visit nepalhorizons.com Contact Rupa Hamal @ Conferenceanmf.net and Bhargab Dixit Chairanmf.net

July 19: The International Literary Society (INLS) invites all to participate in 196th Bhanu Jayanthi and INLS 18th Annual General Assembly 2009 on Sunday July 19 from 2.00 pm to 10.00pm Venue yet to be confirmed. For updates keep visiting nepalhorizons.com

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.

US Officials: Swine Flu Less Deadly than First Feared

U.S. health officials are expressing cautious optimism the virus causing swine flu A-H1N1 may not be as virulent as initially feared, but they say aggressive steps to combat the infectious disease are still warranted.

Days after Mexico suspended public activities to reduce the spread of swine flu, the country is reporting a leveling off in the rate of new infections. In the United States, the number of confirmed influenza cases continues to rise, but most flu sufferers report relatively mild symptoms, and only one death has been recorded.

This is welcome news for U.S. health officials, who initially had to consider the possibility that the new flu strain's impact could mirror the devastation of the 1918 influenza pandemic that led to tens of millions of deaths worldwide.

The acting director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, Richard Besser, spoke on ABC's "This Week" program.

"What we have found is that we are not seeing the factors that were associated with the 1918 pandemic. We are not seeing the

factors that were associated with other H1N1 viruses," Besser said.

But, he adds, "I do not think it is time to let our guard down. I think we have to continue in an uncertain situation to be aggressive."

U.S. officials worry that, even if the virus' spread is eventually contained, it could re-emerge months from now during the northern hemisphere's winter flu season, when more than 30,000 Americans die each year from common influenza.

The Obama administration says it is laying the groundwork to develop a vaccine against swine flu, although no decision has been made on large-scale production of such a vaccine. Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius also appeared on "This Week".

"We can accelerate the seasonal flu vaccine, which we are doing right now to be prepared for what we know will hit this fall and winter. At the same time, we are in the stages of growing the [swine flu] virus, testing it, and we can be ready to do both [vaccines] simultaneously," Sebelius said.

In the meantime, the Obama administration is urging common-sense steps to prevent the spread of swine flu, including frequent hand-washing and asking flu sufferers to stay at home.

Some critics have accused the administration of overstating the dangers of swine flu and unnecessarily alarming the public. Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano dismisses the charge.

"We had a new strain of flu.

We did not really know that its lethality was going to be. We did not know how quickly it was going to move. Once you get behind [the spread of] flu, you cannot catch up. You have to get ahead of it," said Napolitano.

In an appearance on "Fox News Sunday," Napolitano again defended the administration's decision against closing the U.S. border with Mexico, saying it would incur massive economic costs with no meaningful health benefits, since swine flu is already spreading in the United States. (VOA)

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Announcement:

We'd like to announce that Nepal Abroad would now be available to our readers twice a month. We'd also like to take this opportunity to thank all our readers for their continued support and readership. Next edition would be available on May 16 '2009.

Management

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China Steps Up to World Stage, Cautiously

China isn't ready to play the big boy on the world's stage

- By François Godement YaleGlobal, 24 April 2009

PARIS: There is no better indication of the fascination that China now exercises than the comments surrounding its participation at the recent G-20 summit. As the world leaders assembled in London, the world's focus was on the rising economic power China. One wondered how would China stake its position on the growing division between the US and EU over anti-recessionary measures. Also, would it make a contribution to the IMF's reserves, or claim instead a greater hand in IMF decisions, or perhaps even openly question the role of the dollar as the major international reserve currency? There was also the question of how, at this summit of world leaders, it would behave with Europeans, after a year of rocky relations over Tibet. How China behaved on all these issues could be an important pointer to the future.

When the meeting ended, it was clear that China was not in a hurry to claim the mantle of leadership, but neither was it willing to play the traditional second fiddle. China has in fact acted in a fashion that will be immediately familiar to long time observers of the Middle Kingdom. It does not want to be perceived as an outlier to the international community, and even less to be isolated. But neither will it put itself on the line for major multilateral responsibilities.

Out of touch with any of the main parties at the summit. China does not want to be stuck with the agenda and the constraints of a Sino-American G-2. Feuding with Europeans, even if it is on symbolic issues, simply lessens China's options.

Other declarations or gestures by China, however muted, also spoke volumes. Vice-premier Wang Qishan, in charge of economic issues, came forth with a public disclaimer of China's ability to save the world at the summit. Not only had China done its part already by rescuing its own economy and going on an international shopping spree, but a country's ability to contribute to international currency reserves should not be judged on the size of its own stash, he said. Characteristically, the world's third economy, soon likely to speed past a stalled Japan, was

again portraying itself as a developing economy.

China plunked down 40 billion dollars on the IMF's table, but only as a potential loan, when Japan delivered a 100 billion contribution. It also avoided, in the final communiqué of the summit, any reference to a global imbalance that would have implicated China's role in the crisis, where President Obama directly acknowledged America's own responsibility.

In other areas, China followed the same course. Europeans were promoting regulation for the global financial system, but also more precisely control of off-shore financial centers. Since China's inward and outward capital remittances largely flow through these centers, this is no small issue. Thanks to unofficial leaks of the Summit's discussions by a German newspaper, we know that President Hu Jintao endorsed the principle of regulation. But China fought hard to avoid the inclusion of Hong Kong and Macao on a "grey" list of off-shore financial centers. In the end, they only figured as a vague footnote to the list. It is unclear whether this implies future action by China on Europe's requests, or whether it has deflected all pressure on the issue.

Let's chalk up the assessment of China's stand at the G-20. It was never openly negative to any of the proposals, and in fact it went cautiously with every one of them. It certainly did not brandish the implicit threat of a systemic change for the world's reserve currency system. On its potentially increased contribution and standing within the IMF, the jury is still out. The G-20 meeting was certainly not the occasion where an IMF reform of quotas and voting rights could be agreed. But it's hard to say if China really wants that change, or is happy to hide behind the reluctance of Western members of the Fund to give more prominence to emerging economies.

Above all, perhaps, in a summit of symbols and public gestures, any inkling that there was a common group or position of the world's emerging economies was absent, and China largely moved as its own representative, and not as a leader of such a group. Posturing was left to

Russia's president on the side of the summit, but there was no particular initiative either with Brazil and India.

The true ambiguity of China's strategy on the international scene is there. Routinely, China is strengthening ties and mutual interests with the world's producers of energy and raw materials, and is now even putting its own currency to use in long-term cash for resources deals. But this does not form a strategic axis. Realist calculus, simple and straightforward commercial competition, prevent it. More broadly, China's needs are about reassurance from the West – and that includes Europe besides the US – towards the stability of its financial earnings and the openness of its principal external markets. And China's cultural tradition instinctively goes against taking charge of major international responsibilities and the risks that go with them, let alone promote wide systemic change.

The problem with this course is that China's sheer economic weight now exceeds the prudent commitments it is willing to make. Unavoidably, China is center stage, and under the limelight. There may in fact be, in a stagnating West, an exaggerated expectation by business and market leaders of China's potential to restart the global economy. China's economic agenda is largely self-centered, with

international contributions often seen simply as an unavoidable burden. The competitive response to the crisis by China's firms may inject as much of a deflationary trend into global markets as its government stimulus packages create additional demand.

At the G-20, China's leaders contributed pragmatism and cautiousness, rather than make the splashing entrance into global financial affairs that many commentators expected. If China is to play a role in helping to solve the global crisis, it will likely be in the form of that country moving away from a major external saving imbalance to a more consumer driven economy. Such a shift would require China to become a major player in the global monetary and financial system, limiting Beijing's ability to control its economy, leading to a sea change in China's domestic policy and structure – an unlikely event in the near term. And since we are much more likely to see only incremental domestic reform, we should only expect incremental international influence.

François Godement is Director of the Asia Centre at Sciences Po and co-author (with John Fox) of "A power audit of EU-China relations", European Council on Foreign Relations, April 2009.

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Government Inaction ...

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littically and criminally motivated violent incidents nationwide, including armed attacks, bombings, killings, abductions and street violence. Ten people were killed. INSEC said the violence was increasing. The political violence is reportedly being perpetrated by Maoist-affiliated groups and various ethnic-political groups fighting for greater rights and autonomy.

Most parliamentarians - spread over 17 national political parties in the Constituent Assembly - have been boycotting proceedings in protest against the failure of the Maoist-led government to restore law and order.

At a recent gathering in Hetauda, some 200km south of the capital, more than 70 human rights organisations warned that human rights abuses were getting out of hand.

In 2006, the Maoist rebels and Nepalese government signed a peace agreement to end a decade-long armed conflict which killed more than 13,000 people and displaced nearly 200,000. (IRIN News)

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CAN-USA Launches 'Professional Networking Seminar

The Computer Association of Nepal-USA (CAN-USA) successfully completed their first professional networking seminar on April 24, 2009 in California. The highlight of this seminar was a talk by the keynote speaker, Mr. Kanwal Rekhi, a legendary Indo-American entrepreneur from the Silicon Valley.

Mr. Rekhi spoke about his own experiences in starting the company that attributed to his great success. He spoke about the technical, financial, logistical, and emotional challenges he faced and how he overcame them. The audience continued to ask numerous questions and Mr. Rekhi graciously remained long after his originally scheduled time to answer many of them.

Following this talk the attendees had an opportunity to socialize with each other and discover professional and other interests. The numerous Nepali professionals who

attended a CAN-USA function for the first time prompted President Bineet Sharma to say, "We are very happy that so many people came to this first networking meeting despite it being a Friday night, and especially because there was a large social gathering at the same time in San Francisco."

Mr. Sharma stressed that CAN-USA is not just an organization for people from technical backgrounds but an organization for all professionals. Mr. Suresh P. Ojha, General Secretary of CAN-USA also stressed the open nature of the organization and the differences between CAN-USA and other organizations, "All of our meetings are open to the public. We are not a social or cultural organization, but a professional support and advocacy organization."

Dr. Pukar Malla, Western Regional Vice President of CAN-

USA, highlighted the Transfer of Knowledge initiative by CAN-USA which utilizes live videoconferencing to link technology professionals in the US with students in Nepal on key technological advancements. He also stated, "There are many opportunities for people who want to help with the CAN-USA ICT conference during the ANA conference in July."

This seminar was broadcast live via the web through the courtesy of www.vivu.tv. During the proceedings several questions were received from different parts of the world.

Following the socializing period and brief speeches by CAN-USA officers, Mr. Kumar Pandey and Mr. Nabin Acharya presented the second in their series of courses on cloud computing to an eager group of 45 students in Kathmandu. These students waited patiently for two hours

on Nepali Mother's day despite numerous delays to the schedule in the US.

"In all, we are tremendously satisfied with the success of this networking event and look forward to making this a routine event," said Mr. Niley Shrestha, chairman of the seminar committee.

The seminar was sponsored by Kodalo Financial, and Mr. Deepak Neupane (dn@kodalofinancial.com), a Kodalo employee and a founding secretary/treasurer of CAN-USA. The entire seminar is available on the internet, courtesy of www.vivu.tv.

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Immigration in American History

- Sirjana Sharma (Pokhrel) LL.M, Southern Methodist University Dallas, Texas Email: creative_law2005@yahoo.com

...Contd. from previous week

The second report discussed legal immigration issues and suggested that immediate family members and skilled workers receive priority. The third report covered refugee and asylum issues. Finally, the fourth report reiterated the major points of the previous reports and the need for a new immigration policy. Few of these suggestions were implemented.

In 1996, Congress passed the Illegal Immigrant Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA). The act added to border controls by mandating the hiring of more Border Patrol and Immigration and Naturalization Service agents. Repercussions for entering the country illegally were increased and a border fence was planned for San Diego. An automated employment verification pilot program was created in the hopes of easing worksite enforcement. The Act also allowed state police officers to enforce immigration law using the 287(g) program. Although the IIRIRA boosted de jure enforcement, poor funding again hindered the actual enforcement of the laws.

Also during the 1990s, a series of four smaller amnesties were passed. The first, the Section 245(i)

amnesty, was passed in 1994 and pardoned approximately 578,000 illegal aliens, who were each fined \$1,000. This amnesty was later renewed in 1997 and again in 2000. The second, the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act (NACARA), was passed in 1997 and gave legal status to approximately one million illegal aliens, mostly from Central America, who had lived in the U.S. since 1995. In 1998, the Haitian Refugee Immigration and Fairness Act (HRIFA) passed after it was argued that excluding Haitians from NACARA was discriminatory. The most recent amnesty, passed in 2000, was the Legal Immigration Family Equity Act (LIFE). The LIFE Act was a mini-amnesty aimed at those illegal aliens who hoped to become green card holders through marriage, employment or other categories, but who were not anywhere near approval yet, due to the long line of people ahead of them. It was sold as a way around the growing processing backlogs that were the result of previous amnesties. During the time of this legislation, from 1994 to 2000, millions of hopeful legal immigrants waited in line overseas.

The terrorist attack on September 11, 2001 affected perspectives on many issues, including immigration. A total of 20 foreign-born terrorists were involved, 19 of whom took part in the attack that caused 2,974 civilian deaths. The terrorists had entered the country on tourist or student visas. Four of them, however, had violated the terms of their visas and become illegal aliens. The attack exposed long-standing holes in our immigration system that included failures at visa processing, internal enforcement, and information sharing.

In 2006 the issue of immigration reform was once again discussed in Congress, with the House of Representatives and the Senate producing their own, conflicting bills. In December of 2005, the House passed the Border Protection, Anti-terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005, which was sponsored by Rep. James Sensenbrenner (R-WI). The act was limited to enforcement and focused on both the border and the interior. In the Senate, the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2006 (CIRA) was sponsored by Sen. Arlen Specter (R-PA) and passed in May 2006. CIRA would have

given amnesty to a majority of illegal aliens already in the country as well as dramatically increased legal immigration. Although the bills passed their respective chambers, no compromise bill emerged.

In 2007, the Senate again attempted to pass amnesty legislation. The Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2007, which would have given amnesty to a large majority of illegal entrants in the country, significantly increased legal immigration and increased enforcement. The act, which had bipartisan support in the Senate, was widely unpopular with the American public. As the result of unprecedented public pressure, the bill failed to pass a cloture vote, essentially killing it.

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Telegraph Nepal

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Administration Off To...

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pushed through Congress a \$787 billion economic stimulus package and unveiled a number of initiatives to rescue the ailing financial and automotive industries.

He ordered the closure of the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and changed the U.S. strategy in Iraq and Afghanistan. He took steps to improve America's image abroad, including outreach to the Muslim world, and made overtures to U.S. rivals Cuba, Iran and Venezuela.

The president entered his 100th day in office Wednesday with

an approval rating above 60 percent, but he is facing another major challenge -- an outbreak of swine flu that has killed dozens of people in Mexico and has spread to the United States and other parts of the world.

It has been a tradition for journalists and historians to examine a new president's first 100 days in office since Franklin D. Roosevelt's presidency in 1933. President Roosevelt pushed through 15 major pieces of legislation during that period to help the nation combat the Great Depression, the worst economic crisis in U.S. history. (VOA 04/29)

Maternal Health Goal...

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of maternal health services, especially in the hills, where most of the maternal deaths occur.

"In rural areas, most women need to walk for hours. If they travel by bus it's just as bad because the roads are so rough that women in labour end up in a serious condition even before reaching hospital," said Sabitri Chettri, a female community health volunteer.

Weak administrative, technical and logistical capacity, inadequate investment and lack of skilled health personnel further hamper effective health services, according to UNICEF's State of the World's Children - 2009 report.

Impact on other MDGs

Experts are concerned that failure to achieve the MMR goal will also adversely affect other MDGs.

Unless you reduce the MMR, it will be difficult to achieve other MDGs, including a reduction in child mortality [goal 4], as well as gender equality and empowerment [goal 3], Saramma Mathai, a maternal health expert with the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) in Bangkok, told IRIN. We know that unless a mother survives [childbirth], the risk of death of a newborn is much higher," she said.

She said the maternal health goal was also linked to MDG 1, which relates to both poverty reduction and malnutrition.

"Without a mother, a child's nutrition is going to suffer. And women contribute a lot to the economy, both in terms of working at home and contributing to the economy," said Mathai.

Local health experts told IRIN the health of mothers and newborns was closely linked, and preventing deaths required implementing measures like antenatal care, skilled attendance at birth, access to emergency obstetric care, adequate nutrition, post-partum care, newborn care and education to improve health, infant feeding and care, and ensuring good hygiene behaviours.

"To be truly effective and sustainable, however, these interventions must take place within a development framework that strives to strengthen and integrate programmes with health systems, and an environment supportive of women's rights," said the State of the World's Children 2009 report.

New government programme

The Ministry of Health and Population, with the support of the UK Department for International Development (DFID), has started Ama Surakchhya Karyakram, a national programme offering free childbirth and travel costs to women who come and deliver at a maternal health facility.

The programme is available in all government hospitals and health centres.

"This programme is aimed at improving maternal health and newborn survival, and we are committed to its effective implementation," said senior government official Girija Mani Pokhrel.

"We need to remember that Nepal is the 14th poorest nation in the world," Sushil Baral, DFID maternal health adviser in Kathmandu, told IRIN, adding that the programme was a "bold initiative". (IRIN News)

Border People Demand...

cont'd from pg 3 ...

Locals here still have the fresh memory of the cold-blooded killing of Hari Bahadur Thapa by Indian smugglers. "He was murdered by them for raising voice to hand over forests to communities," Gharti said.

In response to the villagers' plea, Chief District Officer of Banke Ganesh Bahadur Khatri expressed commitment to make sound security arrangement in the villages living under the fear of Indian smugglers.

Meanwhile, the Embassy of India in Nepal has begun investigations following extensive protests by the entrepreneurs of the incident of the Indian police illegally seizing 52 sacks of valuable herbs being exported to India from here some days back.

A team led by the First Secretary at the Indian Embassy, MK Sinha, has started investigations into the incident, it is learnt.

Central president of Nepal Herbal Traders Association, Mohammad Yakub Ansari had submitted a memorandum to the Indian Embassy, drawing its attention to the incident of the Indian police seizing the herb

being legally exported to India.

The team also studied the export-related papers and documents from the local customs office, the Indian customs, the District Forest Office and related offices as well as inquired about the incident with the herbs traders, and the office-bearers of the Association.

Ten days back, the Indian police seized the 52 sacks of herbs exported to Mumbai, India by local Natural Herbal Suppliers at Jarwal Road, India, suspecting the herbs were being exported with fake export documents. (RSS/The Rising Nepal)

Happy Birthday!



Sameer Bhattarai
Fairfax, VA
DOB: May 01



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Suvani Aryal
DOB: April 21

With love ♥

Grandpa Grandma, Sudhir, Sunil, Sudeep
Geharaj, Sirjana, Suvan, Ayush

NTC To Extend...

cont'd from pg 7 ...

additional BTS towers till the end of current fiscal year, which would help reform the quality of the phone services to the customers.

The NTC had earned around Rs. 7 billion 940 million net profits in 2064/65 fiscal year whereas the company had earned around Rs. 5 billion 980 million net profits in the fiscal year 2063/64. The NTC has aimed to earn around Rs. 10 billion 130 million net profits in the next year. (TRN)

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Obama: US Moving Toward High-Speed Railways

- By Kent Klein Washington 16 April 2009 VOA

President Barack Obama wants the United States to join other industrialized countries in having an extensive high-speed rail system. The president has unveiled his plan to accelerate the development of high-speed rail in the U.S.

President Obama says high-speed rail could do for America what it is already doing for other countries, including China and Spain.

"A high-speed line between Madrid and Seville is so successful that more people travel between those cities by rail than by car and airplane combined. China, where service began just two years ago, may have more miles of high-speed rail service than any other country just five years from now," he said.

High-speed rail only serves America's Northeast corridor, between Washington, D.C. and Boston, Massachusetts. But plans are under way to extend the rapid transit to other areas of the country.

Before leaving for Latin America, Mr. Obama outlined his two-part strategy for accelerating those plans.

"Improving our existing rail lines, to make current train service faster, but also identifying potential corridors for the creation of world-class high-speed rail," he said.

Congress included \$8 billion for rail development in the economic stimulus legislation it passed in February. Mr. Obama is including

another \$5 billion for high-speed rail in his federal budget.

High-speed rail has had mixed political support in the past. But President Obama says it could strengthen the U.S. economy, in addition to improving the country's transportation system. He says the United States should not be left behind while other nations are moving ahead with high-speed rail.

"So it is being done. It is just not being done here. There is no reason why we cannot do this. This is America. There is no reason why the future of travel should lie somewhere else, beyond our borders," he said.

The president was joined at the announcement by Vice President Joe Biden, who, in 35 years as a U.S. Senator, is estimated to have taken almost 8,000 rail trips between Washington and his home in Wilmington, Delaware.

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NTC To Extend Broadband Internet Service

Kathmandu, April 23: Nepal Telecom (NTC) is planning to extend its broadband Internet service outside the valley from the current fiscal year.

Presently, NTC has been providing the broadband Internet service within the valley only for the residential use. Till the end of February this year, a total of 13,969 customers have used the service.

Speaking at the press conference, Managing Director of the NTC, Amar Nath Singh said that the company would extend its service across the country with improving quality of NTC's service.

Accepting the telecom's failure in providing quality service to its customers, he said that the company has declared 20-point programme for improving service to the customers. He said that the telecom was using the solar and generator to increase the backup capacity of the batteries in its cell phone towers, known as BTS, to improve the quality of service to the people.

He said that the NTC had to expand its service to 7 million people in the next five years. Now, it claimed

that it had succeeded in distributing around a total of 3,660,000 lines across the country.

Surendra Prasad Thike, spokesperson of NTC, said that the NTC had been able to add 20,000 PSTN telephones, 700,000 pre-paid and post paid mobile phones and 200,000 CDMA phones during the eight-month of the current fiscal year. The total numbers of PSTN telephone has reached to 51,5416 prepaid and post-paid mobile phone 2,422,699 and CDMA phone 686,000.

The NTC had been able to extend its GSM and CDMA services in all 75 districts of the country within two years' time. The company has started providing prepaid GSM phone service to the customers on demand, he said.

The NTC has planned to expand the mobile phone network to the Kathmandu-Pokhara and Kathmandu-Bhaktapur at the end of Asar with the view to provide the mobile phone services for the users travelling in these highways, he informed.

The NTC would add 239
...Contd. on pg 6

We May Take 'Other' Route...

cont'd from pg 1 ...

But those who violate the discipline should not be let free."

Touching upon the labour issues, the Finance Minister assured that the rights of the working class people would be ensured in the new constitution.

"I would like to urge both the industrialists and labourers to prevent strikes through mutual understanding for the benefit of both the groups," he said. "I specially urge labourers close to us to forward their problems to the industrialists and settle them amicably."

He said his ministry was preparing the upcoming budget in such a way that some one million new jobs were created within a year. "I have asked the other ministries to come up with projects for creating new jobs."

Shalik Ram Jamarkattel, chairman of the Federation, stressed on ensuring the rights of the labourers in the new constitution and vowed to fight for the same. *(The Rising Nepal)*

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| Australian \$1 | 57.10 | 57.53 |
| Swiss Franc 1 | 70.00 | 70.53 |
| Singapore Dollar | 53.47 | 53.87 |
| Japanese Yen 10 | 8.26 | 8.32 |
| Chinese Yuan 1 | 11.71 | 11.79 |
| Indian Rupees 100 | 160.00 | 160.15 |
| Swedish Kroner 1 | 9.84 | --- |
| Danish Kroner 1 | 14.14 | --- |
| Hong Kong Dollar 1 | 10.31 | --- |
| Saudi Arab Riyal 1 | 21.30 | 21.46 |
| Qatari Riyal 1 | 21.95 | 22.12 |
| Thai Bhat 1 | 2.26 | 2.27 |
| UAE Dirham 1 | 21.75 | 21.91 |
| Malaysian Ringgit 1 | 22.26 | 22.42 |

[Source: Nepal Rastra Bank, for April 30 '09]

Nobel Laureate Develops Low-Cost Health Care System for Bangladesh

By Michael Lipin Washington April 16 2009 VOA



Nobel Peace Prize winner Muhammad Yunus of Bangladesh is developing a health care

network for the poor in his country that will operate at low cost using mobile phone technology. Yunus is working with U.S. medical experts to help Bangladeshi villagers transmit their medical information to doctors in far-away cities for better treatment.

Muhammad Yunus won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006 for setting up a bank in his native Bangladesh to provide small loans to impoverished women to help them to become entrepreneurs.

In recent years, he has expanded the work of his Grameen

Bank to focus on improving health care for the 40 percent of Bangladeshis who live on less than a dollar a day.

On a visit to Washington this week, Yunus told an international health conference that Grameen Health, an affiliate of Grameen Bank, has 51 clinics that offer low-cost treatment to villagers who pay an insurance premium of just \$2 a year.

But he says many doctors who run the rural clinics want to stay only a few months before returning to the cities, which forced him to rethink the operation. "One of the alternatives we decided on finally is that maybe we should not even try to bring the doctors in the village. And that is what we now are working on - redesigning the system," he said.

Yunus says he is working with U.S. medical experts to create health care centers that allow villagers to transmit their

medical information over the Internet using cellular telephones to a far-away doctor's computer. "He can see it on the screen and decide what the advice should be in this particular case and pick up the mobile phone and tell the health management center what is the next step to take, what precautions, whatever advice they have," he said. Yunus began his partnership with the U.S. health care providers last September to help to make his Bangladeshi clinics more cost-efficient and self-supporting.

One of his partners, Pfizer - the world's biggest pharmaceutical maker - is helping to evaluate Grameen's health care delivery systems. Another is General Electric, the world's top maker of medical imaging devices such as ultrasound machines. GE is working with villagers to make diagnostic equipment less complex and easier to carry to people's homes. And the Mayo

Clinic, a leading nonprofit medical provider, is training village doctors and nurses how to use state of the art medical equipment.

Yunus says another way to make his health care network sustainable is to encourage Bangladeshi women to train as nurses and become part of the Grameen health care system.

"In Bangladesh, we are in a very strange situation where there are three doctors per nurse because the shortage of nurses is so big. So we thought we could turn it around. You have plenty of girls with good quality education. We can run them through the nursing colleges, and they become good health care workers and they will fill up the gap," he said.

If Yunus's health care system succeeds in Bangladesh, he says he hopes the model can be replicated to help millions of people throughout the developing world.

Bollywood Comes to Life on US College Campuses

- By Lonny Shavelson Bollywood...no,Berkeley, California March 10 2009 VOA

The Academy Awards for Slumdog Millionaire have brought new attention to India and the Bollywood cinematic style of over-the-top songs and dances. But it's nothing new for American college students.

Fierce intercollegiate dance competitions in the Bollywood style are staged across the country throughout the winter and early spring. The largest one is held each February on the campus of the University of California, Berkeley.

Bollywood Berkeley 2009 drew 2,000 students into UC Berkeley's Zellerbach Hall to cheer for the eight college teams presenting their original choreography to the music of sappy, overacted Bollywood movie love stories.

Classic Bollywood with an American twist

Recorded music from those films blasts from the speakers as the dancers synchronously jump and boogie in acrobatic, gravity-defying moves. They're dancing out 8-minute stories, lip-syncing the lyrics, chang-

ing into increasingly exotic costumes. Their themes are classic Bollywood: Boy meets girl; girl avoids boy; boy does something dramatic to win girl over. And then, the required happy ending: They marry.

"Bollywood's a fairy tale. It's not even real life," observes Rohan Vora, a business and administration major at the University of Southern California and a member of the school's dance team. "It's a getaway from reality. That's why it's so popular in India, because Bollywood is an escape. It's song, dance, festivities, perfect love."

He compares it to Shakespeare's classic love story Romeo and Juliet, but as seen through a contemporary - and much larger-than-life - prism.

Purely for fun

Vora and the other dancers competing in these Bollywood competitions are mostly high-achieving Indian-American college students who were born in the United States. He says they don't really believe in

these perfect love stories.

"The ideas presented in these Bollywood films come from our parents, and they're well ingrained in us as we grow up. You know, find the perfect girl for you, and so that just comes out when we're planning these Bollywood dances. We know that it's purely for fun."

Northwestern University's team captain, Ronak Vashi, doesn't see the Bollywood films as stereotyping. She says the love story characters come just as much from the European tradition as the South Asian.

"I more kind of see it as that kind of Cinderella story that people here grow up with," she explains.

And that's the story line her team's dance follows. It's about some studious girls who can't get the boys to notice them.

"And then we transform into the hotter versions of ourselves, and then we kind of fall in love, and everyone's excited and

happy at the end."

Corny, trite, stereotypically sexist or not - Bollywood produces more than 2,500 songs and dances every year, a fusion of East Indian classical, bhangra, and now hip hop, jazz, salsa and folk. And college teams bring the productions to life at competitions across the United States, from New York, to Philadelphia, to Chicago, to Berkeley... where the winner of Bollywood Berkeley 2009 was UC Irvine.

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