

Nepal Abroad

Published weekly from Washington D.C.

Nepal Abroad

Saturday Baishak 21, 2064 B.S. / May 03, 2008

Year 3. No. 16

'US Eager To Work With New Government In Nepal': Dr. Chalise

The end of April '08 marks the completion of 100 days of Dr Suresh C Chalise starting his official assignment as Nepal's Ambassador in Washington DC by presenting his credentials to US President George W Bush on January 22' 08.

Since then, Ambassador Chalise has extensively interacted with and participated in the discussion with the US government officials, foreign diplomats, members of the international organizations and the Nepalese expatriates across the country, apart from his academic interactions with such institutions as the Institute on Religion and Public Policy, Institute of Foreign Service, Dept. of South & South Asian Studies at the University of California, Berkeley and others.

'US government is eager to work with the new government in Nepal formed by the newly elected representatives; and that they'd also like to see the ongoing peace process



Dr. Suresh C Chalise

move forward, as it received fresh impetus with the accomplishment of the recently held election for the Constituent Assembly (CA)', said Dr. Chalise while talking to Nepal Abroad on Thursday April 30. He further said that the measures are being taken to improve consular services in the mission and streamlining the offices of the Consul Generals.

Ambassador further says that the talks are in progress to remove the travel alert on Nepal as it would enormously help revive the

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Indiana Takes National Spotlight in US Presidential Primaries

By Kane Farabaugh, South Bend, Indiana May 2 '08 VOA

The last time a Democratic candidate won the general election in the midwest state of Indiana was 1964. Though considered a conservative Republican stronghold, experts say there could be a major shift in the state's politics this election year. Members of the Democratic Party are expected to turn out in record numbers for Indiana's newly critical Presidential Primary election. That has both candidates for the nomination doggedly seeking votes in the final days leading up to the May 6th primary. VOA's Kane Farabaugh has more from Indiana.

Jennifer Peck is among a roomful of volunteers working for one of the candidates seeking the Democratic Party's presidential nomination.

She says she is excited to have her home state make a difference,

"Now this is the chance that people feel that they can matter, and that their voice can count, so I think that [the midwestern U.S. state of] Indiana will matter."

Peck's candidate, Senator Hillary Clinton, has the endorsement of Indiana's popular Senator Evan Bayh. Analysts expect her to do well in Indiana's rural areas.

Indiana is next to Senator Barack Obama's home state of Illinois, and his campaign headquarters in Chicago. He has not lost a primary contest in the other states bordering Illinois, and his campaign hopes that Indiana follows suit.

But volunteers say many voters here are still undecided. Peck, a former teacher and now stay-at-

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Nepal's New Constitution Must Enshrine Press Freedom: Bennett

Kathmandu May 2: Enshrining guarantees of freedom of expression and access to information in Nepal's new constitution will be crucial tasks for the recently elected Constituent Assembly, the top United Nations human rights official in the country said today, on the eve of the worldwide observance of World Press Freedom Day.

"However journalists, and all Nepalis, will be empowered only when those written guarantees are translated into real access to information on the ground," said Richard Bennett of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Nepal, as he addressed a gathering in the capital, Kathmandu, to mark the Day, observed annually on 3 May.

He stressed the important role of the media in a country such

as Nepal, which is recovering from a decade-long civil war that claimed an estimated 13,000 lives until the Government and Maoist rebels signed a peace accord in 2006.

"In a post-conflict society such as Nepal, where tensions are sometimes high and challenges remain to human rights, governance, development and durable peace, the media plays an even more central role where accuracy and depth of reporting is especially crucial," stated Mr. Bennett, who also heads the human rights unit of the UN Mission in Nepal (UNMIN).

OHCHR plans to conduct training for journalists next month on the media's role in reporting on the Constituent Assembly, including the drafting of a new constitution that will enshrine respect for human rights, including freedom of expression.

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PSU Approves Formation Of Nepalese Students Association

On Monday April 28 '08 the officials at Portland State University approved the requests to form Nepalese Students Association (NSA).

'The (Nepalese) students would work on to form the committee to head this organization next week as all are busy during the last hours of this spring semester', says Sarita Sitaula- a graduate student at PSU-Department of Chemistry.

The International Night has been scheduled for Friday May

16 at the University and some of the Nepalese students are planning to participate in the Nepalese fashion show; and as of now, they're also looking forward to include extra activities / performance related to Nepal and the Nepalese culture.

Sudin Maharjan, a student with Electrical and Computer Engineering major, and a member of PSU International Cultural Service Program, will be participating in the Nepalese fashion show, said Ms Sitaula.

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Editorial:**Media and new Nepal**

Talks are afloat about restoring sovereignty, national interests and pride in Nepal and among the Nepalese community across the globe, and the outcome of the recent election is a popular support for those advocating these issues. Although there may be a varying interpretation of national interests and pride, and the ways to achieve it, there is no denying that every component that constitute a State has a role to play. Certainly media's role is undeniably important.

Their role becomes more important in Nepal as the country is still in transition, heading towards excitedly new, and yet unknown to many. When people consume news they get from various medium, they imbibe news, views and information that influences their intellectual ability and decision making process. Hence the mass media has a greater role in cultivating national pride among the citizens.

In a precarious political situation, it would do more social good when national interests and pride guides the media person when working on the content for public consumption. Going through the recent edition of Bimarsha weekly, and its interview with Sitaram Yechuri – a communist leader in India who argues that 'to

expect US and Pakistan to eradicate terrorism is to live in a fool's paradise' (rediff.com chat transcript Sep 24 '01), it gives readers a feel that Nepal as a country is so weak, with vision less leaders, who completely depend on India for all their political actions for their country. Certainly his responses are not too soothing to any patriots the way he comments on Nepal's national issues. If read carefully, it's a blatant intervention of Nepal's affair by this Indian leader, however, on the other side, a question can be asked - who made this alien speak and his response available to the general readers? The question asked shows a challenged intellectual ability, only to hurt our national pride. This would give all Indian leaders an excuse to shift the blame to the Nepalese media for making them speak against the Nepalese pride, while pretending to be a good neighbor.

Its time for all to rethink and to introduce self-censorship on issues that do not promote national interests and common good for its citizens or else we'd always be debating this issue while others advance in the path of socio-economic prosperity. Undeniably, mass media has a greater role to play in transforming Nepal as a prosperous, sovereign, and an active player in the regional affairs.

Big, Old NC Not So Youth-Friendly

Kathmandu, April 30 (HNS): Out of 17.6 million eligible voters for the Constituent Assembly polls, roughly 30 per cent — 5.28 million voters — were aged between 18 and 28 years.

The Nepali Congress, one of the oldest political parties of the country, lagged behind the CPN-UML and CPN-Maoist when it came to fielding youth candidates under the First-Past-The-Post (FPTP) election system. The median age of Maoist candidates under the FPTP is 39, followed by UML's 45 and the NC's 52. The median age of NC leaders, who won the FPTP polls, is 53, while the median age of Maoist winners under the FPTP polls is 39.

Given these facts, will the NC send more youths to the CA under the proportional representation system? Analysts are not sure of this because old figures are still occupying party positions. Youth leaders of the NC, stating that the party did not field a good number of youth candidates under the FPTP polls, doubt whether it will include more youths on its PR list.

"Like in the FPTP polls, the party might not include a good number of youths under the PR system. We have conveyed this concern to NC leaders," said Pushpa Parajuli, general secretary of Tarun Dal, youth wing of the NC.

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Former Rebels Favoured By Marginalised Communities

Nepalgunj, April 27: Radha Biswokarma is ecstatic that the former Maoist rebels won a landslide victory in the historic Constituent Assembly (CA) elections held in Nepal on 10 April.

"Finally, we will have a lot of Dalits in the government," said Biswokarma, who, according to the Hindu caste system, is of low caste and known as a 'Dalit', meaning 'untouchable' or 'outcast'.

The Dalits are among the most neglected, socially discriminated and economically deprived of Nepalese communities and have always been under-represented in Nepalese politics and civil administration, analysts say.

According to a 2001 census by Nepal's Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), Dalits make up about 13 percent of the country's 29 million inhabitants. However, some local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) say Dalits make up more than 20 percent of the population.

Party for the poor and neglected

The Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPNM) was the first political force to advocate for the rights of Dalits, who strongly supported the Maoists' armed rebellion, dubbed the 'People's War', according to political analysts. The former rebels trained and recruited Dalits in most of the country's 75 districts to work as their political cadres.

The recent election results show that Dalits were among the key voters for the Maoists. "I believe in their promises and this is why I voted for them despite being a communist party," Ram Hari Sunwar, a Dalit villager, said.

The elections for the 601-member CA were contested by 55 parties in 240 constituencies. More than 10.7 million Nepalese voted, according to Nepal's independent Election Commission.

By way of a mixed parallel voting system - First-Past-the-Post (FPTP) and Proportional Representation (PR) - the Maoists

won 220 of the 601 seats, while the Nepali Congress party came second with 110 seats and the Communist Party of Nepal (UML) third with 103 seats.

"Our real representatives were elected"

"For the first time, I will see a leader from my own community," said Sushila Nepali, a Dalit woman from west Nepal. She explained that the Maoists were the only party to have Dalit representatives elected in the assembly.

Other excluded groups, such as indigenous communities known as 'Janjati' and the ethnic Madhesi group, also voted for the Maoists in large numbers.

"My vote didn't go in vain as more Janjatis were elected and I am so happy that we will see many people from my community representing us," said Sita Lama, a Janjati Nepali.

Of the 62 Janjatis elected to the CA, 40 belong to the Maoist party.

"The Maoists won because people thought this was the party that would do more than other parties," said local independent analyst Janardhan Acharya, adding that there would also be more female representatives in parliament now. Of the 29 women elected to the CA, 23 were Maoist.

High expectations

According to the Election Commission, the Maoists also

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Nepali Calendar

Sun May 04 / Baishak 22 '65

Chaturdashin

Mon May 05 / Baishak 23 '65

MataTirtha Aunshi

Tue May 06 / Baishak 24 '65

Pratipada

Wed May 07 / Baishak 25 '65

Duwitija

Thu May 08 / Baishak 26 '65

Akshya Tritiya

Fri May 09 / Baishak 27 '65

Chauthi

Sat May 10 / Baishak 28 '65

Panchami

Conference In CA Explored Religious Stereotypes

By a staff reporter

Northridge CA April 20: Dr. Deepak Shimkhada, visiting professor of religious studies at California State University, delivered a paper at a conference hosted by the School of Religion of Claremont Graduate University just last week. Titled *Mirror and Windows: Facing Religious Stereotypes and Prejudices*, the conference focused on issues relating to common religious stereotypes in every religious tradition.

At the conference, Dr. Shimkhada, representing Hinduism, argued that "Stereotyping arises from distortion of facts, either knowingly or unknowingly. It may also arise from misunderstanding, lack of knowledge, personal biases, prejudices, and simply hatred....It is understandable when a person who has no deeper understanding of Hinduism to judge a Hindu, but what is disturbing is the fact that people who have studied and claim to be experts of Hinduism still make judgments characterized by pejorative remarks." Before jumping into the Western misconceptions of Hinduism, of which there are many, Dr. Shimkhada began his presentation with a few anecdotes that happened to him personally.



Dr. Deepak Shimkhada

In the face of what are all-too-often negative characterizations, misguided prejudices, and deeply entrenched misunderstandings, this year's conference sought to provide a forum for safe and peaceful, yet critical and rigorous, reflection. The reflections not only allowed one to peer through the pane and observe the strange, the foreign, and the unknown, but also allowed one to face his or her own reflection, identifying those conceptions that need substantial re-shaping, re-imagining, and re-imagining. Scholars from seven different religious traditions representing Catholicism, Copticism, Hinduism, Judaism,

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US Ambassador in Nepal Meets Maoist Leader for First Time

By Steve Herman, Delhi May 2, 2008 VOA

The U.S. ambassador in Kathmandu has, for the first time, met with the leader of Nepal's Maoists, an organization still on Washington's terrorism watch list. VOA correspondent Steve Herman reports from our South Asia bureau in New Delhi.

The U.S. Embassy in Kathmandu and the Maoists are saying little about the first meeting between American Ambassador Nancy Powell and Pushpa Kamal Dahal, the Maoist leader known as Prachanda.

The United States still officially considers the former rebels, who now compose Nepal's Maoist

Communist Party, as a terrorist organization.

Tribhuvan University political science professor Krishna Khanal says there were indications in recent weeks that such a meeting between Ambassador Powell and Prachanda was inevitable.

"There was no direct contact between the U.S. ambassador and the Maoist leader here in Kathmandu," said Khanal. "But after the constituent assembly elections and the Maoist victory, there were some indications that American officials and the Maoist leaders had these

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Calendar of Events

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

May 04: The Tamang Society of Greater Washington (TSGW) and America Nepal Society (ANS) is jointly organizing an interaction program with Deepak Tamang - a development professional from Nepal on Sunday May 04 from 3.00 pm to 5.00pm at Tysons - Pimmit regional Library 7584 leesburg Pike Falls Church VA 22043. For details visit nepalhorizons.com

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

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

May 11: The INLS DC Metro chapter is organizing a spring poetry festival-Basanta Kavya Utsav on Sunday May 11 from 1.00pm to 5.00pm at Fairfax Regional Library 10360 North Street. For details visit nepalhorizons.com

May 11: Rocky Mountain Friends of Nepal and Gujarati Samaj is presenting performances of Bollywood's Top Singers Dancers and Musicians on Sunday May 11 from 3.30 pm at William C. Hinkley High School 1250 Chanber Road CO 80011. For details visit rmfn.org

May 17: The Nebraska Nepalese Society (NNS) is organizing Community Garage Sale on Saturday May 17 at 7920 N 152nd Ave Bennington NE 68007. For details visit nnsociety.org

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

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

June 21: The America Nepal Society (ANS) invites all for Summer Picnic 2008 on Saturday June 21 from 12.00 noon to 6.00pm at Lake Accotink Park 7500 Accotink Park Road Springfield VA 22150. For details visit nepalhorizons.com

August 16: The Nebraska Nepalese Society (NNS) has scheduled to organize Summer Fair Picnic on Saturday August 16 from 10.00am at Lake Manawa State Park. For details visit nnsociety.org

September 01: The Nebraska Nepalese Society (NNS) has scheduled to organize Dar Khaane on Monday Sep 01 from 3.00 pm to 8.00 pm at the Hindu Temple. For details visit nnsociety.org

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

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

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

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Five Years After 'Mission Accomplished' in Iraq, War Continues

By Leta Hong Fincher Washington D.C VOAnews

Washington May 01: Thursday marks the fifth anniversary of the day U.S. President George Bush stood on an aircraft carrier and declared major combat operations in Iraq were over. Now, some political analysts say the United States is likely to maintain a military presence in Iraq that will last years into the next U.S. presidential administration. Leta Hong Fincher has more.

On 1 May 2003, President George Bush strode onto the deck of the aircraft carrier, USS Abraham Lincoln. Overhead was a banner saying "Mission Accomplished."

President Bush said, "Major combat operations in Iraq have ended. In the battle of Iraq, the United States and our allies have prevailed."

Five years later, some 140,000 U.S. troops remain in Iraq. More than 4,000 members of the U.S. military have died in the conflict. The number of Iraqi civilians killed in sectarian and other violence is sometimes estimated in the hundreds of thousands.

Anthony Cordesman is a military expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington. He says the United States was not prepared for a long-term counterinsurgency, and it will need to maintain a military presence in Iraq for years to come. "[The war] is winnable," says Cordesman. "It does require patience. I think no one can go to Iraq or Afghanistan without becoming aware that the country teams are talking about a U.S. intervention which will almost certainly last through the life of the next administration."

Cordesman says even after the United States withdraws most of its troops from Iraq, U.S. air support, artillery and ground forces will at times be needed to help the Iraqi military.

With the war dragging on and casualties still mounting, public opinion polls show that a majority of Americans now oppose the war and favor bringing U.S. troops home.

The war has become one of the top issues in the U.S. presidential campaign.

Republican Senator John McCain supports staying the course in Iraq. He told a recent congressional hearing that his goal is for Iraq to no longer need U.S. troops. "But I also believe that the promise of withdrawal of our forces regardless of the consequences would constitute a failure of political and moral leadership," he added.

Democratic Senator Barack Obama pledges to have all U.S. combat brigades out of Iraq within 16 months if elected president. "When John McCain says that the war in Iraq has been a success, when he talks about continuing a war with no exit strategy, a war that has not made us safer, when he talks about maybe keeping troops there for a hundred years, I think the American people understand we can't afford that," said Obama.

Democratic Senator Hillary Clinton says that as president, she would begin to withdraw U.S. troops within 60 days. "We have to restore American leadership and our moral authority, and we will do that by ending the war in Iraq and bringing

our troops home as responsibly and quickly as we can," said Clinton.

Political analysts say the growing anti-war sentiment favors the Democratic Party in the general election.

John Fortier is an expert on U.S. elections at the conservative American Enterprise Institute in Washington. "People are still - now in higher numbers than ever, in the 60 percent range - saying that the war was not a good idea in the first place, they worry that there is no good outcome to the war," said Fortier. "If you ask a generic question, 'who is better at handling the war, a Republican or a Democrat?' Democrats win that battle."

Nonetheless, Fortier says many voters believe McCain has better leadership skills than his Democratic rivals. He adds that U.S. public opinion on the war could easily shift, depending on the level of violence in Iraq.

Analysts say conditions on the ground in Iraq could also limit the decisions a future president makes.

U.S. Power and Leadership Evolve

By Jela De Franceschi Washington D.C

Washington D.C. April 24 (VOA) :There is a growing discussion in Washington about the need for a new vision of American leadership in world affairs. Most analysts agree that U.S. military engagement in Iraq has weakened America's influence as the world's sole superpower and that policy makers need to rethink U.S. foreign policy to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

There is broad agreement that the United States will remain a leading world power for the foreseeable future. It boasts the largest military in the world and spends more on defense than the 32 next most powerful nations combined. It has the largest economy in the world with the most sway in many international financial and other institutions. And many observers agree that the appeal of American society, culture and ideas reverberates throughout the world.

But most international public opinion polls show that much of the world has been unhappy with American leadership in international affairs in recent years. Even traditional U.S. allies have been questioning some foreign policy decisions the United States has taken since the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks against America, especially the war in Iraq.

A World Leader

"The United States is sometimes perceived as something of a bully," says Steven Kull is Director of the University of Maryland Program on International Policy Attitudes. "In the post-World War II period the United States took the lead in establishing a world order based on international law, international institutions and open markets. The United States has engendered a lot of respect for it. The United States has also promoted

democracy and human rights, and these ideas have spread as well. The perception is that the United States is departing from those principles. The desire is for the U.S. to get back to those principles," Kull says.

"After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the other important nations of the world were willing to tolerate a situation in which there would be one superpower," says Andrew Bacevich, who teaches history and international relations at Boston University.

"The Bush administration's tendency to render very sharp judgments, you know, that 'You're either with us or you're against us,' has caused nations of the world to question whether or not a global order in which the United States is the sole superpower is actually tolerable. And that is the most important thing that we have lost, I think, since the invasion of Iraq," says Bacevich.

The Limits of Power

Military historian Andrew Bacevich contends that the war in Iraq and other events have displayed the limits of American dominance. "And it's not simply [the] limits of military power. Our trade imbalance, the weakening of our currency, the ever-growing debt — the amount of money we are borrowing from other countries just to maintain our system — all of this suggest that our power is not as great as we once imagined," says Bacevich

Stephen Walt, Professor of International Affairs at Harvard University, agrees. He argues for more watchful use of American foreign policy assets.

"The United States does not want to become weaker. What it wants to do is use the power that it has with a certain degree of restraint; that is to say, get different threats in priority and don't try to deal with

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NAJA Holds Annual Meet On May 3



Photo: nepalhorizons.com

Image of the NAJA meeting on Saturday May 3 '08 in Harrisburg PA. Chief guest Yogesh Upadhaya (Center) is seen releasing 'Prayash', a NAJA publication on the occasion.

The annual meeting of Nepal America Journalist Association started today May 3, 2008 at Aagan Restaurant in Harrisburg PA.

May is also the World Press Freedom Day, as it serves as an occasion to inform the public of violations of the right to freedom of expression and as a reminder that many journalist brave death or jail to bring people their daily news.

The program was attended by over 50 journalists from US and

Canada. The program was chaired by Girish Pokharel, the President of NAJA, while Yogesh Upadhaya was the chief guest.

Other speakers on the program were Tarun Paudel, Achyut Wagle, Shiv Prakash, Shree Om Rodan, Shaswat Parajuli, Sahadev Paudel, Shekhar Dhungel, and Deepak Adhikari. There are around 160 journalist across US and Canada affiliated to various mass medium.

'Ambassador For Peace' Awarded

In coordination with Peace Ambassador Govinda G Prerana, the Universal Peace Federation- Capital Hill chapter had organized a interaction program on Sunday April 13 2008 at Fairfax Regional Library in Fairfax VA.

The Universal Peace Federation is a global alliance of individuals and organizations dedicated to building a world of peace, a world in which everyone can live in

freedom, harmony, cooperation and co-prosperity for all.

On the occasion, Peace Ambassador Prerana talked about the objective of this organization, and Gail Paine, UPF Secretary General of the Mid-Atlantic District presented five individuals with certificate for 'Ambassadors for Peace' – Sunu P KC, Hemanta Shrestha, Basu Shrestha, Sujeet Arjel and Rajaram Paudel.

Nepali lies dead on Kolkata road, cops bicker over jurisdiction

Kolkata, April 30: An elderly man lay dead for over four hours on a busy street in Kolkata's twin district Howrah today even as officials of two police stations argued over the jurisdiction and passers-by turned a blind eye. The body remained on the spot for over four hours in front of a police jeep, as no one was willing to take it to the nearest hospital.

"The person, identified as Kadam Kumar Pantha, 60, came from Nepal this morning. The man was travelling by a bus when he fell ill.

The other passengers helped him to get off from the vehicle near Ghoshpara area," a senior police official of Howrah district, Samarendra Das, said.

He said the man sat by the roadside and later died of some breathing trouble there. Police said Pantha was seriously ill when he got down from the bus. "His body could not be removed from the spot as there was confusion over the jurisdiction of two police stations - Shibpur and Bantra," a police official said.

He said the body was later taken to Howrah State General Hospital and the family members of the victim in Nepal were also informed about the incident. "The man used to work as a private security guard at Shibpur area in Howrah district, about 10 km from Kolkata, and stayed in a rented house there," the official said.

"I was passing by the road in the morning when I saw the man lying dead.

There was a police jeep parked in front of the body but the officials were indifferent about taking it to the hospital," said Rupan Nanda, an eyewitness. "It was pathetic... The body was left for more than four hours there," he said. (Courtesy: Himalayan Times)

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Notice

Dear Readers, we'd not be publishing on Saturday May 24 '08.

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Former Rebels ...

Contd. from page 2...

managed to get a lot of support from the Madhesi people.

"It's time for a change of leadership and we have a lot of hope in the Maoist leaders to change the lives of millions of poor Nepalese," said Sita Kurmi, a local female Madhesi voter who added that now

there was a chance for the Maoists to prove themselves.

But Kurmi also warned that Maoists should not take their current support for granted as high expectations have been placed on them to tackle the economic problems and hardship - including increasing food prices - which many Nepalese face. (*IRIN News Service*)

Govt Bans Export...

Contd. from page 7...

of price hike persists, the consumers might start stocking food," said Pabitra Bajracharya, president of the Retailers Association.

The price of cooking oil, which almost doubled in the last few months from Rs 90 to Rs 140, has been brought down after bargaining with the wholesalers, said Bajracharya.

Only middle and high-class people can afford to stock foodstuff. Those families relying on

daily wages and lower middle class families are going to be hit hard by the price hike as they cannot afford to stock food and spend more than 80 per cent of their income on daily consumption, says Jagannath Adhikary, a food economist.

Urban planner Dr Puskar Pradhan of the Central Department of Geography stressed on the need to develop agriculture infrastructure, as well as develop a modest land use policy, along with the conservation of prime agricultural land and river ecology for a smooth food supply.

Conference In CA...

Contd. from page 3...

Islam, Mormonism and Zoroastrianism, were invited who echoed the same sentiment and agreed that the conference provided an open and a safe environment to come together as a group and discuss the stereotypes and prejudices each of the traditions has suffered from time to time.

Deepak Shimkhada was born in Nepal and came to the U.S. in 1972 as a Fulbright fellow to pursue graduate studies. He attended several universities including the University of Chicago, University of Southern California and received his Ph.D. from Claremont Graduate University. He also has degrees in art and art history. His works are widely published in professional journals and edited volumes. His edited books include *Himalayas at the Crossroads: The Portrait of a*

Changing World; Buddhist Mantras in Sanskrit; and The Constant and Changing Faces of the Goddess: Goddess Traditions of Asia. He is currently working on another book *Nepal: Nostalgia and Modernity.*

As a long time resident of Claremont, he has taught at Scripps College, Claremont McKenna College and Claremont Graduate University. He is currently a visiting professor at California State University, Northridge. His activities do not stop there. He is active in the local community and is the founding president of Indic Foundation. He also serves on two national organizations—Asian Studies on the Pacific Coast and South Asian Studies Association—in the capacity of president and treasurer.

The conference ended with a dinner and a vote of thanks by the School's Dean, Dr. Karen Torjesen. Richard Livingston coordinated the conference.

Big, Old NC Not...

Contd. from page 2...

"The Prime Minister has assured us that there will be a justifiable representation of youth leaders under the PR system. We are hopeful," he added.

NC leader Dr Prakash Sharan Mahat begs to differ.

"There will be both young and old faces. Since the NC is one of the oldest parties, it has a lot of old faces," he said.

"Youths are ambitious and want rapid changes but the parties have the tendency to have the same old faces in party positions and the government," said Ajambar Rai

Kangnang, president of the Democratic National Youth League, youth wing of the UML.

"Parties may come under fire if they fail to ensure proportionate representation of youth leaders in politics," he added.

There are very few youths among the 100 names that figure in the PR list of the NC, said Parajuli.

Gagan Thapa, Mahendra Yadav, Radha Ghale, Saraswoti Tiwari, Usha Gurung, Laxmi Pariyar, Gopal Biswakarma and Jeevan Dangol are among youth leaders, who are on the PR list of the NC.

Nepal's New Constitution...

Contd. from page 1...

Mr. Bennett noted that while the activities of the media "are not without controversy," as the 10 April polls demonstrated, in general the media did its job of reporting in a balanced and responsible manner.

He also voiced concern about the incidents against journalists that were reported during the election process. According to the Federation of Nepalese Journalists (FNJ), these included 20 cases of physical attacks, a dozen cases of threats and

intimidation, and numerous other attempts to stifle freedom of expression.

In addition, a report released today by the Federation of Development Journalists (FODEJ) reveals that the number of incidents in which media workers were targeted jumped in the past year, from 294 to 474.

Mr. Bennett pledged the assistance of OHCHR to help ensure that the right to freedom of expression and information is respected by all in Nepal. (*UN News Service*)

Indiana Takes National...

Contd. from page 1...

home mom and waitress say she is concerned about jobs and the economy, like other voters here, "I think the undecided voters are taking their time, and they're looking at both candidates. And they're seeing both candidates come to this area, which hasn't happened in 40 years."

In an effort to win those undecided voters, both candidates have increased their visibility in the state in the days before the May 6th primary. Democrats expect Obama to do well in college towns like South Bend, which is home to the University of Notre Dame.

Until recently students in Professor Darren Davis' political science class have watched the excitement and drama of the Democratic Presidential Primary race from a distance.

The night of the Pennsylvania Presidential Primary, Davis says he was intently watching the election returns and

polling data, fully aware that Pennsylvania and Indiana voters share similar concerns.

"They are actually more similar in terms of unemployment rate, loss of jobs, state of the economy, outsourcing and the implications that has on the state economy," he said.

As as Davis continues to monitor the polling data, he says it's a close race in the state, "Right now, they are in a statistical dead heat, and I think that Hillary Clinton has a slight chance of actually carrying the state, because of the exit polling data and what we know about Ohio and Pennsylvania."

Obama holds a lead over Clinton in the popular vote from earlier primaries and other states' pledged delegates. Many Democrats say to remain competitive in the race for her party's nomination Clinton must win in Indiana.

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Govt Bans Export Of Food Items

Kathmandu, April 30 (HNS): The government today decided to ban export of food items in a bid to tackle the soaring food prices.

Prices of essential food items have gone drastically up within the past few months. The problem became acute in Nepal after India and Bangladesh cut down the export of rice to Nepal following an international rise in the prices of staple food.

As the government was preoccupied with CA election, it was least bothered about the rising prices of food items until now.

A meeting held at the Ministry of Supplies today decided to ban export of food items. "We are dependent on India for food items. India has stopped exporting to us now. On the other hand, we export wheat flour to Tibet, China and Basmati rice to Bangladesh," said Gyan Darshan Udhas, a senior official at the ministry of supplies. He said the decision to ban the

exports was taken to prevent food crisis in the country.

The price of Basmati rice has gone up by approximately Rs 400 per sack (20 kg) to Rs 1,400 as compared to last year's price. Similarly, price of mansuli rice has gone up by more than Rs 200 per sack (30 kg) to Rs 800.

Nepal Food Corporation has a practice of buffer-stocking food items, but the officials refused to divulge the details on the amount of food stocked by the corporation. Recently, SAARC made a decision to stock 4,000 metric tonnes of food items.

Though there is no ration scheme for lower income families in Nepal, the government provides transportation subsidies to thirty remote districts.

"Until now, there is no shortage of foodstuff in the market. If the government cannot maintain the stock and the present situation

...Contd. on pg 6

US Central Bank Cuts Key Interest Rate, Says Inflation Will Moderate

The U.S. central bank has cut its main interest rate one quarter of a percentage point to two percent, while hinting that this may be the last rate cut for a while.

In a statement accompanying the decision Wednesday, the Fed said tight credit and a slumping housing market will continue to affect growth. It said it is ready to act "as needed." The Fed also warned that uncertainty about inflation remains high, although it expects inflation to moderate as the costs of energy and other commodities level off.

This is the seventh time since last September that the central bank has lowered the federal funds rate - the rate that banks and other depository institutions charge when they lend money to each other, usually on an overnight basis.

Earlier, the U.S. Commerce Department said the economy grew

at a rate of 0.6 percent in the first quarter of 2008.

The department's report on gross domestic product, the total of all goods and services produced, said growth between January and March kept pace with the previous three months.

There have been concerns the U.S. economy is slipping into a recession, a period defined by two quarters of negative economic growth.

The chairman of the U.S. Senate Joint Economic Committee, Democrat Charles Schumer, argued that the data shows the economy has "stalled" and that 90 percent of Americans are experiencing a recession.

White House spokeswoman Dana Perino said President George Bush is not satisfied with the slow growth rate. She also said tax rebates that started going out to Americans this week will help spur the economy. (VOA 04/30)

US Eager To Work With...

Contd. from page 1...

tourism industry in Nepal. Even with the existing adverse travel alert, Nepal witnesses continued influx of US tourists, and if this (travel) alert is removed, the tourists' arrival is bound to increase immensely, argues Dr Chalise. He is confident that in near future he would be able to bring Nepalese diaspora and the American families- who have adopted Nepali children closer, so that both the parents and the kids are exposed to the Nepalese culture and practices, and get to know them, the Nepalese expatriates, and Nepal better.

Ambassador said, talks are also in progress to include Nepal in the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) as it would ensure more development aid to Nepal. MCA is

a US government program that gives development aid in the form of grants to poor countries that adopt economic and political reforms.

He's optimistic that the formation of Nepalese caucuses by the end of this year would also provide an added zest to Nepal-US relations. He expresses confidence in this regard as he sees very positive response from Congressmen whom he has been meeting.

During his interactions with government officials, international organization and expatriates, Ambassador says, he's been sharing the bright prospects of future Nepal, given the successful completion of election for CA, and the positively advancing peace process.

US Ambassador in Nepal...

Contd. from page 3...

occasions to see each other and meet."

Nepalese media report that the Maoists term the unprecedented meeting at Prachanda's residence Thursday as "very positive."

The Maoists ended a ten-year violent campaign against Nepal's government in 2006 and entered into a peace pact, which led to last month's national elections.

In a brief statement issued Friday, the U.S. Embassy in

Kathmandu said the ambassador sought assurances from the Maoist leader that the new government will respect current agreements with international aid organizations and "ensure the safety of those implementing them."

The ambassador left Nepal Friday for Washington where she is to brief the Bush administration on U.S.-Nepal relations in wake of the surprising election victory by the Maoists.

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Exchange Rates in Nepal

| Currency | Buying (Rs) | Selling (Rs) |
|---------------------|-------------|--------------|
| US \$ 1 | 64.75 | 65.35 |
| Canadian \$1 | 63.88 | 64.48 |
| Euro 1 | 100.98 | 101.92 |
| Pound Sterling 1 | 127.22 | 128.40 |
| Australian \$1 | 60.55 | 61.12 |
| Swiss Franc 1 | 62.60 | 63.18 |
| Singapore Dollar | 47.55 | 47.99 |
| Japanese Yen 10 | 6.24 | 6.30 |
| Chinese Yuan 1 | 9.26 | 9.34 |
| Indian Rupees 100 | 160.00 | 160.15 |
| Swedish Kroner 1 | 10.78 | --- |
| Danish Kroner 1 | 13.53 | --- |
| Hong Kong Dollar 1 | 8.31 | --- |
| Saudi Arab Riyal 1 | 17.26 | --- |
| Qatari Riyal 1 | 17.79 | --- |
| Thai Bhat 1 | 2.04 | --- |
| UAE Dirham 1 | 17.63 | --- |
| Malaysian Ringgit 1 | 20.49 | --- |

[Source: Nepal Rastra Bank, May 02 08]

In India, Infrastructure Falls Short as Economy Moves Forward

- By Anjana Pasricha, New Delhi VOA

New Delhi May 01 :India is building new roads, airports and power plants to cater to the needs of an economy that is growing at a rapid pace. But, as Anjana Pasricha reports from New Delhi, infrastructure continues to be woefully inadequate.

Later this month, a gleaming, new airport will open in India's famous information technology hub, Bangalore, meeting a long-standing demand of the I.T. industry.

However, access roads to the new airport — 36 kilometers north of the city center — have not been widened to ease chronic traffic snarls. As a result, people fear the commute to the airport could take up to three hours — longer than a short-haul flight.

Inadequate transport networks in bursting cities is just one of the problems confronting a country where all infrastructure is in short supply — whether it is reliable power, highways, ports or world-class airports.

Bidisha Ganguly, a consultant at the Confederation of Indian Industry, says these shortages have intensified amid the recent economic boom.

"India has been growing at a very fast rate," Ganguly said. "So,

as a result, all infrastructure is strained, so there are huge gaps and bottlenecks everywhere. We don't build infrastructure ahead of demand. We typically build it once the bottlenecks are there and fairly apparent."

The bottlenecks are becoming severe. Vehicles choke already crowded roads as car sales go up. Average loading and unloading time at busy sea ports is 85 hours — 10 times longer than at Singapore or Hong Kong. Airports and ports often run short of warehouse space. It takes manufacturers days to transport goods from one part of the country to the other — partly because trucks are barred from congested cities during the day for fear they might bring traffic to a standstill.

Lack of adequate power is perhaps the most severe problem. Most industries and offices rely on massive power generators because electricity is often shut off for hours at a stretch, even in prime business and industrial areas.

The head of the Indian Council of International Economic Relations, Rajiv Kumar, says lack of adequate infrastructure holds back growth and discourages investors — both domestic and foreign.

"The industry has to provide all the infrastructure needs, itself, rather than these be available to it as it is in all other countries routinely as a part of the delivery of public services," Kumar said. "That means that even for those who can afford to do this, the costs become very high. But for a large number of medium and small enterprises it just means that they simply have to forego investment opportunities. So, infrastructure deficit in my view is probably costing India up to two percent growth in GDP (gross domestic product)."

The government acknowledges the country is grappling with a huge infrastructure deficit. It estimates India needs to invest \$500 billion, in the next five years, to build roads, seaports, airports, high-speed expressways and power plants. The government is calling on the private sector to share the task.

Some of that investment is already in the pipeline. A project to link the country's four major cities with wide roads is to be completed this year. Modern airports are being built in several cities, under a new model under which private groups will build facilities, collect tolls and

eventually hand the project back to the government.

The government says the results of all these investments will be visible in five to 10 years. But many fear it may be longer, because many infrastructure projects often get delayed.

Ganguly says India needs to speed up the pace at which projects are implemented.

"The feeling is that much more should be done," Ganguly said. "While the government has a broad plan, there are problems in implementation, getting clearances. Bureaucratic delays are there and it is not a straightforward issue, where you can just go and build a port or a airport."

But many acknowledge that it is not always easy to fast track projects in a democracy where issues like land acquisition are sensitive and time consuming.

Critics often compare India to the other Asian giant, China, which has built world-class infrastructure in record time. But others point out that although the Chinese central government's nod is enough to get a project off the ground, the task is far more difficult in India, where consensus is needed before any project can go ahead.

U.S. Power and Leadership Evolve...

Contd. from page 4...

every single one of them simultaneously. It's recognizing that American power is very valuable, but it can't do everything. And you ought to use it for what it is good for and avoid squandering it on foolish crusades," says Walt.

New Partnerships

According to Walt and many other analysts, the United States is likely to restore some of the practices it followed during the Cold War when it fostered partnerships and alliances and exercised leadership with a certain caution. "I would argue that unipolarity actually calls for the United States to act with greater wisdom than was the case during the Cold War, where lots of other countries wanted to ally with us because they worried about the Soviet Union the same way we were," says Walt.

"I would think that the pendulum will shift from unilateralism back toward multilateralism," says military historian Andrew Bacevich. "I should emphasize that the pendulum shifting doesn't mean that we are going to necessarily have the same view of international law and international institutions that, let's say, some Europeans might," says Bacevich. "But we'll tend to see them as useful rather than as obstacles, which is the way the Bush administration has treated them."

Professor Bacevich says that the rise of India and China has shifted the epicenter of geopolitics from the Atlantic community to Asia. Aaron Friedberg, who teaches politics and international affairs at Princeton University, predicts the creation of new multilateral partnerships.

"One of the interesting things to watch is going to be whether there will be new alliances created, either in different regions or on a global level that try to draw together countries that share similar values. An example would be an institution of democracies in Asia, some kind of mechanism for consultation that would include Japan and South Korea and Australia and maybe India," says Friedberg. "There have been suggestions also about trying to create something at a global level that would draw together democracies from Europe and Asia."

Professor Friedberg says the United States will have the same global responsibilities it has assumed since the end of the Cold War. "Because of the fact that the United States is still the strongest country in the international system, it is almost inevitably going to be playing a leadership role in most areas of the world in some ways, whether we like it or not. And I think that's going to

continue." Like many other analysts, Professor Friedberg says the 21st century requires strong U.S. leadership that enhances global security, democratic governance and economic development.

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