

Nepal Abroad

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Nepal Abroad

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Progressing Buddhist Temple In Portland OR



The image above shows the construction of a Nepalese Buddhist temple in progress in Portland, Oregon. The construction began two months ago and is expected to be completed by this summer. The establishment of this temple in the Northwest will be a major step forward in the preservation, expansion and exploration of Nepalese sacred art and dance, meditation and ritual, while welcoming other spiritual traditions of art and practice to share the space. Contributions to support this project are thankfully accepted. For details visit dancemandal.com

Clinton Presses On, Despite Calls To Abandon Presidential Campaign

- By Jim Malone, Washington D.C.

Washington May 08 (VOA): Democratic Party presidential contender Hillary Clinton shows no signs of quitting the race, despite calls from some fellow Democrats that it is time to concede the nomination fight to rival Barack Obama. VOA National Correspondent Jim Malone has the latest on the presidential campaign from Washington.

Hillary Clinton campaigned in West Virginia in advance of next Tuesday's primary, and left little doubt it was full steam ahead, despite her disappointing showings this week in North Carolina and Indiana.

"I think we want to keep this going so that the people of West Virginia's voices are heard and their votes are counted! This is a little bit like deja vous all over again," Clinton said. "Some in Washington wanted us to end our campaign, and then I

won New Hampshire. Then we had huge victories on Super Tuesday, then we won Ohio and Texas and Pennsylvania, and I was never supposed to win Indiana. Well, I am running to be president of all 50 states, and I want to be sure that we count all 50 states."

On Tuesday, Senator Obama scored a 14-point victory over Clinton in North Carolina and narrowly lost to her in Indiana.

Those results have spurred some Democrats to urge Senator Clinton to abandon her White House bid and throw her support to Obama to help the party retake the presidency in November.

Obama spent part of Thursday meeting with uncommitted superdelegates in Washington and asking for their support. Superdelegates are Democratic

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Constituent Assembly Must Convene By May 28

Kathmandu, May 9 (THT): The country will see the first meeting of the historic constituent assembly within 21 days after the Election Commission submitted the final list of CA members elected under direct and proportional polls to the Prime Minister on Thursday.

"The countdown starts from on Thursday. The first meeting of the CA must be held within 21 days from now," said Bhimarjun Acharya, an expert on constitutional law.

He also said the 26 members to be nominated to the CA

by the cabinet should be nominated within this period through consensus among all parties. "Any delay in calling the first meeting of the CA will breach the constitution," he said.

He also said the members to be nominated to the CA must be apolitical. "They should be highly technical and have expertise in constitution-making process. Civil society members are acceptable if they are capable. It would be cheating if the parties tried to give space to defeated candidates or unpopular cadres," he added.

Janaki Shah Attends WFN Annual Conference In DC

Ms Janaki Shah, the Co-ordinator of Tewa – a non profit organization committed to empowerment and advancement of women through regular grant making to women groups throughout Nepal, participated in the Women's Funding Network Annual Conference in Washington DC area on May 1-3 '08 at Hyatt Regency Hotel, Crystal City, VA.

During the conference she shared with the audiences the objectives and achievements of



Tewa, the experience gained during the process and the experiences of

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Editorial:

Returning the favor

Undeniably the Nepal's revolution wouldn't have come this far, up to the formation of the Constituent Assembly to redesign the State and the redefining of power-who gets what, when and how at all levels, without the support of our neighbor country – India. It is assumed that the peace would rein the country now on, with the abolition of monarchy and the advancement of the rebel groups into the state's power. Although things seem to be moving in certain direction with its own speed, many are worried whether Nepal and the Nepalese people would be able to return this favor to her friend.

While also working on internal affairs, as has been abundantly discussed on several forums inside and abroad about the future structure and a model of development after the April movement, Nepal should reassert her desire for regional peace by sharing recent experiences in bringing the rebels into the political mainstream in the region. Immediate need is in the neighboring India where rebel comrades in states like Jharkhand, Chattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, and more, make violent front-page news, killing security personnel and other casualties, to mention one among several dissenting groups. While our good neighbor supported the April movement, and even today, the establishment plus the (Indian) political leaders have been stating in Nepal and in India that the people's choice would be respected in deciding the future of their land, hence the election for Constituent Assembly. With such statements and commitments, they have once again given us the lesson of democracy, peace and showed the path towards prosperity.

While learning from our own past, initiative should be taken towards bringing solution and facilitating peace in the region. Several non state actors, such as the expatriate groups abroad, the human rights group, experts on conflict management, the group of minorities and others can take a lead in this direction, starting a discussion and

seminars on regional issues. Human rights issues have always been an effective way of expressing global solidarity and becoming a part of the global family. Although there are several issues that can be brought into fore for discussion, many argue that such dialogue should start with Dr. Binayak Sen – the winner of the 2008 Jonathan Mann Award for Global Health and Human Rights, scheduled to be awarded on May 29 by the Global Health Council, USA. A pediatrician by profession, Dr. Sen is known for providing health care to the poorest people and defending the human rights of indigenous tribal and other people in the State of Chattisgarh, India. Dr. Sen appears to be a victim of the Chattisgarh government's attempt to silence those who criticize its policies and failure to protect human rights in its fight against Naxalites, argues Brad Adams, Asia director at Human Rights Watch.

Given the transition situation in Nepal, it may not be possible to broach the topic immediately by the institutions mentioned above, however, an informal discussion about Dr. Sen in a friendly get-together would help champion the cause of human rights. Human rights group in Nepal can take more affirmative action, like staging a banner, placard demanding fair trail of Dr. Sen. Even individual(s) can take a lead in broaching the topic at an informal assembly anywhere, and be a champion of peace at their own level. Its time for all patriots in Nepal and abroad to return the favor, and it can be done in many different ways.

Letter to the editor can be emailed to print@nepalabroad.com with your name, and contact no to verify the sender.

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Poverty-stricken Western Areas Most Vulnerable To Food-price Hikes

Kathmandu, May 6 (IRIN): Worldwide food price hikes are particularly hitting remote villages in western Nepal, the most food-deficit and impoverished part of the country, according to food security experts.

"We can't grow enough food. We have no source of employment. The rising food prices are making our life very difficult," said Kanchi Biswakarma, a villager from the remote hill district of Jumla, some 700km northwest of the capital, Kathmandu.

Biswakarma said her six-member family could afford only one meal a day. "If we eat in the morning, we have to skip a meal at night," she said.

"My whole family has to work as daily wage labourers to find enough money to buy food," said Maneta Chettri, a villager from the remote Dolpa District. Her children had to drop out of school to help her feed the family.

"The potential food crisis is growing and the number of people vulnerable to food insecurity has doubled in the last six months," WFP Nepal country director Richard Ragan told IRIN.

One of South Asia's poorest nations, Nepal has over eight million people (out of a population of about 28 million) living below the poverty line of US\$1 per day. Roughly half of these 8 million are regarded as the extreme poor, who survive on less than 50 US cents a day, according to WFP.

Food insecurity is nothing new to Nepal due to its low agricultural productivity caused by droughts, natural disasters and poor farming practices and technologies, say agriculture specialists.

Less food from India

Nepal has been largely dependent on low-cost rice and vegetables from India. The ban on exports since October 2007 of non-Basmati (cheap) rice from India had caused a huge problem, said Ragan.

According to local traders, India's supplies roughly meet 25 percent of Nepal's food requirements.

The Ministry of Agriculture estimated that the production of summer paddy would be 17 percent higher this year, but it is likely that rice prices will still increase by over 20 percent because of the lack of food imports from India, according to WFP.

The government's Central Bank of Nepal estimated that the price of rice had increased by over 30 percent in the last three months. However, owing to lower incomes, people in remote hilly areas were most exposed to the price hikes.

"I used to pay only Rs 80 [US\$ 1.27] for cooking oil and now it costs more than Rs 120 [\$1.90]. The cost of rice has increased from Rs 5,000 [\$80] to Rs 8,000 [\$127] for a 100kg sack. Just imagine our hardship," said Sunita Chettri from Dolpa.

Tens of thousands of Nepalese migrate to India for seasonal work. This workforce usually returns home every six months with enough money to buy food and build up food stocks, but increasingly they are unable to do this, according to WFP.

Both China and India have rapidly expanding economies and rising food prices and this is affecting Nepal, especially the poorest there.

WFP officials said there was a need to set up programmes to build up farmers' capacity, increase

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Nepali Calendar

Sun May 11 / Baishak 29 '65
Saptami
Mon May 12 / Baishak 30 '65
Astami
Tue May 13 / Baishak 31 '65
Nawami
Wed May 14 / Jestha 01 '65
Dashami
Thu May 15 / Jestha 02 '65
Ekadashin
Fri May 16 / Jestha 03 '65
Duwadashin
Sat May 17 / Jestha 04 '65
Trayodashin

Interaction Program in DC

The Tamang Society of Greater Washington DC (TSGW) and America Nepal Society (ANS) jointly organized an interaction program on Sunday May 4 '08 at Tysons-Pimmit Regional Library in Falls Church VA with Deepak Tamang as a speaker.

Tamang talked about several developmental opportunities in Nepal during the discussion.

Tamang is the executive director of Search Nepal and a senior international research fellow at the World Forest and Environmental



Sciences at Oregon State University, Corvallis.

The program was participated by people from the DC metro area.

Rawal And Shrestha Stands Third in MoshPit



Rawal and Shrestha are seen on their final presentation at the Loyola College in Baltimore MD.

Bharat Rawal and Nina Shrestha were a part of the four member team, represented as Sky Projection Inc., from the University of Baltimore, which succeeded in securing third position in the MoshPit Final Competition that was held on Thursday April 24 at Loyola College, Timonium MD.

MoshPit, the world's coolest business plan competition, was created by the Greater Baltimore Technology Council (GBTC) that provides an opportunity for undergraduate students from Maryland colleges and universities to experience every aspect of starting a business. Student participants learn how to form a qualified team, write a competitive and realistic 2-5 page business plan, and present their ideas in a concise and clear format.

Rawal and Shrestha and two other member of the team came up with Sky Projection Inc., an outdoor advertising and promotion marketing medium using technology developed by the company to project high resolution color product images and messages in the open sky. These images, which will be clearly visible over even the largest metropolitan areas, will be seen by tens of thousands of consumers during football games, street fairs, state fairs, new store openings and at beaches.

The first and second team was from the Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore MD.

Bharat Rawal will complete his MBA from the University of Baltimore this summer, while Nina Shrestha goes to Baltimore Community College, Baltimore MD.

Calendar of Events

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 Chamber 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 Khasskhass.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

July 12-13: The Computer Association of Nepal-USA (CAN-USA) has announced their first 'US-Nepal Technology Development Conference' on the weekend of July 12-13, '08 at the Alumni House, University of California, Berkeley. For more information on the conference visit can-usa.org

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 from Aug 29 Sep 01 '08 at Doubletree Hotel & Executive Meeting Center Omaha - Downtown 1616 Dodge Street Omaha NE 68102. For more information, visit 2008.jointconvention.org

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

For latest News / Views / Information, images, community activities & more... from Nepal & Abroad

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Is Iraq Ready To Go It Alone?

- By Aida F. Akl Washington D.C. May 02 2008 VOA

After ordering a military crackdown on Shi'ite militiamen in the southern city of Basra last month, Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki has vowed to disarm all militias, by force if necessary. But the resistance encountered by the military offensive in Basra and Baghdad's Sadr City has raised questions about Iraq's security forces and their ability to bring order to the country.

Many analysts see Basra and Sadr City as proving grounds for the Iraqi Security Forces, five years after the fall of Saddam Hussein from power. But recent fighting there between U.S.-backed Iraqi government forces and Shi'ite militias has left many observers wondering whether these forces can handle internal security without coalition help.

Some analysts argue that the military operation has exposed divided loyalties, lack of discipline and a shortage of experienced officers in Iraq's security ranks. Others say these forces would not have been able to carry out such operations, even with coalition support, two or three years ago.

Building security forces from scratch in five years against an unstable political and security backdrop is an unreasonable expectation, argues the RAND Corporation's Terrence Kelly, a post-conflict stability and reconstruction expert.

"If there is real political accommodation, an agreement, even if it is not full reconciliation, then I think that they [i.e., the Iraqi forces] are probably close to being ready right now," says Kelly. "If there is going to be resurgence in violence, then it will probably take some time. To think that you can just create military units from scratch and throw them into what's got to be one of the most grueling and difficult situations for any armed forces and expect them to perform immediately up to what we would like to see I think is being naive."

Slow Progress

Most experts agree that the progress of the Iraqi forces has been gradual, although painfully slow. Senior foreign policy analyst Michael O'Hanlon of the Brookings Institution says the reason is that

previous efforts to build viable forces have not succeeded.

"It's true at one level that we [i.e., U.S. military forces] have been there five years. It's also true we haven't been doing it right until the last fifteen months," says O'Hanlon. "A second point would be to say, 'Which tasks are they [i.e., Iraqi troops] up to now and which ones aren't they up to?' We see an increasing number of Iraqis who are fairly well-trained and fairly well-equipped. But we haven't yet seen the senior commanders have responsibility for these new formations for very long. We haven't seen them carry out very many operations. They don't have much capacity in the Ministry of Defense to back them up, their logistics aren't very good. So we have a number of areas of progress and a number of areas where we need to go much further."

Many analysts say widespread corruption and bureaucracy have hampered Baghdad's ability to provide its troops with necessary equipment. Others say the Iraqi government's efforts to curb corruption have constrained military spending. U.S. Army Colonel Guy Cosentino of the United States Institute of Peace says these problems are partially due to the security situation in the country. Cosentino was Chief of Plans and Strategy with the Multi-National Security and Transition Command in Iraq in 2006 and 2007.

"We're in the middle of a war, so it isn't like you were building these forces in a vacuum. You were building them and sending them immediately to combat. So they [i.e., the Iraqis and the Americans] focused on building the [Iraqi] infantrymen first, the fighters," says Cosentino. "So areas like logistics, intelligence, transportation — all the things that it takes to actually sustain a force — have lagged behind the growth of the force. Also, they realized probably two years ago that the Iraqi forces that we were building were too small."

Challenges Ahead

Baghdad is planning to incorporate into its security forces thousands of provincial Sunni units that were recruited to combat al-Qaida in Iraq. The resulting national

force, some analysts say, will reflect the country's diversity and address what military analyst John Pike, Director of GlobalSecurity.org, calls the problem of divided loyalties.

"People's first loyalty tends to be first to their family; their second loyalty to their tribe; their third loyalty to whatever religious leader they are following; their fourth loyalty to their religious sects generally and, finally, possibly loyalty to Iraq as a unified country," says Pike. "So it's very easy to get yourself into a combat situation where your loyalty to a religious leader is going to be stronger than your loyalty to the national commander of your unit."

A new generation of Iraqi leaders loyal to the concept of a national government is emerging, says Guy Cosentino at the United States Institute of Peace. But he cautions that even as Iraqi forces continue to mature, they are still not ready to assume control of the country's internal security.

"If you're talking about where the Army of Iraq will do most of the fighting, I think we are very close to a transition point. If you're talking about where the Iraqi Army is going to be able to fully sustain all the systems of its forces, I think it's

going to be some years. But we are not talking about 140-thousand coalition forces that are needed to do that," says Cosentino. "We are talking about training, logistics, intelligence, maybe air support — the things that you can't build in a couple of years that take literally a generation to build. So I think that we are rapidly approaching a major transition point, sometime in the next year or so."

Most analysts say Iraqi forces need three-to-five years to function independently of U.S.-led coalition forces. But Michael O'Hanlon of the Brookings Institution warns against pushing the Iraqis too far, too soon. "There are hopeful signs. There are obvious limitations to how far they've come," says O'Hanlon. "And the combination of that means that if we stay on a gradual, patient trajectory toward a gradually diminishing American role, we have a good chance to wind up in a fairly solid place here in the end. But if we ask too much of these forces too quickly, I am afraid they may fracture."

While Iraq's security forces have come a long way, most analysts agree that they still have a long way to go.

Global Food Crisis Has Many Causes, Experts Say

- By Aida F. Akl Washington D.C. May 02 2008 VOA

A variety of factors have come together to drive world food prices dramatically higher. The high cost of food is pushing many of the world's poorest people deeper into poverty. As we hear from VOA science reporter Art Chimes, experts say the causes include the high cost of oil and a growing middle class in some big countries.

If you've been shopping for food lately, I don't have to tell you that prices are going through the roof. In some cases world prices have more than tripled in recent months, "going from, in December, a price of \$300 a ton to just this week over \$1,000 a ton."

Robert Zeigler of the International Rice Research Institute is talking about rice, a basic staple food across Asia, of course. Prices surged dramatically after China, Vietnam, and

India curbed exports to ensure they had enough supplies for their own people.

Other food products have also seen alarming increases.

The U.N.'s Food and Agriculture Organization, the FAO, says wheat prices have doubled in Senegal. Bread prices doubled in Tajikistan. The cost of maize in Uganda rose 65 percent in just six months.

One reason: farmers are passing on their higher costs, particularly the rising cost of energy.

"Fertilizers become more and more unaffordable for the small farmers, who are at the center of a response to the world food crisis," notes Joachim von Braun, who heads the International Food Policy Research Institute in Washington. "And transport costs have become higher and

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Clinton Presses On Despite Calls To...

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officeholders and party activists free to support either candidate at the party convention.

Among the latest prominent Democrats to declare for Obama is former Michigan Congressman David Bonior. He had managed John Edwards' presidential campaign this year and spoke about his decision to support Obama on MSNBC television.

"This is a watershed year, and he has the ability to deliver a message that unifies the country, he has the ability to deliver a message that supports working people in a way that we have not seen in a long, long time," Bonior said.

Bonior's decision came a day after former senator and 1972 Democratic presidential candidate George McGovern announced he was switching his support from Clinton to Obama.

West Virginia is one of six Democratic contests to be held

between now and June 3 when the primary season will end.

Clinton campaign chairman, Terry McAuliffe, told NBC television that Senator Clinton will not fight Obama for the nomination all the way to the Democratic national convention in late August.

"I think the superdelegates are going to move very quickly within a week or two after June 3, and I think it will be all over," McAuliffe said. "I do not see it going to the convention. We will have a nominee in June. But with seven million people yet to vote, let us let them vote."

Most of the nearly 800 superdelegates have committed to either Obama or Clinton, and the remaining uncommitted superdelegates will provide the winning margin to one of the contenders to secure enough delegates to win the party nomination.

Some Democrats worry that the lengthy and bitter nomination contest will hurt the party's chances against the presumed Republican candidate, Senator John McCain, in November.

But Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi says the longer than expected campaign has helped the party by registering hundreds of thousands of new Democratic voters. "Me, I like combat," Pelosi said. "You know, I think the best training for campaigning is campaigning, so I think that as they have campaigned, the support in our country has grown for our Democratic message. Look at, more than a million Democrats voted in Indiana. That was great, and a big, strong vote in North Carolina of Democrats turning out. So this is all very healthy."

Pelosi is a superdelegate to the national convention, but has not expressed a preference in the presidential race.

Improvements in E-Verify Program

Bhumika Ghimire, USA

United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced on May 5th that the E-Verify program which helps employers check the immigration and employment eligibility status of job applicants has been improved to lower mismatch rate and increase effectiveness.

In a press release Acting USCIS Director Jonathan Scharfen said that "Less than one percent of all work-authorized employees receive a tentative non-confirmation through E-Verify," and the improvement will help make sure that everyone who is authorized to work in the US does not have to face any delay in getting approved.

Naturalization data is now included in the E-Verify system which instantly checks the citizenship status of the applicant. This feature was added because a large number of naturalized citizens have not updated their record with the Social Security Administration which leads the E-Verify system to show that they are not authorized to work.

According to the USCIS about 64,000 employers across the

United States now use the E-Verify system and around 1,000 new employers sign up to use the system weekly. The system was launched as a web based application in 2004.

The Secure America with Verification and Enforcement (SAVE) Act 2007 introduced by Rep. Tom Tancredo (R-Colorado) and Rep. Heath Shuler (D-North Carolina) in the Congress which seeks to enforce border security and introducing an employer verification program seeks to make the use of E-Verify mandatory for all employers. The bill has been introduced to the Congress, read twice and referred to the Judiciary Committee. It seems to have stalled for now; the last time any action was taken regarding the bill was November of last year.

Various groups supporting tougher anti-illegal immigration standards in the country have welcomed E-Verify system. NumbersUSA, based in Arlington, Virginia, which supports immigration reform, says that E-Verify system will help the US reign in illegal immigration problem.

But not everyone is welcoming the system.

Although the USCIS data shows an impressive rise in number of employers signing up to use E-Verify, complaints about the system is also emerging. Washington Technology reported in 2007 that an evaluation conducted by the USCIS showed that the database E-Verify relies on is faulty and does not meet standards set by Congress.

In April of this year, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) said that the tax payers will have to pay heavy amount for the verification system. In a press release it cites the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) which estimated the cost of E-Verify to be more than \$40 billion over 10 years.

Tim Sparapani, senior legislative counsel for the ACLU said that "E-Verify is bad policy for both employers and employees, and now we discover it would also be bad for taxpayers and senior citizens, costing more than \$40 billion in lost tax and Social Security revenue."

Janaki Shah Attends...

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other women's from around the world working for the empowerment of women. The program was attended by over 200 women's organization globally and had over 300 participants.

The Women's Funding Network is a world-wide membership of over 100 women's and girls' funds that support the solutions of women and girls through local, national and international grants.

Notice

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

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NJSA-NY Celebrates New Year, Raise Funds For Social Welfare



Nepali Janasamparka Samiti America (NJSA), New York Chapter organized a popular Bivid **Nepali Lok Sanskritik Karyakram** (a multi-cultural Nepalese Folk Program) on Saturday April 26, 2008 at Dhaka Club, Woodside NY to celebrate the New Year 2065 BS and also to raise funds for social welfare.

The program started with lighting the candle by the Chief Guest Madhuraman Acharya, Nepal's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, to the portrait of BP Koirala, followed

by national song sung by NY chapter's Executive members.

The program was moderated by NY Chapter's Vice President Ram Chandra Regmi. NY Chapter's Treasurer Ms. Maya Bhatta made a welcome speech and program coordinator Durgesh Karki highlighted the program. Central member and organization's Department Chief Bansha Lal Tamang spoke about the importance of Nepali Janasamparka Samiti America. Eight different Nepalese ethnic presentations were performed.

The artists performing the program were Prem Raja Mahat, Rajaram Poudel, Sunil Uprety, Rabi Lamichhane, Khem Sangroula, Anupama Prasai, Ram Raja Chhetri, Subarna Chhetri, Dharam Bir Lama, Bimal Budhathoki, Sapana Shree, Sishir Shrestha, Nuchhe Dangol, Goma Yonzon, Raj Kapoor, Sanjok Lama and a guest artist Amalia Rubin. The Cultural program's moderator was Ram Raja Chhetri.

The program, presided by NY Chapter's President Somnath Ghimire, had more than 600 participants from around the NY metro area. Another

special guest was Ms Sita Gurung, Central Secretary of Nepal's Women's Association and a nominated member of Nepali Congress to the Constituent Assembly.

This was the first cultural program organized in the United States under the flag of Nepali Congress. The program's main theme was to bring unity in the community.

The Nepali Janasamparka Samiti, NY Chapter has its own office in Sunnyside NY and welcomes all Nepalese people residing in the US, also with the aim to assist any community members in need.

New Type of Businesses...

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important role in economic development.

Some social investment projects have had their growing pains. The online site "Kiva" channels millions of dollars in loans to small enterprises in the developing world, showcasing entrepreneurs and allowing visitors to the website to choose businesses to invest in. However, the effort, which was founded in San Francisco in 2005, had more investors for a time than projects in need of funding.

The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation makes both charitable grants and community investments, and Foundation official Debra Schwartz says social business needs the right kind of management.

"It requires a special kind of institution that has creativity and resilience and

systems in operation, so it has to have those business disciplines that make it a viable enterprise or business," she said.

In Bangladesh, Muhammad Yunus and Grameen enterprises have branched out into fisheries, irrigation, textiles, education and other fields. Yunus sees new areas opening up, and says he is exploring the possibility of social businesses in medical care and health insurance.

Classifieds

House For Sale in VA

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America Losing Its...

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economy is also been influenced by European economy. When Europeans agreed to use Euro. to replace US dollars. Evidently dollar does not have that charm in Europe as it was before. In the international arrival centers alternatives to dollars have already been in practice. In the European market they openly encourage to use Euro instead of dollars. They say Euro was introduced primarily to discourage dollar. Clearly when European countries organized as EC it has an impact on USA.

A third world country like Nepal can learn something from US political and economic policy: encouraging foreign investment can have a negative impact even on a giant nation like USA, a country like Nepal can hardly withstand this kind of blow. Economy is the back bone of a nation, until it is strong enough it cannot stand on its foot. Therefore it is necessary to determine what percentage of foreign investment is good enough for a

country. In fact economists suggest that large numbers of investors in China are US citizen of Chinese origin and their products are exported to USA with made in China label. In a way dollars are invested in China and eventually returns to China. This simply means dollars are piling up in China. As a result, in the history of Chinese economy, they have been able to collect the largest amount of US \$. American mentality of encouraging foreign investment without proper justification can give birth to another 'East India company'. Everybody knows India's colonization under East India Company for years.

Finally, besides national economy leaders can learn a lesson from President Bush: do not put your whole nation on stake just for a personal malice with a single individual's ego. I have stated in the beginning how President Bush is draining leftover dollars on Iraq and Afghan war.

US Home Sales Continue to Decline as Housing Sector Remains Weak

- By Barry Wood Washington D.C. May 09 2008 VOA

Home sales remain weak in the United States, a development some economists say will prolong the slowdown in economic growth that began last October. VOA's Barry Wood has more.

Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson said Thursday that the economy remains weak but that it should pick up in the second half of the year. He said consumers are being hit hard by higher costs for gasoline, food and health care.

The growth slowdown or possible recession is aggravated by the prolonged slump in housing. The National Association of Realtors reports that sales of existing homes fell again in March and are down 20 percent over the past year.

Zillow, a Seattle-based company that tracks home prices, says 50 percent of home-owners who bought at the top in the market in 2006 now have mortgages bigger than the current market value of their home, meaning they have negative equity. The median price of an existing home in the United States fell 10 percent in 2007.

Economist Mark Zandi says the nearly nine million homeowners with negative equity are particularly vulnerable in this weak economy. "These folks are in big negative equity positions. If there is any disruption to their income at all, they have a major problem. And disruption to income doesn't mean what it used to. Disruption to income ten years ago meant death, divorce or major disability. Disruption of income now means, well, I have to replace two tires (on my car), or my water heater broke," he said.

Alan Meltzer, a professor at Carnegie Mellon University, says it is hard to predict how homeowners with negative equity in their principal asset-

their home-will adjust their spending. "The people who see the value of their houses go down, do they assume that they are going to stay down? Or, do they assume that they never should have risen as much? And therefore they are not going to allow their long-term (spending) behavior to be affected?," he said.

Desmond Lachman, an economist at Washington's American Enterprise Institute, believes home prices will fall by another 10 to 15 percent this year. Mainly because of the housing slump, Lachman believes the US economy will register negative growth this year.

"Cumulatively, we're going to see gross domestic product-I think the International Monetary Fund forecast is pretty accurate-in that we'll see G.D.P. (Gross Domestic Product) decline by something like three quarters of a point (percent, this year)," he said.

The Bush administration predicts modest growth of about one percent for 2008. The ongoing housing slump is the most serious to confront the US economy in past 30 years.

Poverty-stricken Western...

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investment in agricultural development and most importantly subsidise programmes for poor communities. In the interim, there was a need to supply food for eight million Nepalese immediately.

Political parties are in the process of forming a new government and there is uncertainty as to how and when food security issues will be tackled, said aid workers. "The timing of the potential food crisis has emerged in the middle of forming the new government, so there will be challenges," said the WFP's Ragan.

Wheat Production Decreases

Tikapur, May 8 (HNS): Production of wheat grain has decreased in Kailali district in the current fiscal year.

Due to lack of irrigation facility has pulled the production down, stakeholders of agriculture sector said. "Production of wheat crop decreased since there was no sufficient rainfall this year and irrigation was also not regular during the winter season," Tulsiram Subedi, chief at office of Agriculture Service Centre, Tikapur, said.

Around six quintals wheat grain production has decreased in comparison to last year in each hector of land this year, he said.

The produce of wheat was 24 quintals per hector last year, while 18 quintals of wheat grain is produced

per hector this year, the ASC said, adding that production in Joshipur, Bhajani, Narayanpur and Munuwa has also decreased. Of 90,550 hectares of arable land, 38,976 hectares has irrigation facility in the district, the Kailali District Agriculture Development Office informed.

Some part of land was irrigated with the help of tube-well, while other parts in Durgoli, Manuwa, Narayanpur, Dhanasinghpur and Patharaiya were irrigated from Jamara, Rani and Kulariya canals that channelise the water from Karnali river.

Farmers complained that the supply of water in these canals could not be regular during the winter season. (Courtesy: HNS)

Global Food Crisis Has...

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higher, so the cost side of agriculture will keep food prices high, even if we make major efforts to increase production."

Other reasons for the run-up in prices include natural causes like drought and pest outbreaks and speculation in the commodities market.

And as world oil prices hover around \$120 a barrel, more food crops are ending up in fuel tanks. In the United States, about one-quarter of the corn crop is now being used to make ethanol, which is blended with gasoline to make a motor fuel. Soybean farmers are switching to corn, which drives up soy prices, and so on.

Rising living standards also play a role. Particularly in India and China, where hundreds of millions of people are getting their first foothold on the middle class, more people are buying more food higher up the food chain, says Carlos Seré of the International Livestock Research Institute in Nairobi.

"We know that consumers, when they move, let's say, from \$2 to \$10 a day per capita, they largely expand the consumption of vegetables, oils, and animal products. This is happening in big countries around the world. This has a big impact."

But in many cases the poorest of the poor are paying the price for the good fortune of the emerging middle class.

Analysts like Robert Zeigler of the Rice Research Institute are starting to assess the damage. "Now what are the consequences of this? Well, there are some

estimates that say that if present trends continue for very long, we can expect 100 million people to be pushed back into poverty."

And Joachim von Braun of the Food Policy Research Institute says that higher food prices today can cause long-term damage as people change their eating habits.

"The high food prices lead poor people to limit their food consumption and shift to even less balanced diets with harmful effects on health in the short and long run. The child [who] is not appropriately nourished under the age of three for a couple of months will be harmed for the rest of its life."

The three experts spoke in a telephone briefing organized by the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, whose member research centers have some 8,000 scientists working on food issues.

Exchange Rates in Nepal

| Currency | Buying (Rs) | Selling (Rs) |
|---------------------|-------------|--------------|
| US \$ 1 | 66.55 | 67.15 |
| Canadian \$1 | 65.78 | 66.37 |
| Euro 1 | 102.11 | 103.03 |
| Pound Sterling 1 | 130.00 | 131.17 |
| Australian \$1 | 62.52 | 63.09 |
| Swiss Franc 1 | 62.94 | 63.51 |
| Singapore Dollar | 48.32 | 48.76 |
| Japanese Yen 10 | 6.39 | 6.45 |
| Chinese Yuan 1 | 9.51 | 9.59 |
| Indian Rupees 100 | 160.00 | 160.15 |
| Swedish Kroner 1 | 10.96 | --- |
| Danish Kroner 1 | 13.68 | --- |
| Hong Kong Dollar 1 | 8.54 | --- |
| Saudi Arab Riyal 1 | 17.74 | --- |
| Qatari Riyal 1 | 18.28 | --- |
| Thai Bhat 1 | 2.08 | --- |
| UAE Dirham 1 | 18.12 | --- |
| Malaysian Ringgit 1 | 20.67 | --- |

[Source: Nepal Rastra Bank, May 09 08]

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America Losing Its Glory ?

No matter what, is it an individual or a nation it has to come down from the apex after a certain period of time. Whatever is created in this world, its end is inevitable.

Whatever you achieve one day, you will lose that again someday. The main essence/question is how long you can maintain being on the top. Something may last for thousands of years and other just for a few days. Birth and death both are natural phenomena, in another words, the period between birth and death is one's life.

That is law of nature – as far as this physical world is concerned.

Subject in hand is about economy recession of America. Today in America prices of home have been plunged down surprisingly, whereas home rents have skyrocketed. This columnist is not an economist nor has acquired any degree. But has learned a lot, about the American lifestyle, being a residence of Northern California for the last two decades.

Due to economic downfall and price hike it is clear that once

what used to be an epicenter of attractions losing its charming now. Due to lack of vision self pride and ego of President Mr. George W. Bush, the only superpower of the world is, economically, heading downwards and failure (?) In order to win his war not only he spent billions of dollars in Iraq war to oust Saddam Hussein but it also had a negative impact (left a deep scar) in American goodwill, and images around the world. This columnist wishes to show some scene of life in California.

California is facing a huge impact of slowed down economy. You won't find a buyer for a 1 million dollar home even if you offer for 500,000 dollars. Eventually banks are forced to foreclose. Buyers are having difficulty even to bid foreclosed houses. This past July government has decided to give tax relief in order to increase its royalty. Government is trying to implement this policy in order to collect more taxes to compensate its ailing treasury. Gas prices have been hiking up unexpectedly. Just recently gas price per barrel has gone up by four

dollars. As promised, government does not have sufficient funds for donation. It's been learned that school teachers and municipality employees have not even getting their salaries.

Largely America's success relies on the investment of rich foreign individuals and institutions. For instances, BP petroleum is actually a British company. Lately foreign investors are reluctant to invest in the US. Decrease in investment is directly proportional to production. In basic law of economy scarcity increases value/cost. And this is a simple fact behind ever soaring prices of consumer products in America. Strangely in economics value of a product is determined when demand and supply are in balance not because of investors' investment. To determine value of product at an equilibrium point of demand and supply is a democracy in economy.

Even universal law of economics does not seem to work in America these days. Specially, in housing business you do not find a potential buyer even when you lower your price. House rental is



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soaring up whereas house prices are plummeting. Almost every other consumer product is made in China. It clearly means a large amount of dollars are going to China. It is essential that US needs to sell its product to China in order to get those dollars back. So it needs to make something that China would buy. US makes arms, but China does not want that. Eventually US is compelled to lower its currency value in order to bring those dollars back from China and other countries. Only two years back, 1 US\$ was equivalent to NRs 73 where as it is around NRs 63 only US

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New Type Of Businesses Pursue Social Goals and Profit

- By Mike O'Sullivan Los Angeles VOA

A new type of business is focused on making a difference in society as well as making a profit. Mike O'Sullivan reports, so-called social businesses are linking investors in the industrial world and entrepreneurs in developing countries.

Social businesses are taking aim at problems that range from environmental pollution to health care. Better World Books of South Bend, Indiana, targets illiteracy. The company, founded in 2002, collects used books from college libraries and bookstores. It resells them and gives part of its revenue to such programs as Books for Africa.

Other efforts link cash-starved entrepreneurs in the developing world to investors in the rich world. The Calvert Social Investment Foundation has partnered with the Internet site eBay to create the company MicroPlace. It sells securities to investors in wealthy countries and, working through

micro-lenders in the developing world, makes loans to small businesses in such places as Tanzania, Kenya, Bolivia, Cambodia and Tajikistan.

Foundation director Shari Berenbach says MicroPlace is opening up the field of social investing.

"We're making it possible for people to invest in, really, units as small as \$100, where those funds are then being used to finance micro-finance all across the globe. So it's all about opening up and democratizing and making it possible for all kinds of individuals to invest in social business," she said.

Berenbach spoke on a panel at the Milken Institute Global Conference, an annual business forum, together with a man who pioneered the micro-credit concept, Bangladesh banker Muhammad Yunus. Yunus and his Grameen Bank shared the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize

for efforts in economic and social development. The bank began by making tiny loans, for example, helping women in rural villages to buy a mobile phone and set up a small-scale telecom company.

Grameen has since launched a number of joint ventures with major corporations. One project with Intel is creating information technology for the poor. Yunus has also partnered with food processor Danone, known as Dannon in the United States, to produce a yogurt.

"But this is a social purpose-yogurt because there are millions of malnourished children in Bangladesh. What we have done in this company, we picked up all the micronutrients which are missing in those malnourished children, put it in the yogurt, and then make it very cheap so that the poorest children can afford it," he said.

Grameen has also teamed up with the French water company

Veolia to provide clean drinking water for the poor in Bangladesh. Yunus says these projects have a greater impact than simple charity.

"That's the beauty of the business. [The] charity collar works only once. Once you have done it, it goes. It never comes back. But if you put this whole thing into a social business format, money recycles," he said.

Some social businesses are profit-making enterprises that return part of their revenue – say, five or 10 percent – to social development. Others, like the Grameen Bank, are grass-roots cooperatives that reinvest their profits in the community.

Some social businesses offer investors a financial return, and others repay investors only the principal. As with any enterprise, social businesses can lack transparency and have problems with fraud and corruption, but these experts say that with the right safeguards, they can fill an

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