

# Nepal Abroad

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Nepal Abroad

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Year 3. No. 18

## People Protesting Against Maoists In Kathmandu



Photo : Nepal Samacharpatra

People in Koteswor, Kathmandu protesting against the death of a local businessman Ramhari Shrestha while in the Maoists captivity on Friday May 16, 2008.

## US Treasury Secretary Says Credit Markets Slowly Returning to Normal

- By Barry Wood, Washington D.C. . May 17 '08 VOA

U.S. Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson expects further weakness in housing but sees gradual improvement in credit markets buffeted from nine months of turmoil. VOA's Barry Wood reports Paulson is predicting a stronger US economy in the second half of the year.

Paulson told a Washington forum that credit markets are considerably calmer than they were in March. He said there is more liquidity in the market and that investor confidence is stronger than it was. Credit markets froze up last August following the disclosure of billions of dollars of bad loans related to subprime US home loans. Banks worldwide have had to write down the value of U.S. housing related bonds they had purchased. In March the crisis led to the near collapse of Bear Stearns, one of America's biggest investment banks.

Paulson, a successful Wall Street financier before coming to Treasury two years ago, said home prices have not yet begun to recover and that two million higher-risk homeowners could lose their homes this year.

"We know that the (housing) correction has further to go. So we should not be surprised at headlines that note rising foreclosures and falling home prices. But the correction is progressing. We are working through the excess inventory," he said.

Paulson indicated that a greatly slowed pace of economic activity is not likely to pick up until home prices start to rise. He believes that will occur in the second half of the year.

"In my judgement, we're closer to the end of the market turmoil than the beginning. Looking forward, I think the financial markets

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## Maoists Never Were A Terrorist Outfit: US

Washington May 15 : The US now says CPN-Maoist had never been designated a "foreign terrorist organisation" and the basis of its relations with the new government in Nepal will depend on the actions of individuals there.

"First of all, the Maoists in Nepal have never been a 'foreign terrorist organisation,' as designated. That is one category under law," State Department spokesperson Tom Casey said, indicating a rethink in Washington's Nepal policy following the party's victory in last month's elections there.

"They have, however, been on the 'terrorist exclusion list'. That is something that applies to consular issues, visas and other kinds of matters," he told reporters yesterday, for the first time making a subtle distinction between the two categories.

"You have two separate issues here," he said when asked to comment on Washington's position with the former guerrillas now poised to head the new Nepali government. "But you know, ultimately, the basis of our relations with the government of Nepal will be based on the actions of the individuals there." ...Contd. on pg 6

## 'India not to interfere in Nepali affairs': Sood

The Indian Ambassador to Nepal, Mr. Rakesh Sood has said that with the formation of the new government in Nepal, the process for the review of the 1950 Treaty of Peace and Friendship will begin.

At a program held in the capital May 15, 2008, Ambassador Sood said that talks are already on regarding the treaty review and that the formal process will be initiated with the formation of the new government in Nepal.

"Since last seven years, this issue has been raised but yet no tangible efforts could be made because of the continued political instability in Nepal", Mr. Sood added.

"The government that is soon to be formed in Nepal must be based on enhancing the national unity...there must be consensus among all the political parties-25 of them and the ethnic minorities who have become victorious in the recently concluded election to the Constituent Assembly".

"Our foreign Minister, Mr. Pranav Mukherjee is soon to visit Nepal and that Comrade Prachanda-the Maoists' Party chief has already been forwarded a formal invitation to visit India", the newly appointed Indian Ambassador to Nepal said.

"The visits of both the leaders will further enhance the

...Contd. on pg 6

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**Editorial:**

## Strengthening Nationalism and Sovereignty

While the political forces in Nepal are all excited about writing the new constitution in the days ahead, many within the several political groups and others are worried, debating unanimously the cause of safeguarding the nationalism, national pride and sovereignty.

Several disturbing news that have come out of different news medium recently have cautioned all Nepalese and friends of Nepal – within and abroad, and they're seen talking about this issue at all forums and occasions. Dr Sashank Koirala reveals on Wednesday May 14 '08 that some in Delhi are busy writing the Nepal's constitution. Few months ago one of the weekly newspaper reported that the curriculum for educational institutions were being redesigned under the aegis of Indian Embassy in Kathmandu, removing all glorious accounts of Nepal's past and present; the newly appointed Indian Ambassador in Nepal working hard to form a new government in Nepal even before submitting his credentials; Comrade Dr. Babu R Bhattarai suggesting Nepal's merger in the Indian Union if things doesn't happen the way he and his party preferred, and others all indicate Nepal's nationalism and sovereignty is in serious crisis, therefore, needs a concerted effort in strengthening and asserting against all forces trying to undermine it.

Nationalism and sovereignty in crisis is a very serious thing and needs to be discussed at all levels. Several forms of aggression against Nepal is still in progress, and the aggressors, and aggression on all fronts should be identified and brought forth for discussion in public as soon as possible while the supposedly new constitution making process begins. The Susta encroachment, intrusion of the Indian border security forces and their aggression on the Nepalese people, the harassment of Nepalese people at the Indian borders, and all that makes headline so frequently hasn't been properly addressed, and when questioned, the stake holders have been successful in evading the incident as insignificant.

The discussion about the aggression against Nepal should be taken to every corner of the country and at the grassroots level in a more

formal way. This would provide an opportunity for all to participate and understand all those who are advocating the safeguarding of nationalism and sovereignty; and if effectively campaigned, a new generation of uncompromising population for national interests can be developed despite their political differences.

Efforts of Phanindra Nepal – President of United Nepal National Front (UNNF) in reminding the people about their past, reclaiming glorious Nepalese sovereignty, the unjust realities of the treaties with India, since the Treaty of Sugauli in 1816 and up to the recent encroachment of Nepalese territories by India's boarder security forces is very laudable. Many argue that all should read his work and if possible support them in their effort. There is also unanimity is acknowledging the work of UNNF as one that inspires self respect, exposes all to Nepal's missed opportunities and makes one wonder how they can participate.

The movement like UNNF and others are but the result of the attitude India has adopted towards Nepal since the treaty of peace and friendship 1951, and their failure to recognize the changing needs and aspirations of Nepal and the Nepalese people with the change of time and world order system, among others. Nepal should be looked at as the coordinate partner for regional peace and development, and not subordinate to the Indian establishment. If Indian ambassador in Nepal can negotiate the formation of Nepal's government, India should allow Nepal's ambassador to work in a similar fashion in New Delhi, taking initiative to work for the formation of Gorkhaland – the demand of the people of north Bengal, start a dialogue in creating a favorable environment for referendum in Jammu & Kashmir, and the like. As long as things don't change on the other side, they would always engage Nepal in internal conflicts, and make the country and the leaders more India dependent than independent.

Therefore, it becomes the responsibility of all to take this issue seriously and explore ways to end further discussion on nationalism and the sovereignty, and shift the discussion to the delayed economic advancement of Nepal.

## Small Arms Fill Power Vacuum

Kathmandu May 14: Civilians are becoming more vulnerable to attack by militant groups and criminal gangs in the Terai region of southern Nepal as a result of the apparent proliferation of small arms and improvised explosive devices, local analysts say.

Easy access to guns has led to an increasing number of killings, abductions, attacks and cases of looting and extortion, they said.

"The control of small arms still seems to be a low priority for political parties and the government; such neglect has led to a dangerous situation in the Terai," independent conflict analyst Bishnu Upreti told IRIN in Kathmandu.

Some 20 violent incidents - including killings, child kidnappings, rape, shootings, abductions and bomb explosions - have taken place in the past two weeks, according to the Informal Sector Service Centre (INSEC), a local human rights group. It said about five people had been killed and 14 injured in the incidents - mainly in the Terai.

The Madhesis dominate the Terai but feel they have been sidelined and excluded from national politics and development. Over a dozen armed political groups and criminal gangs (mainly Madhesi) have emerged in recent times, analysts said.

### Armed groups

A new report by Amnesty International said there were over a dozen armed groups in the Terai, including the Janatantrik Terai Mukti Morcha (JTMM), led by the Jaya Krishna Goit (JTMM-G) and Jwala Singh (JTMM-J) factions.

According to the Nepal police, there are also other armed groups like the Madhesi Mukti Tigers (MMT), Samyukta Janatantrik Tarai Mukti Morcha (SJTMM), Liberation Tigers of Terai Elam, Terai Cobras, Madhesi Virus Killers, Terai Army and the National Defence Army.

Analysts are concerned that many criminal and armed

militant groups have taken advantage of the recent power vacuum (a government has still not been formed over a month after the 10 April elections), and have been able to bring in arms and use them at will.

"There is virtually no government presence as the ruling parties are too busy fighting for power and seats in the new government," Bhagyanath Prasad Shah, president of Madhesi Janadhikar Forum-Madhesh (MJF-M), told IRIN.

Officials from the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) agreed the security situation was tense in the Terai.

"This is why we have stepped up security by stationing more security personnel in most of the areas," senior MoHA official Ekmani Nepal told IRIN. He said a large contingent of the Armed Police Force (APF) - originally deployed to cover the election period - would remain in the Terai to protect civilians. Nepal said the issue of small arms would remain a priority after the formation of the new government.

### Small arms not seen as a priority?

Experts and analysts lobbying for tighter controls on small arms are frustrated that no party has yet spoken out on the issue.

...Contd. on pg 6

### Notice

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

### Nepal Abroad Management

### Nepali Calendar

Sun May 18 / Jestha 05 '65  
Chaturdashin  
Mon May 19 / Jestha 06 '65  
Poonnima  
Tue May 20 / Jestha 07 '65  
Poonnima BuddhaJayanti  
Wed May 21 / Jestha 08 '65  
Pratipada  
Thu May 22 / Jestha 09 '65  
Dwutiya  
Fri May 23 / Jestha 10 '65  
Tritiya  
Sat May 24 / Jestha 11 '65  
Chauthi

## Greeting The CA Members



Photo: Udghosh/Nepal

Ms Bhotani Devi Khawas is seen greeted by the women from the Khawas community on Saturday May 17 '08 in Biratnagar, Nepal. She is the Nepali Congress representative nominated through the proportional representation for the Constituent Assembly that would write a new constitution of Nepal.

## More Young Women At Work: Report

Kathmandu, May 15: Majority of working young women employed in sectors like woolen carpet industry, commercial shops and cabin/dance restaurants have been found of age group 16 to 25 years.

An International Labour Organisation (ILO) study report on 'women workers in woolen carpet industry, commercial shops and cabin/dance restaurants,' has revealed that almost 62 per cent women workers in these sectors are of age group 16 to 25 years. This is followed by age group of 26-35 years, which accounts for 29 per cent, while women workers aged above 35 years are only 6.5 per cent, according to the report.

Drawing an attention of the concerned stakeholders, the report

has also revealed that these sectors employ about three per cent women workers aged below 15 years. In ethnic composition, majority of the workers are Janajatis, while Brahmin/Chhetris are 23.2 per cent and Newars and Dalits account for 21.8 per cent and 1.8 per cent respectively.

The study, which was carried out among 449 women respondents-comprising 148 each from woolen carpet industry and commercial shops and 153 from cabin/dance restaurants, further reveals that the workers get married at an early age of 18.2 years, which is less than the national average of 19.5 years.

...Contd. on pg 6

## 'Gratis Visa Not In Favour Of Nepal's Tourism'

- Courtesy: Himalayan Times 5/14

Kathmandu, May 15: The government has been issuing gratis visa for tourists entering Nepal through India for many years now with the aim to bolstering its tourism industry, but nothing as such is happening and only the Indian tour operators are benefiting, officials claimed.

They bring in large tour groups to Lumbini, the birth place of

Lord Buddha, but do it in such a way to create some sort of confusion regarding the place's geographical location.

The operator gets a large number of visa stamped at his own initiative at the border check point and brings the tourists into Nepalese territory in Lumbini. The whole affair is so short lived that tourists

...Contd. on pg 6

## Calendar of Events

**May 17:** 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 17 from 7.00am to 3.00pm at 6481 Little River Turnpike Alexandria VA 22312. For details visit nepalhorizons or call Ambika Gurung 703 992 5882 Madhavi Karki 703 609 7165 Rita Tiwari 703 532 2343

**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. Performing artists include 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 4:** The Baltimore Association of Nepalese In America (BANA) is hosting **26th ANA Convention** starting Friday July 4 to Sunday July 6 with the theme 'Dignity Prosperity and Integrity' at Baltimore Marriott Hunt Valley Inn 245 Shewan Road Hunt Valley Maryland 21031 For more information on convention visit ana-convention.org/2008 or 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. Olivette 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](mailto:enews@nepalabroad.com)

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## 'Unlike other organization Tewa is committed to help the grass root level women...': Ms Janaki Shah

*Ms Janaki Shah, the Co-coordinator at Tewa- a non profit organization committed to empowerment of women through grant making to women groups throughout Nepal was in Washington DC to participate in the Women's Funding Network's annual conference early this month. Last week, we approached Ms Shah to have her introduce the organization she represents and their activities to our readers. Below the results:*

### **Q: Can you talk about the idea behind the establishment of Tewa?**

Tewa is into the world of development since 1996. Founded by Rita Thapa, who after attending the Beijing Conference came up-with the mission to work for the women's upliftment and empowerment in Nepal. Tewa is established as model for diversity, non-hierarchical, transparent, and accountable; and a frugal/efficient structure that can truly "walk its talk".

Tewa has 3 major programs: Local Fund raising, Grant making to rural women's groups, and training and mobilization of fund-raising volunteers.

Tewa's main aim has been to promote self-reliant development for sustainability and to actively engage in local resource mobilization to support rural women's organizations in their pursuit to empowerment, equitable justice and peace.

It aims to increase the self reliance of Nepalese by reducing dependency on foreign donors; to inculcate the habit in the Nepalese men and women to donate regularly for the sustainable and equitable development of the country with special focus on women; and to bring Nepalese men and women into equal partnership.

### **Q: How has it been meeting its financial needs, and where does it invest more?**

In order to make Tewa a sustainable organization, a concept to establish an endowment fund was initiated from the very beginning. Year 2000 was set as the target year to complete the establishment of this endowment fund. The target for the endowment fund in the amount of Nepalese Rs. 1.5 million (approx. US\$ 200 K) was exceeded by about one hundred thousand rupees. Till the year 2002 Tewa sustained its operational cost from the interest income from the bank.

Tewa has invested its endowment fund in Land and Building since the year 2002. Due to political

and economic situation in Nepal the interest rate at the bank became very low (from 12-13 % to 4-5 %).

Much of the fund is raised in small, but significant ways. By encouraging Nepalese to develop a habit of changing their spending patterns and freeing up funds to give to social causes, they are helping not only to alter adult behavior but to influence younger generations. Tewa members, volunteers can try to convince their family or friends to donate Tewa all the money they would spend on their birthday parties etc.

Tewa applies different fund-raising activities. One of them is by selling T-shirts, caps. Tewa's supporters in USA also hosts tea party and house sell events where Nepali hand made products sent through Tewa are sold, the profit from these activities are categorized as "surplus from resell"

Tewa's holistic approach in its grant making program has benefited both the grantees from rural areas as well as Tewa in terms of its growth and learning.

### **Q: What impact has tewa been making at the grassroots level?**

Most of Tewa's grant has been utilized for income generating program, as per our survey in different part of Nepal. Tewa believes in self-reliance and sustainable development thus it has been raising funds locally for its grant-making program to lend helping hands to rural women's groups, with an objective to help women step toward their self empowerment processes.

The impact of our grant programme would be best told by what the grantee women themselves are saying. To cite one example - Rina Rai from the remote part of Makwanpur, who could not study beyond class 9 but had a desire to do something for her community started an organization in 2004. Since she did not know where to start to get support for her project, she applied for a grant for income generation project to Tewa. This project, initially started

with women from 17 families, has now grown to benefit 51 families and has a direct impact on 139 girl children. Because of this project now girls are sent to school which otherwise was not possible. Rina still admires the kind of trust Tewa had given to her as an individual, her work and her organization which was new and had no track record to show.

Rina Rai is just one example - in the past 12 years and every year such inspiring stories are told by women who did not know where to turn for support when they started. It is understandable why women are using Tewa's grants for their economic advancement, because it has been proved to be very effective means to empower them. We have heard from our grantees that in this process of empowerment they are now beginning to be able to assert their views in decision making in domestic level, which over time will lead to the community level and eventually at political levels. The other hindrances which impede women's development is having daughters relegate the educational opportunity for sons, are being addressed as women with their earnings are able to send their daughters to school. This is just a snapshot of the impact that a small but strategic grants can have in development of women. We are in contact with our grantees and we asked the grantee to send us progress report - a minimum of twice a year and we occasionally visit our grantee in their work areas.

### **Q: What are the significant achievements made by tewa?**

We have been fund raising locally for the past 12 years for our grant making program. Our grant making program is specifically aimed to support the rural women organizations for micro projects identified and implemented by women themselves. Since Tewa's inception to date we have raised more than 11 million rupees locally and has awarded grant to 282 women organization in 58 districts through our Grant making programme.

Tewa has almost 300 past grantee al-



Janaki Shah

lies. Our average grant size is Rs. 35,000 to maximum of Rs. 50,000 which is in the range of US\$ 550 to US\$ 800. Depending on the local priority of the women, the projects ranges from income generation micro-projects like goat, pig raising, to advocacy, general support, leadership/organizational development, mid-wife training, gender training, environment etc. it is because Tewa has left the area of support open for women themselves to decide. Tewa's Grant-making is built on with much consideration and understanding of not only the proposed project that are selected by women themselves but also keeping in mind the difficulty these women in terms of the culture and conditioning they are brought up and the social environment.

The broad expected outcomes of Tewa's grants are for women's empowerment through economic, skill developments. Our grant criteria allows our grants to be given to only community based organizations hence we do not give grants to any individual person or family.

These grants we have given are helping women to empower themselves so that they can make their presence felt in the family and community enhancing their political visibility. It has opened doors for rural women to other opportunities, linkages and network and no doubt it has had a multiplier effect.

Tewa also attempts to get support from corporations through its corporate Sector Campaign. The campaign aims to builds a sense of social responsibility amongst Nepali business people and raise funds for Tewa in the process.

Corporate achievement of Tewa:

(a) Since 2 years Nepal's one of the best domestic airlines "Yeti

## Cultural Program Organized To Support NECC/VAC



Photo : nepalhorizons.com

Image from the program organized by the Nepalese community in Arlington, VA and the DC to support Nepal Educational & Cultural Center - vitalizing Action Committee (NECC-VAC) on Sunday May 11 2008 at Arlington Central Library, Arlington VA. The program had several cultural performances, and was attended by people from the DC metro area. During the last nine months NECC-VAC has been able to raise over \$123,000.00 (cash and pledges) to establish a Nepal Center the DC area.

## ICE Detention And Raid Picks Up Speed

Bhumika Ghimire, USA

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) arrested 33 illegal immigrants on May 8, who were working at new U.S Federal Courthouse site on Richmond, Virginia. The raid came after the agency began investigation on information that the construction contractor was employing illegal immigrants. All of the detained individuals are undergoing deportation proceedings; two are facing criminal charges for falsifying documents and re-entering after deportation.

In a press release, ICE said that the detained are citizens of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua and Peru.

After the "Comprehensive Immigration Reform" proposed by President Bush collapsed last year after strong public opposition to the plan to provide path to citizenship to millions of illegal immigrants already in the United States, there has been rise in anti-illegal immigrant sentiments and also raids by ICE to apprehend those without proper documents.

Four days after the Virginia action on May 12th, ICE along with Department of Justice searched Agriprocessors, Inc. in Postville, Iowa. They had search warrant for evidence for aggravated identity theft, fraudulent use of

Social Security number and illegal immigrants. 300 people were arrested and are now being questioned by ICE agents and local health officers if they have medical or caregiver concerns. So far 40 people have been released after the interview.

In April, Pilgrim's Pride poultry plant in five states-Texas, Arkansas, Florida, Tennessee and West Virginia were target of immigration raids. Around 300 were arrested, according to the Associated Press. Spokesman for the company said that they cooperated with the authorities and are not being charged.

As ICE is going full speed ahead with immigration raids and detentions, many are questioning where the actions are any help to solving America's immigration crises.

In March, The Los Angeles Times reported that United Nations is not too happy with the way US treats migrants. Jorge Bustamante, a U.N investigator said that the country is relying too much on detaining immigrants rather than employing other means such as ankle bracelets to monitor them.

He presented his report on condition of migrants in the US to the UN's Human Rights Council in Geneva, criticizing America's policy

on dealing with migrants and their human rights.

New York Times, in its editorial on October 4, 2007 called for the government to "Stop the Raids". It says that the raids are often poorly planned and end up scaring and violating privacy of innocent migrants rather than arresting truly dangerous criminal illegal aliens.

In a stinging criticism of enforcement action conducted by ICE, The Times says "federal officials say the raids are a focused campaign to catch gang members and other fugitives. That would be good if Immigration and Customs Enforcement were carefully extracting the dangerous criminal sliver from a population of 12 million illegal immigrants. But as immigration raids have vastly increased, they have become something murky and ugly."

Boston Globe criticized the raids and tearing up families and scaring people rather than doing any good to solve the illegal immigration problem. (Compiled from various sources)

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## Maoists Never Were A...

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The spokesperson acknowledged that US Ambassador to Nepal Nancy Powell had met Maoist chief Prachanda on May 1. But this first formal US contact with a party still on US "terrorist" list, he said, was essentially intended to get an assurance that US humanitarian programmes will continue.

Though the United States accepted the April 28 election

verdict that favoured the Maoists in Nepal, Washington remains doubtful about the former guerrillas.

Yesterday's statement making a distinction between a 'foreign terrorist organisation' and a 'terrorist exclusion list' is indicative of a movement towards what a senior US official recently described as "legitimate reconciliation and reintegration politically" in Nepal after the Maoists' election victory. (IANS/THT)

## Small Arms Fill Power

Contd. from page 2...

"The new government should immediately put the control of small arms at the top of its agenda, as this is a crucial step for the peace process," said independent conflict analyst Shovakar Budathoki.

"A clear policy on small arms is needed and there is a need for border checks," said conflict analyst Upreti.

Upreti and Budathoki said there had not been enough pressure from the media, academia and political parties to tackle the issue.

## 'India not to interfere...

Contd. from page 1...

bilateral ties between the two countries", he continued.

Mr. Sood ruling out any pact between the parties and the king in favor of a ceremonial monarchy said, "During Indian special envoy Karan Singh's visit to Nepal in April 2006 at time of the

People's uprising no agreement as such was made on India's initiative between the King and the political parties to retain the monarchy in Nepal in any form".

"We stick to our policy of non-interference in Nepali affairs and we will abide by any decision made by the sovereign citizens of Nepal", Sood concluded. (Courtesy: Telegraph Weekly)

## More Young Women At...

Contd. from page 3...

Majority of the respondents were migrants. They have migrated due to financial problems or in search of better opportunities, according to the study. Contrary to the general belief, only 3.6 per cent had migrated to Kathmandu due to conflict. Over 91 per cent of the respondents reported having a family members also migrated.

The average monthly income of the women workers has been found at Rs 3,595 and their respondents from three different sectors, the women workers in cabin/dance restaurants have found earning the highest at Rs 160.51 per day in average, while women working in woolen carpet industry are just making Rs 104.88 a day.

Of the total respondents, 89.5 per cent have stated that they have not received any appointment letter from their employers. "79.3

per cent of the women have reported that they did not have maternity related facilities in their workplace."

Knowledge against child labour has been found high, as 74 per cent of the respondents have reported that they are aware of it or against employing children. "Majority of them are unaware about labour rights."

(Courtesy: The Himalayan Times)

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## Maoists Attack Purulia's Bandwan Area

By Goutam Gupta Kolkata VOA News

Maoists on Monday blew up a Border Security Force patrol vehicle on election duty, killing one jawan in Purulia's Bandwan area. Seven others who were part of the patrol and the driver of the truck were injured in the landmine blast.

Bandwan is a known Maoist hotbed. In December 2005, CPM district secretariat member Rabindranath Kar and his wife were burnt alive by rebels. On May 5 this

year, suspected Maoists shot dead a CPM leader.

According to police, the blast occurred around 5.30pm when the eight BSF jawans of the 39th battalion were patrolling the densely forested area between Sirka and Gangamanna, about 15km from the Jharkhand border, in the truck. The dead jawan has been identified as 45-year-old Ali Akbar Sheikh.

## 'Gratis Visa Not In Favour...

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are least aware and some of them even confused whether they are in Nepal or India.

Most of them hardly spent an hour around Lumbini and take the bus ride back to India with the 'false impression' that Buddha was born in India, spokesperson at the Lumbini Development Trust (LDT) Gyanin Rai told The Rising Nepal (TRN).

Hence the package tours organised by Indian operators has turned out to be fruitless for Nepal, which does not earn a penny from the visiting tourists who come on a free visa and do not spend anything, he said.

"Though approximately 70,000 tourists visited Lumbini last year and the number of tourists visiting Lumbini this year in the last four months has increased by approximately 30 per cent we really have not been able to benefit from it," Rai said.

"To the tourists its like they are in India because they don't even have to get off their bus at the immigration to get their visa, the tour operators do it for them," said Rai.

The number of tourists who visited Lumbini in the last three months this year is 36,435 as compared to 27,879 tourists during the same time last year. However, Nepal has not really been able to reap the benefits of these numbers.

Nepal has not been able to promote Lumbini the way it should be promoted. According to LDT, Lumbini is not only about Maya Devi temple, there are approximately 16 international monasteries that have been built there and a complete tour of Lumbini garden takes approximately three days.

LDT had previously introduced land leasing to foreign countries, which wanted to build a monastery representing their nation in Lumbini. Of the 42 plots that were out for lease 33 of them have been leased and approximately 15-16 monasteries have been built in the garden.

"We leased land for 99 years to countries interested to invest here, so far Japan, Germany, Maha Bodhi Society-India, China, Thailand, Myanmar and International Nunnery Association have completed construction where as Korea, Vietnam, Austria, Sri Lanka, France and Cambodia are nearing the completion of monasteries being built there. Apart from these there are two meditation centers and Lumbini is also home to 268 different bird species like the Sarus Crane; the Blue Bull and pythons so tourists and to see all this it would take at least three days," informed Rai.

According to Rabi Jung Pandey, a tourism entrepreneur and a SASEC project member for the Regional Buddhist Circuit, the reason why there are so many Indian tour operators bringing tourists to Lumbini is because though they have three important Buddhist pilgrimage destinations in India a Buddhist pilgrim's pilgrimage cannot be completed without visiting Lumbini.

"We have to remember that this is the most important pilgrimage for Buddhists since Lord Buddha was born here and while marketing Lumbini this shouldn't be forgotten," he said.

He also stated that if we do not market this as our brand we

...Contd. on pg 7

## All-Electric Car by Nissan to Go on Sale in 2010

Record high oil prices and sluggish sales are forcing the world's biggest automakers to turn to electricity to power their vehicles.

Nissan Motor Company is the latest automaker to move in that direction, officially announcing Tuesday it plans to introduce an all-electric vehicle for sale in the United States and Japan by 2010.

Nissan's chief executive officer says the company will mass-market electric cars globally by 2012.

Nissan also forecast its profits will decline by 30 percent this year to \$3.4 billion compared to \$4.6 billion last year.

Nissan, Japan's number three automaker, joins Toyota and Honda in predicting smaller profits, as car buyers shun fuel-thirsty vehicles.

The senior editor of the Web site GreenCarAdvisor.com, John O'Dell, tells VOA many auto industry executives will be watching Nissan to see if its electric car venture succeeds. He says Nissan is trying to become the market leader by being the first major automaker to promise - and deliver - an all-

electric vehicle for sale in a large market by a certain date.

The associate editor of the Web site WardsAuto.com, Mike Sutton, says the announcement is "fairly significant," but Nissan's move is mostly about market positioning.

Sutton tells VOA that other major automakers are also planning to introduce electric-powered vehicles in 2010.

American car company Chevrolet plans to introduce the Volt, a plug-in hybrid, in 2010. And Toyota says it will unveil the next generation of Prius hybrid vehicles the same year.

Hybrids use less fuel than conventional vehicles because they combine a gasoline engine with high-tech batteries and electric motors.

Chrysler, Mitsubishi and Subaru are also working on electric cars.

Fuel-efficient vehicles have recently been the lone bright spot for the auto industry. Toyota says sales of its hybrid cars have jumped 42 percent in the past year. Some dealerships in the United States say they have waiting lists for would-be buyers. (VOA News 5/13)

## New Report Says US Inflation Pressures Appear to be Easing

- By Mil Arcega, Washington 15 May 2008 VOA

The U.S. Labor Department says overall prices paid by consumers rose only slightly in April. Wednesday's report shows energy costs appear to be stabilizing after posting sharp gains earlier this year. Although food prices continue to rise, some economists say the report should ease fears of runaway inflation. However, for some lower income Americans, it may already be too late. VOA's Mil Arcega reports.

Inflation pressures appear to be easing a bit in the U.S., despite the largest increase in food prices in 18 years. A (U.S.) Labor Department report shows the consumer price index, a measure of the average price changes for goods and services, rose only two-tenths of a percent in April. In March, it rose three tenths of a percent.

But the numbers mean little to some Americans. Rising prices for basic items have already had a devastating impact on some families.

Single mother, Julie Tkachuck, says after paying for gas and groceries, she had no money left to pay for electricity.

"There's something wrong with this picture," she says. "I work hard. I come home; I take care of my kids. Why am I in this situation?"

Despite the hardship for some, the lower than expected price index helped ease financial market concerns, pushing Wall Street slightly higher on Wednesday.

Taking out volatile food and energy costs, the Labor Department says "core" CPI rose by just one-tenth of one percent last month.

Consumer assistance groups say the irony is that the number of people unable to pay their energy bills is now the highest it has been in 16 years.

Mark Wolfe is executive director of the National Energy Assistance Directors Association.

"Energy is becoming unaffordable to millions of low-income families," he says. "We don't have a good solution in place to help them."

Although gasoline prices surged higher last month, the price index reflected a two percent drop after seasonal adjustments are factored in. That may be little comfort to motorists now paying record prices at the pump.

## 'Gratis Visa Not In Favour...

might not benefit from The Regional Buddhist Circuit, which was supposed to be implemented by the end of this year. While talking to The Rising Nepal Rabi Jung Pandey said that the draft for the Regional circuit had been submitted and should be implemented by January next year.

He told TRN that Nepalese Travel Tour agents would have to focus on introducing packages that would help retain tourists in Lumbini. "The reasoning that there isn't enough infrastructure

in Lumbini to withstand the number of visitors visiting there is just a lame excuse. Infrastructure will develop only if there is demand for it and the infrastructure already there can retain the current number of tourists visiting there," he said.

However, he did state that there was a need of expanding the airport there into an international airport so pilgrims could directly fly there, just like what the Indians have done in Bodh Gaya. "The only way to link Lumbini to the global market is by expanding the airport there into

an international airport, which would increase its accessibility," he said and added, "apart from this Nepalese tour operators too should stop treating Lumbini like a day trip destination."

Both Rai and Pandey told TRN that it was essential for Nepalese tour operators to increase the duration of the Lumbini tour if the destination was to retain the

number of tourists visiting there. "It all depends on how we market and promote our destinations and Nepalese tour operators too should stop treating Lumbini like a small destination which can be covered in an hour," they said.

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### Exchange Rates in Nepal

Currency	Buying (Rs)	Selling (Rs)
US \$ 1	67.74	68.33
Canadian \$1	67.70	68.29
Euro 1	105.30	106.21
Pound Sterling 1	131.85	133.00
Australian \$1	63.43	63.98
Swiss Franc 1	64.58	65.14
Singapore Dollar	49.07	49.50
Japanese Yen 10	6.47	6.52
Chinese Yuan 1	9.69	9.77
Indian Rupees 100	160.00	160.15
Swedish Kroner 1	11.30	---
Danish Kroner 1	14.11	---
Hong Kong Dollar 1	8.68	---
Saudi Arab Riyal 1	18.06	---
Qatari Riyal 1	18.60	---
Thai Bhat 1	2.09	---
UAE Dirham 1	18.44	---
Malaysian Ringgit 1	20.78	---

[Source: Nepal Rastra Bank, May 16 08]

## 'Unlike other organization Tewa is committed to...

*Contd. from page 4...*

Airlines Pvt.Ltd" has been supporting Tewa alongwith 3 other social organizations working in different field. They have allocated Rs.1/- (One Rupee) to each organization from each ticket sold in all domestic sector.

(b) Bank of Kathmandu has also signed an agreement in the year 2007 with Tewa to support us by providing certain percentage of amount on an account opening through Tewa network.

Tewa is encouraging modern philanthropy & women's empowerment primarily through its grant-making program for social change

Since the year 2004 Tewa has allocated 20% for Peace building from the total grant-making budget.

I am also happy to share with you that strengthened in 2000 in Nepal, Tewa as founding members of the International Network of Women's Funds and some of our international sister funds from Nicaragua, Brazil, Mongolia and Hong Kong have also adapted our programs which has strengthen the Global Women's Movement; and we have been able to create a network of 28 International Women's Funds from different part of the world - that includes 4 from Asian region..

The 400 plus Tewa Volunteers have trained and mobilized so far are mainly women with an intense desire to serve the community. These volunteers are our back-bones in many of our fund raising events and programs which are organized regularly.

### **Q: What are the challenges Nepalese women face today?**

Patriarchal system relegate women to a subordinate position at all levels, thus from it starts all forms of discriminations and inequality. Such system negatively affects women and girl children's self-esteem, confidence and decision making ability.

While boys are prepared for their future roles in outside work and decision making, girls are prepared for their future roles as effective housewives, mothers and service providers, thus instilling in their minds that women's duty is to provide services to their family. Thus qualities like self-denial, putting others before oneself, self-effacement, sacrifice, timidity are encouraged as girl children grow. Girls are not encouraged into the domain that are taken for granted for boys such as decision making, free mobility, articulation and expressing one's opinion, needs and wants.

The Nepalese law(s) allow only males to inherit property. Such pervasive exclusion system bars women's access to resources and systematically marginalized them from decision making within all social institutions. This results in high degree of social violence against women. It is a social norm for women to rise early and sleep late, serve other male family members and the last one to eat, which is essentially the leftovers.

Another very disturbing violence against women is trafficking. This practice do not seem to have stopped completely despite many social organizations involvement because social acceptance of the "commoditization" of girls/women.

Mostly women are self-employed or are engaged in low-wage earning informal sectors. Though there is light expansion in number of women entering into modern sectors like manufacturing, trade and commerce and tourism, it is confined to urban areas only. Because of low education and proper training, and limited mobility they are confined to low-skilled jobs. In a nutshell many of the economic problem with Nepali women are due factors like being confined to household, very limited access to education, skill and vocational trainings, discriminatory laws and practices and deprivation of property rights.

Women's political participation and access to political position and power is restricted by their low access to education, resources and constraints in the mobility. In the national politics, the only significant participation of women are in municipalities where more educated women are centered or it tend to be confined to grass-roots level decision making have entered in local government. The situation gets worst in the higher strata of political decision-making. Even after the dawn of democracy in 1990, women's representation in the House of Representatives from 1991 to 1999 was very dismal.

### **Q: How is Tewa different than other non profit organizations in Nepal?**

Unlike other organization Tewa is committed to help the grass root level women by awarding grants mobilizing local resources. This way I think we are not only working for social justice for sustainable and equitable development in the country but also trying to bring awareness on women issues among Nepalese women & men by donating regularly. I think one of the inherent qualities of Nepali -philanthropy has been practiced for a longtime and Tewa is strongly advocating and encouraging Nepali women and men to keep on practicing the philanthropic giving but to modern need such as Women's issues.

Tewa grants are awarded with humility and trust that has equalized our relationship as our grantees have become our donors so that we could provide resources to other needy groups. It also helped to create an environment of trust, confidence for women who because of lack of mobility, education, and connections find it difficult to access resources even when they have formed groups and are organized. This has been our strength and uniqueness that our grants are given with humility and the trust to the women whose strength is nothing but their own dedication and zeal to help themselves.

Our grant programs have been successful because we believe and have proven that we can raise fund within ourselves and within Nepal. As Mahatma Gandhi once said "If the cause is the right means will come". Our track records show that the practice of philanthropic giving in Nepal can be a solution to many of our problems.

### **Q: How can any interested individuals or organization(s) contribute to your organization?**

As for 501 (c) status we have a fiscal agreement with Global fund for women, San Francisco, donor residing in USA can send their contribution with a note " donation to Tewa" or you may please visit our website for further banking details.

## US Treasury Secretary Says...

*Contd. from page 1...*

will be driven less by market turmoil and more by broader economic conditions, and specifically by the recovery of the housing sector," he said.

Paulson said the government's economic stimulus package, which is delivering about \$100 billion of cash to taxpayers, will boost economic growth. He acknowledged that higher fuel and food prices are causing considerable pain.

While the stock market has bounced back over the past two months, consumer confidence is still declining, in large part because oil prices continue to rise. A closely watched measure of confidence declined in May to its lowest level since July 1980. Most forecasters predict US growth could slow to no more than one half of one percent this year. In 2007 the US economy expanded by over two percent.

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