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THE RISING NEPAL

ALL BE HAPPY, ALL BE WELL

MPs push governance reform

BY PALLAV BHUSAL
Kathmandu, Apr. 2

The first meeting of the newly elected House of Representatives convened on Thursday, with party leaders and an independent MP highlighting governance reforms, accountability, and inclusive development.

Rastriya Swatantra Party President Rabi Lamichhane, addressing the Parliament, pledged a decisive shift from rhetoric to action, stating that the government would prioritise results over promises. "We all share the same goal, the prosperity of the country, and we will focus on that," he said.

Lamichhane highlighted the public mandate as a clear demand for change and promised that his administration would pursue solutions rather than merely identifying problems. He highlighted that MPs would not face interruptions when raising issues, and that the government would work with urgency, counting seconds rather than days.

FIRST HOR MEETING

Lamichhane invited opposition scrutiny, urging parties to hold the government accountable continuously and warning against arrogance in power. He described the government as born of the Gen Z rebellion, and committed to structural reforms, improved governance, and robust support for the private sector. He assured investors that corruption and the influence of middlemen would be eliminated, with policies no longer treated as commodities.

He pledged equal access to education and employment, zero tolerance to violence against women, strengthened social security for senior citizens, and job creation through effective utilisation of domestic resources.

Lamichhane issued a formal apology to Nepal's Dalit community for centuries of discrimination, calling caste-based segregation organised crime and promising justice, including compensation. He also acknowledged the sacrifices of Nepalis working abroad, urging them to invest in Nepal and committing to better working conditions at home while cracking down on exploitation and middlemen networks. Highlighting the importance of a strong opposition in a functioning democracy, Lamichhane stressed that Parliament should be a platform for debate rather than revenge. He further pledged to rectify past legal and political missteps and ensure transparency in domestic governance and foreign policy. He said that the government's actions would speak louder than words.

Similarly, Nepali Congress MP Bhishma Raj Angdambe called for unity, accountability, and renewed public trust as Nepal embarks on a new parliamentary journey. He paid tribute to martyrs of the 1990 People's Movement, the Maoist conflict, and subsequent uprisings, urging leaders to prevent future bloodshed and averred that, despite political differences, the country remains one.

Angdambe reaffirmed parliamentary democracy as Nepal's shared path, noting that former opponents now sit together in the House. While congratulating the Rastriya Swatantra Party and Prime Minister Balendra Shah, he committed the Congress, as the main opposition, to support, advise, and caution the government where necessary.

He acknowledged public frustration but rejected claims that no progress has been made, highlighting achievements in roads, electricity, healthcare, communications, and financial services despite conflict, political instability, natural disasters, and the Covid-19 pandemic.

He also raised concerns over the September 8–9 incidents, which involved the destruction of key state infrastructure, urging the government to conduct transparent investigations and ensure that no guilty party escapes punishment while safeguarding the innocent.

Angdambe called for long-term political stability, good governance, and social harmony to prevent future unrest, pledging constructive support while warning the opposition would challenge actions against the constitution or public interest.

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PHOTO: BIKASH DWARE/TRN

Prime Minister Balendra Shah, President of the Rastriya Swatantra Party Rabi Lamichhane, and other members of the House of Representatives participating in the first-day meeting of the Parliament at Singha Durbar in Kathmandu on Thursday.

Speaker election on Sunday

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 2

The election of the Speaker of the House of Representatives is scheduled for 11:00 am on Sunday, April 5, at the parliament meeting hall, Singha Durbar. According to the schedule, proposals for candidates must be registered on April 3 between 9:00 am and 2:00 pm at Room No. 2 of the Parliament Secretariat. The list of registered candidates will be published at 2:30 pm the same day. The proposed candidates are required to submit a photocopy of their parliamentary membership and Nepali citizenship certificate.

Likewise, the election for the Vice-Chairman of the National Assembly has also been scheduled, with the notice period set for Sunday, April 5. Members may submit proposals between 2:30 pm and 4:30 pm at the Business Advisory Committee Hall, National Assembly Secretariat.

The list of candidates will be published at 4:00 pm, followed by a discussion and final decision during the assembly meeting on Monday, April 6, beginning at 9:00 am in the Assembly Meeting Room. These elections are being conducted under the respective parliamentary rules, with Padma Prasad Pandey, Secretary General, overseeing the process for both Houses.

Meanwhile, the Rastriya Swatantra Party, which holds the majority of seats in the House of Representatives, has nominated party vice president Dol Prasad Aryal as their candidate for Speaker. This decision was made following a meeting of their parliamentary party and on the recommendation of party president Rabi Lamichhane. With a majority in the House, Aryal is widely expected to become the next Speaker.

HOME MINISTER GURUNG SUBMITS THREE ORDINANCES

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 2

Home Minister Sudhan Minister Gurung submitted three ordinances in the first meeting of the House of Representatives on Thursday. He submitted the 'Citizenship (First Amendment) Ordinance, 2082', 'Election of Members of the House of Representatives (First Amendment) Ordinance, 2082' and 'Nepal Special Service (Third Amendment) Ordinance, 2082' under the regular agenda after the members made their statements on a party basis in the meeting.

The amendments include provisions for reserving population groups to be included in the closed list of proportional representation, in accordance with Article 84(2) of the Constitution of Nepal. Following the announcement of the House election date on March 5, the previous government had introduced the Election of Members of the House of Representatives (First Amendment) Ordinance to update the voter list.

Minister Gurung also noted tha the pal Special Service (Third Amendment) Ordinance reassigns the National Investigation Department from the Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers to the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Meanwhile, a condolence resolution was passed for the late Constituent Assembly members and former MPs Rishikesh Gautam, Mohammad Aftab Alam, Krishna Kumari Shrestha, Amod Prasad Upadhyay, Homnath Dahal, and Baldev Bohara.

The next House meeting is scheduled for Sunday, April 5, at 11:00 am.

Govt issues circular to control corruption

Office head responsible in case of irregularities

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 2

The government has issued a circular to all public offices, ministries and commissions and their subordinate agencies to take measures to effectively control corruption with high priority.

And in the event of corruption, collusion, or irregularities in any public body or office, the head of the concerned entity and the ministry secretary will be held responsible, the circular stated.

Following Prime Minister Balen Shah's directive, Chief Secretary Suman Raj Aryal issued a circular to all secretaries on Thursday, emphasising that controlling corruption must be treated as a priority.

Issuing a circular on Thursday, the Chief Secretary reiterated the government's commitment to eradicating corruption.

Stating that eliminating all forms of corruption, policy-level, institutional, and procedural, within public bodies and ensuring good governance is a government priority, he directed secretaries to implement these measures effectively.

"All concerned bodies must take necessary measures to end corruption arising from the misuse of public office and authority in service delivery, development works, revenue administration, and procurement processes under ministries, commissions, offices, and subordinate bodies, and to ensure a level of good governance and integrity that is felt by citizens," the circular reads.

The Chief Secretary also instructed heads of the offices to maintain close monitoring of any instances of collusion, corruption, or irregularities within their offices and its subordinate agencies and also promptly report any information related to corruption to the concerned authorities.

"It is well known to all of us that Nepal's position in international reports depicting the state of corruption has remained discouraging," the circular further read. "With the fundamental demand of eradicating corruption and ensuring good governance in the country, a people's movement led by Gen Z youth took place on September 8-9, 2025."

"In that same context, the House of Representatives elections were held on March 5, and the recently formed government has accorded high priority to eliminating all forms of corruption, policy-level, institutional, procedural, and others, within public bodies, and to promoting good governance."

Furthermore, he has warned that if any irregularities or corruption are found, the head of the respective body or implementing authority will be held primarily accountable.

"Building a competent, professional, and ethical civil service to earn public trust, maintaining courteous behaviour towards service recipients and strictly adhering to codes of conduct relating to neutrality, transparency, legal ethics, and discipline are the primary responsibilities of office heads," the circular read.

Chief Secretary Aryal has also requested submission of recommendations for policy, legal, institutional, and procedural reforms to prevent and control financial irregularities and corruption.

Progress report on Phewa Lake submitted to PM



BY PHADINDRA ADHIKARI
Lekhnath, Apr. 2

A progress report on ongoing efforts to demarcate Phewa Lake and free it from encroachment has been submitted to the Prime Minister. The report, prepared by Pokhara Metropolitan City, outlines the work carried out so far to implement the mandamus order issued by the Supreme Court. It has been sent to the Office of the Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers.

Prime Minister Balendra Shah had contacted Pokhara Mayor Dhanraj Acharya by telephone last Sunday to inquire about the progress on the lake. Mayor Acharya said the report was dispatched on Thursday.

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Today's Supplement Highlight

Lightning risk demands urgent awareness



Gurung prays for country's peace and stability at Pashupatinath

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 2



Minister for Home Affairs Sudhan Gurung visited the Pashupatinath Temple on Thursday morning, offering prayers and performing rituals.

The Home Minister also inspected the temple premises during his visit, which coincided with Hanuman Jayanti, a day of significant religious and cultural importance.

This marks Gurung's first visit to the temple since assuming office as Home Minister. Hanuman Jayanti is widely observed by Hindus as the birth anniversary of Lord Hanuman, revered as a symbol of strength, devotion, courage and loyalty.

Devotees across the country mark the occasion with prayers, hymns and religious programmes, often observing fast and visiting temples early in the morning.

A large number of devotees gathered at the Pashupatinath area from early morning on Thursday.

Authorities had made special security arrangements, and the temple premises appeared orderly and well-managed. Security personnel were seen to be more active during the minister's visit.

According to the Secretariate of the Home Minister, following the prayers, Minister Gurung wished for peace, stability and prosperity in the country.

He also took stock of cleanliness, management and facilities for visitors at the temple, directing concerned authorities to make necessary improvements.

Officials from the Pashupati Area Development Trust briefed the minister on the current state of the temple, management challenges and ongoing development works.

Remittance surge supports strong external sector performance

Inflows total Rs. 1,450 billion in eight months

BY LAXMAN KAFLE
Kathmandu, Apr. 2

Nepal's external sector has shown remarkable strength in the first eight months of fiscal year 2025/26, fueled largely by a sharp rise in remittance inflows, alongside improvements in the current account, balance of payments, and foreign exchange reserves.

According to current macroeconomic and financial situation report made public by the Nepal Rastra Bank on Thursday, remittance inflows surged by 37.7 per cent to Rs. 1,449.65 billion during the review period, a significant jump compared to a 9.5 per cent increase recorded in the same period last year.

In the month of Falgun alone (mid-February to mid-March), remittances totaled Rs. 188.64 billion, up from Rs. 151.19 billion a year earlier.

However, remittance inflows slightly decreased in the review month of Falgun compared to the previous month of Magh. During mid-January to mid-February (Magh), remittance inflows stood at Rs. 198.08 billion.

In US dollar terms, remittance inflows grew by 31 per cent to USD 10.15 billion in the review period. Such inflow had increased by 7.1 per cent in the same period of the previous year.

The rise in remittances contributed to a notable increase in net secondary income, which climbed to Rs. 1,591.66 billion from Rs. 1,149.30 billion in the corresponding period last year.

Despite a slight decline in the number of first-time labour approvals for foreign employment—273,576 compared to 317,068 last year—the number of renewals increased to 251,985 from 217,403, indicating sustained overseas labour migration.



However, ongoing geopolitical tensions involving Iran, Israel, and the United States have posed a challenge to remittance inflows in the country.

Millions of Nepalis work in the Gulf region, and if the conflict continues for a long time, both employment and remittance inflows may be affected. Nepal receives around 41 per cent of its total remittance from the Gulf region.

Forex reserves rise by Rs. 736 billion to Rs. 3,413 billion

Meanwhile, the foreign exchange reserves have increased significantly in the first eight months of the current fiscal year.

According to NRB, gross foreign exchange reserves rose by 27.5 per cent to Rs. 3,413.77 billion in mid-March 2026, compared to Rs. 2,677.68 billion recorded in mid-July 2025.

This indicates that around Rs. 736.09 billion was added during the first eight months of the current fiscal year.

In US dollar terms, the gross foreign exchange reserves increased by 18.3 per cent to 23.08 billion in mid-March 2026 from 19.50 billion in mid-July 2025.

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BULLION
(Rs. per tola)

Hallmark Gold	: Rs. 294,000/-
Worked Gold	: NA
Silver	: Rs. 4,805/-

STOCK

NEPSE	: 2,782.18
Total Amount	: 8,819,723,335.29
No. of Share	: 21,318,929

Ministers, officials discuss ways to control revenue leakage

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 2



PHOTO: TRN

Finance Minister Dr. Swarnim Wagle, Home Minister Sudan Gurung and officials during a discussion in Singha Durbar on Thursday.

A meeting of the High-Level Central Revenue Leakage Control Committee held on Thursday made decisions aimed at controlling revenue leakage and strengthening tax administration.

The meeting, held at the Ministry of Finance under the chairmanship of Finance Minister Dr. Swarnim Wagle, emphasised ensuring institutional accountability and preparing an action plan that will deliver tangible results immediately.

According to a press statement issued by the Ministry of Finance, key directives include reducing the number of non-filer taxpayers, ensuring prompt recovery of outstanding dues and refunds, and resolving tax-related disputes as soon as possible.

The meeting also decided enhancing the capacity of agencies and personnel involved in revenue leakage control and continuing systemic reforms to improve overall efficiency.

Home Minister Sudhan Gurung, Member of Parliament Sushil Khadka, Secretary of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers, Home Secretary, Finance Secretary, Revenue Secretary, department heads, and heads of all three security agencies attended the meeting.

During the meeting, Finance Minister Dr. Wagle said that the only reason the administration—capable of managing large-scale projects and events—is unable to succeed in routine tasks is the tendency not to work on the Mission Model.

He further emphasised that routine tasks should now be carried out under the Task Model, and the government has laid out a clear roadmap focused on systemic reforms, adopting policies to increase revenue by broadening the tax base while reducing rates.

Dr. Wagle said that an environment will be created to bring individuals, groups or classes involved in smuggling towards self-employment and entrepreneurship through state policies, while creating an environment for tax compliance.

Home Minister Gurung has instructed the government agencies to end the practice of shifting blame between departments and to address issues related to revenue leakage.

He also directed that a dedicated action plan be prepared with a time frame and responsibilities be set for resolving the problems of revenue leakage, that all agencies be equipped with resources, and that additional infrastructure and equipment be arranged at the checkpoints.

Uttar Kumar Khatri, Chief of Revenue Management Division at the Ministry of Finance, made a presentation on the current status of revenue, areas of risk of revenue leakage, the role of the relevant bodies in controlling revenue leakage, challenges in controlling revenue leakage, and future course of action.

During discussions, departmental heads shared efforts made and challenges faced by their respective agencies in controlling revenue leakage.

KOSHI-BENGAL CULTURE AND TOURISM FEST FROM NEXT WEEK

RSS
Jhapa, Apr. 2

Birtamod in Jhapa district is set to host the Koshi-Bengal Cultural and Tourism Festival on April 7–8. The event aims to promote the cultural and tourism heritage and potential of Koshi Province and India's West Bengal state.

The event will be held at Birtamod City Centre and will feature 18 stalls from Nepal and 12 from India.

According to the District Tourism Office, Jhapa, the event will be held at Birtamod City Centre and will feature 18 stalls from Nepal and 12 from India.

These stalls will showcase local cuisine, handicrafts, tourism packages, and related services. Visitors will have the opportunity to enjoy the food items displayed during the festival.

Tourism entrepreneur Indira Shrestha is the coordinator of the Koshi-Bengal Cultural and Tourism Festival Organising Committee. She expressed hope that the event will help strengthen cultural ties between Nepal and India and contribute to reviving the tourism industry in the region.

The festival will also include various cultural programmes, photo and art exhibitions, and discussions on the proposed Nepal-Bengal Tourism Circuit.

FARMERS, MILK COLLECTORS REMAIN UNPAID FOR LONG

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Bardiya (Gulariya), Apr. 2

Milk-producing farmers and milk collection centres in Bardiya have been facing difficulties due to non-payment for the milk they supplied. About Rs. 1.5 million are yet to be paid to farmers and milk collection centres in Bardiya.

Although some financially stable dairy cooperatives and collection centres have provided partial payments to farmers in urgent situations, most farmers have not received their dues.

Nepalgunj Dairy Distribution Corporation, Banke, Bhattarai Dairy, Bansgadhi, SK Dairy, Nepalgunj, and Kushmeshwor Dairy, Rajapur have not paid for the milk supplied over the past few months.

According to the District Milk Producers Cooperative Association Bardiya, Nepalgunj Dairy Distribution Corporation, Banke has yet to pay Rs. 5.15 million to four cooperatives.

The association has not paid the amount since October, 2025.

Similarly, Bhattarai Dairy, Bansgadhi has yet to pay Rs. 7.82 million to two cooperatives, SK Dairy, Nepalgunj has yet to pay Rs. 1 million to one cooperative, and Kushmeshwor Dairy, Rajapur has yet to pay Rs. 2.92 million to one cooperative, said Pawan Kumar Yadav, president of the association.

He said that last year nine cooperatives used to supply milk to the Nepalgunj Dairy Distribution Corporation. However, due to delayed payments, only four cooperatives are supplying milk this year.

Indra Prasad Luintel, a central member of the Dairy Producers Cooperative Union, said that withholding farmers' payments has put them in serious trouble, making it difficult for both farmers and collection centres to operate.

He said, "Farmers work hard to produce milk, and not receiving payment for it has made them distressed."

Dilip Chaudhary, chief of the Nepalgunj Dairy Distribution Project, Banke, said that preparations are underway to clear payments for milk supplied since October.

He said that efforts are being made to make the payment process smoother.

Currently, around 4,000 litres of milk is being collected daily in Nepalgunj from Bardiya, Banke, and nearby districts.

US jobless aid filings fall to 202,000

AP
Washington, Apr. 2

U.S. applications for unemployment benefits fell last week as layoffs remain sparse despite a softening labor market and rising energy costs due to the Iran war.

The number of Americans applying for jobless aid for the week ending March 28 fell by 9,000 to 202,000 from the previous week's 211,000, the Labor Department reported Thursday.

That's fewer than the 212,000 new filings analysts surveyed by the data firm FactSet were expecting and within the range of the past several years.

Filings for unemployment benefits are considered representative of U.S. layoffs and are close to a real-time indicator of the health of the job market.

A number of high-profile companies have cut jobs recently, including the software maker Oracle, which according to media reports cut thousands of workers this week.

Others that have recently announced job cuts include Morgan Stanley,Block, UPSand Amazon.

Weekly jobless aid applications have stabilized in a range mostly between 200,000 and 250,000 since the U.S. economy emerged from the pandemic recession.

However, hiring began slowing about two years ago and tapered even further in 2025 due to President Donald Trump's erratic tariff rollouts, his purge of the federal workforce and the lingering effects of high interest rates meant to control inflation.

Employers added fewer than 200,000 jobs last year, compared with about 1.5 million in 2024, according to the data firm FactSet.

Last month, the Labor Department reported that U.S. employers unexpectedly cut 92,000 jobs in February, a sign that the labor market remains under strain. Revisions also slashed 69,000 jobs from December and January payrolls, nudging the unemployment rate up to 4.4%.

The surprisingly weak employment picture in February adds to the economic uncertainty over the war with Iran, which has caused oil prices to surge more than 40% and saddled business and consumers with higher costs.

The Commerce Department recently reported that the Fed's preferred inflation gauge rose 2.8% in January compared with a year earlier. That's above the Fed's 2% target and the latest sign that prices were persistently elevated even before the Iran war caused spikes in oil and gas costs.

That persistent inflation, combined with the uncertainties brought on by the conflict in the Middle East, led the Fed to leave its benchmark lending rate alone at its last meeting and raised doubts that a cut was coming anytime soon.

1,836 cooperatives receive registration certificates

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Urlabari, Apr. 2

A total of 1,836 savings and credit cooperatives across the country have obtained operating licences from the National Cooperative Regulatory Authority.

The deadline for registration, extended for the third time, expired at midnight on Tuesday.

The government had formed the National Cooperative Regulatory Authority through an ordinance issued on December 29, 2024, amending existing cooperative laws to regulate savings and credit cooperatives operating under federal, provincial and local jurisdictions.

The authority began the registration process on November 26, 2025, after issuing guidelines for listing cooperatives primarily engaged in savings and credit transactions.

Initially, a 60-day deadline was given for registration. However, fewer than 500 cooperatives applied within that period. The deadline was then extended twice -- first until February 24 and later until March 31 -- due to low participation.

According to Bijay Paudel from the authority's IT section, 1,836 cooperatives have so far received registration certificates, while 3,989 have submitted full details. A further 804 cooperatives have completed verification and are awaiting certificates.

In addition, 5,039 cooperatives have paid fees and obtained one-time passwords (OTPs) to begin the registration process.

Paudel said the entire process is conducted online through the authority's website, where cooperatives can also submit feedback and required information.

So far, a total of 11,668 cooperatives have either completed registration, are in the process of correcting errors, or have entered the system.

According to Shashi Kumar Lamsal, Deputy Registrar and Information Officer at the Department of Cooperatives, there are around 15,000 savings and credit cooperatives in Nepal. However, the authority had called on all cooperatives --regardless of their stated objectives -- to register if more than 30 per cent of their transactions involve savings and credit activities.

Nepal has around 32,000 cooperatives in total. Of these, about 15,000 are registered primarily for savings and credit purposes, while the remaining 17,000 are registered under sectors such as agriculture, dairy, multi-purpose services, betel nut farming, beekeeping, herbs, tourism and communication.

However, cooperative campaigners say that most of these also primarily conduct savings and credit transactions, with only around 5 per cent operating in line with their original objectives.

Even if the number of cooperatives primarily engaged in savings and credit is estimated at around 20,000, the current registration figure represents just over half.

Chairperson of the National Cooperative Regulatory Authority, Dr. Khag Raj Sharma, said many cooperatives failed to register due to poor management practices.

"Many have not conducted audits for years, have not cleared taxes, or have failed to hold annual general meetings. Some have ignored the process, claiming savings and credit is not their main activity, while others in remote areas have not complied despite legal provisions introduced since 2017," he said.

He added that information about the registration process has now reached local ward levels and that the deadline will not be extended further.

Sharma also said that delays in issuing certificates were partly due to a shortage of staff. Even with the mobilisation of volunteers, it takes around 30 minutes to verify the full details of a single cooperative.

Under current provisions, cooperatives operating without registration may face accounts such as the freezing of bank accounts, restrictions on land collateral, denial of tax clearance certificates after audits and blacklisting.

Bird flu hits poultry business hard in east Nepal

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Biratnagar, Apr. 2



The poultry business in eastern Nepal has reached a point of collapse due to the bird flu outbreak seen in various districts of Koshi Province.

After the infection was confirmed in Morang, Sunsari, and Jhapa, both the production and sale of poultry have decreased sharply, causing farmers and businesspeople who have invested billions of rupees face a serious financial crisis.

According to the Livestock Department, the outbreak that began on March 17 has now spread to 16 commercial farms across the three districts.

According to the chief of the Livestock Division, Deepa Diwali, 66,032 chickens from six farms in Morang, eight in Sunsari, and two in Jhapa had been destroyed as of March 26.

Of these, 64,897 were layers and 1,135 were broiler chickens.

Due to the outbreak, demand for chicken meat in the market has dropped drastically.

Santosh Bhujel, owner of New Quality Fresh House in Biratnagar–11, Pitchra, said that business has almost come to a halt due to rumours surrounding bird flu.

"Until a few weeks ago, we used to sell up to 80 kg of meat daily. Now, it is difficult to sell even 5 kg in a whole day," he said. "I am now thinking of looking for alternatives, as I cannot even cover the shop rent."

Currently, the prices of most consumer goods have increased, but the price of chicken meat is decreasing in the market.

The basic economic principle—that reduced supply leads to higher prices—is not working in this case. Due to fear among consumers, the price of chicken meat has dropped to Rs. 360 per kg, yet buyers remain scarce.

Most consumers have started choosing goat meat or vegetarian dishes as alternatives to chicken. Due to this change in consumer behaviour, some businesspeople have stopped selling chicken meat and have begun prioritizing the goat meat business.

On the production side, farmers are also facing worsening conditions.

According to Hom Baskota, president of the Layers Poultry Farmers Association of Morang-Sunsari, demand for chicken meat has fallen by 50 per cent.

"There are 74 large layer farms in Morang and Sunsari alone. On the one hand, chickens are being destroyed, and on the other, the produced meat is not getting a market. Farmers who took loans for this business are at risk of ending up on the streets," he said.

To control the outbreak, the Ministry of Industry, Agriculture, and Cooperatives of Koshi Province has deployed rapid response teams to cull infected poultry and enforce stricter biosecurity measures.

However, as the infection has not yet been fully controlled, losses in the poultry sector are expected to increase further.

Chhantyal picks herding over city comfort

RSS
Myagdi, Apr. 2

Him Bahadur Chhantyal, 50, of Malkawang of Dhawalagiri rural municipaliy-5 spent 20 years in foreign employment. It was not a compulsion for him to leave urban life; rather, it was his own decision to live as a farmer.

On his own initiative, he chose to rear goats and sheep. In his own words, his income from his job in the UAE was sufficient to provide his family with a better life in Pokhara.

However, he listened to his inner feelings, which encouraged him to do something in his birthplace. He believed that someone should remain in the village and engage in meaningful work. Finally, he followed his heart, returned to his village, and started commercial goat farming.

He now owns the Malkawang Goat-Sheep Farm, while his family and relatives reside in Pokhara. He herds around 600 goats and sheep, moving them to the lower valley during winter and to the highlands during the warmer months.

He this time climbed down with his animals in September–October and set up a temporary shed for them near the Khalikhola Stream on the lower slopes of Malkawang during winter. He is now planning to shift back to the highlands, reaching Buki Patan near Dhawalagiri Peak in July–August.

As he says, he personally enjoys rural life, which he believes is far better, healthier, and more enjoyable than urban life with its noise, pollution, and stress.

He is not alone in this farming venture; he has employed three people from his locality. Each year, he sells around 300 goats and sheep. He invested around Rs 10 million to start the business, and his annual income ranges from Rs 3 to 4 million.

The Dhawalagiri Rural Municipality has supported him in building huts near the Khali Stream to protect the animals from the cold, said Ward Chair Amar Chhantyal. The Veterinary Hospital and Livestock Service Expert Centre has provided free vaccinations against parasites and diseases for the animals.

For the safety of the mobile sheds, Him Bahadur keeps five dogs and two horses for transporting goods. Shrinking pastureland, wildlife attacks, and the impacts of climate change are among the major challenges he faces in sustaining his herding business.

KMC to introduce night bus service

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 2



AI generated sketch of a night bus in Kathmandu.

The Kathmandu Metropolitan City (KMC), in collaboration with Sajha Yatayat, is set to launch a night-time public transport service from the Nepali New Year, Baisakh 1 (April 14), in a bid to improve late-evening mobility and safety in the capital.

The service will operate on two major routes using four electric buses.

The first north-south route will run from Lagankhel in Lalitpur through Patan Hospital, Alka Hospital, Norvic Hospital, Prasuti Griha, Trauma Centre, Bir Hospital, Kanti Children's Hospital, TU Teaching Hospital, and Shahid Gangalal National Heart Centre, before reaching Budhanilkantha. This 16-kilometre one-way route connects key medical and urban hubs.

The second east-west route will operate from Thankot via Satungal, Kalanki, Kalimati, Tripureshwor, Thapathali, Maitighar Mandala, Baneshwor, Minbhawan, Tinkune, and extend up to Tribhuvan International Airport. This route covers a distance of 20 kilometres one way.

According to KMC, the night service has been introduced to address the lack of public transportation after 8 pm, which has forced commuters to rely on expensive alternatives.

"Due to the absence of public transport after 8 pm, people are compelled to pay high travel costs. Women and girls, in particular, have faced harassment, and students are financially burdened. We are launching this service to address these problems," said Acting Mayor Sunita Dangol.

She added that the goal is to develop a modern, integrated, safe, and reliable public transport system, and the metropolis is open to further collaboration with partners to strengthen the service.

Under the plan, buses will operate from 8 pm to 11 pm at 20-minute intervals along designated stops. The vehicles will be equipped with CCTV cameras, and municipal police will be deployed to ensure passenger safety.

Family receives and cremates Inisha's body after 27 days

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Surkhet, Apr. 2



The funeral of 16-year-old Inisha Bk from Surkhet took place on Thursday. Inisha was found dead in the community forest of Birendranagar on March 7 and her family had refused to receive her body for 27 days.

The family had initially refused, claiming she was a victim of gang rape and murder.

However, following the arrest of those involved and the court's order to remand them in custody for investigation, the family agreed to receive her body.

The cremation took place at Samjhi Ghat of the Bheri River on Thursday, the family confirmed.

After a two-week investigation, the police submitted their report to the Public Prosecutor's Office last week. On Sunday, the office filed a charge sheet at the Surkhet District Court, and following a remand hearing on Tuesday, the court ordered the accused to be held in custody pending further investigation.

The Juvenile's Bench of Surkhet District Court, presided over by Judge Deepak Dhakal, ordered all four accused to remain in custody. As per the court's directive, they will be sent to a juvenile correction facility.

According to court information officer Ujjwal Rawal, due to the gravity of the case and the preliminary evidence, the accused will remain in custody until the investigation is complete. The remand hearing was part of ongoing proceedings in the Children's Bench since Monday.

Following Inisha's death, protests had erupted in Birendranagar over the incident.

NEWS BRIEFS

Lightning strike kills one

Makwanpur: One person has died and another sustained injuries after being struck by lightning in Bhainse, Bagmati Rural Municipality–1, Makwanpur district.

According to Deputy Superintendent of Police Pushkar Bogati of the District Police Office, Makwanpur, the incident occurred on Tuesday evening during a thunderstorm accompanied by strong winds and rain. The deceased has been identified as local Ajay Pahari.

Police said that 32-year-old Pahari and 37-year-old Ujjwal Thokar were walking home after fishing along the banks of the Bagmati River when they were struck by lightning. Both of them were seriously injured.

A police team was immediately deployed to the scene and rescued the injured. Pahari was first taken to Sanvi Polyclinic in Jhurjhure and later referred to Hetauda Hospital for further treatment, where doctors pronounced him dead at 23:25 pm. Injured Ujjwal Thokar is currently undergoing treatment at Hetauda Hospital.

Two arrested for cheating inmates

Kathmandu: Police have arrested two individuals on charges of defrauding money by falsely promising to secure the release of detainees on bail.

The arrested have been identified as 45-year-old Hari Bahadur Thapa Magar and 37-year-old Anita Thapa Magar, also known as Mithu Magar, both residents of Mandikhatar, Budhanilkantha Municipality, Kathmandu.

According to police, the accused allegedly targeted three defendants who are currently in judicial custody at Kathmandu's Central Prison in Sundhara for their involvement in criminal activities during the protests held on September 8 and 9. The suspects reportedly claimed they could influence a judge at the Supreme Court through personal connections to secure bail for the detainees.

(TRN)

Immense public support motivates police: IGP Karki

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 2



PHOTO:TRN

Inspector General of Police (IGP) Dan Bahadur Karki speaking at the inauguration of the newly constructed Women, Children and Senior Citizens Service Centre at Butwal Police Station on Thursday,

Inspector General of Police (IGP) Dan Bahadur Karki has acknowledged that the Nepal Police face a shortage of infrastructure, resources, and legal authority.

Despite these challenges, IGP Karki emphasised that the force has continued to fulfil its responsibilities towards citizens.

Speaking at the inauguration of the newly constructed Women, Children and Senior Citizens Service Centre at Butwal Police Station on Thursday, IGP Karki said that nearly half of Nepal Police units operate without adequate buildings, essential resources, or sufficient legal provisions, yet have remained committed to public service.

Highlighting the overwhelming support the police have recently received from the public, he said this encouragement motivates officers to work with greater accountability and responsibility.

IGP Karki reflected on the Nepal Police's 70-year journey, navigating political, cultural, and social conflicts while maintaining peace and public security, and successfully investigating crimes.

At the ceremony, Butwal Sub-Metropolitan City Mayor Khel Raj Pandey expressed gratitude for support from the UK government in establishing services for women, children, and senior citizens, as guaranteed by the Constitution. He also emphasised the need for a police outpost within the Motipur Industrial Area and requested assistance to establish it.

Other dignitaries, including Lumbini Province Police Chief and Deputy Inspector General Bhupendra Khatri, former Senior Police Superintendent and project head Indra Neupane, and Rupandehi Chief District Officer Madhav Prasad Paudel, expressed confidence that the new facility would improve access to services for women and children.

According to available information, the Nepal Police has completed and handed over 42 buildings aimed at enhancing protection and access to justice for women and children, with ten more under construction. The centre will handle complaints, investigations, rescue operations, and legal assistance for women, children, and senior citizens who are victims of violence, exploitation, or abuse.

The new building, covering 287.25 square metres within the police station premises, was constructed at a total cost of Rs. 24,143,753 and comprises 11 rooms, including living quarters, child care rooms, reception, general case registration, counselling, and conference rooms.

The two-storey facility also features disability-friendly toilets, a solar power system, security fencing, and provisions for furniture and equipment.

SMUGGLED CLOTHES SEIZED IN SUNSARI

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Inaruwa, Apr. 2

Customs authorities in Sunsari have seized a consignment of clothes brought into the country illegally. The items were recovered from a border-adjacent market, with the total value estimated at over Rs. 250,000.

Police from the Khanar checkpoint on the Koshi Highway stopped a public vehicle travelling from Biratnagar and discovered clothes worth Rs. 257,800 being smuggled without proper customs clearance.

The seized items have been taken to the Itahari Police Station and forwarded to the Sunsari Customs Office at Setubandh for further action.

16 DRIVERS HELD IN EARLY-MORNING SURPRISE CHECKING

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 2

Traffic police in the Kathmandu Valley have stepped up strict monitoring of drivers who put passengers' lives at risk. During a special operation on Wednesday and Thursday morning, a 'surprise checking' campaign led to the action against 16 drivers found operating vehicles under the influence of intoxicants.

Superintendent of Police (SP) Naresh Raj Subedi for the Kathmandu Valley Traffic Police Office said that drivers were apprehended at various police ambush points set up across the city. Notably, those caught included drivers of public transport and school buses, considered highly sensitive sectors, he said.

21 gamblers held from Lalitpur

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 2



Police have arrested 21 gamblers from Changathali of Mahalaxmi Municipality-7, Lalitpur. The gambling was taking place at Green City Villa, run by 32-year-old Deepak Bohara, originally from Sindhupalchok.

According to SSP Hobindra Bogati, Chief of Lalitpur District Police Range, Rs. 907,000 in cash was seized from the gambling den.

Investigations revealed that the second floor of Green City Villa had been booked by Mohan Krishna Shahi to host the card games.

The suspects arrested from the gambling den on Wednesday night are currently under investigation by the police.

48 NABBED FOR HARASSING PASSENGERS

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 2

Police have arrested 48 individuals accused of harassing passengers leaving Kathmandu.

A team from the Kathmandu District Police Office detained the suspects from the New Bus Park in Gongabu, Kalanki and Balkhu on Thursday.

According to police, the individuals were involved in forcibly pulling passengers and pressuring them to travel in specific vehicles from ticket counters, causing unnecessary trouble and behaving in an unruly manner.

Police Spokesperson and Superintendent of Police (SP) Pawan Kumar Bhattarai said that five persons were arrested from the New Bus Park, 24 from Kalanki and 19 from Balkhu. Further investigation is underway.

Protest erupts at Inaruwa Land Revenue Office

BY JAY KRISHNA YADAV
Inaruwa, Apr. 2

The Inaruwa branch of the Nepal Association of Legal Practitioners has staged a protest after more than a dozen people were arrested on Wednesday for harassing members of the public under the guise of providing services at the district Land Revenue Office in Inaruwa-3.

The association demanded the unconditional release of 13 individuals detained from the Land Revenue Office premises and suspended work on Thursday in protest.

According to Pratap Bhattarai, Secretary of the association, the arrests were made following complaints from service users. The Sunsari District Police Office said the detainees were involved in exploiting citizens and obstructing official work.

Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Keshav Kumar Thewe said that the arrested individuals were acting as intermediaries rather than licensed legal professionals, and investigations are ongoing.

In response, local legal and accounting practitioners shut shutters around the Land Revenue Office, halting services. Approximately 200 firms are operating in the area, offering accounting and legal services.

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

Do not wait to strike till the iron is hot; but make it hot by striking.
- William Butler Yeats

EDITORIAL

Madhes Matters Much

Madhes Province is critical to Nepal in many ways. Known as the breadbasket of the nation, the province contributes over 20 per cent to the nation's total paddy production, over 25 per cent to total maize production, and over 75 per cent to total mango production, among many other agricultural yields. Beyond agriculture, the region is also a crucial industrial hub boasting many factories, including those for leather goods, beverages, fabricated metal products, and paper materials. Madhes is also a religious and cultural hotspot. Home to the ancient Mithila civilisation and major temples, it draws millions of pilgrims and visitors from around the globe annually. At the same time, despite being rich in resources, it is also the region beset by many ills. Severe socio-economic and infrastructural issues, along with environmental crises, are holding it back. Uncontrolled mining of riverbed materials and deforestation in the Chure hills have disturbed not only the natural recharge mechanism for underground water but have also led to the drying up of rivers and degradation of fertile land into sand. To make matters worse, the region has recently faced recurring droughts, which have increased in both duration and frequency, keeping farmers awake at night and driving youth away for employment.

In an effort to address these and more issues bedevilling the province, Prime Minister Balendra Shah held meetings with newly elected lawmakers from the province on Wednesday. The MPs raised a wide range of pressing development and governance concerns, along with persistent structural challenges crippling both their constituencies and the province as a whole. Dominating the discussions were the topics of good governance, controlling corruption, and accelerating infrastructure development, particularly roads and bridges. Environmental protection and border management also featured prominently. Strong concerns were raised about protecting the Chure region, managing border areas effectively, and reopening smaller customs points that were closed during the COVID-19 pandemic. The lawmakers also highlighted longstanding social and administrative problems, bringing up the issues faced by loan-shark victims, land disputes, and difficulties service seekers face in government offices such as the CDO and land revenue offices. Additionally, water scarcity, groundwater depletion, and mobile network concerns were discussed.

After listening to all these grievances, Prime Minister Shah pledged to make concrete efforts to address all of them. Hailing from the province, the Prime Minister must have taken these matters seriously. The Prime Minister himself began his election campaign from Madhes, addressing a huge crowd of Madhesi people in the Maithili language. With deep roots in the region, he is expected to give due priority to it. Indeed, whatever happens in Madhes doesn't stay with it; it ripples across the country. For example, when Madhes suffers from unyielding drought and a plunge in food production, the whole nation faces dire food insecurity. A thriving sugarcane industry there means not only that the sugar supply is steady in Kathmandu or Pokhara, but it is also affordable. Therefore, ensuring Madhes remains healthy is critical. Since the province is hungry for infrastructural development, Madhes is in serious need of large-scale projects that enhance connectivity and ease the transportation of industrial products. Giving a dose of momentum to the long-delayed Sunkoshi Marin Diversion Project that aims to irrigate five districts in the province, besides generating electricity, can be a long stride toward this goal. At the same time, it is also vital to ensure that development doesn't come at the cost of the environment. Conservation of the Chure must not take a backseat.

Fight For Dignity

LUNGELO NDHLOVU

In a rural area around 250 kilometres from Zimbabwe's capital Harare, Kevin (real name kept anonymous for safety), a transgender man, is rebuilding his life through tobacco farming. In a country where LGBTIQ+ people face discrimination, criminalisation and social exclusion, cultivating a high-value cash crop has given Kevin something he had long been denied: economic stability and recognition.

Gender rights organisations report high levels of anxiety, depression and suicidal thinking within the community, often driven by family rejection and economic exclusion. For Kevin, relocating to a rural region in 2024 was a strategic decision. Living in urban areas had exposed him to daily discrimination linked to his gender identity, limiting both employment opportunities and personal safety.

"I needed a way to survive that didn't depend on someone else's approval. People think we have nothing to contribute except sex, forgetting that we can work and contribute to the economy like anyone else," he says. Tobacco farming offered that opportunity because it operates largely within Zimbabwe's formal economy. Unlike maize or vegetables, which are commonly sold through informal markets vulnerable to exploitation, tobacco is regulated and sold through licensed auction floors or contract farming systems.

By obtaining a grower's licence from Zimbabwe's Tobacco Industry and Marketing Board (TIMB), Kevin was able to sell his crop directly. "Before, someone else sold my tobacco for me and claimed the prices were low or payments were delayed," he says. "Now I sell it myself, and I can also access contracts to grow tobacco from companies."

This formal system provides a crucial layer of protection. At auction floors, tobacco is graded according to quality, not the farmer's identity. "The auction floor doesn't care about my gender; it cares about the grade of my leaf. For the first time, I am officially recognised as a farmer," Kevin says. That recognition means bargaining power, predictable income and access to inputs and contracts – forms of stability that are rarely available to LGBTIQ+ people in informal sectors.

However, tobacco farming is capital-intensive and increasingly affected by climate change. Kevin's first season was marked by delayed rains and a lack of infrastructure such as curing barns. To manage these challenges, he joined Mother's Haven, a rural initiative formed by queer women and transgender men.

Tsitsi Chiwa, director of Mother's Haven, says the initiative emerged as climate shocks reduced rural livelihoods. "When resources become scarce because of drought, queer people are the first to be excluded from community support," she says. "Agriculture, especially high-value crops like tobacco, became a way to secure our own income and build safety nets." Through the initiative, members pool resources for fertiliser and firewood, reducing individual risk. Still, visibility in rural areas remains dangerous.

Teddy Munyimani, programmes manager at Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe (GALZ), adds that young queer people face higher risks of anxiety, depression, trauma and low self-worth, particularly when they return to family or community environments that are not emotionally safe. "Many experience isolation, enforced silence and pressure to suppress their identity," he says.

-Development And Cooperation

Use Power With Prudence



Dr. Narad Bharadwaj

With the emergence of the Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP) as a formidable national political force in a short span of time, in sharp contrast to other large parties that took decades to achieve visibility and a credible profile, a new milestone has been set in the history of party building. This party has catapulted itself from the bottom rung of the power hierarchy to the pedestal of a ruling party through an electoral high jump not witnessed before. This event will go down in history as a new frontier of electoral possibility.

As traditional large parties lick the wounds of defeat, not knowing how they lost their foothold in their home turf, the RSP appears to be basking in the glory of victory, trying to script a new rule book for the solution of the problems besetting the country. It is yet to be seen how the party will be as effective in prescribing the recipe for economic development and navigating the diplomatic labyrinth as in mobilising the support base for enacting the electoral blitzkrieg.

Youthful force

The RSP has risen to power, projecting itself as a new and youthful force in society. They were voted to power with the overwhelming support of smartphone-holding youths and the ordinary voters who were exasperated by the inability of traditional parties to frame feasible development plans and implement them expeditiously. The RSP also significantly benefited from those political workers who voted for the RSP candidates or remained passive after crossing the corridors of allegiance to their parties.

After taking a relatively easy ride to power, the RSP is now up for facing the tougher challenge of meeting the popular aspiration for a rapid social-economic transformation. Multiple challenges await them on different fronts. To bring about a visible change, the new government must be able to stem the flow of out-migration, find alternative employment avenues to compensate for the remittance, control corruption, abolish nepotism and institutionalise meritocracy. At the same time, cultivating a democratic culture and promoting participatory governance is important.

The new government has assumed power in a complex geopolitical ecosystem marked by shifting international and regional balance of power, whose repercussions are being felt in the economies of less developed countries in the global south. As the war in West Asia moves up the escalation ladder, Nepal faces an imminent risk of having to deal with the chain effects of fuel shortages, ranging from increased transport costs, disruption in production, pressure on supply mechanisms to inflation. Given the crumbling international supply chains and resulting scarcity, completing national pride projects and implementing fresh infrastructure within the deadline can be a daunting task.

The new RSP government is endowed with the most competent, educated and youthful human resources at the leadership level, in addition to owning the widest support base and its legitimacy anchored on popularity. But that is not sufficient. Despite high motivation and strong will, the RSP leadership lacks adequate exposure to statecraft and diplomatic insights for navigating the nuances of foreign policy imperatives. Many of its leaders have publicly criticised the foreign policy management of the previous governments. With the recall of ambassadors assigned to friendly foreign countries, it remains unrepresented in international diplomatic forums. As of the writing of this article, the RSP government has not spelled out its own foreign policy vision.

> After taking a relatively easy ride to power, the RSP is now up for facing the tougher challenge of meeting the popular aspiration for a rapid social-economic transformation.

In the present moment marked by ever-intense international power rivalry, the RSP government has a paramount necessity for maintaining transparent and balanced relations with our immediate neighbours, China and India, giving priority to building relations with countries of the global south. This government has inherited certain diplomatic baggage from the previous government, which it cannot dump aside without impinging on consistency and continuity with time-tested foreign policy practices. They are the BRI agreement signed with China and the Millennium Corporation Compact (MCC) signed with the United States of America. A general diplomatic understanding is that China has taken Nepal's acceptance of the MCC project with certain discomfort.

Discourse on SPP

In this context, the ongoing discourse on the State Partnership Programme (SPP) and the connection of Tibetan Original Blood (TOB) with the Gen Z revolt could put the RSP government on edge while dealing with cross-cutting strategic interests of international powers. The ongoing conflict dynamics of the Gulf region show that seemingly harmless concessions to powerful countries eventually lead smaller countries into conflict. The five oil-rich Gulf countries are now incurring heavy losses in the form of retaliatory missile attacks from Iran because they have decided to host the US air bases on their land. Just like the Gulf States, Nepal occupies a sensitive strategic location in triangular power rivalry among China, India and the US. The new RSP government may need to tread cautiously while dealing with the geopolitical interests of these powers.

The RSP's sweeping mandate allows it to reformulate guiding policies on any sector of governance, remodel economic programmes and reinforce institutional reforms in all areas of public interest. They are also free to frame their own foreign policy priorities. But what they must not forget is the fact that the mandate of the people demands responsibility and restraint. The people have given a mandate to the RSP in a complex circumstance. It will succeed only if it treads cautiously, reinforcing collaborative ambience, remaining free from a revenge mindset and fully awake to both the domestic and geopolitical challenges.

(Dr. Bharadwaj is a former ambassador and former chairperson of Gorkhapatra Sansthan. Bharadwajnarad@gmail.com.)

On Scrapping Of Primary Level Exams



Dr. Byanjana Sharma

The new government under Prime Minister Balendra Shah or Balen has released its 100-point action plan, where different schemes are listed to be completed within 100 days. These actions are related to various fields and one of them is education. Among others, it highlights abolishing the formal examination system from the coming academic session for students in grades 1 to 5. The plan claims this will reduce academic pressure on young learners, which is absolutely true. However, there are a lot of reservations.

While I was reading the news, I started to reflect on my PhD days. When I first took my son to get admission in a primary school in Victoria, Australia, in 2008, he was in grade four. The first thing I noticed was that there were no textbooks at all, and secondly, they would not give formal examinations to primary level students. This kind of education system made me worried, as these two were the key elements of our education system. The other parents who had newly arrived in Australia, particularly from Asian countries, also shared the same feeling.

Examination system

These parental worries led me to conduct my PhD research on how literacy teaching and learning happen in primary schools in Victoria, Australia. This research drew a lot of invaluable information related to continuous learning and assessment. There is no doubt that the traditional examination system encourages students' rote learning and it does not seem to be suitable in today's world. Unfortunately, almost all of the Nepali parents and teachers have come from a background of the traditional education system, which considers a formal examination as the most effective way to assess learning outcomes.

The role of teachers is very important in implementing the things suggested by policymakers. For this, they must be qualified enough, well-trained and well-informed. The major questions here are: Are the teachers who teach in grades 1 to 5 capable of using the alternative evaluation system confidently? Do they have access to the resource materials that they need? Have they received enough training for this? Is continuous guidance available to them? The other chief stakeholder of education is parents. So, how will they take the governmental decision to abolish all sorts of internal examinations? Were they consulted before making the decision? Will they accept this normally? Such questions automatically arise in someone's mind when it comes to trying something new.

Well, in principle, it is said that the formal examinations have already been abolished in grades 1 to 3. But what is in practice? Are teachers using the alternative techniques of evaluation in reality? Is there any strong follow-up mechanism? I do not think schools are seriously following the newly introduced system of no formal examinations, but continuous evaluation. In documentation, everything looks fine but on the ground level, the same traditional practice is being continued in most of the contexts. The most challenging part of abolishing internal examinations is its implementation throughout the country.

> If everything works perfectly, then the abolition of formal paper-and-pencil tests in grades 1 to 5 sounds great. This gives students more room for enjoyable and exploratory learning.

In urban areas, it may be possible if the schools try hard but in rural areas where students do not even have proper school buildings, classrooms or furniture, this sounds like a far cry. In such areas, the only resource material teachers have is a textbook and their ultimate evaluation method is formal examinations. I agree that primary level students do not need formal examinations, as they do not measure their real capacities. During this time, they are curious to learn many things. So, they must be exposed to different subject areas, which can make their learning interesting and enjoyable. In such a learning environment, gradually, teachers can identify students' favourite subject areas, their talents or their inclinations. This helps teachers to encourage students to hone their strengths.

Even if this is the case, in the context of Nepal, introducing the new evaluation system abruptly may not achieve the expected results. There are several issues to address before implementing something new in classrooms. First of all, there must be an extensive research study including all the stakeholders, such as teachers, parents, students, curriculum designers or textbook writers and it must cover participants from all geographical regions. Their views guide the government to make wise decisions. Secondly, the concerned teachers must be trained in alternative ways of assessment and they must be provided with continuous guidance and support.

Sufficient resources

The schools must have sufficient resource materials; only having a textbook as their instructional material, teachers cannot implement an alternative evaluation system in their class. Among all, the most important factor is a regular and strong follow-up mechanism. The usual practice of teacher training in Nepal has seemed to be merely a formality so far. Teachers participate in such training programmes only for a salary increment, but not to bring positive changes in their teaching methods. They may be reluctant to use whatever they have learned due to the lack of follow-up. If they had been followed up regularly the situation of community schools would have improved a lot.

It is a natural phenomenon to resist something new in the beginning but if you cannot get away from it, you gradually start to accept it. If teachers realise that they will be going to be observed once they complete their training and go back to their classroom, they will obviously use the knowledge, skills or strategies that they have gained. Otherwise, they follow the same traditional method, which they find easy and comfortable. If everything works perfectly, then the abolition of formal paper-and-pencil tests in grades 1 to 5 sounds great. This gives students more room for enjoyable and exploratory learning.

(The author is the director of Vidya Shilpa Academy, Damak, Jhapa.)

50 YEARS AGO

THE RISING NEPAL

April 3, 1976

NTL Imparted Cars Offered For Sale To Private Citizens

Kathmandu, April 2: The motor cars imported by the National Trading Ltd. Are to be sold to private citizens too, reports RSS.

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READER'S MAIL

Preventive Strategies Against Bird Flu

This is in reference to a news report published in this daily, regarding the outbreak of bird flu in Jhapa, Morang, and Sunsari. While such outbreaks are not entirely new to Nepal, the scale and rapid spread this time raise serious concerns about our preparedness and response mechanisms.

The immediate impact is clearly visible in the large-scale culling of poultry, which has severely affected local farmers and the poultry industry. For many small-scale farmers, poultry farming is a primary source of income, and such losses can push already vulnerable households into economic distress.

Unfortunately, discussions around compensation, support, and rehabilitation often remain limited or delayed. From the perspective of public health, though the chances of bird flu in humans are low, it cannot be totally ignored. The case also points to weaknesses in monitoring and surveillance systems, biosecurity measures, and inter-country regulations regarding the movement of poultry.

It is expected that the bird flu case should be a wake-up call for the authorities to improve early warning systems, ensure timely compensation to the affected farmers, and spread awareness among the people regarding the safe handling and consumption of poultry products. Another aspect is the need to coordinate the response of local governments, animal husbandry departments, and public health organizations.

Rather than reacting after outbreaks occur, Nepal must invest in preventive strategies and long-term planning to safeguard both livelihoods and public health.

Angela Ghising
Maitighar Kathmandu

TAILPIECE

Jennifer watched as the cashier rang up her purchases. "Cash, check or charge?" she asked, after folding the items Jennifer had bought.
As Jennifer fumbled for her wallet, the cashier noticed a remote control for a television set in her purse.
"Do you always carry your TV remote with you?" the cashier inquired.
"No," she replied. "But my husband, Jeff, refused to come shopping with me, so I figured this was the most evil thing I could do to him."
+++
Young Son: "Is it true, Dad? I heard that in some parts of the world, a man doesn't know his wife until he marries her."
Dad: That happens in every country, son.

Pakistan confirms new peace talks with Afghanistan

AP
Islamabad, Apr. 2



Photo: AP

Residents and rescue workers inspect the site of an airstrike at a drug rehabilitation hospital in Kabul, Afghanistan, March 17, 2026.

Pakistan on Thursday confirmed it was holding peace talks with Afghanistan's Taliban government in China, where Beijing is mediating to broker a lasting ceasefire after weeks of fighting that have killed hundreds, disrupting trade and cross-border travel.

The confirmation of the new round of talks came a day after officials from the two sides told The Associated Press that representatives from the two countries had traveled to Urumqi in northern China, where they held the first round of talks.

It remains unclear who is representing Pakistan and Afghanistan in the latest negotiations in China.

In Islamabad, Pakistan's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Tahir Andrabi told a news briefing that the talks are ongoing. "Yes, Pakistan has sent a delegation to Urumqi, in line with its consistent position and longstanding practice of supporting a credible process that can help find a durable solution to cross-border terrorism from Afghanistan," he said.

However, Andrabi said success of the talks largely depends on Kabul.

"The burden of a real process lies with Afghanistan, which must demonstrate visible and verifiable action against terrorist groups using Afghan soil against Pakistan," he said.

Andrabi said Pakistan has never shied away from dialogue on the issue. "We remain engaged with the Chinese leadership on this issue and other relevant international partners," he said, but maintained that Pakistan is seeking written assurances from Kabul that Afghan soil will not be used for attacks against Pakistan.

There was no immediate comment from Kabul.

Though China has not officially confirmed the talks, the Chinese Foreign Ministry on Thursday said Xi Jinping's government has been "actively mediating and facilitating the resolution of conflicts between Afghanistan and Pakistan." Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said China has "always supported both sides in resolving their differences through dialogue and negotiation."

Despite the ongoing peace talks, Pakistan's operations against the Pakistani Taliban along the border with Afghanistan and other militant groups will continue, according to Andrabi.

On Wednesday, Farid Dehqan, a police spokesperson for the eastern Afghan province of Kunar, said Pakistan had fired mortars into Afghan territory late Wednesday, killing two civilians and wounding six others, including four children. He said the shelling was ongoing two hours after it started.

Andrabi dismissed the accusation, saying Pakistan conducts operations against militants with care to avoid civilian casualties.

Pakistan often accuses Afghanistan of providing a safe haven to militants who carry out attacks inside Pakistan, especially the Pakistani Taliban, known as Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan or TTP. The group is separate from but allied with the Afghan Taliban, which took over Afghanistan in 2021 following the chaotic withdrawal of U.S.-led troops. Kabul denies the charge.

The fighting between the two sides has been the deadliest since February, when Afghanistan's Taliban government said Pakistan launched strikes in Kabul and several other areas, causing mostly civilian casualties. Pakistan has said it targeted hideouts of TTP.

Pakistan has also said it is in "open war" with Afghanistan.

Tensions have been especially high since last month when Afghanistan said a Pakistani airstrike at a drug-treatment center in Kabul killed more than 400 people. The death toll could not be independently confirmed, and Pakistan has disputed the claim. It denied targeting civilians, saying it struck an ammunition depot in Kabul.

The latest peace talks in China followed earlier rounds held in Qatar and Turkey, during which the two sides agreed to a ceasefire which largely remained in place until Pakistan carried out strikes in Kabul and elsewhere in Afghanistan in late February, triggering border clashes which have subsided in recent days.

Pakistan and the Afghan Taliban have a history of tense relations, but the ongoing violence has alarmed the international community, particularly because apart from outlawed TTP, other militant groups such as al-Qaida and the Islamic State group remain present in the region and have sought to regroup.

UK gathers over 30 countries on reopening Strait of Hormuz

AP
London, Apr. 2



Almost three dozen countries will meet Thursday in an effort to exert diplomatic and political pressure to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, a vital shipping route that has been choked off by the U.S.-Israeli war against Iran.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said the virtual meeting chaired by Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper "will assess all viable diplomatic and political measures we can take to restore freedom of navigation, guarantee the safety of trapped ships and seafarers and to resume the movement of vital commodities."

Iranian attacks on commercial ships, and the threat of more, have halted nearly all traffic in the waterway that connects the Persian Gulf to the rest of the globe's oceans, shutting a critical path for the world's flow of oil and sending petroleum prices soaring.

The U.S. is not among the countries attending Thursday's meeting. Trump has said securing the waterway is not America's job, and told U.S. allies to "go get your own oil."

No country appears willing to try and open the strait by force while fighting rages and Iran can target vessels with anti-ship missiles, drones, attack craft and mines. But Starmer said Wednesday that military planners from an unspecified number of countries will meet soon to work on how to ensure security for shipping "after the fighting has stopped."

In the meantime, 35 countries including the U.K., France, Germany, Italy, Canada, Japan and the United Arab Emirates have signed a statement demanding Iran stop its attempts to block the strait and pledging to "contribute to appropriate efforts to ensure safe passage" through the waterway.

Thursday's meeting is considered a first step, to be followed by "working-level meetings" of officials to hammer out details.

Starmer said resuming shipping "will not be easy," and will require "a united front of military strength and diplomatic activity" alongside partnership with the maritime industry.

The international effort idea has echoes of the international "coalition of the willing" that has been assembled, led by the U.K. and France, to underpin Ukraine's security after a future ceasefire in that war. The coalition is, in part, an attempt to demonstrate to the Trump administration that Europe is stepping up to do more for its own security.

The urgency of stronger continental defenses has been reinforced by Trump's renewed suggestion that the U.S. could pull out of NATO.

'Spiral of violence' warned against journalists in Serbia

AP
Serbia, Apr. 2

International media organizations have joined Serbian journalists in raising the alarm about worsening press freedoms in the Balkan country, including "record levels" of physical violence, online smear campaigns and death threats against reporters.

The partner organizations of the Council of Europe's Platform for the Safety of Journalists and the Media Freedom Rapid Response groups said in a statement released this week that "the past year had seen a continued deterioration, leaving the country in a prolonged and worsening press freedom crisis."

The statement warned that "chances of further escalation in the severity of attacks against journalists remain dangerously high."A delegation visited Serbia on March 26-27, holding meetings with both the media and government representatives.

"The mission came at a time of unprecedented physical attacks on journalists and rampant online smear campaigns, led or amplified by influential members of the ruling party," the statement said. "The delegation is fearful that journalists are caught in a spiral of violence with few protections in place."There was no immediate response from the government's information ministry to a request for comment for The Associated Press.

Dozens of Serbian journalists on Wednesday blocked traffic outside the office of Serbia's populist President Aleksandar Vucic to protest the latest spate of attacks recorded during violence-marred local elections on Sunday. The Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia said that 20 reporters were attacked on Sunday, while around 100 attacks have been recorded so far this year.

International election observers at the balloting said they witnessed violence and irregularities. The vote was held in 10 municipalities throughout Serbia. It was seen as a test for Vucic after more than a year of youth-led protests that first erupted after a train station tragedy in Nov. 2024 that killed 16 people.

While he formally seeks EU membership for Serbia, the increasingly authoritarian Vucic and his government have been accused by rights groups of clamping down on democracy, including media freedoms.

International media groups said in their statement that pressure and attacks on media workers surged since the station canopy collapse in Novi Sad and the start of the student-led mass demonstrations. The group cited "alarming levels of impunity" with hardly any of the perpetrators being held accountable.

"Clear political will is needed to break the downward spiral and ensure all attacks on the media are properly sanctioned under the law," the statement said.

Trump pledges to 'finish the job' in Iran

AFP
New York, Apr. 2



President Donald Trump said US forces would keep hitting Iran "very hard" in the next two or three weeks and bring the country "back to the Stone Ages" in a televised address on Wednesday night, even as he argued that Washington had accomplished its goals but offered no clear timeline for ending the monthlong war.

President Donald Trump said US forces will “finish the job” in Iran soon as “core strategic objectives are nearing completion”, offering a full-throated defence of the war Wednesday night in his first national address since the conflict began more than a month ago.

Trump gained a wide audience and a chance to articulate clear objectives for the war after weeks of changing goals and often contradictory messages about whether he is winding down or ready to escalate military operations – even as Iran kept up its attacks on Israel and Persian Gulf neighbours and air strikes pounded Tehran.

But he spent much of his time repeating some of the same points he made in recent weeks, while also suggesting that the US was close to meeting its major military objectives in Iran and reiterating his estimated timeline for concluding operations within two to three weeks. He promised US forces would continue to hit Iran very hard.

“For years, everyone has said that Iran cannot have nuclear weapons. But in the end, those are just words if you are not willing to take action when the time comes,” Trump said.

The president added, “In these past four weeks our armed forces have delivered swift, decisive, overwhelming victories on the battlefield,” and slammed previous decades of US policy, saying past presidents “made mistakes and I am correcting them”.

“The situation has been going on for 47 years and should have been handled long before I arrived in office,” he said.

Trump also acknowledged rising oil prices and volatile financial markets, but insisted those effects would be temporary. Polling shows many Americans feel the US military has gone too far in Iran – even as more American troops move into the region for a possible ground offensive. Trump opted not to deliver such an address closer to when the US and Israel first launched attacks, raising questions about whether it is now too late for his speech to break through.

Iranian missile fire targeted Dubai in the United Arab Emirates and Israel just before Trump’s speech. At an Easter lunch Wednesday afternoon, the president said of Iran: “We could just take their oil. But you know, I’m not sure that the people in our country have the patience to do that, which is unfortunate.”

“Yeah, they want to see it end. If we stayed there, I prefer just to take the oil,” Trump said. “We could do it so easily. I would prefer that. But people in the country sort of say: ‘Just win. You’re winning so big. Just win. Come home.’ And I’m OK with that, too, because we have a lot of oil between Venezuela and our oil.”

PRISM

Ducklings rescued from storm drain

Texas: Firefighters, animal services officers and public works employees teamed up in Texas to rescue a family of ducklings from a storm drain.

The Farmers Branch Fire Department said on social media that firefighters worked together with local animal services officers and public works employees when the baby ducks fell into the drain on Tuesday.

The "team quickly lifted the grate and safely rescued all the little ones -- no injuries, just a lot of happy peeping," the post said.

The ducklings were reunited with their mother, who was watching the rescue from nearby.

Orphaned chick gets feather duster as surrogate mom

Iowa: Animal rescuers in Iowa shared a photo of an orphaned baby chick being comforted by its new surrogate mother -- a feather duster.

The Animal Rescue League of Iowa said on social media that the baby chick was brought in by someone who found it wandering alone by the Saylorville Dam.

The chick was taken to ARL's Second Chance Ranch, where the care team set about making it comfortable.

"We set them up in an enclosure with heat lamps and feather dusters to mimic a mama hen, then placed them under the feather dusters.

They caught on right away, snuggling in under their 'mom' to get warm," the post said.

Agencies

TODAY IN HISTORY

956 – Polyeuctus of Constantinople is elected as patriarch of Constantinople.[2]
1043 – Edward the Confessor is crowned King of England.
1882 – American Old West: Robert Ford kills Jesse James.
1922 – Joseph Stalin becomes the first General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.
1968 – Martin Luther King Jr. delivers his "I've Been to the Mountaintop" speech; he was assassinated the next day.
1993 – The outcome of the Grand National horse race is declared void for the first (and only) time.
2010 – Apple Inc. released the first generation iPad, a tablet computer.

New funding boosts electricity access in Africa

AP
Kenya, Apr. 2



Photo: AP

A view of electric wire poles and cables towering over the Kibera informal settlement in Nairobi, Kenya, Tuesday, March 31, 2026.

Before dawn in the narrow alleys of Mathare, an informal settlement in Kenya's capital, Agnes Mbesa flicks on a single bulb hanging from her tin roof. For years, the mother of three relied on smoky kerosene lamps. Now electricity lights her home and powers the small shop she runs from her veranda.

"Before the power came, we closed early because it was too dark," Mbesa said. "Now people come even at night, and I can earn something."Hundreds of kilometers (miles) from Nairobi in Sori, western Kenya, fisherman Samuel Oketch tells a similar story. After a solar mini-grid reached his village, he bought a freezer to store his catch. Fish that once had to be sold quickly at low prices can now be preserved and transported to nearby towns.

"These small changes mean a lot," Oketch said. "Electricity gives us options. My wife can now sell (fish) without being taken advantage of by brokers who had the freezers."

Their experiences with electrification funded by philanthropic and government sources highlight how expanded energy access can transform the lives and improve livelihoods. More than 730 million people worldwide still lack access to electricity, about 600 million of them in Africa. Limited access constrains health care, education, digital connectivity and job creation.

New financing aims to accelerate progress. The European Investment Bank pledged more than $1.15 billion in March for renewable energy projects across sub-Saharan Africa, including hydropower, solar, wind and grid expansion."This funding is Europe's commitment to provide cleaner, more affordable, and reliable energy for hundreds of millions of people in Africa," said European Investment Bank President Nadia Calviño.

The Rockefeller Foundation also announced in March at the Africa Energy Indaba in Cape Town, South Africa, that it will invest an additional $10 million to support electrification programs in at least 15 African countries.

The funding will be deployed with the Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet to strengthen national programs and support government reforms.

"African governments are choosing to transform their energy sectors by committing to national energy compacts and investing in African-led solutions," said William Asiko, senior vice president at the Rockefeller Foundation.

The investments support the Mission 300 initiative led by the World Bank and the African Development Bank, which aims to connect 300 million people in sub-Saharan Africa to electricity by 2030 through grid expansion and decentralized solutions such as mini-grids and off-grid solar. Across much of Africa, where national electricity grids are often unreliable, mini-grids have emerged as a key alternative. These small, community-level systems, typically powered by solar or hybrid energy, generate and distribute electricity locally.

GOVT AID, NOTICES ONLY THROUGH OFFICIAL MEDIA

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 2

The government has decided to publish and broadcast all types of government advertisements exclusively through government-owned media outlet, including the publications of the Gorkhapatra Corporation.

According to the Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers, the decision aims to maintain austerity in government expenditure, ensure uniformity and transparency in publishing and disseminating of advertisements and notices, and to promote the government-owned media outlets.

The government has issued a circular mandating that all advertisements and public notices issued by federal, provincial and local governments be disseminated exclusively through state-owned media.

The Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers has directed all public bodies to ensure that notices related to public procurement and other matters are published and broadcast through media outlets funded by the Government of Nepal, provincial governments, and local levels.

Furthermore, payments for such publications and broadcasts must be made directly from government or public funds into the accounts of the respective media institutions.

The circular also stipulates that the rates and any discounts must be officially approved by the respective media organisations.



PHOTO: SUJAN GURUNG/TRN

Students taking School Education Examination (SEE) at an exam centre in Jorpati, Kathmandu, on Thursday.

Police arrest 28 with drugs

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 2

A police team on routine patrol has arrested 28 individuals from various parts of the country in possession of illegal drugs.

According to the Central Police News Desk, one person was arrested from Bhantabari in Koshi Municipality-8 of Sunsari, seven from Narsingh Bagan in Bhadrapur Municipality-5 of Jhapa, one from Kankai Municipality-6 Camp, and three from Ratupul in Mithila Municipality-10 of Dhanusha.

Similarly, one person was held from Dharapani in Dhanushadham Municipality-9, one from Janaki Rural Municipality-5 of Banke, three from Nepalgunj Sub-metropolitan City-16, two from Baluwatar in Tikapur Municipality-9 of Kailali, and one from Bharuwa in Lamkichuha Municipality-1.

BUSINESSMAN BHATTA HELD

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 2

Businessman Deepak Bhatta has been arrested in connection with an ongoing money laundering investigation.

The Central Investigation Bureau (CIB) of the police took Bhatta into custody from Kathmandu, according to Additional Inspector General and Chief of the Bureau, Manoj KC.

As the money laundering probe progressed, the Department of Immigration had placed Bhatta on its blacklist. Last Monday, the Department sent a letter requesting that his passport be suspended.

Bhatta is accused of manipulating major contracts and procurement.

SEE English exams concludes peacefully nationwide

BY RAMAN PAUDEL
Kathmandu, April 2

The Secondary Education Examination (SEE) in compulsory English concluded peacefully across the country on Thursday, the first day of exams.

According to the National Examination Board, all examination centers completed the compulsory English examination. "Overall, the exam of compulsory English has been completed peacefully across the country as per our schedule. We have received positive reports from all examination centres," Tuka Raj Adhikari, controller of the NEB, stated.

Talking to The Rising Nepal, Adhikari said that despite the tight schedule due to the March 5 election, SEE has started in a peaceful manner.

According to Adhikari, examining the answer sheets has began at the designated exam centres on Thursday evening.

There have been reports that checking of answer copies began at examination centres in many districts on Thursday evening, said Adhikari.

"The District Education and Coordination Unit will decide about those exam centres where testing cannot be conducted due to security or various reasons," said controller Adhikari.

Likewise, Laxmi Marasini, Information Officer at the NEB, informed that most of the exam centres have started the checking process on Thursday evening.

With this, the SEE directives issued by Minister for Education, Science and Technology, Sashmit Pokharel, on Wednesday have come into effect. In accordance with the same guidelines, examining the answer sheets started on Thursday evening, and the results are expected to be made public within a month.

According to the new directives, examiners are now required to stay overnight at exam centers to evaluate answer papers. This rapid testing format is the first in the history of the SEE.

The new directive introduces a revised method for assessing answer copies, which is expected to enable the release of SEE results within a month. Adhikari said that this new approach, along with the assessment process, will also change how results are published this time.

The directive issued on Wednesday includes guidelines for publishing results as well. Section 12 specifies that results can be released at the provincial level.

For this year's SEE, 1966 examination centres were designated. Students will sit for the compulsory Nepali exam on Friday.

35 JUVENILES, EIGHT PRISONERS ATTEND FROM BANKE

BY SIRAJ KHAN
Nepalgunj, Apr. 2

A total of 43 juveniles and prisoners from two juvenile rehabilitation centres and two prisons in Banke sat for the Secondary Education Examination (SEE), which began on Thursday.

A total of 35 juveniles from Jayandu Juvenile Rehabilitation Centre in Dudhua Rural Municipality and the Naubasta Juvenile Rehabilitation Centre, along with eight prisoners from Nepalgunj and Naubasta Prisons, participated in Thursday's exam.According to Dhanasudan Chaulagain, Head of the Education Development and Coordination Unit (EDCU), Banke, 32 juveniles appeared from Jayandu Centre and three from Naubasta Centre.

MPs push governance...

Likewise, CPN (UML) Vice Chairman Ram Bahadur Thapa described his party's electoral setback as a temporary defeat and a serious lesson, promising a constructive and honest opposition. He raised concerns about the violent incidents of September 8 and 9 during the Gen Z movement, questioning their purpose and alleging they were well-planned.

Thapa called for impartial investigations into public property destruction, arrests of senior leaders, and the use of students in unrest, insisting that accountability be ensured. While congratulating the Rastriya Swatantra Party on its miraculous electoral victory, he also recognised contributions from civil society, state institutions, and the media, paying tribute to martyrs who sacrificed their lives for national sovereignty.

Similarly, Nepali Communist Party Vice Chairman Barshaman Pun reflected on past failures, acknowledging that previous communist governments had not fully utilised strong electoral mandates. He recalled that the Maoist-led government after the 2008 elections, as well as the near two-thirds majority secured in 2017, fell short of meeting public expectations.

Pun urged the ruling party to treat these experiences as lessons, highlighting that electoral victory should not lead to arrogance and defeat should not breed resentment. He called for cooperation between the government and opposition in the national interest.

Pun also made clear that key constitutional achievements, including democracy, republicanism, and inclusiveness, must remain intact. He reaffirmed his party's role as a constructive yet critical opposition, pledging support for policies promoting social justice, economic development, and job creation while urging the government to act responsibly and protect national independence.

Shram Sanskriti Party Chairman Harka Raj Rai Sampang proposed a transformative approach to governance, promoting the principle of one municipality, one industry; one house, one employment. He urged the government to legislate for public access to services, protect natural and cultural resources, end corruption, and implement transparent policies.

Rai highlighted urgent priorities, including providing legal ownership to landless citizens and squatters, ensuring equal pay for former Gurkha soldiers, and linking education with production, innovation, and technical solutions. He proposed a three-day academic and four-day practical work week for school children.

Rai also demanded accountability for the Gen Z movement incidents and called for investigations into the assets of ministers and MPs. He pressed the government to prioritise peace, security, healthcare, drinking water, and social welfare, including reviewing old age allowances and student organisations.

Stressing on national sovereignty, Rai recommended annulling any treaties detrimental to Nepal's self-respect and deploying the Nepali Army to safeguard borders. He said that governance must serve all citizens, not only the privileged, urging lawmakers to act responsibly.

Likewise, Rastriya Prajatantra Party MP Gyanendra Shahi stressed that victims of cooperative fraud should be compensated from the property of the criminals responsible, rather than government funds. He called for action against embezzlers, transparent and accountable governance, and adherence to democratic norms.

Shahi demanded timely justice for high-profile cases, youth employment, citizenship rights for non-resident Nepalis, and attention to underdeveloped regions such as Karnali Province.

Similarly, independent MP Mahabir Pun pledged impartiality, describing his role as transcending party politics. Drawing on 33 years of social work and a brief tenure as Education Minister, Pun highlighted challenges in Nepal's education sector, including politicisation, corruption, and interference.

He advocated depoliticising university leadership, removing the Prime Minister as university chancellor, and appointing qualified academics. He proposed a Science, Technology, Research and Innovation Fund to utilise domestic youth talent, combat corruption, ensure good governance, and allow overseas Nepalis to vote in the upcoming local and provincial elections.

The House meeting is scheduled for 11 am on Sunday, April 5.

Progress report on...

"As the Prime Minister showed concern, we have sent details of the work completed so far," he said.

The report was forwarded through Khagda Raj Paudel, who was elected from Kaski Constituency No. 1 and currently serves as Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation. The government's 100-point good governance plan includes a commitment to begin removing encroachments on Phewa Lake within three months.

A facilitation committee, formed under the coordination of Gandaki Province Chief Minister Surendra Raj Pandey, has already created a subcommittee to demarcate the lake boundary and install boundary poles along its perimeter.

In 2018, the Supreme Court issued a mandamus order declaring land registrations along the lake carried out after 1974 invalid. It directed authorities to maintain a 65-metre standard from the lake's edge, beautify vacant land and remove both natural and human-made encroachments.

A meeting of the facilitation committee on Wednesday also decided to lift restrictions on land located beyond the 65-metre boundary. Mayor Acharya said that structures built on illegally registered land will now be removed, while details of structures eligible for compensation will be prepared and submitted to the federal government.

"The Prime Minister's interest has encouraged us. We believe the federal government will carry out its responsibilities on time," he said. "We have talked enough about Phewa Lake - now it is time to act."

The government had earlier formed a committee in 2011 under the coordination of Bishwo Prakash Lamichhane to study encroachment and define the lake's boundaries. The committee submitted its report on May 16, 2012.

Based on that report, the Supreme Court issued a landmark verdict assigning responsibilities to all three tiers of government regarding the conservation of Phewa Lake. Although the order was to be implemented within six months, it has remained largely unimplemented for seven years.

Lamichhane said that proper implementation of the court's order would mark a historic step in conserving the lake. "The decision can be implemented. What is needed is political will," he said. "A coordinated effort by all three levels of government is essential to protect Phewa Lake," he added.

Remittance surge...

Of the total foreign exchange reserves, the reserves held by NRB increased by 25.7 per cent to Rs. 3035.11 billion in mid-March 2026 from Rs. 2414.64 billion in mid-July 2025.

Reserves held by banks and financial institutions (except NRB) increased by 44 per cent to Rs. 378.66 billion in mid-March 2026 from Rs. 263.04 billion in mid-July 2025. The share of Indian currency in total reserves stood at 21 per cent in mid-March 2026.

Based on the imports of eight months of 2025/26, the foreign exchange reserves of the banking sector is sufficient to cover the prospective merchandise imports of 21.4 months, and merchandise and services imports of 18.5 months.

The ratio of reserves-to-GDP, reserves-to-imports and reserves-to-M2 stood at 55.9 per cent, 153.8 per cent, and 40.8 per cent respectively in mid-March 2026.

Current account BOP surplus widens

Similarly, the country's current account posted a robust surplus of Rs. 552.85 billion, significantly higher than Rs. 197.03 billion recorded in the same period last year. In US dollar terms, the surplus stood at USD 3.88 billion, up from USD 1.46 billion.

In the review period, net capital transfer amounted to Rs. 12.59 billion. In the same period of the previous year, such a transfer amounted to Rs. 6.41 billion. Similarly, during the review period, Rs. 10.84 billion in foreign direct investment (equity only) was received.

In the same period of the previous year, foreign direct investment inflows (equity only) amounted to Rs. 8.47 billion. Similarly, the balance of payments (BOP) remained strong, registering a surplus of Rs. 658.35 billion, more than double last year's Rs. 310.37 billion.

In US dollar terms, the BOP surplus reached USD 4.61 billion.

CASTE CHANGE NOTICE

I hither to known as CHITRA BAHADUR THAPA alias CHITRA BAHADUR BISHWOKARMA s\0 BOM BAHADUR BISHOWOKARMA District Kapilvastu Shivaraj municipality ward No. 1 Nepal, CITIZEN No. 14292 and Date of Birth Bs 2030/08/12 Have change my name and shall here after be known as CHITRA BAHADUR BISHWOKARMA .

Government of Nepal
Ministry of Home Affairs
Department of National ID and Civil Registration
Singha Durbar, Kathmandu

List of Shortlisted Firms/Company

First Publication Date: 3nd April 2026

Ref:- EoI No: 082-83-ICB-NIDMIS-01, Published on 17 December 2025

The evaluation of Expression of Interests (EOI) submitted for above referenced EOI Notice "Support and Maintenance of National Identity Management Information System" has been completed. We notify that the following consulting firms has been shortlisted according to section 30(5) of the Public Procurement Act, 2063(Nepal) and rule 70(5) of the Public Procurement Regulation, 2064(Nepal).

S.N.	Name and address of Shortlisted Firms
1.	IRIS CORPORATION BERHAD IRIS SMART TECHNOLOGYCOMPLEX TECHNOLOGY PARK MALASIYA BUKIT JALIL KUALALUMPUR KUALALUMPUR 57000
2.	Gravity Group Ind. LLC University City Road, Industrial Area 13, Sharjah Sharjah 150199
3.	IN Smart Identity France, 2 place Samuel de Champlain Courbevoie 92400

Government of Nepal
Ministry of Health and Population
Department of Health Services
Management Division
Teku, Kathmandu, Nepal

Re-Invitation for Electronics Bids

Date of publication : **3 April 2026**

Invitation for Bids No. : DOHS/G/ICB-18.2/EDCD/2082-083

1. Government of Nepal, Department of Health services invite the International Competitive Bid for the procurement of Anti-Rabies Vaccine 1.0ml (ARV) under the contract identification number (IFB No. **DOHS/G/ICB-18.2/EDCD/2082-083**) to be delivered at Central Store Teku, Kathmandu.
2. Department of Health Services Management Division Teku, Kathmandu invites ***electronic*** bids from eligible bidders for the ***procurement of Anti-Rabies Vaccine 1.0ml (ARV)*** under **International Competitive Bidding – Single Stage Two Envelope Procedure.**
3. Under the Single Stage, Two Envelope Procedure, Bidders are required to submit simultaneously two separate sealed envelopes, one containing (i) the Technical Bid and the other (ii) the Price Bid, both in turn enclosed in one sealed envelope as per the provision of ITB 23 of the Bidding Document.
4. Eligible Bidders may obtain further information and inspect the bidding documents at the office of Management division Teku Kathmandu or may visit PPMO e-GP system **www.bolpatra.gov.np/egp**.
5. The bidder shell chooses to submit their bid electronically may download the bidding documents for e-submission from PPMO's e-GP system **www.bolpatra.gov.np/egp**. Bidders, submitting their bid electronically, should deposit the cost of bidding document NRs. 5,000.00 or USD. 50.00 in the following Rajaswa (revenue) account as specified below.
   Information to deposit the cost of bidding document in Bank:
   Name of the Bank : Rastriya Banijya Bank, Teku, Kathmandu
   Name of the Office : Department of Health Service,
   Office Code No. : 370-013-501
   Office Account No. : 1000200010000
   Revenue Head No. : 14229
6. Pre-bid meeting shall be held at ***Meeting Hall of Management Division Department of Health Services Teku Kathmandu*** at ***12:00 Hr 13 April 2026.***
7. Electronic bids must be submitted to the office of Management Division Department of Health Services Teku Kathmandu by through PPMO's e-GP system **www.bolpatra.gov.np/egp** on or before ***13: 00 Hr*** on ***24 April 2026*** Bids received after this deadline will be rejected.
8. The bids will be opened in the presence of Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at ***13:10 Hr 24 April 2026*** at the office of ***Management Division Department of Health Services Meeting Hall***. Bids must be valid for a period of ***90 days*** from the date of bid opening and must be accompanied by a scanned copy of the bid security in pdf format, amounting to a minimum of NRs ***23,00,000.00 (USD. 23,000)*** which shall be valid for **30 days** beyond the validity period of the bid (i.e., **22 August 2026**)
9. If the last date of purchasing and /or submission falls on a government holiday, then the next working day shall be considered as the last date. In such case the validity period of the bid and bid security shall remain the same as specified for the original last date of bid submission.

NIFF kicks off



BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 2

The 9th edition of the Nepal International Film Festival (NIFF) began in Kathmandu on Thursday.

The festival, being held at the QFX cinema hall in Civil Mall, Sundhara, was inaugurated by the Government of Nepal's Communications Secretary, Laxmi Kumari Basnet.

The event opened with the screening of the Iranian film My Daughter's Hair, directed by Hisham Farahmand.

Organised by the Nepal Film and Cultural Academy (NFCA), the festival will run until April 6.

At the opening session, there was a strong presence of domestic and international filmmakers, including Bollywood director Ramesh Sippy. During the festival, both Nepali and foreign films will be screened.

The organisers believe that the festival will grow into a major film celebration at both national and international levels.

On the second day of NIFF, a dialogue programme titled Cinema Dialogue: With Ramesh Sippy and Rajesh Hamal is scheduled to be held at the Tourism Board. The session will feature a conversation between director Sippy and actor Rajesh Hamal, focusing on their personal experiences, cinematic journeys, and the future of film.

The festival will also include a five-day AI film workshop aimed at young filmmakers. In addition, a Feature Pitch programme has been arranged to connect writers directly with producers, allowing them to present their story ideas.

This edition will feature 88 films from 40 countries competing in the festival. Additionally, six Chinese and four Russian films will be screened outside the competition.

Singa hot water spring attracts tourists

BY AMRIT PRASAD POUDEL
Myagdi, Apr. 2



PHOTO: TRN

Evening Ganga Aarti and cultural programme held at the Tatopani pond area.

The Singa Tatopani kunda (hot water spring) area in Beni Municipality-4 of Myagdi has recently begun attracting increased attention due to its growing religious and cultural activities.

The number of devotees visiting the site has risen significantly since the Tatopani Kunda Management Committee began organising evening Ganga Aarti, which has been held regularly every Monday since mid-July 2024.

Krishna Khadka, Chairperson of the Tatopani Kund Management Committee, said that the Ganga Aarti, organised every Monday evening, sees active participation from devotees who come to bathe in the hot water spring.

Most devotees visiting Tatopani for religious reasons take part in the Aarti and experience spiritual bliss. He added that this has helped establish the hot water spring area not only as a natural healing site but also as a religious centre.

Regular morning and evening prayers are held at the Jalakundaleshwar Mahadev Temple located in Tatopani. A priest has been appointed to manage temple services and conduct worship, ensuring that religious activities continue consistently.

The expenses for conducting the Aarti programme are covered through voluntary donations from devotees and religious enthusiasts.

According to Sudip Gautam, the temple's priest, the main attractions include Jaldhara, Abhishek, Rudri recitation, the lighting of 108 lamps every Monday and the Ganga Aarti.

Alongside religious activities, the cultural aspect of the Tatopani area is also progressing strongly. The Tol Bikas Sanstha has been organising cultural programmes every Friday evening. The main objective is to preserve local art, culture, and traditions and pass them on to the new generation.

Such events have provided an important platform for local artists to showcase their talents. In addition, these initiatives have played a significant role in preserving and promoting original art and culture, said Deepak Baniya, President of the Singa Tatopani Tol Bikas Sanstha.

For talented artists, this has become not only an opportunity to perform but also a source of income. Tatopani, a beautiful confluence of religion and culture, is now also developing as an attractive destination for domestic tourism.

Eugene Mirman rescued from fiery crash

AP
New Hampshire, Apr. 2



Bob's Burgers voice actor and comedian Eugene Mirman suffered serious injuries after his car crashed into a toll plaza and caught fire, before he was pulled from the blazing wreck by a state trooper assigned to protect Kelly Ayotte.

The crash happened shortly before midday on Tuesday, when a northbound electric vehicle struck the Bedford Toll Plaza and burst into flames, according to New Hampshire State Police. Governor Ayotte and her security team came upon the scene soon afterwards, and a trooper along with two bystanders pulled Mirman from the burning vehicle through a window, said State Police Colonel Mark Hall. The governor, who got out of her vehicle and retrieved a fire extinguisher, was never in danger, he added.

"Eugene was in a very frightening car accident," Mirman's agent, Jay Glassner, said in a statement on Wednesday. "He wants to thank the bystanders, state police, first responders and hospital staff who saved him. He is grateful to be recovering. At this time, we kindly ask for privacy for Eugene and his family as he focuses on healing from his injuries."

Hall described the rescuers' actions as "heroic".

"Without hesitation, they put themselves in danger to help someone in urgent need," Hall said.

State police identified the driver as Yevgeny Mirman, 51, of Massachusetts. Born in Moscow and raised in Massachusetts, Mirman is best known for voicing Gene Belcher in more than 300 episodes of Bob's Burgers and its film adaptation, as well as for roles in Flight of the Conchords, Delocated and Archer.

Ayotte said she and her husband were praying for the driver's recovery.

"I want to thank the trooper on my security detail and the bystanders who stepped in to help at the scene for their brave, life-saving efforts," she said in a statement.

The crash remains under investigation, and no charges have been brought.

KALASH YATRA HELD ON HANUMAN JAYANTI

BY JAYA KRISHNA YADAV
Inaruwa, Apr. 2

A Kalash Yatra was held in Inaruwa, Sunsari, on the occasion of Hanuman Jayanti.

Organised by Sunsari Bajrang Dal, the Kalash Yatra was held in the district headquarters, Inaruwa, with the participation of hundreds of organisations.

Satya Narayan Yadav of the organising committee said that a grand Kalash Yatra and a large motorcycle rally were organised to celebrate the infinite grace, power, courage, and devotion of Lord Hanuman.

On Thursday, the Kalash Yatra, which began near Sunsari Bridge in Inaruwa Municipality-4, circled the city and concluded with the immersion of the Kalash at the Shri Ganinath Temple.

Participant Laxmi Sah said that the Kalash Yatra helped spread the message of Sanatan Dharma, culture, and unity.



Zendaya set for busy 2026 schedule

AGENCIES
New York, Apr. 2



Zendaya is preparing for an exceptionally full schedule in 2026, with a string of major releases that will see her dominate both cinema and television screens.

The award-winning actress will first appear in The Drama, due to premiere on 3 April, followed shortly by the much-anticipated third series of Euphoria on 12 April. After a brief pause, she returns to the big screen in The Odyssey, directed by Christopher Nolan, arriving in cinemas on 17 July.

Just a fortnight later, Zendaya will reunite with Tom Holland for the fourth instalment of the Spider-Man franchise, before rounding off the year with her role in the third Dune film, scheduled for release on 18 December.

Speaking to Fandango, Zendaya expressed gratitude for the continued support of her fans, while also joking that audiences might tire of seeing her so frequently. She added that she intends to "go into hiding for a little bit" once her busy release slate concludes.

Despite her planned break, the actress is expected to return to public life in summer 2027 to promote Shrek 5. In the film, she will lend her voice to Felicia, the daughter of Shrek, alongside returning cast members Mike Myers, Eddie Murphy and Cameron Diaz.

Ranbir to do Lord Rama's roll in Ramayana

AGENCIES
New Delhi, Apr. 2



Bollywood star Ranbir Kapoor has been revealed in his first look as Lord Rama in producer Namit Malhotra's highly anticipated film Ramayana, one of the most ambitious cinematic projects in Indian cinema.

The makers unveiled a two-minute and 38-second teaser, titled Rama, on Thursday to mark the occasion of Hanuman Jayanti. Directed by Nitesh Tiwari, the film is being produced by Prime Focus Studios in association with DNEG, the eight-time Oscar-winning visual effects studio, along with Monster Mind Creations, backed by Yash.

Inspired by the timeless Sanskrit epic attributed to Valmiki, the film features a star-studded cast. Kapoor leads as Rama, alongside Sai Pallavi as Sita and Yash as Ravana. Sunny Deol will portray Hanuman, while Ravi Dubey appears as Lakshmana. The supporting cast includes Kajal Aggarwal, Rakul Preet Singh, Lara Dutta, Arun Govil, Kunal Kapoor, Adinath Kothare, Sheeba Chaddha and Indira Krishnan.

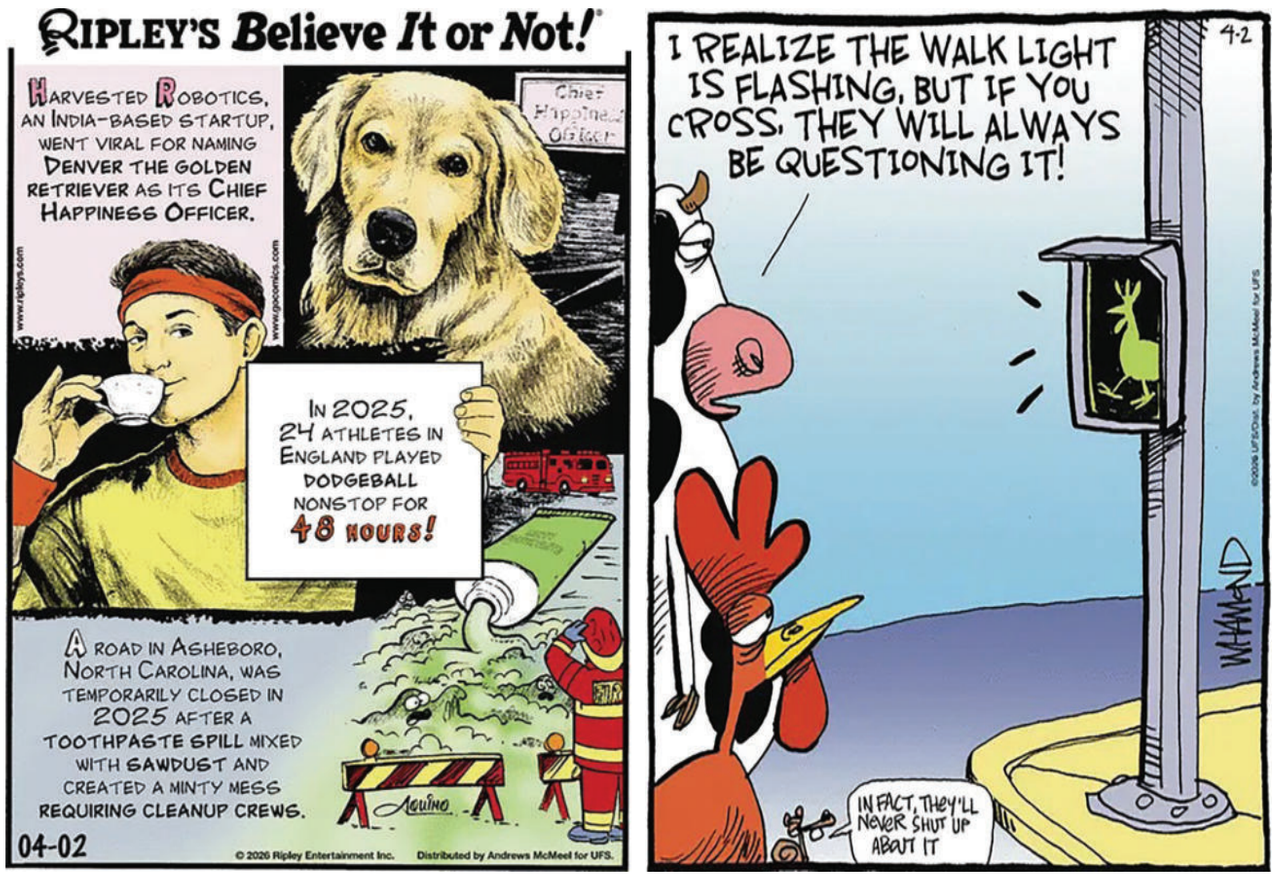
The musical score is being composed by acclaimed musicians Hans Zimmer and A. R. Rahman. Planned as a two-part global release, Ramayana: Part 1 is scheduled for Diwali 2026, with Part 2 to follow during Diwali 2027. Both instalments have been filmed for IMAX.

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Tiwari, best known for directing the blockbuster Dangal, brings to screen the legendary tale of Prince Rama and Sita, whose exile in the forest is disrupted when Ravana abducts her. The first film is expected to conclude with the abduction, while the second will focus on Rama's battle to rescue Sita and defeat the demon king, setting the stage for a grand cinematic retelling of one of mythology's most enduring stories.

CARTOON

gocomics.com



Army dominate Madhesh, Sudur Paschim survive Gandaki scare

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 2

Tribhuwan Army Club maintained their winning run to go one point clear at the top of the league table, while Sudur Paschim Province climbed to second place in the Men's Prime Minister (PM) Cup on Thursday.

Army produced a commanding performance to defeat Madhesh Province by six wickets in Janakpur. Sudur Paschim, meanwhile, clinched a thrilling two-wicket win over Gandaki Province in Birgunj.

The fourth win took Army to the summit with nine points from five matches. Sudur Paschim also secured their fourth victory, trailing just behind with eight points from five games. Army had shared a point with APF in their third outing, while Sudur Paschim lost their second match against Madhesh.

Madhesh, on the other hand, suffered their first defeat of the tournament and slipped to fourth place with seven points from five matches.

Nepal Police Club, also on seven points, sit third thanks to a superior net run rate. Gandaki endured their third defeat to remain ninth, just above bottom-placed Koshi Province, who are still winless.

At Ramjanaki Multipurpose Stadium, Army opted to field first and bowled out Madhesh for 184 in 48.3 overs. In reply, Army's top order made light work of the chase, reaching 185 in 29.2 overs for the loss of four wickets.

Opener Trit Raj Das set the tone with a fluent 69 off 72 balls, striking seven boundaries and three sixes. He shared a brisk 67-run stand with skipper Binod Bhandari, who smashed 32 from 29 deliveries. Basir Ahamad capped his fine all-round display with an unbeaten 41, guiding his side home. Kushal Malla added 24 runs.



PHOTO: CAN

Tribhuwan Army Club's Trit Raj Das (front) and Kushal Malla running between a wicket during the PM Cup match against Madhesh Province in Janakpur on Thursday.

Mohammad Aadil Alam claimed two wickets, while Pawan Sarraf and Bishal Shusling picked up one apiece for Madhesh.

Earlier, Anil Sah's 42 and Shusling's patient 51 were the only major contributors for Madhesh.

In Army's bowling, Ahamad starred with 3 for 31, supported by Naren Saud and Shahab Alam with two wickets each.

Malla's tight spell of 1 for 14 from seven overs and Pawan Karki's 1 for 15 from three overs further restricted the scoring.

At Narayani Cricket Ground, Sudur Paschim successfully chased 191 in 39.2 overs. Gandaki, after electing to bat, struggled to build momentum and were dismissed for 190 in 49 overs.

Sudur Paschim endured early jitters at 24 for 3, but opener Abhishek Pal steadied the chase with a patient 66 off 93 balls, striking six boundaries and two sixes. His 68-run stand with Dipak Bohora (35) revived hopes before Gandaki captain Bipin Khatri struck back with a five-wicket haul. At 146 for 7, the match was delicately poised.

Narayan Joshi's unbeaten 45 proved decisive, guiding Sudur Paschim home alongside Sher Malla, who contributed a crucial two not out. Khatri finished with 5 for 36, while Krishna Poudel, Subash Bhandari and Bishow Karki took one wicket each.

Earlier, Arjun Kumal top-scored with 44, while Khatri added a fighting 30. Contributions from Deepak Dumre (22), Bhandari (24), Poudel (15), opener Gaurav BK (14) and Cibrin Shrestha (13) lifted Gandaki to 190. But their innings was undone by Sudur Paschim's disciplined attack, with skipper Malla claiming 5 for 42 and Ashok Dhami adding two wickets.

Barca and Atletico clash in La Liga before CL quarters



PHOTO FILE: AP

Barcelona's Marcus Rashford in action in front of Rayo's Isi Palazon during a La Liga soccer match in Spain.

AP
Madrid, Apr. 2

Barcelona and Atletico Madrid square off in La Liga this weekend in a preview of their series in the Champions League quarterfinals.

It will be the first of three games between Barcelona and Atletico in 10 days. The Spanish rivals will face each other five times in less than two months. They also met in the semifinals of the Copa del Rey in February and March when Atletico advanced to the final 4-3 on aggregate.

The Champions League games will be on Wednesday in Barcelona and on April 14 in Madrid. Barcelona is looking to make it to the Champions League semifinals for the second season in a row and Atletico is seeking to get back to the last four for the first time since 2017.

Saturday's league matchup will see Barcelona trying to remain at least four points ahead of Real Madrid at the top, while Atletico — which trails Barcelona by 16 points — will seek to get back into third place past Villarreal. Atletico sits one point behind Villarreal.

Real Madrid visits relegation-threatened Mallorca earlier on Saturday. Real beat Atletico 3-2 at home in the teams' last game before the international break.

Other matchups

Real Betis on Saturday hosts Espanyol, which has yet to win in 12 games this year.

Sevilla fired coach Matías Almeyda before the international break and visits last-placed Oviedo on Sunday. Sevilla has won only one of its last eight matches.

Out of action

Barcelona will face Atletico without forward Raphinha, who will be out for about five weeks after injuring his right hamstring while playing for Brazil in a friendly against France.

Raphinha scored twice in Barcelona's 7-2 rout of Newcastle in the second leg of the Champions League round of 16 and is set to miss both matches against Atletico in the last eight.

Players to watch

Real Madrid forwards Kylian Mbappé and Vinícius Júnior faced each other in the Brazil-France friendly during the break. Mbappé, La Liga's scoring leader, netted once in France's 2-1 win over Brazil, a result that helped send the French squad back to first place in the FIFA rankings.

Vinícius couldn't find the net and was criticized by many for his lacklustre performance for Brazil. He scored twice for Madrid against Atletico in the derby before the break.

Off the field

Barcelona star Lamine Yamal is coming off a tough match for Spain after Spanish fans repeatedly chanted anti-Muslim chants during the friendly against Egypt on Tuesday in Barcelona.

Yamal, who is Muslim, came out with a statement on Wednesday saying the fan chants at RCDE Stadium were disrespectful and intolerable. He said it didn't matter that the chants were not directed at him personally.

"I understand that not all fans are like that, but to those who chant these things: Using a religion as a taunt on the field makes you look ignorant and racist," he wrote on Instagram. "Football is for enjoying and cheering, not for disrespecting people for who they are or what they believe."

ITALY SOCCER PRESIDENT RESIGNS AFTER AZZURRI MISS THIRD STRAIGHT WORLD CUP

AP
Rome, Apr. 2

Italy's soccer federation president resigned amid political pressure on Thursday, two days after the Azzurri failed to qualify for a third consecutive World Cup.

Gabriele Gravina's decision will likely lead to the ouster of Italy coach Gennaro Gattuso, too.

Italy Sports Minister Andrea Abodi called for a change in the country's soccer leadership after Gravina oversaw two sets of disappointing World Cup qualifiers.

"It's evident to everyone that Italian soccer needs to be overhauled," Abodi said on Wednesday, "and that process needs to start with new leadership at the FIGC (federation)."

Italy's chances of reaching this year's tournament in North America ended on Tuesday after a penalty shootout loss to Bosnia and Herzegovina in a qualifying playoff.

Gravina took charge of the federation in 2018 replacing Carlo Tavecchio, who also stepped down after Italy failed to reach that year's World Cup.

The defeat to Bosnia added more misery for four-time champion Italy after being eliminated by Sweden and North Macedonia, respectively, in the qualifying playoffs for the last two World Cups.

Italy's World Cup struggles go back all the way to 2010 and 2014 when it failed to advance from its group on both occasions.

The Azzurri's last World Cup knockout match was in 2006 when they won the title by beating France in the final after a penalty shootout.

Gravina did oversee Italy's European Championship trophy in 2021.

An election was called for June 22 to elect a new FIGC president.

Mancini, Inzaghi, Conte, Allegri

Gattuso took over from the fired Luciano Spalletti in June with the squad already in crisis mode following a defeat at Norway in its opening qualifier.

The Azzurri then went on a six-match winning streak before losing again to Norway in November to finish second in their group and end up in the playoffs again.

Among those being mentioned to replace Gattuso are Roberto Mancini, Simone Inzaghi, Antonio Conte and Massimiliano Allegri.

Kickboxing seminar starts in Ktm



PHOTO: NSC

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 2

The Black Belt Grading and Referee/Coach Seminar, organised under the Kickboxing Development Programme, was formally inaugurated in Kathmandu on Thursday.

The opening ceremony was jointly inaugurated by Ramcharitra Mehta, Member-Secretary of the National Sports Council, and Nasser Nassiri, President of the Asian Kickboxing Confederation.

Speaking at the event, Member-Secretary Mehta said such programmes play a vital role in enhancing the skills and competence of participants.

President Nassiri, who arrived in Nepal on Wednesday, highlighted the growing popularity of kickboxing in Nepal. He also informed that the Asian Kickboxing Federation is a recognised body under the Olympic Council of Asia.

Around 200 participants, including coaches, athletes and referees from all seven provinces and three departmental teams- Nepal Police, Nepal Army and Armed Police Force- are taking part in the seminar.

The event is being hosted by the National Kickboxing Association Nepal and will conclude on Saturday.

The inauguration ceremony was also attended by NSC Executive Committee member Kamal Bahadur Bhattarai, along with members Himal Kumar Shrestha, Jagat Singh Dhami and Sant Kumar Mehta, among others.

Women's Asian Cup finalists accuse governing body over equal money

AFP
Sydney, Apr. 2

Women's Asian Cup finalists Japan and Australia renewed calls Thursday for equal prize money with the men's tournament in a direct challenge to the Asian Football Confederation and accused the governing body of "ignoring" previous requests.

Japan beat hosts Australia 1-0 in the final in Sydney on March 21 in front of more than 74,000 fans, the biggest crowd in the competition's history.

It concluded a tournament which made global headlines after seven members of the Iran squad sought asylum after being branded "traitors" at home for refusing to sing the national anthem. Two players remain in Australia.

The prize fund for last month's Women's Asian Cup was widely reported to be $1.8 million, the same as in 2022, compared to the $14.8 million on offer at the men's equivalent.

In February a report issued by the global footballers' union FIFPRO said the event could generate up to $82.4 million in revenue.

A record 350,000 fans came through the turnstiles during the three weeks of the tournament.

In a joint statement released by FIFPRO on Thursday, the Japan and Australia teams said: "Despite the success of this tournament it remains the lowest-paying continental tournament in the world and inequality between the men's and women's game remains.



PHOTO:AFP

"Our pre-tournament invitation to the AFC to work together on equal prize money, a guaranteed share to all players, and to co-develop a lasting legacy has so far been ignored.

"Equal prize money would be transformational for all players and football communities across Asia.

"Equal prize money would help to raise standards at all levels of the game across our region.

"Equality benefits players in the short term, but football in the long term."

The statement said that the tournament "was played against a backdrop of real challenges that the AFC and the players need to work in partnership to address".

It highlighted the plight of the Iranian team and how India's players were left with kits that did not fit them properly.

South Korea's squad had threatened to boycott the 12-team tournament in the build-up over "poor" treatment by the national federation compared to their male counterparts.

"These challenges can only be tackled together in partnership," the statement added.

"As we look forward, we expect FIFA to honour its pledge of equal prize money for the 2027 FIFA Women's World Cup and we will continue to fight for equality and respect for women players across our region."

AFP has contacted the Kuala Lumpur-based AFC for comment.

SNIPPETS

French Embassy hosts Friendly Table Tennis



Kathmandu (TRN): A special friendly table tennis programme under the Relay Around the World initiative was held in Kathmandu on Thursday. The event was organised by the French Embassy in Nepal, with support from the Nepal Olympic Committee and the All Nepal Table Tennis Association at the Earthquake Memorial Multi-Purpose Covered Hall of the Nepal Olympic Committee in Dallu. The event aimed to strengthen diplomatic and community ties through sport. Professional play-ers, local students and stakeholders came together on a single platform, reflecting the spirit of the Global Embassy Sports Initiative. French Ambassador to Nepal, Virginie Corteval, described sport not only as competition but also as a powerful tool for peace, harmony and the building of a healthy civic society. Nepal Olympic Committee President, Jeevan Ram Shrestha, said the event embodied core values of excellence, respect and friendship, and further strengthened bilateral relations between Nepal and France at the people-to-people level. The relay, conducted by French embassies worldwide, has become a global campaign to bridge social and cultural divides.

Olympian Baidya honoured

Kathmandu (TRN): The Nepal Women's Chamber, under the Nepal Chamber of Commerce, honoured taekwondo athlete Sangina Baidya on Thursday. Baidya is the first Nepali women player to play in Olympics. As part of the Chamber's Diamond Jubilee celebrations, along with Baidya other 75 pioneering women from different fields were honoured at the function. Baidya represented Nepal at the 2004 Athens Olympics after successfully passing the qualification stage. She was not only the first Nepali woman but also the first Nepali athlete overall to qualify and compete at the Olympics. Sangina, who won gold at the 1996 Asian Taekwondo Championships in Melbourne, also claimed gold medals at the 8th and 9th South Asian Games.

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Friday, April 3, 2026
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Lightning Disasters Demand Urgent Action



Navaraj Pokharel



Lightning is one of the many forms of climate-related natural disasters. It creates a shock wave heard as thunder, causing massive, rapid heating of the air that expands explosively. It usually creates fewer human casualties at once than other disasters, making it less discussed. At the same time, lightning damage often occurs in forests and rural areas, and due to the lack of immediate data and detailed incident reporting, its recurring impacts receive limited attention. Most of the news reports on lightning focused on the damage caused, with no attention given to timely awareness and response. People often take such incidents lightly as a result. The vulnerable communities have limited discussions on lightning prevention, control, and protection measures.

During a lightning strike, the electrical energy involved can reach temperatures of up to 90,000 degrees Celsius—about three times hotter than the surface of the sun. The interaction between two or more charged clouds generates this immense energy.

According to meteorological data, the months of Chaitra, Baisakh, Jestha and Asar experienced the highest number of lightning strikes. Between 2019 and 2024, 372 people lost their lives, and property worth millions of rupees was damaged due to lightning, according to the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Mitigation Authority.

A 2021 study published in an American journal analysed 2,501 lightning incidents from 1971 to 2019, resulting in 1,927 deaths and 20,596 people directly or indirectly affected. In the past ten years alone, more than 800 people have died due to lightning, and the trend continues.

> To mitigate the risk of hundreds of human casualties and millions in economic loss each year, it is important to take measures and spread awareness, especially during peak season.

Lightning hazard

The scientific basis of lightning is electric current. This phenomenon is the process of electricity colliding with positively and negatively charged clouds. Such electric current that occurs regularly in the atmosphere causes damage only when it reaches the ground. The electrical current emitted in the atmosphere causes damage when it reaches the ground or settlements. Generally, the height of clouds in the atmosphere ranges from a few metres to ten kilometres. 'Human-made' means it can also be a method of bringing the electrical current in the atmosphere to the ground. If there is a human settlement near buildings, trees, towers or electric poles, then such a current can take people's lives and affect other human comforts and facilities. Additionally, reports indicate that lightning has struck some aircraft flying in the sky. When lightning strikes electrical transformers and telecommunication towers, it can also damage the towers and personal electrical equipment connected to them.

The electric current from such a collision may not harm the atmosphere, but it can harm people and damage property when it reaches the ground. This type of lightning strike is known as a cumulonimbus cloud. It collides in the atmosphere and can only be seen by humans. Lightning caused by the collision between clouds and the ground causes human damage.

Nowadays, the frequency of lightning has increased. According to the Ministry of Home Affairs, more than 100 people die annually due to lightning. There is no exact information about the damage apart from death.

A fully reliable real-time lightning prediction system has not yet been developed. However, short-term forecasting sensors are available. The Department of Hydrology and Meteorology has begun monitoring lightning by installing sensors in nine locations across the country, with support from the World Bank. These include Tumlingtar, Biratnagar, Simara, Bhairahawa, Kathmandu, Pokhara, Nepalgunj, Surkhet and Dhangadhi. This sensor monitors lightning statistics. Such sensor devices help adopt awareness by monitoring lightning.

A systematic settlement system and the construction of tall buildings, poles, and towers are essential for electrical or nuclear safety to avoid the effects of lightning. To avoid lightning scientifically, an earthing system should be established.

For this, a conductor is used from the top of the building or tower or pole to conduct and discharge the positive and negative charged electric current to the ground. For the earthing system, engineers develop a system of conductive wires, conductors, and surrounding conductive solid objects that neutralise the electric current before it is discharged into the ground. It discharges the excess electric current in the atmosphere.

In rural areas, take precautions like avoiding building houses or living near tall trees. Avoid travelling through forests or areas with tall trees when there is lightning or thunder.

At the same time, it is preferable not to build houses or settlements near forests and forest areas. During rainy weather and lightning, citizens should stay away from metal poles and objects, electrical appliances, and other electronic devices. During lightning, one should stay away from tall and metal objects. Sometimes lightning also causes large natural fires, causing large disturbances in forests.

Precautions

Lightning occurs more likely during rainfall and when dark cumulonimbus clouds are present. When a thunderstorm or lightning is near, go indoors immediately and avoid using phones or electrical devices. If you cannot reach a safe building, stay away from trees, open water, metal objects, vehicles, and wires. Avoid open areas and instead stay in low-lying places, small structures, forests, or bushes while being careful of flash floods. Take shelter in a strong building if possible and wait, as lightning usually lasts a short time. Do not use wired phones during thunder. If lightning strikes someone, immediately take them to the hospital—it is safe to touch them. In open areas, crouching low to the ground is safer than lying flat.

The probability of lightning is higher during rain and when there are many dark cumulonimbus clouds in the sky. Therefore, if you are indoors at such times, personal safety measures include avoiding electrical appliances and staying warm. However, to reduce the overall risk of lightning, it is necessary to raise awareness at the individual, community and national levels.

By identifying places where lightning strikes are frequent and installing a conductive pole and earthing system in that area, we can avoid its possible damage. It is necessary to take initiatives at the individual, local, community and national levels to reduce the damage caused by lightning. To mitigate the risk of hundreds of human casualties and millions in economic loss each year, it is important to take measures and spread awareness, especially during peak season.

(Pokharel is an environmentalist.)

Economic Transformation Through Inclusive Governance



Balkrishna Silwal Sharma

> The question is not whether the government has the right ideas, but whether it can deliver them at speed and scale.

Nepal is in decisive moment now. The newly formed government is raising expectations of people. People are tired of the incremental changes. They want a visible improvement in income, jobs, and daily life. The government now has to translate the election mandate into economic growth.

For a long time, the country has invested in access to education, but this expansion has not translated into real changes for employment or productivity. Many school-going children are unable to complete their education, and the number of dropouts increases as they grow older. Once they come to the job market or for their employment, there are wide gaps in learning and earning. This is not merely an education issue; it is an economic constraint. The country's economic growth is not inclusive.

Women, who are more than 50 per cent of the total population, remain largely excluded from the productive sector. Both urban and rural women predominantly engage in informal, low-income activities that offer minimal chances for progress. The heavy unpaid carework burden limits their time and mobility, gets them market information, and actively engages them in the labour market. The dual failure of education to generate skills and growth that includes women is the true cause of our economic stagnation.

The current government led by Balendra Shah has reflected the emergence of a comprehensive government, unveiling 100 agendas for governance reforms with priority.

These action points may seem administrative or sectoral at first glance, but they represent a broader economic strategy. Economic growth will come from general reform that improves governance, reduces friction, and unlocks productivity across sectors.



Economic growth will definitely begin with a capable state. The hundred action points focus on governance reform by reducing the number of ministries, simplifying service delivery, making processes within the prescribed time, and establishing the prime minister's delivery unit. By these measures, transaction costs fall, the efficiency of the services rises, and economic activity thrives. Similarly, investor confidence will also increase due to a well-improved procurement system, established accountability, and strengthened anti-corruption mechanisms.

There are other strong emphases in a hundred action points, such as digital governance, further reinforcing this direction. Providing online services, digital signatures, creating unified platforms, and adopting a 'data once' approach are productivity enhancers. Digital services are the means to reduce corruption, shorten processing time, and lower costs for business. The reform agendas prioritised IT infrastructure, legal frameworks, and integrated systems. In fact, the reform agenda recognises digital transformation's economic competitiveness.

The state alone cannot drive economic growth. The private sector has a vital role. The simplification of investment procedures, establishment of a one-door system, facilitation of the start-up process, and expansion of SME credit included in the 100-point agenda address long-standing barriers to promoting economic growth across the nation. For business security and removing transport bottlenecks and creating a transparent investment environment, there has been a clear way out.

We understand that addressing the labour market is essential for sustaining growth. The action points align closely with the need to bridge the education-employment gap.

The agendas have clearly emphasised establishing employment and skill centres, depoliticising education, and improving the examination system for establishing outcome-oriented education. The real transformation will come from reorienting skills with market demand, expanding technical and vocation education, and creating pathways from school to work. Without these changes, we will definitely continue to produce graduates without opportunities, perpetuating unemployment and migration.

Half of the population is female, and no economic growth is possible without their active involvement. It is not a social add-on but a core growth driver. Implementing SME financing, CSR alignment, business security, and skill development inclusively will significantly benefit women. Success is only possible when structural barriers such as access to finance, asset ownership, and the burden of unpaid care work are addressed properly. Economic growth without women's economic empowerment will remain unsuccessful, but growth that includes them will multiply.

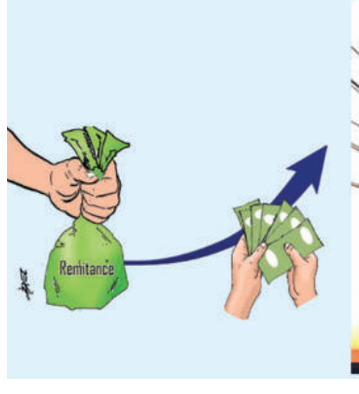
The focus of government on infrastructure and sectoral reform is another critical aspect. It is paramount to ensure timely completion of road projects, improve the energy system, integrate water management, and promote tourism in the country to increase productivity and job opportunities. Most of the population in the country rely on agriculture for their livelihood. The agenda focuses on agriculture to strengthen the real economy rather than depending on remittances.

Financial and revenue reforms included in the agendas are also key to improving the tax system, enforcing e-billing, reforming customs, and integrating funds that can enhance revenue mobilisation and reduce leakages. These reforms can improve fairness and transparency, encourage compliance and widen the tax base.

Land is one of Nepal's most underused resources. The agenda has included measures related to land management, urban development, and use of assets. Similarly, resolving cooperative saving issues and ensuring social stability are very crucial aspects for maintaining public trust and financial confidence. The comprehensive agendas have highlighted that economic growth is not the result of a single policy or sector but of a system that functions efficiently, inclusively, and predictably.

The comprehensive agendas from the current government are popular. However, the challenge lies in implementation. In the past, government had many policies, strategies, and plans, but the lack was in execution. The success of agendas will depend on prioritisation, coordination, and accountability. The question is not whether the government has the right ideas, but whether it can deliver them at speed and scale. If it succeeds, the nation can definitely move from a cycle of low productivity and high migration to one of inclusive economic growth and opportunity.

(The author is an international development consultant.)





WTO Facing Structural Challenges



Durga Prasad Bhusal



In 2025, the World Trade Organization (WTO) marked its 30th anniversary of its establishment. The creation of the WTO significantly expanded the multilateral trading system beyond the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade to the General Agreement on Trade in Services, Intellectual Property (TRIPS) and a Binding Dispute Settlement Mechanism (DSU).

The WTO was founded as a single, rules-based multilateral trading system, with the overarching objective of raising living standards, creating employment, and promoting sustainable development. Its core principles such as non-discrimination, trade liberalisation, reciprocity, transparency, fairness, and inclusivity remain central to its mandate. The preamble to the Marrakesh Agreement explicitly acknowledges the need to integrate developing countries, including LDCs, into global trade through special and differential treatment, technical assistance, and capacity-building support.

Proponents of the multilateral trading system often argue that expanded global trade has helped lift over 1.5 billion people out of extreme poverty. Around 98 per cent of trade takes place under WTO architecture, while the share of trade under Most Favoured Nations is still around 72 per cent. The TRIPS Agreement has supported innovation and public health, while agreements on trade facilitation and customs valuation have contributed to reducing trade costs.

The Trade Policy Review Mechanism has enhanced transparency by enabling peer review of members' trade policies and practices and their consistency with WTO rules and ministerial decisions. Furthermore, the WTO has delivered extensive technical assistance and capacity-building programmes aimed at enabling developing members and LDCs to implement WTO obligations under several agreements and integrate their trade into the global economy.

The WTO's dispute settlement mechanism has handled over 600 disputes, successfully resolving the majority of them. However, developing countries and LDCs may continue to struggle with meaningful integration into global trade and with meeting domestic needs through imports of goods and services. LDCs' share in the global trade is around one per cent. Furthermore, the onerous implementation costs of the TRIPS agreement, coupled with stringent TBT and SPS requirements, impose disproportionate burdens on weaker economies such as Nepal.

Despite its accomplishments, the WTO is currently facing severe challenges in its history. Questions appear large over its ability to sustain a fair, open, transparent, and predictable trading system in the 21st century. Are three-decade-old rules still fit for purpose? Do WTO members need some rules to address the era defined by e-commerce, digital trade, artificial intelligence, and digitally delivered services?

The paralysis of the appellate body since 2019, alongside the resurgence of unilateral reciprocal tariff measures, has further escalated tensions among members and undermined confidence in the system. At the same time, long-standing frustration over the slow progress of the Doha Development Agenda, launched in 2001, continues to erode trust, particularly among developing members, including LDCs. Adding to these problems is the increasing demand to include multiple-country agreements, like the Investment Facilitation for Development Agreement and the Agreement on E-commerce, in the rules set by the Marrakesh Agreement. In 30 years, only two multilateral agreements, named the Trade Facilitation Agreement and the Fisheries Subsidies Agreement, have been concluded; views are around the idea that consensus-based decision-making has become excessively cumbersome.

> Despite the differences in several agendas among the members, the vast majority of WTO members remain convinced that rule-based trade is the cornerstone of global economic stability and growth.

Trade ministers in the 12th session of the Ministerial Conference committed to work towards necessary reform of the WTO. They also envisioned reforms to improve all its functions while reaffirming the foundational principles of the WTO. In addition, ministers instructed the General Council and its subsidiary bodies to conduct the work, review progress, and consider decisions, as appropriate, to be submitted to the next Ministerial Conference. With this mandate, WTO bodies initiated reforms in the functioning of the committees and councils, focusing on agenda setting, the use of digital tools, and meeting management, among others. In MC13, trade ministers again instructed the General Council and its subsidiary bodies to continue to conduct this work and report progress as appropriate to the next ministerial conference while acknowledging the progress made. However, the reform initiative taken during the period failed to meet the expectations of today's needs.

Despite the differences in several agendas among the members, the vast majority of WTO members remain convinced that rule-based trade is the cornerstone of global economic stability and growth. Members also acknowledge that without deep, comprehensive, and credible reform, the WTO will remain unable to overcome its current impasse or meet 21st-century expectations.

A careful look at the WTO's structure is needed so it can be more flexible, faster, and stronger, supported by quick talks on current issues and new rules that can address unfair trade practices and major problems that have led to frustration and a loss of trust. Thus, WTO reform is widely expected to feature prominently at the 14th WTO Ministerial Conference scheduled to take place in Cameroon from 26 to 29 March 2026. The reform agenda identifies and considers decision-making, development, special and differential treatment, and levelling the playing field, including transparency, while leaving the DS reform aside.

In the WTO, consensus-based decision-making has been the norm, although voting remains legally possible in limited circumstances. Each member has one vote, which makes the WTO different from the World Bank and IMF because it treats all members equally, no matter how big or small their economy or trade volume is. Some members argue that the paralysis surrounding the appellate body and the resistance to incorporating plurilateral agreements reflect the shortcomings of consensus decision-making.

While rule-making has undoubtedly slowed, attributing the WTO's challenges solely to consensus would be misguided and does not bring a positive result for the future. Consensus remains fundamental to the WTO's legitimacy, inclusivity, and equity, particularly for small economies and LDCs. There is collective frustration over the organisation's inability to make decisions; however, the core problem lies not in the mechanism itself but in political will, trust deficits, and insufficient engagement. Replacing consensus with majority voting risks undermining implementation and deepening divisions. This current practice provides each member a veto to protect their interests, and it works very well for a smaller economy like Nepal.

WTO rules should enable growth, structural transformation, and the integration of developing members, including LDCs, into global value chains.

However, development needs vary widely, encompassing industrialisation, trade diversification, digital inclusion, food security, SMEs' development, women's participation, environmental sustainability, and technology transfers, among others. More than 150 S&DT provisions exist across WTO agreements, primarily offering flexibility in implementation. Many of these provisions were time-bound and have expired.

Current reform debates focus on making S&DT more precise, targeted, effective, and needs-based while grappling with contentious issues of differentiation and eligibility. In this regard, first, S&DT should not be viewed as a panacea that would address all the trade- and investment-related challenges of developing members, including LDCs. Second, how to define what S&DT is need-based and whom, and how to differentiate among the similar set of the members while members take S&DT as treaty-embedded rights. Third, there is not a clear and objective framework within the WTO to distinguish between developed and developing members, as self-designation persists. While China has announced that it will not seek S&DT in future negotiations, it retains its developing-country status.

Disparities exist between founding and acceding Members, as well as between developed countries and developing Members, particularly in areas such as industrial subsidies and agricultural domestic support.

Many WTO agreements, negotiated three decades ago, are increasingly misaligned with today's realities. Transparency obligations remain weak and formal, notification compliance seems uneven.

The provision of Annex VII of ASCM does not address the challenges of graduated countries from the LDC status. The reform agenda should address this discrimination. Furthermore, changes in this area need to tackle deep-rooted unfairness, especially the greater responsibilities placed on new members and the limited options for industrial growth in developing countries.

In conclusion, trade ministers in the MC14 in Cameroon will utilise this opportunity to have open and frank discussions on all the reform agendas, including dispute settlement reform, and will be able to present a clear roadmap ahead to revitalise the WTO, making it more relevant for the future generation. This time ministers will translate the rhetoric of WTO reforms into reality while addressing the difficulties of developing countries and redefining their status.

(The author is an undersecretary at the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies.)

Skywatchers To Enjoy April Wonders



Dr. Rishi Shah



The night skies of this month would provide us with optimum opportunities to immerse ourselves into the cryptic conundrums connected with planets, stars and constellations along with innumerable exciting entities existing in our universe. The mysterious planet Mercury is moving through captivating constellations Aquarius (water bearer) and Pisces (fishes) during the day. Trying to marvel at it minutely on the eastern horizon before dawn is irksome. On 03 April the fleet-footed Mercury reaches the greatest western elongation from the Sun. It would bestow avid sky-gazers with the best time to relish Mercury since it will be at its loftiest position above the horizon in the morning sky. Otherwise, one should refrain from looking for the planet low in the eastern sky just before sunrise even through optical aid, it could be harmful to eyesight. Permanent blindness could be deplorably triggered. The vagarious planet Venus can be visualised briefly in the western sky as evening twilight fades to darkness. Thereafter, it will be venturing with valour towards the horizon and be evanescent.

It is shimmering with stars that sketch the comely constellations Aries (ram) and Taurus (bull). The magnificent planet Mars would be marching in the sky during daytime through the conjuring but consoling constellation Pisces (fishes). Monitoring it in solar glare, even succinctly at sunset low-lying in the western sky, is riling. Planet Jupiter can be joyfully admired in the western sky after sundown. It would dip drastically towards the horizon after a few hours by midnight. Its Jovian moons can be applauded astonishingly with the sparkling stars of the commanding constellation Gemini (twins). Castor (Kasturi) and Pollux (Punarbasu) can be appreciated ardently above Jupiter. This Delphic star-duo represents two heavenly twin stars that are quite different in detail. Castor is a complex sextuple system with hot bluish-white stars and dim red dwarfs, while Pollux is a single cooler yellow-orange giant star that is merely 34 light-years away. Appearing as a solo star, Castor is acceptably 49 light-years away. The resplendent ringed planet Saturn stays out of sight. It sails across the sky during the day through the constellation Pisces.

ASTRONOMY

Planet Uranus can be perceived pithily in the western sky after twilight during the beginning of the month in the constellation Taurus. Glimpsing it would then be grim and grievous. The far-flung blue-hued planet Neptune is skimming across constellation Pisces too close to the Sun and is lost in the Sun's severe scintillation. The full moon betides on 02 April, while the new moon is realized on 17 April. The full moon has been popularly recognised as the pink moon because it marked the advent of moss pink, or wild ground phlox, which is greeted as the first spring flower. It bears the moniker of 'fish moon'sh moon to describe the time when shad swam strenuously upstream to spawn. New Nepali Year, Bikram Sambat (BS) 2083, is heartily welcomed remembered,onMother's Dayothers' day is celebrated cheerfully on 17 April. Easter is remembered rejoicing on 05 April.

The relativelylatively Arcanee arcane Lyrid meteor shower usually unveiling a scant 20 meteors per hour at its maximum, can be gleefully watched during the night of 22 April to the morning of 23 April this year. It is produced by particles left behind by iconic comet C/1861 G1 Thatcher. The shower runs annually from 16 to 25 April.

These meteors can manifest bright dust trails that last for several seconds. The first quarter moon will set shortly after midnight, leaving tenebrous skies for presenting a shiny show of speedy shooting stars. Apt viewing could be done from murky neighbourhoods away from menacing city lights but after midnight.

Meteors seemingly spring out from the

NIGHT SKY IN APRIL 2026

radiating point sitting strangely north-east of the border of congenial constellations Lyra (harp) and Hercules (mythical strong hero). When our planet trudges through the track left by the comet, the piercing pieces of debris (dashing at a whooping 47 kilometres per second) would wildly burn and disintegrate up in the terrestrial atmosphere, stretching softly to circa 60 kilometres above the earth's surface, thereby dramatically displaying dazzling lights whizzing in the sky. Lyrids will peak during the wee hours (01 AM local time) of 23 April under a 34 per cent illuminated waxing moon dwelling delightfully in the constellation Gemini. The Lyrid meteor shower is one of the oldest known meteor showers, wowing for 2700 years. The first recorded observation of these fas and furiously fulgent meteors was made by Chinese experts in 687 BC and later then in 15 BC. In 1136, a report from Korea chrthe northeast'.onicled the shower 'mentioningords mentioning many stars flew from northeast.

They are not as prolific as the famed August Perseids or the December Geminids; Lyrids can amuse and amaze onlookers with as many as over 100 meteors per hour. Sadly, however, no outburst of Lyrid activity is expected in 2026. Although Lyrids are a medium-strength shower, they have the potential to show off outbursts or an unexpectedly numerous copious number of meteors during pinnacle activity. The Lyrids counted curiously 650 meteors per hour in 1803 (witnessed from Virginia, USA), awesomely 430 meteors per hour in 1922 (Greece), gingerly 110 meteors per hour in 1945 (Japan), and simply 250 meteors per hour in 1982 (USA).

Astronomer Peter Jenniskens at the SETI Institute and NASA Ames Research Center in California, USA, suggests a 60-year periodic cycle for Lyrid outbursts. The next Lyrid outburst will probably overwhelm us in 2042. Comet C/1861 G1 (Thatcher) is ostensibly the parent body of the Lyrid meteor shower. It is a quirky long-period comet that orbits the Sun once every 415.5 years. It sprinted to its last perihelion (closest approach to the Sun) on 03 June 1861. Amateur American astronomer A. E. Thatcher discovered this comet from New York City on 05 April 1861. It is now officially designated C/1861 G1 (Thatcher), honouring his name. One astronomical unit (AU) is defined as the mean Sun-earth distance, approximately measuring 150 million kilometres.

Comet Thatcher is travelling outwards unrelentingly away from our Sun. It will trek to its farthest point from us in around the year 2070 and then commence its return trip to rendezvous with the next perihelion around the year 2283. It is zooming currently through the alluring constellation Andromeda (chained princess) at a surprising span of a striking 108.97 AU. Vega (Avijit) is basically a beautiful bluish-white star located, putatively, 25 light-years away in the charming constellation Lyra. Historically Vega was once the Pole Star, and it will be again, questionably, in year 13727. Its mass divulges to 2.135 solar masses with its radius of 1.961 million kilometres. Its temperature is a mere 9790 degrees Celsius, and its spin velocity is barely 20.48 kilometres per second. Its age is possibly 455 million years.

In both ancient Egypt and India, the constellation Lyra was depicted as either an eagle or a vulture. Thus influenced by these cultures, Vega in the western world carried its Arabic appellation, meaning 'the swooping eagle'. Vega is a blue-white main sequence star, only halfway through its one billion-year stellar life cycle, and still in the process of fusing hydrogen into helium. It is about 40 times more luminous than the Sun, as it is using up its hydrogen fuel about ten times quicker. Vega is also about 2.1 times more massive than our Sun. Vega is part of an attractive asterism of stars, so-called the Summer Triangle, consisting of Vega; rapidly rotating, startling star Altair (Sravan affirmed at 16.73 light-years) in commendable constellation Aquila (eagle); and stunningly huge star Deneb (arguably 3230 light-years away) in charismatic constellation Cygnus (swan), aka the Northern Cross. Vega never slides below the horizon and remains a circumpolar star throughout the year. Vega is twirling extremely swiftly at 236.2 kilometres per second at its equator.

This value translates into one turn once every 12.5 hours, which outlines 87.6 per cent of the velocity it would take for the star to fly apart as the result of excessive centrifugal forces. Consequently, its equatorial bulge is pronounced. Interestingly, Vega's horribly high lambency (40 times that of the Sun) can be explained by the effects of elevated differential whirl on its magnetic field. The beguilingly candy-coloured Ring Nebula (M57, NGC 6720) is beaming boisterously in Lyra. This perplexing planetary nebula perennially in vogue among amateur astronomers is nominally 2300 light-years away.

(Dr. Shah is an academician at NAST and patron of NASO.)

A General's Posthumous Autobiography



Madan Kumar Bhattarai

A new book with an attractive cover showing the insignia of positions the writer held in the force has been published to serve as the autobiography of General S. M. (Satyawant Mallannah) Shrinagesh, Chief of Staff of the Indian Army, during the crucial period of 1955–1957 and a celebrity combining the triple roles of a dedicated soldier, a strategist and a statesman. The author, born in Kolhapur, now in Maharashtra, died in 1977 but left a valuable collection of notes and records preserved by the family, who published the account recently in an interesting book, with his grandson Gaurav Shrinagesh writing the foreword.

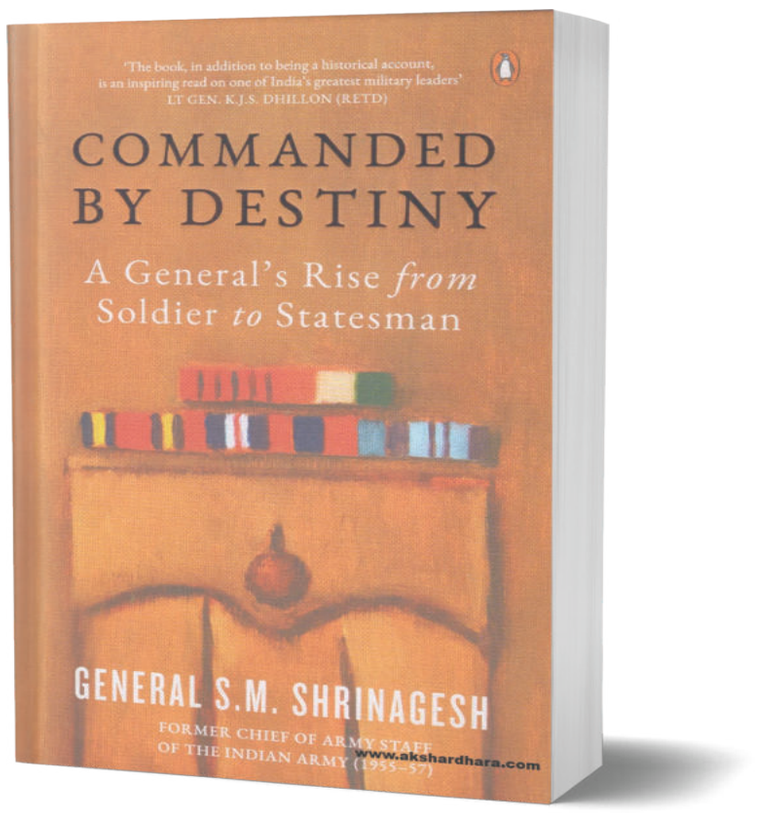
General Shrinagesh was the son of a renowned bacteriologist of his time with a distinguished scholastic record at Edinburgh and Germany, Dr Shrinagesh Mallannah, and Ahalyabai Mallannah Shrinagesh, who was also educated at Edinburgh. The book is dedicated to her. General Shrinagesh is indirectly connected to Nepal, as his younger brother, Jayawant Mallannah (J.M.) Shrinagesh, an ICS (Indian Civil Service) officer of the 1928 batch, had served in Nepal as a member of the three-member group of Indian administrative advisers who came to Nepal to advise the government in the post-1951 era. The comprehensive study popularly called the Buch Commission report, after the name of the team leader, N.M. Buch, ICS, is the first of its kind with extensive coverage of Nepal's administrative milieu and recommendations. The report is readily available on the internet.

It is a queer coincidence that even the manuscript depicting life and accomplishments was prepared by his second younger brother, J.M., who has a connection to Nepal. His relatives also discovered the manuscript depicting life and accomplishments, prepared by his second younger brother with a Nepal connection, J.M. Shrinagesh, long after the writer's death. It is also interesting that all three brothers of Shrinagesh and the son of the general went to Cambridge for higher studies.

The youngest brother, Madhukar Mallannah Shrinagesh, followed the footsteps of his father and belonged to the Indian Medical Service with specialisation in the field of aviation medicine, becoming the first medico to opt for service in the Indian Air Force, ultimately rising to the level of Air Vice-Marshal.

It may be recalled that in those days, Oxford and Cambridge attracted the attention of upper-class and middle-level Indians and those who were meritorious and got scholarships during colonial days. There were no British colleges in India, while there were a number of renowned public schools like Doon, Mayo and Lawrence even if we just counted such institutions in our more comparatively familiar area of North India alone.

The new publication portrays events in India during which he served as Chief of Staff, a role that evolved from his earlier and more widely recognised position as Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army and as the founding President of the Administrative Staff College of India in the post-retirement



COMMANDED BY DESTINY: A General's Rise from Soldier to Statesman
General S. M. Shrinagesh
Publishers: Penguin/Veer, Gurugram, 2025
Pages 306
Price: Indian Rs. 699/-

period. The writer puts two attributes—training and discipline—at the core of an officer in the defence forces. He later took over as Governor of Assam and Andhra Pradesh under the premiership of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Mysore (now incorporated in the state of Karnataka) during the time of Lal Bahadur Shastri, making him the first army officer to be entrusted with such gubernatorial positions. Later years replicated the experiment of appointing service chiefs as governors of states.

In his active service, Shrinagesh had the unique experience of serving in both the British Indian Army and the Indian Army after the country's formal independence, including various assignments outside the country during the Second World War and post-war missions to Japan, Germany and Burma (now Myanmar).

Divided into sixteen chapters besides the introduction and epilogue, the highly readable book has 12 chapters relating to the author's life and period spent with the Indian Army in various forms, including as the fifth and third Indian incumbent to hold the position of Chief of the Army Staff following the independence of the country from the British colonial rule on August 15, 1947.

The thirteenth chapter dwells on his stint as the first-ever Principal of the Administrative College of India, and three subsequent chapters deal with the periods that General Shrinagesh spent in three different states, Assam, Andhra Pradesh and Mysore, respectively.

The author, who was in Cambridge before his formal induction into the Indian Army, has given a very lucid account of his Sandhurst days, including important information on people who joined civil services. The list included the newly created Indian Foreign Service (IFS). The IFS was rather hastily constituted through multi-faceted inductions from both the Indian Political Service, a somewhat hybrid arrangement under which Indian Civil Service officers, army people and even some police officers, and other sources, including absorption of members of the armed forces as emergency recruits, got demobilised after the conclusion of the Second World War.

The Nepali readers of the book will be disappointed at least on two counts. First, the author mentions what he calls the unenviable assignment of his younger brother J.M. Shrinagesh served as border commissioner during the sensitive period of the country's partition into India and Pakistan, but he does not mention his duties in Nepal.

The second point is that he does not refer to the sensitive military mission to Nepal that involved one of the highly decorated officers of the Indian Army, S.P.P. Thorat, who led the team, leading to the stationing of the Indian Military Mission in Nepal for quite some years. Thorat is believed to have been denied the position of chief of the Indian Army due to the intervention of V.K. Krishna Menon, a powerful but controversial Defence Minister of the country. As a post-retirement assignment, Thorat was, however, made chairman of the Bombay Public Service Commission.

On the whole, General Shrinagesh deserves tributes for the publication of the wonderful book that apparently sheds light both on the status of the army as seen by its chief and the position of the governor of three Indian states that has increasingly become a contentious and controversial position in the realm of centre-state relations in India after the rise of Indira Gandhi and especially when differing parties or combinations hold positions in the union government and states.

(Dr. Bhattarai is a former foreign secretary, ambassador and author. kutniti@gmail.com)

FUTURE WATCH

(Based on birth names)

From April 3rd to 9th, 2026 - D. N. Lohani

ARIES — Excessive expenses will raise financial concern. Business can slow down. The expenditure level will rise till Tuesday. Friends and family will provide appreciable support. Travel won't yield much gain.

TAURUS — Major tasks will complete successfully. Friends will provide appreciable support. The technical line will turn profitable. Trade and profession both will turn profitable. Study-related investment will yield a return.

GEMINI — Hardship will yield impressive returns. Family will provide appreciable support. Business-related investment will pay. You may have to handle a new venture. Avoid risky ventures on Thursday.

CANCER — Initially you may have to tolerate health problems. Circumstances will improve from Sunday. Fear and confusion can reside within oneself. Indecisiveness can create some problems. Prayer of Lord Shiva will help. Business will yield return.

LEO — Success without struggle is unlikely. The mid portion is troublesome. Start and end will provide some return. You may have to tolerate minor injuries. Be careful from Tuesday. Prayer of the sun is a remedy.

VIRGO — Business-related travel can occur, but a return will be limited. Others can copy or imitate your genuine work, business concept or creation, causing you loss, so be careful. Family may not provide adequate support.

LIBRA — The start is recreational. You will enjoy a pleasant meeting with friends and relatives. Family problems will gradually end. Job will yield some return. Expenditure level will rise on Thursday.

SCORPIO — Initially, the expenditure level will rise. You may have to treat others at your own expense. Lack of support from friends can create some problems. Confusion can reside within oneself. Study can slow down. The important assignment will be completed on Wednesday.

SAGITTARIUS — An improved week is in store for you. Friends will cooperate. The study will take a progressive course. Employees will observe some progress. Watering Sacred Fig is a remedy.

CAPRICORN — A high level of confidence will guide you ahead. Financial status will improve. Trade and profession both will turn profitable. Friends will cooperate. Marital development will take a progressive course.

AQUARIUS — Initially fear and confusion can reside within oneself. Increasing expenses will cause some problems. Trade and profession both will turn profitable. Employees will observe an ordinary period. The opposite sex will provide good support.

PISCES — Health disorder is predicted. Choose your diet carefully. The period till Tuesday is challenging. Circumstances will improve from Wednesday. Employees will observe an ordinary period. Students will have to work harder. Unknown fear can reside.

BOOK REVIEW

Himalayan Identity Meets Global Change



Amar Aakash

Hiraṇya Bhojpure's 'Sagarmathabhanda Mathi', now available in English as Aang Sherpa and the Ocean of Heights, arrives not simply as a translation but as a cultural crossing. It attempts to carry a deeply rooted Himalayan sensibility into the global language of English—an ambitious task that is as much about context as it is about language.

Bhojpure is widely known in Nepal as a singer, composer, and lyricist associated with the Lekali Group. Yet this novel, along with earlier works such as Chhiten Gori and his short story collections, reveals a writer deeply invested in narrative, memory, and the ethical tensions of a rapidly changing world.

At the centre of the novel is Aang Sherpa, a mountain guide who navigates what the text evocatively describes as Nepal—a "sea of heights". This is not merely a poetic flourish. The metaphor is structural. shaping the novel's vision of the Himalayas as both physical and moral terrain. Here, the mountains serve as a site of endurance, where survival intertwines with compromise and pressure forges identity.

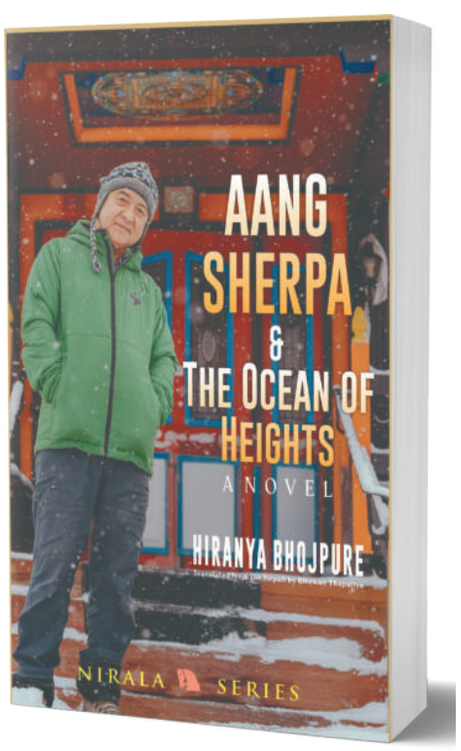
Bhojpure's most compelling achievement lies in his portrayal of the Himalayas as a contested space. Writing from within a worldview that regards the mountains as sacred, he places his protagonist in direct contact with a global economy that reduces them to spectacle and commodity. The arrival of mass tourism—and more troublingly, forms of cultural intrusion that border on exploitation—marks a shift from reverence to violation. The novel thus becomes less a narrative of mountaineering than a meditation on desecration: of land, of culture, and ultimately of the self.

Aang Sherpa is rendered with deliberate ambiguity. He is neither hero nor antihero, but a figure suspended between roles—guide, witness, participant, and exile. His journey resists conventional narrative arcs, unfolding instead as a series of encounters that deepen his sense of dislocation. Even when the novel follows him beyond Nepal, into Australia, this condition of in-betweenness intensifies rather than resolves. He does not arrive; he lingers.

A romantic relationship offers the possibility of emotional anchoring, yet it dissolves without resolution, reinforcing the novel's refusal of closure. Similarly, Aang's dependence on alcohol is not framed as a moral failing but as a symptom—a quiet surrender to forces that exceed individual control.

Yet for all its thematic ambition, the novel remains uneven in its engagement with Himalayan society. While it gestures toward the ecological destruction of the region in the name of development, it does not fully capture the everyday life of its people. The textures of domestic existence—the kitchens, rituals, and familial structures that sustain Sherpa communities—remain largely absent. This omission is significant, particularly for a work that seeks to situate itself within a distinctly Himalayan worldview.

At the same time, Bhojpure introduces another unsettling dimension: the suggestion of a sexual and moral decline reaching the mountains, likened to waves arriving from distant Western seas. These passages, at times stark and even grotesque, juxtapose the Himalaya's symbolic association with spirituality against images



of decay and disintegration. Human bodies, stripped of vitality, appear as lifeless as rotting gourds. This imagery, though jarring, lends the novel a certain force, underscoring its critique of a world where desire and excess fail to produce meaning.

In the broader landscape of Nepali literature, Bhojpure's novel occupies a rare and important space. Nepali fiction has traditionally been centred on the hills, with relatively few works set in the Tarai and even fewer engaging directly with Himalayan civilisation. Daulat Bikram Bista's Himal ra Manchhe remains one of the few notable precedents. Novels focused specifically on Sherpas and mountaineering are rarer still, making Sagarmathabhanda Mathi a significant, if not entirely realised, contribution.

Book: Aang Sherpa and the Ocean of Heights
Genre: Novel,
Author: Hiraṇya Bhojpure
Translate from Nepali: Bhuwan Thapaliya
Pages: 169, Price: 795
Publisher: Nirala Publications, New Delhi, 2025

Tourism is often described as a shared "religion" of Nepal, yet it has seldom been explored in depth within Nepali fiction. Bhojpure's decision to foreground a mountain guide as his protagonist is therefore noteworthy. However, the novel stops short of fully examining the economic, social, and familial dimensions of this profession. The lives of guides and porters—so central to the country's tourism economy—remain only partially sketched. Even so, the novel opens an important imaginative space, pointing toward possibilities for future writing.

Formally, the novel is marked by restraint. Bhojpure avoids overt dramatisation, allowing emotional intensity to build gradually. Told in the first person, the narrative is woven intricately into the story through different techniques that draw readers objectively into an intimate yet unstable consciousness where memory, guilt, and longing intersect. There is also an undercurrent of patriotism—not declarative but deeply felt—that lends the work a quiet urgency.

Bhuwan Thapaliya's translation rises to the challenge of conveying this tonal complexity. Bhojpure's prose, at once idiomatic and layered, resists straightforward transfer into English. Yet the translation remains fluid and accessible, preserving much of the rhythm of the original. There are occasional inconsistencies, particularly in the transliteration of names, where the balance between fidelity and readability falters. These, however, are minor issues in an otherwise assured rendering.

One of the novel's strengths lies in its grounding in the material realities of mountaineering. Bhojpure's attention to the physical demands of climbing, the fragility of mountain ecosystems, and the logistics of expeditions lends the narrative a documentary texture. This interplay between realism and reflection allows the novel to occupy a distinctive position within Nepali fiction, where mountaineering is neither romanticised nor reduced to adventure.

Ultimately, Aang Sherpa and the Ocean of Heights marks a decisive moment for Nepali literature in English. Translations such as this work do more than extend readership; they reshape the terms through which a literary tradition is encountered. For English to function as a meaningful bridge, it must carry not only stories but also the weight of their contexts—their silences, their tensions, their ways of seeing.

Bhojpure's novel, in Thapaliya's careful translation, does precisely that, even if imperfectly. It invites readers into a world where the mountains are not conquered but endured, where height does not guarantee transcendence, and where the most difficult ascents take place within.

(The author is a litterateur and film critic.)

Opportunity Gap Fuels Migration



Bipul Baral



As record numbers of young Nepalis pursue opportunities abroad, the nation confronts a defining challenge: can it transform migration from necessity into choice? One can witness long queues outside consultancy offices that offer pathways to Australia, Canada, Japan, South Korea, and the Gulf. Passport offices experience large crowds every day. Language proficiency testing centres are often fully booked several months in advance. For many young Nepalis, migration has become the primary strategy for building a future rather than just a backup plan.

Foreign employment has been a part of the Nepali economy for several decades. Remittances have consistently generated a quarter of the nation's GDP.

Several communities have been able to rise out of poverty because of the remittances sent by migrant workers. But the more pressing issue is the one that lies just below the surface, where the migration of young, skilled, and competent Nepali citizens continues. The concern now extends beyond low-skilled labour migrations. The country is experiencing a growing number of skilled individuals leaving the country, a phenomenon known as brain drain.

Historically, most Nepali migrants worked in construction, manufacturing, the mines and service sectors in the Gulf and Malaysia. Remittance became a lifeline for rural families where agriculture could no longer guarantee stability, providing essential financial support for education, healthcare, and daily living expenses. Today, the migration pattern is evolving. A growing proportion of those leaving are students, healthcare professionals, engineers, IT specialists, and skilled workers. Educational consultancies in major cities often promote foreign degrees as pathways to permanent residency. For many families, sending a child abroad for study is an investment and a symbol of upward mobility.

Different factors motivate current youth unemployment rates and underemployment. Even university graduates have struggled to secure a job that fits perfectly with what they learned. Many graduates earn very little money, and nepotism, rather than merit, has shaped and defined the physical working environment. Developed nations have extensive career development systems, more rigorous labour laws, and higher wage rates. With today's youth having access to images of how others live through various forms of social media, it is likely that they will compare themselves to those who are doing things differently.

Economic paradox

Remittance is one of the pillars of economic strength in Nepal. It helps to reduce poverty and strengthen the rural economy, and it also helps to cope with economic shocks, including earthquakes and the COVID-19 pandemic. Heavy dependence on foreign earnings creates structural vulnerabilities. An economy that relies mainly on remittance-fuelled consumption faces a risk of stagnation if domestic production and innovation continue to be weak. Investment in manufacturing, research, and high-value industries has lagged.

Additionally, a lack of highly skilled workers contributes to the problem. There is an ongoing shortage of qualified doctors and nurses within the hospital system, while engineering firms continue to lose valuable employees; too many trained professionals in this area have chosen to work elsewhere. Meanwhile, IT companies are losing their software developers to foreign companies willing to pay for them to work off-site. Meanwhile, many universities are training their students and sending them abroad shortly after graduation, which creates a major cycle, short-term remittances support the economy, but the long-term exodus of skilled workers places institutions at risk of losing their strategic relevance and competitiveness over the long term.

> The government must create opportunities at home to harness its youth potential and turn its brain drain issue into a brain gain.

The consequences of migration extend beyond macroeconomic indicators. In many villages, working-age adults are absent for years. Policy discussions often overlook the emotional strain and social fragmentation. Similarly, migration has reshaped social norms in positive ways. Women are participating in the workforce. Returnee migrants bring back savings, skills, and broader worldviews. Exposure to international systems has inspired entrepreneurial ventures and civic engagement. The challenge lies in converting individual success stories into systemic gains. The lack of reintegration policies may hinder the effective use of returnees' potential. Dissatisfaction with domestic higher education plays a significant role in migration. Concerns include outdated curricula, limited research infrastructure, and weak links between universities and working organisations.

Families often take substantial loans to finance foreign study. Many middle-class households view overseas education as a long-term security plan. The exodus is the result of a lack of confidence in the education system inside the country. Reformation is essential. Updating the curriculum to meet labour market demands, providing quality technical and vocational training, supporting research, and having meritocratic governance will take time. But collectively, they might help restore confidence in local education systems. Reversing brain drain does not require restricting migration. Instead, it demands the development of an environment where staying back is not only desirable but also makes sense.

Promising potentials

Youths are increasingly showing interest in coding, freelancing, digital designs, and starting their businesses. If the country invests in the right infrastructure and capital and regulates the sector accordingly, it is likely to provide employment to a large number of youths and provide them with access to the global market.

The country has tremendous potential to harness hydropower. Developing this sector not only provides employment to youths with engineering, finance, environmental science, and management degrees but also increases the country's treasury. Besides trekking, other areas include eco-tourism, cultural heritage tourism, adventure sports, and health tourism. Developing the sector can provide employment to a large number of youths. Although this sector is not considered an attractive option by the youths, it is possible to make it profitable by adopting technology and improving access to markets. However, sectoral growth is not enough. Political stability is a prerequisite.

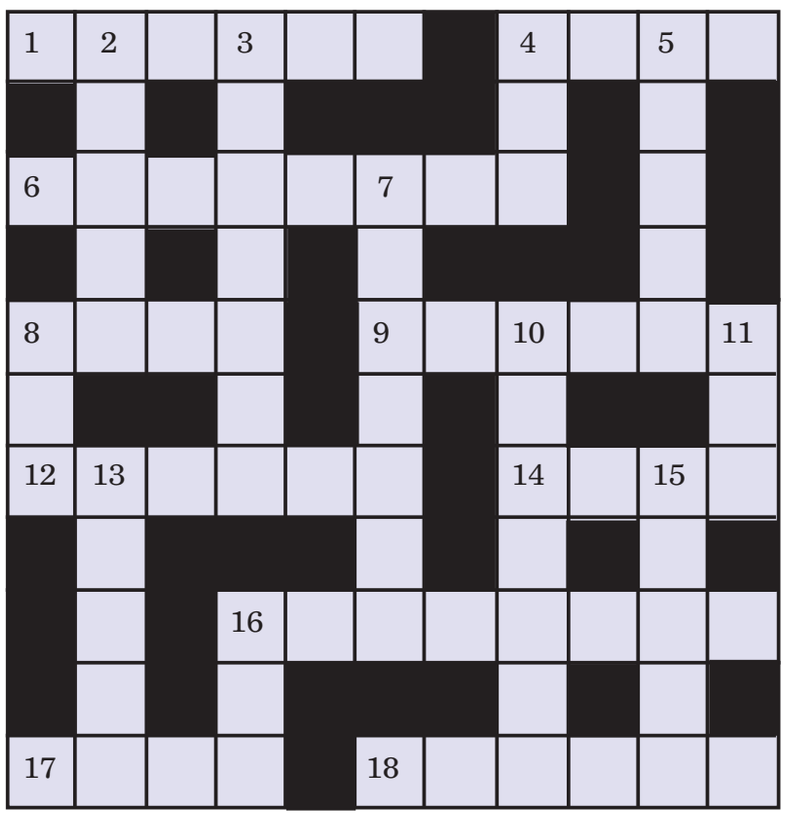
Strategies and actions need to be implemented to tackle the phenomenon of brain drain. A youth employment strategy would call for the reform of the education system and the promotion of enterprise formation, as well as the formulation of a data-driven labour market strategy.

For instance, the formulation of incentive packages for return migrants in the form of tax credits, grants for new enterprise formation, the facilitation of business registration, and the recognition of foreign qualifications would help ease their reintegration into the labour market. To restore trust in a merit-based system, it is just as important to have clear hiring processes, enforceable workers' rights, and regulatory systems that make it easier to move up in your career. Without government reforms to the system, implementing economic initiatives alone will likely fail to convince young professionals to stay in Nepal.

A generation eager to learn, work, and innovate reflects their uncertainty about fulfilling those aspirations at home. The goal for the future of migration should be to promote development. The government must create opportunities at home to harness its youth potential and turn its brain drain issue into a brain gain.

(Baral is a civil engineering undergraduate at Tribhuvan University.)

TRN CROSSWORD PUZZLE NO. 1875



Last date of entry:
April 8, 2026

Win a prize of Rs. 600. In case there are more than one correct entry the prize will be split into three sums of Rs. 200 each. The winner will be selected by a lucky draw. Only cuttings (not photo copy) that include the Crossword Puzzle no. will be accepted.

Name: .....

Address: .....

Across

1. Floating freely
4. A persistent pain
6. To make someone do something by giving a good reason
8. A mix of smoke, gases, and chemicals
9. Not easy to get
12. A part of the engine
14. A despicable person
16. A strong and negative reaction
17. A long strap on a horse
18. A sufficient amount

Down

2. A happening in the mind during sleep
3. A deep understanding
4. The number of years one has lived.
5. A devastation
7. A toxic chemical element
8. To deplete something over time
10. To free someone from guilt
11. A large tree
13. To fill up with something
15. A state of being unhappy
16. A legal prohibition

Solutions to TRN Crossword Puzzle No. 1874

ACROSS: 1. STEADY 4. ORAL 6. BONHOMIE 8. YETI 9. RECOUP 12. KARMIC 14. IDEA 16. PROCEEDS 17. ENVY 18. STARRY

DOWN: 2. TROVE 3. ATHEISM 4. ODE 5. ADIEU 7. MOROCCO 8. YAK 10. CHIMERA 11. PEA 13. ARSON 15. ELDER 16. PAY

LUCKY WINNER

Jaya Pal Shrestha, Lalitpur -14
Khagendra Nath, Bagbazar, Kathmandu
Damodar Lohani, Gyaneshwor-30

CREATIVE CORNER

Youth Drain Economy



Aaryan Niroula

Every day, thousands of young Nepalis walk through the departure gates of Tribhuvan International Airport. We celebrate the remittances that keep our economy afloat while ignoring their detrimental effect on our sovereignty. As remittances' contribution to our GDP grows, our dependence on the labour and immigration policies of foreign nations grows as well.

With millions of our youth working in the Gulf, our nation's economy is at the mercy of conflicts we have no involvement in. The escalating conflict between the U.S.–Israel alliance and Iran puts Nepali citizens in a precarious position. Our government recently implemented a suspension of labour permits for the Middle East. If war rooms in Tehran, Tel Aviv, or Washington have the ability to crash our economy and change our labour policy, we have to wonder whether we are truly sovereign.

While our youth build skyscrapers in Dubai and stadiums in Qatar, our fields lie barren. Our local industries have failed because it is simply cheaper to import than to produce. We import the food we eat, the tools we use, and the furniture we sit on—often paid for by the same remittance money that is costing us our youth. When a nation loses skilled workers, innovators, and labourers, it loses the ability to develop itself.

The harder question is whether Nepal's political class actually wants to solve this problem. A population that earns abroad and sends money home is a population that is peaceful, works, and trusts authorities. Remittance dependency doesn't just weaken our sovereignty; it is convenient for the people tasked with building it. Until we name that conflict of interest, no policy speech will mean anything.

Grade: XI, Koshi St. James, Itahari



Nyla Batala, Grade: Mt. Marigold School, Kritipur



Supriya Sapkota, Grade: VII, Ripumardini Sainik Mahavidyalaya



Aadhvi Basnet, Grade: V, St.Mary's School, Jawalakhel

QUIZ OF THE WEEK 41

Questions	Answers
1. How many parts is the current constitution of Nepal divided into?	
2. When is United Nations Day celebrated?	
3. Which is the largest district of Nepal?	
4. What is the value of π (Pi)?	
5. How many people were killed in the 2058 BS palace massacre?	

LUCKY WINNER

Kumari Nirmala Giri, Bheemdatt-15