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THE RISING NEPAL

ALL BE HAPPY, ALL BE WELL



PHOTO: KABIN ADHIKARI/TRN

Newly elected Vice Chairperson of the National Assembly Lila Kumari Bhandari takes the oath of office and secrecy before Chairperson Narayan Prasad Dahal in the presence of President Ramchandra Paudel at the President's Office, Sheetal Niwas, in Kathmandu, on Tuesday.

Dr. Bhatta appointed NPC Vice Chair

Pandit named Deputy Governor of NRB

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 7

The government on Tuesday appointed Dr. Gunakar Bhatta from Doti as the Vice Chairman of the National Planning Commission.

Meanwhile, Kiran Pandit, an Executive Director at the Nepal Rastra Bank, was appointed as Deputy Governor, filling one of the two vacant posts at the central bank.

The Cabinet also accepted the resignation of Shriman Kumar Gautam, Chairman of the Problematic Cooperative Management Committee, along with members Lalita Kumari Maharjan and Dhruva Acharya. The resignations come amid ongoing challenges in the management and reform of troubled cooperatives across the country.

US$ 85 million concessional loan accepted

At a meeting held on Tuesday, the Cabinet also decided to accept a concessional loan of 85 million US dollars from the World Bank for the Greater Lumbini Area Development Project. The funding is expected to support infrastructure and tourism development in the Lumbini region, a site of significant religious and cultural importance.

50% exemption on customs/tax POL products

Addressing concerns over fuel supply, the government announced a 50 per cent exemption on customs duty and infrastructure development tax on the import of petroleum products, including petrol, diesel and kerosene.

It further indicated that an odd-even vehicle operation system could be introduced if supply disruptions worsened, while urging the government offices to adopt work-from-home practices and increase the use of digital means to reduce fuel consumption.

The government also approved the relocation of the Water Resources and Energy Research Centre from Pulchowk, Lalitpur Metropolitan City, to Godavari Municipality in Lalitpur district.

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Dr. Gunakar Bhatta



Kiran Pandit

CABINET DECISIONS

MPs raise issues of public concern in Zero Hour

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 7



Lawmakers on Tuesday used the Zero Hour to urge the government to take immediate action against the recurring threat of monsoon flooding, while raising a wide spectrum of pressing public concerns.

The session was dominated by calls for enhanced disaster preparedness, policy reform and swift intervention across critical sectors, including agriculture, health, education and social welfare.

MP Ashok Kumar Chaudhary drew the government's attention to the recurring threat of monsoon flooding in Sunsari. He warned that annual inundation of local rivers continues to cause significant loss of life and property, leaving residents in a constant state of fear. Stressing the need for long-term solutions, he called for scientific studies and sustainable flood control measures ahead of the approaching monsoon season.

Likewise, Karishma Katharia urged the government to fix a minimum support price for wheat before the next parliamentary meeting, arguing that farmers have long been neglected. She also called for state mechanisms to ensure the procurement of produce, highlighting the vulnerability of farmers to market uncertainties. Echoing similar concerns, Khushbu Oli questioned the government's preparedness to ensure the timely supply of fertilisers, warning that shortages or price hikes, exacerbated by geopolitical tensions in West Asia, could severely impact agricultural production and food security.

Lawmaker Ganesh Karki highlighted the persistence of unresolved land ownership disputes, noting that some families have waited generations for legal recognition of their property. He urged the government to prioritise land reform as a matter of urgency.

Ojaswi Sherchan said that the national health insurance programme is under significant financial strain, with hospitals yet to receive substantial reimbursements. She cautioned that the sustainability of the scheme is at risk unless immediate policy reforms and stronger coordination between government agencies are ensured.

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NA VICE CHAIRPERSON BHANDARI SWORN IN

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 7

Leela Bhandari, the newly elected Vice-Chairperson of the National Assembly, took the oath of office and secrecy on Tuesday.

National Assembly Chairman Narayan Prasad Dahal administered the oath to Bhandari in the presence of President Ramchandra Paudel at a ceremony organised at the President's Office, Sheetal Niwas.

The event was attended by Vice-President Ram Sahay Prasad Yadav, Prime Minister Balendra Shah, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Dol Prasad Aryal, Acting Chief Justice Sapana Pradhan, ministers, parliamentarians, heads of constitutional bodies, and senior government officials.

Chinese, Swiss envoys call on FM Khanal

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 7

Ambassadors of China and Switzerland to Nepal have called on Minister for Foreign Affairs Shisir Khanal at his office on Tuesday.

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Chinese envoy Zhang Maoming conveyed greetings from the Foreign Minister of China Wang Yi to FM Khanal on his assumption of office of the Foreign Minister.

During the call on, matters relating to further strengthening Nepal-China relations and enhancing mutually beneficial cooperation were discussed.

Likewise, Ambassador of Switzerland to Nepal Dr. Danielle Meuwly also conveyed the Federal Councillor (Foreign Minister) of the Swiss Confederation Ignazio Cassis's greetings to FM Khanal on his appointment as the Foreign Minister.

They exchanged views on further deepening the longstanding friendship and cooperation between Nepal and Switzerland.

Minister Gurung inspects flood-hit BP Highway



BY KEDAR TIMALSINA
Banepa, Apr. 7

Home Minister Sudhan Gurung on Tuesday conducted an on-site inspection of the BP Highway in Kavrepalanchok district, which was damaged by floods and landslides last year.

During the inspection, he instructed officials to complete work on the most vulnerable sections of the highway at least 10 days before the onset of the monsoon.

Stating that the rainy season will begin in three months, the minister said potential risks during the monsoon should be identified in advance and necessary precautionary measures prepared accordingly.

"It will not be effective to prepare after it begins raining; we must be ready beforehand. If vehicular movement is disrupted during the monsoon, the public will suffer. Therefore, work on the difficult sections of the highway should be completed before the rains," Minister Gurung said.

He also directed authorities to accelerate reconstruction by increasing the number of workers, adding more equipment, and ensuring adequate safety measures for those engaged in the project.

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Gandaki to seek World Heritage Site status for Lomanthang Palace

BY HARI KRISHNA SHARMA
Muktinath (Mustang), Apr. 7

The Gandaki Province Government has announced in its policy and programme for the fiscal year 2025/26 that it will take the initiative to list the Lomanthang Palace on the World Heritage List. The palace is a site of historical and archaeological importance located in Lomanthang Rural Municipality–5, Mustang.

The provincial government had initiated restoration work six years ago on the 15th-century palace located in Lomanthang Bazaar, which lies at an altitude of 3,880 metres above sea level.

Despite various initiatives taken by local, provincial, and federal government representatives, the palace has not yet been listed as a World Heritage Site.

When the proposal to list the site under UNESCO was introduced in 2008, the local community initially showed hesitation. UNESCO has since conducted repeated studies after recognising that listing the site would facilitate its protection and help attract tourists.



PHOTO: HARI KRISHNA SHARMA

The 700-year-old historic Lomanthang Palace located in Lomanthang Rural Municipality–5 of Mustang district.

Tasi Nharbu Gurung, Chairperson of Lomanthang Rural Municipality, said that while efforts are being made to preserve the ancient civilisation of Lomanthang also known as the "Mud City" there are concerns that it may lose its identity if it is not listed soon.

He said, "The process is still ongoing. We are continuously taking initiatives to attract tourists while preserving the ancient identity of Lomanthang."

According to Chairperson Gurung, there has not been sufficient interest from government agencies in preserving the palace's ancient architecture, its 700-year-old history, the heritage of the upper region, and Tibetan culture.

The five-storey Lomanthang Palace was built in the 14th century during the reign of King Angden Sangwo Bista using stone, clay, and wood. Following the death of the last (25th generation) King of Lomanthang, Jigme Parwal Bista, in 2016, members of the royal family now use the palace for various functions, including festivals, but tourists are not allowed inside.

The palace was repaired after it developed cracks during the 2015 earthquake. Umesh Poudel, head of the Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) in Lomanthang, said the palace is a major attraction for both domestic and international tourists and that efforts are ongoing for its conservation and promotion.

For approximately 4,000 foreign tourists who visit Upper Mustang annually, the palace is the most popular attraction.

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BULLION
(Rs. per tola)

Hallmark Gold	: Rs. 291,800/-
Worked Gold	: NA
Silver	: Rs. 4,820/-

STOCK

NEPSE	: 2,757.40
Total Amount	: 6,737,148,150.66
No. of Share	: 17,406,616

Climbing expeditions begin on Dhaulagiri, Annapurna

BY THAKUR PRASAD ACHARYA
Myagdi, Apr. 7

With the onset of the spring season, climbing expeditions on Dhaulagiri and Annapurna have begun and the presence of both foreign and Nepali climbers has started to increase.

So far this season, a total of 44 climbers have obtained permits to scale the over-8,000-metre peaks of Dhaulagiri and Annapurna. Those with permits have begun heading towards the base camps in preparation for their ascents.

The 8,167-metre Dhaulagiri lies in Mudi of Dhaulagiri Rural Municipality–4 in Myagdi district, while the 8,091-metre Annapurna I is located in Narchyang of Annapurna Rural Municipality–4.

According to the Department of Tourism (DoT), royalties amounting to Rs 7.56 million have been collected from Dhaulagiri expeditions and Rs 12.04 from Annapurna. As per the DoT's latest data, 27 climbers, including eight women across four groups, have received permits to climb Annapurna.

Similarly, 17 climbers, including eight women in two groups, have obtained permits to climb Dhaulagiri, informed Himal Gautam, Information Officer at the DoT. During last autumn season, 36 climbers had taken permits for Dhaulagiri, while no permits were issued for Annapurna.

In recent days, continuous rain and snowfall have made it difficult for climbers to reach the base camps, said Indra Singh Sherchan, a tourism entrepreneur from Dana in Annapurna Rural Municipality–3.

"Climbers who had obtained permits for Dhaulagiri and Annapurna were on their way to the base camps. However, sudden changes in the weather have made it difficult for them to proceed. It is currently snowing continuously at the base camps. As soon as the weather improves, climbers will resume their journey towards the base camps," said Sherchan.



PHOTO: TRN

Dhaulagiri mountain lies in Mudi of Dhaulagiri Rural Municipality–4 in Myagdi district.

ANNAPURNA REGION WELCOMES 48,500 PLUS FOREIGN TOURISTS IN A MONTH

RSS
Gandaki, Apr. 7

The Annapurna conservation area has received impressive number of foreign tourists at the beginning of the tourist season of the year 2026.

The Annapurna Area Conservation Project (ACAP) shared that a total of 48,513 foreigners visited different destinations in the region. The visitors from the SAARC countries stood at 32,020, while 16,493 visitors were from other countries.

Chief of ACAP Dr Rabin Kadariya said that the number of tourists rose by 11,679 in March 2026 compared to the same month of 2025. "Records show that 40 percent of the total tourists arriving in Nepal visit the Annapurna region. The number of Indian nationals is the highest among the South Asian tourists here," Chief Dr Kadariya added.

The time period from March to May is a key tourist season in Nepal.

Likewise, the number of domestic tourists in the ACAP destinations is on the rise due to the upcoming Nepali New Year and the annual session break for the schoolchildren.Similarly, this is the best season for trekkers alike.

Annapurna Base Camp (popularly known as ABC), Mt. Mardi, Ghandruk, Tilicho Lake, Thorangla Pass, Upper Mustang, Ghorepani, Punhill and other sites in the ACAP are the key tourist destinations for visitors.

CNI, NSO SIGN MOU TO COLLABORATE ON NATIONAL ECONOMIC CENSUS

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 7

The Confederation of Nepalese Industries (CNI) and the National Statistics Office (NSO) have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to collaborate on the collection, analysis, and research of reliable data related to the national economy.

The agreement aims to support evidence-based policymaking by improving the quality and timeliness of economic statistics.

Quality data is considered essential for the country's economic development, industrial expansion, and effective policy formulation.

The MoU has been signed in line with the national strategy for developing the statistical system, which emphasises strengthening the collection, analysis, and use of data related to private sector economic activities through coordination between government bodies and private sector organisations, according to a press statement issued by CNI.

Director of NSO Dr. Bed Prasad Dhakal and Director General of CNI Dr. Ghanshyam Ojha signed the MoU on behalf of their respective institutions at a function held on Monday.

Chief Statistician of NSO Dr. Kamal Prasad Pokharel and CNI President Birendra Raj Pandey were present at the function.

Speaking on the occasion, CNI President Pandey said the collaboration would help strengthen the collection, analysis, and utilisation of private sector-related economic data.

Chief Statistician Dr. Pokharel said that cooperation between the public and private sectors would contribute to improving the quality of national economic statistics and expanding their use.

As per the agreement, both sides will work together on national economic census activities, development of private sector data systems, research and policy studies, data sharing, capacity building, and public awareness.

Govt pledges to foster respectful environment for entrepreneurs

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Mar. 7

Ganesh Parajuli, a leader of the Rastriya Swatantra Party and a Member of the House of Representatives, said the government would work to create an environment in which entrepreneurs and businesspeople feel respected in the days ahead.

Speaking at the 45th Annual General Meeting of the Nepal Foreign Trade Association (NFTA) held in Kathmandu on Monday, he stated that the party—having secured nearly a two-thirds majority through elections—requires the support of the private sector to fulfil the five commitments outlined in its pre-election manifesto.

"The Export–Import Act is being drafted, and collaboration with you will be essential in this process," he said.

Parajuli emphasised that just as taxes due to the government can be paid online, refunds owed to businesses should also be processed online.

"If businesses can pay revenue and fees online, why can't refunds be issued online? Work on this should begin from tomorrow," he said to the officials of the Department of Customs present at the programme.

Sharing that he has closely experienced the challenges faced by the private sector, Parjuli said the government would regulate, not control, entrepreneurs. He also suggested that policy-related problems and challenges be brought to parliamentary committees, noting that Parliament is the appropriate forum for policymaking.

Likewise, stressing the need to formalise the informal economy in order to remove the country from the FATF grey list, he urged businesspeople to operate with integrity. "Come forward with clean intentions, and we will amend the necessary laws," he said.

Speaking at the programme, Chandra Prasad Dhakal, President of the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry, said that the federation and other private sector organisations must work together to resolve policy-related issues.

Similarly, Birendra Raj Pandey, President of the Confederation of Nepalese Industries, highlighted the need for policy arrangements that support the private sector and emphasised the importance of boosting production and exports.

Kamlesh Kumar Agrawal, President of the Nepal Chamber of Commerce, said that with the change desired by the public and the stability sought by the private sector now in place, the time has come to initiate an economic transformation. He pointed out that around 150,000 businesses have been blacklisted due to policy issues and stressed the need to study the multi-rate Value Added Tax system.

Agrawal also pledged to move forward in unity with the association in advocating issues of concern to the private sector.

Shiv Kumar Agrawal, President of the NFTA, stressed the need to adjust tax and duty rates so that there is no wide price gap between Nepali and Indian markets, in order to curb unauthorised imports through loopholes along the open border.

He also emphasised that imports should not be restricted arbitrarily and that the practice of pressuring businesses to clear goods under higher-revenue categories must be brought to an end.

NCC, NRNA explore ways to strengthen collaboration



PHOTO: TRN

Officials of Nepal Chamber of Commerce (NCC) and Non-Resident Nepali Association (NRNA).

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 7

Officials of the Nepal Chamber of Commerce (NCC) and newly elected executive members of the Non-Resident Nepali Association (NRNA) have discussed a wide range of cooperation areas to support Nepal's economic development.

The discussion took place during a reception organised by the Nepal Chamber of Commerce to welcome the newly elected NRNA leadership, with a focus on strengthening collaboration to promote economic growth and enhance Nepal's global presence.

Speaking at the event on Monday, President of NCC Kamlesh Kumar Agrawal emphasised that promoting trade, strengthening Nepal's international identity, and ensuring overall development are key priorities at present.

He said that despite Nepal's rich natural resources, cultural diversity, and human potential, their effective utilisation remains limited, calling for strategic mobilisation of these resources.

President Agrawal stressed the importance of closer cooperation between the NCC and NRNA, particularly to establish "Made in Nepal" as an international brand.

He underlined the need to promote local products, boost exports, develop tourism, and attract foreign investment, adding that stronger coordination among the government, private sector, and citizens is essential.

NRNA President Dr. Hem Raj Sharma highlighted the role of non-resident Nepalis as a bridge in promoting Nepal's products, culture, and identity globally.

He said that the private sector has a crucial role in creating an investment-friendly environment in Nepal and added that NRNA would work more effectively to connect second- and third-generation Nepalis with their homeland.

Former President of NCC Rajendra Malla called for strengthening mutual understanding and cooperation between the two organisations and encouraged greater investment in Nepal.

Senior Vice President of NCC Deepak Kumar Malhotra expressed optimism that recent political developments have created a sense of stability, which could accelerate private sector growth.

Participants at the programme stressed that collective efforts are essential to achieve economic prosperity, urging all stakeholders to work together to maximise opportunities and build a prosperous Nepal.

South Pars natural gas complex is energy lifeline for Iran

AP
Frankfurt, Apr. 7

For the second time, Israel has attacked Iran's South Pars natural gas and its associated petrochemical complex - an energy lifeline for Iran that both helps keep the lights on for civilians and provides a key source of export earnings.

Israel's Defense Minister Israel Katz said Monday that Israel attacked a key petrochemical plant at Asaluyeh, the onshore industrial aspect of the gas field, which lies under the Persian Gulf.

Katz said the "powerful strike" hit what he called "the largest petrochemical facility in Iran ... responsible for about 50% of the country's petrochemical production." Combined with an earlier attack, two facilities responsible for 85% of Iran's petrochemical exports have been taken out of service, he said.

Attacks on South Pars are sufficiently provocative to Iran that an earlier Israeli attack on March 18 prompted Iran to target energy infrastructure in other Middle East countries in response, an escalation of the war that sent new shockwaves across the region and beyond.

After the March attack, U.S. President Donald Trump said that Israel would not attack South Pars again, but warned on social media that if Iran continued attacking key energy infrastructure in Qatar, the United States would retaliate and "massively blow up the entirety" of the field.

Here are things to know about the South Pars natural gas field and its associated industries making chemicals using gas as a raw material:

Iran's share of the world's largest gas field provides both domestic energy and export earnings.

South Pars is Iran's biggest source of domestic energy in a country that sometimes struggles to produce enough electricity. The gas field under the Persian Gulf — the world's largest — is shared by Iran and Qatar. It's called South Pars on the Iranian side and the North Field on the Qatari side.

Iran relies heavily on gas to produce electricity and heat homes. It is the fourth-largest consumer of natural gas in the world, behind the U.S., China and Russia, according to the Center on Global Energy Policy at Columbia University, even though its economy is much smaller. In contrast to other Middle East countries, it uses gas for heating due to its cold climate and much of that use is subsidized, which discourages efficient use. Abundant, affordable gas from South Pars fuels industries making chemicals for export

While the South Pars gas is important at home, the petrochemical plant is a source of export earnings. The gas is used to make basic chemical building blocks like ethylene, propylene, methanol, ammonia and urea used to make other products such as plastic pipe, packaging, clothing, household products or fertilizer. Among the largest importers are Turkey, China, India and Southeast Asian countries, according to Iranian mining and petrochemical export company Irminex. Iran's petrochemical industry gets a competitive advantage from low raw material costs due to its access to South Pars gas.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says those earnings benefitted Iran's paramilitary Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps. "Today we destroyed the largest petrochemical plant in Iran," Netanyahu said. "In other words, we are systematically destroying the money machine of the Revolutionary Guards."

Iran has struggled with rickety energy infrastructure and shortages

Iran has suffered power shortages because of interruptions to gas supplies, even though on paper it has huge energy reserves. In July, public buildings had to shut down when a heat wave strained the power grid.

So an attack on South Pars could potentially target both civilian welfare and export earnings. Qatar and Iran have made starkly different uses of the same underground reserves



US stocks drift higher

AP
New York, Apr. 7

U.S. stocks drifted higher in hesitant trading on Monday, ahead of a deadline that President Donald Trump has set to bomb Iranian power plants.

The S&P 500 rose 0.4%, coming off its first winning week in the last six. The Dow Jones Industrial Average added 165 points, or 0.4%, and the Nasdaq composite climbed 0.5%.

Oil prices likewise rose after seesawing through the day amid uncertainty about what will happen in the war with Iran and how long it will slow the global flow of oil and natural gas. Iran on Monday rejected the latest ceasefire proposal and instead said it wants a permanent end to the war.

"We won't merely accept a ceasefire," Mojtaba Ferdousi Pour, head of the Iranian diplomatic mission in Cairo, told The Associated Press. "We only accept an end of the war with guarantees that we won't be attacked again."

Fighting continued in the war, meanwhile, including an Israeli attack on an Iranian petrochemical plant. And in the background was the clock ticking toward a deadline, one that Trump has moved multiple times, where he has threatened to attack Iranian power plants if it does not open the Strait of Hormuz. A fifth of the world's oil typically sails through the strait during peacetime.

Trump on Monday suggested that his latest deadline of Tuesday at 8 p.m. Eastern time will be the final one, saying he'd already given enough extensions. "The entire country can be taken out in one night, and that night might be tomorrow night," Trump said.

Monday also offered the first chance for U.S. stock prices to react to a report from Friday that said U.S. employers hired more workers last month than economists expected. The unemployment rate unexpectedly improved.

Kaligandaki Corridor to get seven new bridges

BY TILACHAN PANDEY
Tamghas, Gulmi, Apr. 7



PHOTO : TILACHAN PANDEY

Vehicles stranded in a river along the corridor during the monsoon.

Vehicles and passengers who have long faced difficulties due to the lack of bridges over rivers along the Kaligandaki Corridor are set to get relief.

During the monsoon, travellers have been forced to take risks while crossing rivers without bridges. The planned construction is expected to ease these dangers.

According to Birendra Teli, Information Officer at the Kaligandaki Corridor Gaindakot-Ramdi-Maldhunga Road Project Office in Palpa, seven bridges will be constructed in the Gulmi section. These include bridges over Badhare Khola, Dihing Khola, Baudi Khola, Hasmadi Khola, Bade Khola, Siureni Khola and Palung Khola.

In total, 10 bridges will be built -- seven in Gulmi, two in Baglung and one in Palpa. In addition, four concrete bridges will be constructed along the Kaligandaki Highway in the Syangja and Parbat sections.

The office has requested budget allocation to begin construction of 14 bridges under its jurisdiction in the next fiscal year. The estimated cost for completing these bridges is Rs. 851.857 million.

Teli said the bridge designs have been completed and a proposal has been sent to the department to secure budget under a multi-year contract. The bridges will range from 15 to 40 metres in length, with a standard width of 11 metres.

Ramu Pandey, a driver operating on the Butwal-Purtighat route, said that the absence of bridges forces drivers to take significant risks during the monsoon. He added that travelling becomes unsafe for both passengers and drivers.

Of the 240-kilometre road under the Kaligandaki Corridor, 17 kilometres of the Ramdi–Ranighat section still remain to be blacktopped. Teli said work is ongoing and is expected to be completed in the next fiscal year.

Similarly, construction of the 53-kilometre Mirmee–Setibeni–Phalebas–Armadi section of the Kaligandaki Highway, also under the same office, is progressing rapidly.

Houseowners demolish their own houses for road expansion

BY HARIPRASAD KOIRALA
Urlabari, Apr. 7

Homeowners in the Pathari market area of Morang have begun demolishing parts of their own houses and sheds to make way for the expansion of the East-West Highway to a six-lane road.

A total of 81 structures fall within the proposed 50-metre road corridor in the market area. In most cases, up to six feet of these buildings extend into the road zone.

Originally, a Detailed Project Report (DPR) prepared in 2019 had classified the Pathari market as a semi-urban area and proposed a 33-metre-wide road.

However, after locals demanded a full urban standard with a 50-metre width and halted construction, an internal agreement was reached among the project office, municipality and local stakeholders to expand the road to 50 metres, according to Mohan Prasad Tumbapa, Mayor of Pathari Shanishchare Municipality.

Alongside the road widening, locals have also demanded that both the Lati Holi culvert to the east and the Pathari Khola bridge to the west be expanded to 50 metres. These additional demands have stalled construction work in the Pathari market section.

Jagat Prajapati, project chief of the eastern section of the Kakadbhitta-Laukahi road under the East-West Highway Expansion Project, said the project is positive about widening the road to 50 metres. He added that an agreement could also be reached with the contractor to increase the size of culverts.

However, he said that two four-lane bridges are already in the final stage of construction, with one one-way bridge on the southern side already completed. Expanding these bridges cannot be decided by the project alone and would require approval from the donor agency and the concerned directorate.

"This is a national pride project and the DPR cannot be changed easily. Several legal procedures must be completed," Prajapati said. "New demands are being raised in every discussion, which risks delaying the project and also creates difficulties for the contractor."

The road is being constructed with loan assistance from the Asian Development Bank. Although initially designed as a four-lane road in a semi-urban setting, construction in the Pathari market area has been halted after locals demanded a six-lane road with drainage, footpaths and service lanes in line with full urban standards.

Paralegal practitioners suspend services in Biratnagar

BY SHASHIDHAR PARAJULI
Biratnagar, Apr. 7

The Nepal Paralegal Service Practitioners Association, Biratnagar Unit Committee, has suspended real estate (online real estate services), bringing around 95 per cent of operations at the Land Revenue Office, Biratnagar, to a halt on Tuesday.

The practitioners withdrew their services in protest against what they describe as being treated like criminals by the state and the ongoing nationwide crackdown.

There are a total of 33 authorised units in Biratnagar, including 28 licensed paralegal practitioners providing land-related documentation services, while five firms exclusively offer such services. With all of them ceasing operations, key administrative functions at the land revenue office, such as land transactions, ownership transfers, encumbrances, and their release, have been disrupted.

According to Kanchan Neupane, President of the Morang chapter of the Nepal Paralegal Law Practitioners Association, the working environment has become untenable due to humiliation despite operating with formal government approval and required deposits.

"We have been operating the service lawfully by depositing Rs. 50,000 per firm and an additional Rs. 200,000 through the association," said Neupane. "However, even licensed practitioners are being arrested without reason, harassed, and humiliated. Under such circumstances, it is not possible to attend the office and provide services."

WHO WARNS OF EVOLVING HEALTH RISKS IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 7

The World Health Organisation has called for urgent, science-led action and a stronger 'One Health' approach to tackle evolving health risks in the South-East Asia Region.

Marking the World Health Day, the WHO South-East Asia Region made this announcement to address increasingly complex and interconnected health risks.

"Across the region, health risks are increasingly driven by climate variability, environmental change, and evolving disease patterns. Responding to them effectively requires stronger, science-led, and cross-sectoral approaches grounded in a One Health perspective," said Dr. Catharina Boehme, Officer-in-Charge, WHO South-East Asia Region, according to statement issued by WHO South-East Asia Region on Tuesday.

The World Health Day themed 'Together for Health. Stand with Science' focused on policies, preparedness, and public health action, to ensure that evidence translates into timely measures to protect lives.

For this, it is stated that a South Asia Hub of the Global Heat Health Information Network (GHHIN) is being advanced by the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) under the WHO–WMO joint programme on Climate and Health.

Supported by the Welcome Trust, the Hub will work closely with the South Asia Climate and Health Desk at the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) and the India Meteorological Department (IMD), aiming to strengthen preparedness by translating scientific evidence into early warnings and practical action to protect communities from extreme heat.

मिथिला बिहारी नगरपालिका
नगरकार्यपालिकाको कार्यालय
तारापट्टी, धनुषा
मधेश प्रदेश,नेपाल

ठेक्का स्वीकृतीको आशयको सूचना

सूचना प्रकाशन मिति २०८२।१२।२५

मिति २०८२ माघ २३ गतेको दिन प्रकाशित बोलपत्र आह्वनको सूचना बमोजिम रितपूर्वक दर्ताहुन आएका बालपत्रहरुको विभिन्न मितिमा बसेको बोलपत्र मूल्याङकन समितिको सिफारिस बमोजिम तपसिलको बोलपत्र न्यूनतम मूल्याङकित सारभूत रूपमा प्रभावग्राही देखिएकोले सार्वजनिक खरिद ऐन, २०६३ को दफा २७ (२) बमोजिम ७ (सात) दिने आशयको सूचना सम्बन्धित सबैको जानकारीका लागि प्रकाशन गरिएको छ।

तपसिल:

सि. न.	सूचना नं.	कामको विवरण	बोलपत्रदाताको नाम र ठेगाना	कबोल गरेको रकम (मु.अ.क.बाहेक)
1.	01/082-83/ NCBW MBM	Road and Drainage Upgrading from Teteribati, Anarbati School to Alora, Mithila Bihari Municipality-6, Dhanusha District	R.K Construction Pvt.Ltd, Mithila Bihari-6 hanusha	Rs.1314725.60

प्रमुख प्रशासकीय अधिकृत

Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA)
Durbarmarg, Kathmandu, Nepal
Web:www.nea.org.np

SALE AND PURCHASE OF POWER BY NEA THROUGH COMPETITIVE BIDDING

BID IDENTIFICATION NO: NEA/PTD/PSPA/2026-03

Notice: Time Extnsion for Submission of Bids

Date of Publication: 8th April, 2026

This is to formally notify all prospective bidders about the deadline for submission of bids under Bid Identification Number NEA/PTD/PSPA/2026-03 for "Sale and Purchase of Power by NEA through Competitive Bidding" published on 23rd February, 2026 has been extended.

The original deadline for submission, which was NST 12:00 hours on 9th April 2026, has been extended by fifteen (15) days. Accordingly, the revised deadline for submission of bids is NST 12:00 hours on 24th April 2026.

All other terms and conditions of the bidding document shall remain unchanged. Prospective bidders are kindly requested to take note of this extension and submit their bids within the revised timeline.

Government of Koshi Province
Ministry of Tourism, Forest & Environment
Biratnagar

Invitation for Bid

First Date of Publication:2082-12-25

1. Ministry of Tourism, Forest and Environment, Biratnagar invites bids from eligible bidders for following procurement of works:

S.N.	Contract Identification Number	Description and Location of Works	Bid Validity period (Days)	Estimated Amount with VAT & PS (NRs.)	Bid Security Amount (NRs.)	Fee for Bid Document (NRs.)
1.	MOTFE/ KOSHI/ NCB/02/ 082-83	Repair and Construction of Gen-Z Effected Physical Structure Works	120	73,07,262.11	180000.00	3000.00
Submission of Bid For NCB				Opening of Bid For NCB		A complete set of Bidding Document may be purchased from the PPMO Website bolpatra.gov.np/egp by eligible Bidders
Date		Time		Date	Time	
2083-01-25		12.00PM		2083-01-25	12.00PM	

2. Revenue Details:

Account Holder's Name	Bank Name	Bank Address	Account Number	Heading No.
Ministry of Tourism, Forests and Environment, Koshi Province	Rastriya Banijaya Bank Limited	Biratnagar	1000100201010001 (Revenue A/C)	14229 (Revenue Code)
Province Treasury Comptroller Office, Biratnagar, Morang	Rastriya Banijaya Bank Limited	Biratnagar	2120100202030000 (KHA-2-3 DHARAUTI A/C)	3290013011 (office code)

3. If the last date of purchasing submission and opening falls on a government holiday then the next working day shall be considered as last day. In such case the validity period of the bid security shall remain the same as specified for the original last date of bid submission .
4. The Purchaser reserves the right to accept or reject, wholly or partly any or all the procurement of works without assigning any reason, whatsoever. Other Procurement process as per rule of PPA and PPR.

Ministry of Tourism, Forest and Environment
Morang, Biratnagar

Ghorahi Sub-Metropolitan City
Office Of Municipal Executive
Ghorahi, Dang, Lumbini Province, Nepal

INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

DATE OF PUBLICATION : 2082-12-25 BS

1. The **Ghorahi Sub-Metropolitan City, Ghorahi , Dang** invites electronic bids from eligible bidders for following works under National Competitive Bidding. Eligible Bidders may obtain further information and inspect the Bidding Documents at the office of ***Ghorahi Sub-Metropolitan City*** or may visit **www.bolpatra.gov.np/egp.**

S.N.	Contract No/ Bid No/IFB No	Description of Works	Estimated Cost Excluding VAT	Bid Security Amount (NRS)	Bid Document Price (NRS)	Bid Validity Period	Remarks
1	NCB/WORKS/ GSMC/21/ 082/083	Nagar Prasahsanik Bhawan Haata Vitra Compound Wa ll, Nala, Septic Tank Nirman	86,30,344.82	2,20,000.00	3000.00	90 days	NCB
2	SQ/WORKS/ GSMC/03/ 082/83	Oda No 1 Ghimirekuti Gaauma Jane Sotama Culvert Nirman	12,07,649.82	30,000.00	1000.00	45 days	Sealed Quotation

Chief Administrative Officer

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

Invitation for Electronics Bids

Invitation for Bids No: DOHS/G/ICB-24/EDCD/2082-83
Date of publication: 8 April 2026

1. The Department of Health Services Management Division Teku, Kathmandu invites ***electronic*** bids from eligible bidders for the procurement of ***Medicine for Vector Borne Disease Control*** under **International Competitive Bidding – Single Stage Two Envelope.**
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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. 3,000.00** (USD 30) 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.: 1000100200010000 Revenue Head No.: 14229
5. Pre-bid meeting shall be held at ***Meeting Hall of Management Division Department of Health Services Teku Kathmandu*** at ***12:00 Hr 13 May 2026.***
6. 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 ***25 May 2026***. Bids received after this deadline will be rejected.
7. The bids will be opened in the presence of Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at ***13:10 Hr 25 May 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 bid security or scanned copy of the bid security in pdf format in case of e-bid, amounting to a minimum of **NRs.** ***115,000.00 (USD. 1,150.00)*** which shall be valid for 30 days beyond the validity period of the bid (i.e. ***22 September 2026)***
8. If the last date of purchase 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.

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

Plato is my friend; Aristotle is my friend, but my greatest friend is truth.
-Isaac Newton

EDITORIAL

Revive Investor Confidence

The capital market is a crucial financial ecosystem where individuals, companies, and governments trade long-term financial instruments to raise funds for investment. It allows investors to participate in a company's growth and earn returns through dividends or capital appreciation. The stock market, as a major component of the capital market, provides liquidity to securities issued through the primary market by allowing investors to convert their holdings into cash. Widely regarded as a "mirror" or "barometer", the stock market reflects investors' sentiment regarding the future profitability of publicly traded companies, which are key drivers of economic growth. When the stock market rises, it often signals confidence in economic expansion, whereas a declining market typically indicates fears of slowdown or recession.

In Nepal, however, the NEPSE only partially reflects the country's economic performance. This is largely due to the limited representation of the broader economy by publicly listed companies, as well as malpractices in share trading. The NEPSE index also tends to be highly responsive to political developments and frequent changes in government. The NEPSE index rose by around 250 points after the election but declined rapidly by more than 280 points following the formation of the new government. The sharp fall in the index has been attributed to government actions against businesspersons allegedly involved in questionable share market transactions. As a result of the steep decline, investors appeared increasingly panicked.

Responding to the market panic, Finance Minister Dr. Swarnim Wagle on Monday said that the government remains liberal towards the share market, which he described as an inherently transparent and professional sector, and that there is no reason for stakeholders to panic. During a meeting with associations of stock brokers and economic journalists, Dr. Wagle emphasised the importance of making the stock market more accessible to institutional investors while also ensuring stronger protection for individual investors. He stressed the need to strengthen the role of the Securities Board of Nepal in protecting retail investors. He also highlighted the crucial role of the private sector, noting that it provides employment to nearly nine out of ten people, and affirmed that the government has no intention of discouraging it. According to him, the government is committed to broadening the scope of private sector participation in the economy. He has clarified that the government's ongoing investigations into certain businesspersons are long-standing cases that have now reached their final stages.

The finance minister also stated that removing Nepal from the Financial Action Task Force grey list is one of the government's top priorities. He noted that Nepal's inclusion on the grey list has harmed the country's international reputation and negatively affected the investment climate, creating challenges in attracting foreign investment and maintaining investor confidence. Past efforts to exit the grey list were largely limited to paperwork and commitments, whereas the current government has now entered the implementation phase by enforcing necessary reforms, he claims.

The Finance Minister's positive remarks about the share market appear to have immediately reversed the index into an upward trend, boosting investor confidence. However, if the capital market is to become less volatile and more resistant to price manipulation, share trading must be monitored more effectively. To ensure that share prices truly reflect companies' performance and to reduce the risk of manipulation, a differentiated price-band system for low-cap, mid-cap, and large-cap stocks could be considered. Such a system may help control excessive volatility, particularly in smaller and less liquid stocks, while improving the credibility and stability of the market as a whole.

Beauty Of Spring

DIXYA POUDEL

It is a season of green leaves, blooming flowers and bright skies with occasional rain. After months of harrowing cold and dreary days, now it is spring season in the Northern Hemisphere. Most of us prefer spring over winter any day. When cold seeps into the bones, even warm rays of winter sun cannot alleviate the chilliness. But once spring arrives, suddenly there is lightness in our steps and a feeling of jubilation. The change feels welcome with splashes of rain and sunshine.

If one is to pore over art and culture in English literature, one can find legions of references to spring. William Wordsworth, the renowned English poet, believed that the harmony of nature contrasts with the discord of humanity. He considered nature to be a conscious being that humans fail to acknowledge. While most people see spring as it is, Wordsworth largely described it as something that does. Nature seems to bask in its own glory during the spring, only humans fail to see its real essence, one that is devoid of any artifice. To Wordsworth, this season is a physical manifestation of joy. It isn't only about the pleasant change in the weather; it is also an active, conscious state of happiness found in nature, as he observes in his poems about spring.

Nature is a great muse to creative artists, whether they are painters, singers, writers or poets. It isn't surprising that there are plenty of inspirations to be found in the spring. Most flowers bloom this season, particularly a famous one that is the cherry blossom. Its light colours contrast with the green leaves and branches forming a sort of floral canopy in the streets. The view is, of course, incredible. Yet, instead of pausing and embracing this view, people limit it to the fodder for social media. In the lack of harmony, humanity can rarely see the true beauty of spring. As such, when the mind is in a dark place, it can seem taxing to take in the beauty of nature.

Psychologists, however, differ. Spending time in nature is healing. Being open to our senses and taking in nature in its full glory can bring a sense of exhilaration. Mental health is at its best when the sun is bright, the air is full of the aroma of flowers, the greenery is vivid enough to evoke feelings of joy and the sounds of birds chirping fill the sky. Cold days bring in SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder), particularly when there is a dearth of sunshine, which is why spring is immensely welcome to many. But what would be the point of spring, if we don't stop and admire its splendor and grace?

In the urban world, nature is limited to flowers in a vessel, trees on sidewalks and birds on wires. If you value your mental health, make sure that you spend time in nature. You could do some gardening or even take pleasant walks in the park. You could listen to the pattering of rain on the rooftop. And you could spend some time in the sun, especially in the morning, to regulate your cortisol level. In the hustle and bustle of daily life, remember to bask in the spring before the mercury rises.

Retain Youths To Foster Growth

Prof. Bhupa P. Dhamala



If we hope for big but end up with small, we are bitterly frustrated. If we want more but have less, we are dissatisfied. That is exactly what is happening in our country. We have been unhappy since we began to see nothing in small, and we have been disillusioned since we ceased to be content with what we have. This restless state of mind is one of the chief reasons for our youths' escape to foreign countries, not only in search of a job but also for permanent settlement. No one can deny that the villages of Nepal are being deserted.

Among other challenges for the newly elected government, one is how to retain youth in the country, if not to bring back those who have already left, with enthusiasm, to stay in the homeland and work for nation-building. It would be a big achievement, despite it looking small, if that really happened. Someone might think migration is a natural phenomenon in the age of globalisation, but it becomes a problem when the psyche of general citizenship is in that direction. If the drained brain comes back home, it will be a big gain, and we will have more, not less.

Ideology of patriotism

There may not be ready remedies for turning our restless psyche to a stable state of mind. Still, we may suggest some solutions to make the youths think for the nation, work for the nation, and build it for the true happiness of the general public. These remedies may be categorised into three groups: political, economic, and cultural. Under the political category, the biggest challenge is instilling the ideology of patriotism in the minds of youth. Many, though, may not believe in the truth that a citizen with a patriotic sentiment is ready to struggle in the homeland, even if they intensely suffer from the hardships of life. One might retort that no one chooses hardship, leaving aside comfort. Why else are people roaming around the world in pursuit of happiness?

What Thomas Jefferson (1776) meant in the Declaration of American Independence was not encouraging people to flee to other countries, but to stay and struggle in the homeland to bring happiness, which was curtailed by the then British monarchy. There can be no denying that Nepali youths are opting for foreign countries, not because they have nothing at home, but more because they want more, which they have not been able to gain. The obvious remedy is to create a conducive environment for patriotic sentiment. The slogan of nationality that is often proclaimed seems to be only a platitude without an illocutionary force to persuade the youth to work hard in the country amid numerous difficulties. Youths need to understand that even a small achievement is big, and even if we get less, it is already valued more.

But patriotism alone does not suffice. No one can choose a hollow sentiment, even at the cost of a moderate degree of physical comfort. No one chooses candlelight while there is a possibility of electric light, and no one is happy to ride a horse-drawn carriage in the midst of advanced automobiles. If someone does, they are called no more than "stupid" persons. One of several ordeals for the newly formed government is thus to create a conducive financial environment to sustain youth at home. Many times, erstwhile governments promised to increase the size of the economy, with a higher GDP and significantly higher per capita income, but they have recurrently failed to achieve their goals.

> When we stop crying only for rights and start making a loud sound about responsibilities, we begin to be happy, even with our little achievements.

The new government must seriously ponder over what exactly could have caused this failure, or whether it was only an insignificant partial success. Is it because of the domestic constraint or because of the foreign intervention for their gain? Simply blaming the predecessors does not work. The government must show genuine cause and valid reasoning to support its point. It must convince the general public that even small things can have far-reaching positive impacts, yielding more rather than less. Only then can it find an unfailing remedy to rectify the apparently incorrigible situation.

Financial adequacy is not sufficient either. Our success depends on how responsibly we work while in decision-making positions. In many cases, we feel that the responsible persons appointed to important positions are not working in the public interest. Making decisions in personal interest of financial gain, nepotism, and favouritism are some examples of cultural degeneration. When we work in personal interest from responsible positions, we are culturally degenerate. For a few decades, we have been witnessing such irresponsible trends. We have cultivated the habit of double standards, denouncing others even if they have done right, while eulogising ourselves, even when we have done wrong.

To establish something as right when done by a group and as wrong when done by another group in a similar context is a double standard. If we are ideologically loaded, we tend to tilt toward our ideological standpoint, forgetting our responsibility to be fair and impartial. We have also been demanding our rights while ignoring our sense of responsibility. It is essential to understand that rights and responsibilities are two sides of a coin and must go hand in hand. This can be called a culture of responsibility. When we stop crying only for rights and start making a loud sound about responsibilities, we begin to be happy, even with our little achievements.

Restlessness of minds

Most of our dissatisfaction has arisen from the restlessness of our minds rather than from the absence of physical comfort. Therefore, our problem is more psychological than physical. If we always think negatively and our attitudes and behaviours are consistent with that negativity, we can never be happy, even if we are physically prosperous. Physical prosperity and mental happiness may not be on the same index. Without being complacent, citizens of a nation cannot be happy themselves or work for the great task of nation-building, either.

If we are truly patriotic, if we do not pursue making more money for luxury rather than moderate comfort, and if we are responsible in our actions, then we can say we are headed in the right direction. All these conditions are crucial to a country's overall development and significant for our happiness, even when we find small rather than big, and get less rather than more.

(The author is the chairman of Molung Foundation. bhupadhamala@gmail.com)

Pros And Cons Of LDC Graduation

Sushana Tamrakar



Starting from 2026, Nepal is on the verge of making a historic transition. Nepal is all ready to graduate from a Least Developed Country (LDC) to a developing country in November 2026. For decades, our country has been listed as one of the least developed countries and categorised among the world's poorest countries. Many see this transition as an indicator of the nation's progress and development. But is this transition really that optimistic? Behind this beautiful and progressive change, a bitter question is hiding: Does this new transition reflect the reality of ordinary Nepalis or is it just a mask to hide the true structural weaknesses?

A developing country is generally defined as a nation with a lower level of industrialisation, lower standards of living and lower GDP, compared to more economically advanced countries. The United Nations classifies countries using three major criteria: Gross National Income (GNI) per capita, Human Assets Index (measures health and education) and Economic Vulnerability Index. Among these three criteria, Nepal met the thresholds in the human assets index, which led to graduation of Nepal from least developed to a developing nation. Whereas in the remaining criteria, Nepal's performance is not so good. Nepal's progress is strong among social factors, but economic and industrial growth are still weak.

Better life

This reflects that Nepali citizens are receiving better education and living longer lives, but they are not earning well and finding employment opportunities. Therefore, the title of developing country only reflects partial progress but not a real and complete change. Over the past few decades Nepal has achieved significant milestones and made meaningful progress. In terms of poverty, it had declined significantly, dropping from over 40 per cent to 17 per cent in recent years. Nepal's literacy rate is approximately 77.4 per cent. Additionally, the rates of child mortality have decreased. Gender parity in school enrollment has largely been achieved. There has been progress in infrastructure and road connectivity is getting better and we can also see the rise of many entrepreneurs.

Even though many of these achievements are uneven but they still matter. These are the result of continuous efforts of the government, international support and local communities. Compared to before, we are getting better, but we cannot judge the overall development by comparing it with the past but we also need to look at the present scenario and future sustainability. The base of Nepal's economy is still very weak and lacks a strong industrial base. It highly depends upon imports. Nepal imports approximately US$13-14 billion worth of goods annually. Our economy highly depends upon remittances from foreign employment. Every day, over 1500 individuals leave for foreign employment. If we look at the country's Gross National Income per capita, it has only recently crossed the minimum threshold required for graduation.

When we think about graduating from the LDC category to developing one, most of us think that it brings only benefits. But how true is this? We know graduation brings prestige but it comes with a price. Being listed in the LDC category, our country has benefited from various international supports, including international aid, duty-free access to international markets, technical assistance, infrastructure development assistance, and many more. Even the Nepali students get a need-based scholarship. But once Nepal graduates, most of these benefits will be withdrawn one by one. Export industries may face higher tariffs, making them less competitive in global markets. Studies have suggested that exports could decline by around four per cent due to these changes.

> We should take this transition as an opportunity to address structural issues like unemployment, a weak economy and a lack of effective governance.

Despite these challenges, graduation also comes with its own advantages. The change in status carries symbolic weight. It will also alter the way the world perceives our country. If we look at the current situation, we are labeled as the poorest country. But the status of a developing nation can improve the country's international image. More importantly, graduation also encourages a shift in mindset. It acts as a force that pushes the nation toward self-reliance, reducing dependency upon foreign aid and emphasising the utilisation of domestic resources. This can catalyze policy reforms, innovation, and economic diversification.

Challenges

For many Nepali citizens, the transition cannot bring immediate change. Their life will go on as it is. But as time passes, their daily life will be shaped by familiar challenges. The immediate change can include limited job opportunities, rising living costs, and dependency on foreign income. Due to changes like a decrease in external support, various trade sectors may face setbacks. However, the changes also depend upon how we manage to adapt in this transition. If the government successfully strengthens industry, creates employment and opportunities, citizens could benefit from better economic opportunities and improved quality of life.

We should see this transition as a turning point instead of a conclusion. We should take this transition as an opportunity to address structural issues like unemployment, a weak economy and a lack of effective governance. We should focus on removing the gap. It highlights our real achievements in health, education, and resilience. But on the other hand, it also acts as a challenge as it exposes deep economic vulnerabilities and poor governance. Development is not defined by international classification but by the lived experiences of citizens. If young people continue to leave the country, if industries remain weak, and if inequality and discrimination remain persistent, then the status of "developing nation" does not make sense.

(Tamrakar is pursuing a Bachelor's degree at St. Xavier's College, Maitighar, Kathmandu.)

50 YEARS AGO

THE RISING NEPAL

April 8, 1976

Young Man Killed By Tiger

Baglung, April 7; Khadga Bahadur Gurung 19, of Muskat village was killed and eaten by a tiger recently, according to local Pradhan Pancha, reports RSS.

NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS

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P.O. Box 23, Kathmandu, Nepal

READER'S MAIL

Concentrate On Aviation Safety

First off, unfortunately, there have been many unanswered deadly air tragedies the world over to date. An air tragedy involves extensive investigative procedures and the involvement of various governmental agencies to determine its cause. Big countries like America and big continents like Asia should take possible steps and put in a lot of hard work to make sure that all is not lost in the immense joy of flying, given the great technological advances and huge human resources available out there - the sooner, the better - in the best interests of all.

First up, the joy of travelling is something mysterious and interesting, and even beyond. Of course, air travel has always been a step ahead because we are literally flying amid beautiful clouds, the Sun and Moon alike in the sky. More to the point, it is worth noting that travel is not just about moving people between places. Rather, even the transportation of goods/cargo actually involves a lot of travel instead.



PHOTO SOURCE: WWW.GLOBAL-AERO.COM

What next then? On the other hand, there have been some unfortunate blots on the aviation sector in the form of fatal air accidents worldwide. This aside, there have been many more advancements in the modern aviation industry, from high-end aeroplanes to well-equipped airports to shorter travel times. All things considered, the time has come for all countries, authorities, and airlines to make good use of the innovations and technological advances available to ensure crucial factors such as passenger comfort and overall safety in the aviation sector globally.

P. Senthil S Durai
Mumbai, India

TAILPIECE

An elderly couple was killed in an accident and found themselves being given a tour of heaven by Saint Peter. "Here is your oceanside condo, over there are the tennis courts, swimming pool, and two golf courses. If you need any refreshments, just stop by any of the many bars located throughout the area."

"Heck, Gloria," the old man hissed when Saint Peter walked off, "we could have been here ten years ago if you hadn't heard about all that stupid oat bran, wheat germ, and low-fat diets!"

+++

Three men were discussing coincidences at a bar. The first man said, "My wife was reading a '" Tale of Two Cities'" and she gave birth to twins" "That's funny", the second man remarked, "my wife was reading 'the three musketeers' and she gave birth to triplets" The third man shouted, "Good God, I have to rush home!" When asked what the problem was, he exclaimed, "When I left the house, my wife was reading Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves"!!!

Iran rejects ceasefire deal

AP
Bruit, Apr. 7



PHOTO: AP

Displaced people wait to receive donated food beside the tents they use as shelters after fleeing Israeli bombardment in southern Lebanon, in Beirut, Lebanon.

Iran rejected a 45-day ceasefire proposal and said it wants a permanent end to the war as U.S. President Donald Trump's ultimatum to make a deal ticked closer with an expanded threat of strikes against the Islamic Republic to include all power plants and bridges.

Trump said Monday he is "not at all" concerned about committing possible war crimes as he again threatened to destroy Iranian infrastructure if Tehran does not meet his Tuesday 8 p.m. EST deadline to reopen the Strait of Hormuz.

U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres warned the U.S. that attacking civilian infrastructure is banned under international law, his spokesperson said Monday. Israel carried out a new wave of attacks on Iran early Tuesday, while Iran responded with missile fire against Israel and its Gulf Arab neighbors.

A gunfight erupted outside the Israeli Consulate in Istanbul on Tuesday. The exchange with police left two assailants dead while a third was captured. One police officer sustained injuries.

More than 1,900 people have been killed in Iran since the war began, but the government has not updated the toll for days.

In Lebanon, more than 1,400 people have been killed and more than 1 million people have been displaced. Eleven Israeli soldiers have died there.

In Gulf Arab states and the occupied West Bank, more than two dozen people have died, while 23 have been reported dead in Israel and 13 U.S. service members have been killed.

Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard warned Tuesday it would "deprive the U.S and its allies of the region's oil and gas for years" if U.S. President Donald Trump carries out his threat to attack power plants and bridges if the Strait of Hormuz doesn't open.

Multiple Iranian media outlets carried the statement. It also issued a new threat to the Gulf Arab states. "We have exercised great restraint and had considerations in choosing retaliatory targets, but from now on all these considerations have been removed," the warning read.

Israel's Magen David Adom rescue service said a 20-year-old woman was taken to hospital with a mild head injury from shrapnel in the northern town of Nahariya. Several cars burst into flames and buildings were damaged from a direct impact on a residential street, medics and Israel's Fire and Rescue service said.

Rocket and drone attacks by the Iran-backed militant group Hezbollah have set off sirens throughout Tuesday in Israeli communities close to the Lebanon border. A container ship in the Persian Gulf has been hit by a projectile that caused damage, the British military said Tuesday.

The attack happened in international waters south of Iran's Kish Island, the British military's United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations center said. It said no one was hurt and there was no environmental impact from the apparent attack.

Over 20 ships have been attacked in the Mideast by Iran since the war began. A gunfight erupted outside a building housing the Israeli Consulate in Istanbul on Tuesday, Turkey's Haberturk broadcaster reported.

An exchange of gunfire with police left two assailants dead. A third was captured. One officer sustained injuries during the clash. The attackers were carrying long-barreled weapons, the report said. The area surrounding the building was quickly sealed off.

The United Nations health agency has suspended evacuations from the Gaza Strip through the Rafah Crossing with Egypt after the death of one of its contractors.

World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in a social media post that the contractor was killed Monday in what he described as a "security incident."

Two WHO staffers were present but were not hurt, he said without elaborating. The incident is being investigated and the evacuations of patients and wounded people will be halted until further notice, Tedros said.

The Rafah Crossing was reopened in February after long delays in a key but mostly symbolic step in the Israel-Hamas ceasefire deal. At least four northern Italian airports have imposed restrictions on jet fuel due to shortages, giving priority to long-haul and medical flights.

The restrictions at Milan Linate, Bologna, Venice and Treviso airports involve supplier Air Bp Italia, the British Petroleum group's aviation division, and will remain until at least April 9.

Priority will be given to ambulance flights, state flights and flights of more than three hours, according to an official notice. For nonpriority flights, the airports have imposed a supply ceiling of 2,000 liters (528 gallons) per aircraft.

The Venice airport has requested pilots ensure they have enough fuel from the previous airport for the following flight. Ahead of U.S. President Donald Trump's Strait of Hormuz deadline, Iranians have expressed both their hopes and fears about the war.

Ex-Australian soldier charged with Afghan war crime

AP
Melbourne, Apr. 7

Australia's most decorated living veteran, Ben Roberts-Smith, faces war crime charges on allegations that he killed five unarmed Afghans while serving in Afghanistan from 2009 and 2012, police and media reported on Tuesday.

Police have not confirmed the name of the 47-year-old former soldier who was arrested Tuesday. But he has been widely reported in the media to be Roberts-Smith, a former Special Air Service Regiment corporal who was awarded both the Victoria Cross and Medal of Gallantry for his service in Afghanistan.

Police charged him Tuesday with five counts of war crime murder. He will remain in custody overnight and make his first court appearance on Wednesday, a police statement said. He will potentially apply for release on bail Wednesday.

Roberts-Smith is only the second Australian veteran of the Afghanistan campaign to be charged with a war crime.

Former SAS soldier Oliver Schulz, 44, has pleaded not guilty to a charge of war crime murder. He is accused of shooting Afghan man Dad Mohammad three times in the head in an Uruzgan province wheat field in May 2012.

War crime murder carries a potential sentence of life in prison. It's a federal crime in Australia, defined as the intentional killing in the context of armed conflict of a person who is not taking an active part in hostilities, such as civilians, prisoners of war or wounded soldiers.

Police arrested Roberts-Smith at Sydney Airport on Tuesday after he arrived on a flight from Brisbane, Australian Federal Police Commissioner Krissy Barrett said.

"It will be alleged that the victims were not taking part in hostilities at the time of their alleged murder in Afghanistan.

It will be alleged the victims were detained, unarmed and were under the control of ADF members when they were killed," Barrett told reporters, referring to the Australian Defense Force.

"It will be alleged the victims were shot by the accused or shot by subordinate members of the ADF in the presence of and acting on the orders of the accused," Barrett added.

A civil court has already found similar allegations against Roberts-Smith credible in a defamation suit he brought after several newspapers published articles in 2018 accusing him of a range of war crimes.

In 2023, a federal judge rejected Roberts-Smith's claims and ruled that he likely killed four noncombatants unlawfully in 2009 and 2012.

But while the civil court found the war crimes allegations were mostly proved on a balance of probabilities, the new charges would have to be proved in a criminal court to a higher standard of beyond reasonable doubt.

In September, Australia's High Court said it would not hear an appeal, ending his chances of overturning the ruling.

Nick McKenzie, a reporter unsuccessfully sued for defamation by Roberts-Smith who has been investigating allegations against the soldier since 2017, expected SAS colleagues to testify in the criminal trial as they had during the civil trial.

"You're investigating conduct allegedly taken by some members of the most secretive, elite fighting force Australia has. The journalism task is difficult. What's been really difficult, though, is those brave SAS witnesses" testifying, McKenzie told Australian Broadcasting Corp.

"For them to come forward and say: 'Well, we served our country bravely like Ben Roberts-Smith did, alongside him in Afghanistan, but we saw things with our own eyes that we feel uncomfortable about.'

Gunmen target Israeli Consulate in Istanbul

AP
Istanbul, Apr. 7

Three assailants opened fire at police outside a building housing the Israeli Consulate in Istanbul on Tuesday, sparking a gunfight that left one attacker dead, Turkish officials said. The two other assailants were captured with injuries.

Two police officers sustained slight injuries in the clash, Istanbul Gov. Davut Gul told reporters. The assailants were carrying long-barreled weapons.

Interior Minister Mustafa Cifti wrote on X that the attackers had traveled from the city of Izmit, some 100 kilometers (60 miles) east of Istanbul, in a rented car. One of the assailants was linked to a group he described as "exploiting religion," without naming the organization.

The Islamic State group has carried out deadly attacks in Turkey in the past. The two wounded assailants are brothers, identified as Onur C. and Enes C. The first has a criminal record related to drugs. Both are being interrogated, according to the Interior Ministry.

Video from the attack showed one assailant carrying what appeared to be an assault rifle, wearing a brown backpack, and hiding behind a bus when exchanging fire with police. A police officer falls to the ground, apparently having been shot, and then rolls away to get behind a tree for cover.

One of the police officers was injured in the leg while the other in the ear, the Interior Ministry said.

The consulate is located in a high-rise building in Levent, one of the city's main business districts. Officials said there are no Israeli diplomats present in Israeli missions in Turkey. Israel withdrew its diplomats amid security concerns and deteriorating relations with Turkey, following the war in Gaza.

Turkey's Justice Minister Akin Gurlek said three prosecutors, including a deputy chief prosecutor, have been assigned to lead an investigation.

The U.S. ambassador to Turkey, Tom Barrack, condemned the attack and praised Turkish authorities for "their swift and decisive response."

UN vote looms on Hormuz resolution

AFP
United Nations (United States), Apr. 7



PHOTO: AFP

A vote at the UN Security Council has been delayed as member countries redraft the text in hopes of avoiding rejection of the resolution.

The UN Security Council is expected to vote Tuesday on a watered-down resolution calling for the unblocking of the Strait of Hormuz -- far from the sponsoring Gulf countries' initial goal of obtaining clearance to free it by force.

The vote is expected at 11:00 am (1500 GMT), though the outcome is not certain. The text in question has been diluted in recent days in the hope of avoiding rejection. A draft seen by AFP on Monday no longer mentions authorization to use force -- even defensively.

The vote comes just hours before Donald Trump's 8:00 pm (midnight GMT) deadline for Iran to make a deal or face the US military destroying its power plants and bridges.

Bahrain, with the backing of the United States and other oil-exporting Gulf countries, launched negotiations two weeks ago on a draft that would have given a clear UN mandate to any state wishing to use force to unblock the strait.

Iran has imposed an effective blockade on the critical waterway since the United States and Israel launched the war on February 28, sending ripple effects throughout the global economy.

"We cannot accept economic terrorism affecting our region and the world, the whole world is being affected by the developments," Jamal Alrowaiei, Bahrain's ambassador to the UN, said last week.

But objections from several veto-holding permanent members -- including France, Russia and China -- have forced the text to be watered down and the vote delayed multiple times. French opposition appeared to be lifted by the addition of wording that meant any action would need to be "defensive."

The Security Council adopted a strong resolution against Tehran in mid-March, condemning its blocking of the strait. The Council must now "swiftly develop the necessary defensive response" to the situation, French Ambassador Jerome Bonnafont said on Thursday.

PRISM

North Carolina flight delayed by bee swarm on turbine

North Carolina: An American Airlines plane preparing to depart from a North Carolina airport was delayed for about an hour due to a swam of bees.

Micah McCollough, a passenger aboard the plane at Charlotte Douglas International Airport, captured video as beekeepers and airline employees worked to remove the bees from the plane's turbine.

The video shows the bee rescuers placing the insects into a box for safe transport. The bees were removed and the plane departed for San Francisco about an hour behind schedule.

Firefighters rescue donkey from canal

Arizona: Firefighters in Arizona responded to a canal where a donkey had somehow wandered in and became trapped in the water.

The Eloy Fire District said crews responded to the Central Arizona Project canal near Highway 87 and Shedd Road in Eloy on an animal rescue call.

"Crews arrived and found the donkey stuck in the water and struggling to free itself," the fire district said on social media.

-Agencies

TODAY IN HISTORY

217 – Roman emperor Caracalla is assassinated and is succeeded by his Praetorian Guard prefect, Marcus Opellius Macrinus.
876 – The Battle of Dayr al-'Aqul saves Baghdad from the Saffarids.
1139 – Roger II of Sicily is excommunicated by Innocent II for supporting Anacletus II as pope for seven years, even though Roger had already publicly recognized Innocent's claim to the papacy.
1143 – Manuel I Komnenos succeeds his father John II Komnenos as Byzantine Emperor.
1232 – Mongol–Jin War: The Mongols begin their siege on Kaifeng, the capital of the Jin dynasty.
1250 – Seventh Crusade: Ayyubids of Egypt capture King Louis IX of France in the Battle of Fariskur.
1271 – In Syria, sultan Baibars conquers the Krak des Chevaliers.
1605 – The city of Oulu, Finland, is founded by Charles IX of Sweden.

Stopgaps can't curb surging oil prices

AP
New York, Apr. 7



PHOTO: AP

Motorists queue up outside a fuel pump in Dhaka, as Bangladesh tries to handle its energy crisis related to the Iran war.

Global leaders have been scrambling to contain the rising cost of oil and gasoline since the start of the Iran war, which took a record amount of oil off the market when tankers full of crude were stranded in the Persian Gulf and military strikes damaged refineries, pipelines and export terminals.

Hoping to ease some pain for consumers, President Donald Trump and other heads of state have been pulling on various levers, launching more oil on the market in a bid to calm the chaos.

A group of 32 nations that are members of the International Energy Agency began releasing the largest volume of emergency oil reserves in its history: 400 million barrels.

Trump is tapping into oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve while lifting sanctions on Russian and Iranian crude and temporarily waiving the Jones Act, a maritime law that requires ships carrying goods between U.S. ports to be U.S.-flagged.

But despite those maneuvers, crude oil has soared well past $100 a barrel and gasoline is selling for $4.14 a gallon on average in the U.S. While the stopgaps are helping, they're not adding up to enough oil to replace what's stranded, experts say.

"They're all incremental," said Mark Barteau, professor of chemical engineering and chemistry at Texas A&M University.

"You're talking about these different patches being at the level of maybe 1 to 2 million barrels a day each, and you've got to get to 20, so it's hard to see those actually adding up to the numbers that are needed. And then the question is, how long can you sustain those?"

Before the war began, roughly 15 million barrels of crude oil and 5 million barrels of oil products passed daily through the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf, amounting to about 20% of global oil consumption, according to the International Energy Agency.

In addition to that loss, some oil producing nations in the Middle East have halted oil production because they can't ship fuel out of the Gulf and their storage tanks are full.

That's taken about 10 million barrels per day off the market, the IEA said. Then there are the eight countries around the Persian Gulf that together hold about 50% of global oil reserves.

Under normal circumstances, they coordinate closely to raise or lower their output to keep prices steady, said Jim Krane, energy research fellow at Rice University's Baker Institute. Usually Saudi Arabia steps in to bring spare oil to market and calm things down, he said.

"But all of that spare capacity is also bottled up inside the Persian Gulf right now and it can't get to market either," Krane said. "So the main emergency response system that we have is also blocked."

The IEA said in its recent report that "the resumption of transit through the Strait of Hormuz is the single most important action to return to stable oil and gas flows and reduce the strains on markets and prices." Barring that, world leaders are grasping for ways to free up more oil.

Some nations have found workarounds to move oil out of the Gulf. Saudi Arabia is using its East-West pipeline, which stretches from the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea, to transfer about 5 million barrels per day out of the Gulf, said Michael Lynch, distinguished fellow at Energy Policy Research Foundation, a non-partisan institution focused on energy and economics. But the nation was already using that pipeline to transport oil, so it doesn't have a lot of spare room to move oil from stranded tankers.

Trump also temporarily lifted sanctions on approximately 140 million barrels of Iranian oil that was already in transit. But that didn't add oil to the market — it just widened the pool of potential buyers, said Daniel Sternoff, senior fellow at the Columbia Center on Global Energy Policy.



PHOTO: RSS

Farmers plucking green tea leaves at a tea garden in Nepaltar, Ilam district.

Three SEE students burned to death



BY NAGENDRA KUMAR KARNA
Mahottari, Apr. 7

Three students were burned to death, and three others were injured after two motorcycles collided and caught fire on Tuesday at the border of Jaleshwar Municipality and Ekdara Rural Municipality in Mahottari district. One of the injured is reported to be in critical condition.

According to Superintendent of Police Heramb Sharma of the District Police Office, Mahottari, the accident occurred at Gena Bathnaha in Ward No. 5 of Ekdara Rural Municipality along the Bakhri-Bardibas road section.

The students were returning home after appearing in their SEE examinations when the motorcycles collided, causing a fuel tank explosion and a sudden fire.

The deceased have been identified as Ravi Das, around 20, son of Ramdayal Das of Jaleshwar Municipality-6; Subhash Das, around 20, son of Surendra Das from the same area; and Abhishek Mandal, son of Shatrudhan Mandal of Ekdara Rural Municipality-3.

The injured include Rohit Das, 19, son of Suresh Das of Dhabouli, Jaleshwar-6; Abhay Kapar, 9, son of Lakhindra Kapar from the same locality; and Ajay Kapar, 20, son of Rambaran Kapar of Gena Bathnaha, Ekdara-5.

Police said the fire engulfed both motorcycles following the collision, with all three riders on one of the bikes caught in the flames. "Police, a fire engine and ambulances were immediately deployed after receiving information about the incident, and the victims were rushed to the Provincial Hospital in Jaleshwar," SP Sharma said.

Doctors at the hospital confirmed that the three severely burned students had died on the way. The three injured were given primary treatment and later referred to Janakpur for further care.

Chief District Officer Indradev Yadav, along with security personnel, visited both the accident site and the hospital to take stock of the situation. He said one of the injured is in critical condition, while two are undergoing treatment at Ram Janaki Hospital in Janakpur and another at the Provincial Hospital in Janakpur.

Police said the bodies were initially unrecognisable due to severe burns, and identification was confirmed only after family members arrived. The bodies will be handed over to the families following post-mortem examinations.

Both motorcycles were carrying three riders each and were destroyed in the fire, making it difficult to identify their registration numbers. The vehicles have been taken into custody and kept at the District Police Office, Mahottari.

Locals described the incident as shocking and tragic. Rajan Mandal, a local resident, said he had heard of deaths due to fire in plane crashes but had never witnessed such a horrific incident involving motorcycles.

Following the incident, residents have urged parents to be more responsible. Local youth Sanjeet Pathak called the accident "heartbreaking" and stressed the need for stricter control over allowing minors to use motorcycles and mobile phones. He also called for accountability, suggesting that parents should face action if students are found riding motorcycles.

US-ISRAELI STRIKES HIT IRAN'S KHARG ISLAND: MEDIA

APF
Tehran, Apr. 7

US-Israeli strikes have hit the key Iranian oil export terminal of Kharg island, media reported Tuesday.

"The American-Zionist enemy has carried out several attacks on Kharg island, and several explosions have been heard there," Iran's Mehr news agency reported.

According to an X post by journalist Barak Ravid of the news site Axios, citing a US official, the US carried out "strikes on military targets" on the island located off Iran's western coast.

President Donald Trump has repeatedly threatened nationwide destruction of Iran's civilian infrastructure and on Tuesday he said a "whole civilization" could be wiped out.

However, The New York Times quoted an unidentified White House official saying that the targets on Kharg Island were military. CNN quoted a US official saying the strikes were against military targets and did not hit oil facilities.

Kharg Island is at the heart of Iran's oil export industry, a lynchpin of the country's battered economy, and lies in the narrow, strategic Hormuz Strait.

It has Iran's largest oil terminal, oil pipelines, storage tanks and related infrastructure. On March 13, the United States said it bombed more than 90 military targets on the island, without hitting oil infrastructure.

NRNA, ECAN collaborate to reform abroad studies process

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 7

The Non-Resident Nepali Association (NRNA) and the Educational Consultancy Association of Nepal (ECAN) have agreed to make the process for abroad study safer, more managed and outcome-oriented through a collaboration between the two organisations.

At an introductory meeting held in Kathmandu on Sunday, leaders from both organisations agreed to lay the groundwork for long-term cooperation, placing student welfare at the centre. The meeting was attended by NRNA President Dr. Hemraj Sharma, ECAN President Laxman Poudel (Andrew), and other officials.

According to a statement issued by the NRNA, discussions were focused on making pre-departure orientation (PDO) more effective, ensuring a safe and supportive environment for students, and improving the quality of counselling services.

Both sides also discussed jointly developing a 'Nepali Career Portal' to create an integrated information system on post-study employment and career opportunities.

Likewise, they also agreed to conduct targeted training programmes to enhance the capacity of counsellors, test student support systems through pilot projects, and undertake skill mapping based on different countries and regions.

"Special programmes focusing on mental health and psychosocial awareness will also be prioritised," read the statement.

The meeting further agreed to jointly advocate with relevant authorities for policy reforms in areas such as health insurance, dissemination of scholarship information, and student tax management. Preparations are also underway to sign a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in the near future.

The meeting stressed that institutional collaboration is essential to make the sector more organised and credible.

Dr. Bhatta appointed...

Simultaneously, the Secretariat Office of the Water and Energy Commission will be shifted to the vacated Pulchowk premises, in a move aimed at optimising institutional capacity and space utilisation.

Permission to use land, forest for infrastructure projects

On the infrastructure front, approval was granted for the acquisition of approximately nine ropanis of private land in Dhunibesi Municipality for works related to the Nagdhunga Tunnel Road project. Additionally, around two ropanis of land in Uttargaya Rural Municipality will be acquired to facilitate improvements along the Pasanglhamu Highway, particularly in the Bunuwa Ghumti section of the Betrawati–Dhunche–Syafrubeshi road corridor.

In a significant decision concerning national infrastructure, the Cabinet authorised the use of 46.39 hectares of national forest land across Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Makawanpur districts for the construction of the Kathmandu-Tarai-Madhesh Expressway. The move includes approval for the felling of 1,898 trees of various species, a step likely to draw scrutiny from environmental stakeholders even as it accelerates progress on the strategic road project.

Gandaki Province completes modern police post in Singa

BY THAKURA PRASAD ACHARYA
Myagdi, Apr. 7

A new, fully equipped police post building has been constructed in Singa Tatopani, Beni Municipality–4, Myagdi. The new building of the Singa Tatopani Police Post has been constructed on an area of 2 ropanis at Rs. 35 million by the Gandaki Provincial Government.

The total estimated cost of the project was Rs. 35.173 million, with a contract agreement signed with Divya Jyoti Nirman Sewa for Rs. 35.172 million in June/July 2024 (Ashar 2081), informed Deputy Superintendent of Police Chiranjibi Pratap Mahato, engineer at the Gandaki Province Police Office, Pokhara. According to him, the construction team that was mobilised at the site immediately after the contract was signed and completed the building



on time. He said, "The Gandaki Province Police Office implemented the budget received from the provincial government to construct this modern building required for the police post.

All construction work has been completed and the building is scheduled to be inaugurated soon." Previously, the police post operated from a rented house. He added that the two-storey building includes an administrative wing, male and female detention cells, a communication room, a kitchen, and toilets.

The construction of this building will help strengthen peace and security in the Singa Tatopani area, known as a natural hospital, and improve citizen-friendly service delivery, said Surya Bahadur Thapa, Chief of the District Police Office, Myagdi.

He further stated that necessary initiatives have also been taken for other police posts lacking their own buildings. Currently, the Rakhu Bhagwati Police Post in the district operates from a rented house. Similarly, police units of the Area Police Offices in Darwang, Ghodepani, Babiyachaur, Galeshwor, Ratnechaur, Mangalaghat, Chimkhola, Tiplyang, Dana, and Ghar do not have their own premises.

These police posts operate from community buildings and rented houses. The main challenge in constructing police post buildings remains land acquisition, Thapa said. Meanwhile, the district police offices at Kalipul, Bhurung-Tatopani, Mauwaphant, and Takam have their own buildings.

MPs raise issues of...

Lawmakers also called for greater attention to mental health. Krantishikha Dhital highlighted the psychosocial impact on families affected by past political movements, injured individuals and security personnel. She argued that mental health issues remain largely overlooked and called for expanded counselling services and policy-level recognition of the problem.

Environmental concerns were raised by Ashika Tamang, who criticised the unregulated extraction of riverbed materials, particularly in rivers such as the Trishuli. She warned that such activities are damaging ecological balance and affecting local communities, urging the government to adopt scientific and sustainable management practices.

Other lawmakers drew attention to a range of additional issues, including the growing number of road accidents, crop damage caused by wildlife in hilly regions, youth drug addiction, and restrictions imposed in parts of Manang and Mustang, which they argued may infringe upon fundamental rights.

The session also saw the tabling of several legislative proposals, including bills related to tourism, forensic science and film regulation. The next meeting of the HoR is scheduled for 1 PM Wednesday.

Minister Gurung...

The minister said the government has also prepared to conduct rescue operations during disasters using helicopter services supported by geo-location tracking to protect citizens.

During the inspection, Suman Yogesh, Chief of the Road Division Bhaktapur, said that reconstruction of the BP Highway damaged by last year's floods is being carried out in four sections. He noted that while work has begun in three sections, reconstruction in the section to be handled by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has yet to start.

He said reconstruction is currently underway on a 2.3-km stretch from Piple to Dalabesi, an 8.5-km stretch from Dalabesi to Charsayabesi, and an 11-km stretch from Charsayabesi to Bhakundebesi.

So far, 22 per cent of work has been completed on the Piple–Dalabesi section, 30 per cent on the Dalabesi–Charsayabesi section, and 28 per cent on the Charsayabesi–Bhakundebesi section. Yogesh added that efforts are being made to ensure vehicular movement along the original road alignment before the monsoon.

Minister Gurung inspected a 28-km stretch of the BP Highway from Bhakunde to Nepalthok. Armed Police Force Inspector General Raju Aryal, Department of Roads Director General Dr. Bijay Jaisi, Superintendent Engineer Shubharaj Neupane from the Federal Road Supervision and Monitoring Office, and Kavrepalanchok Chief District Officer Gopal Kumar Adhikari accompanied the minister.

Gandaki to seek...

The Lomanthang area is also home to 15th-century monasteries and caves. The Tiji festival, the main festival of the Upper Mustang community, is celebrated annually in front of the palace.

Meanwhile, the Gandaki Province Government has also proposed development initiatives for Muktinath Temple, an important pilgrimage site for both Hindus and Buddhists, located at an altitude of 3,710 metres above sea level in Baragun Muktichhetra Rural Municipality–1.

Peace talks with Pakistan have been constructive: Afghanistan

AP
Kabul, Afghanistan, Apr. 7

Afghanistan's Foreign Ministry said Tuesday peace talks held in China between Afghanistan and Pakistan to halt cross-border fighting between the two neighbors have been constructive.

The talks began last week in the western Chinese city of Urumqi following an invitation by China, in an effort to stop the conflict that began between the two countries in February, leaving hundreds dead. Pakistan, which declared it was in "open war" with its neighbor, has also carried out airstrikes inside Afghanistan, including in the capital Kabul.

The United Nations' office for the coordination of humanitarian affairs in Afghanistan posted on X Tuesday that the conflict had displaced 94,000 people overall, while 100,000 people in two Afghan districts near the border have been completely cut off by the fighting since February.

The conflict has alarmed the international community, particularly as the area is one where other militant organizations, including al-Qaida and the Islamic State group, still have a presence in the region.



PHOTO: AP

A man places stones on graves during a second mass funeral for victims of an earlier airstrike on a drug rehabilitation center, in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Bhaktapur comes alive for Biska Jatra



FILE PHOTO:TRN

BY BINU SHRESTHA
Kathmandu, Apr. 7

The festive spirit of the famous Biska Jatra has gripped the Newar settlement in Bhaktapur as the nine-day festival approaches. The eight-night and nine-day festival will kick off on April 10 with the pulling of the chariots of two deities, Bhairavnath and Bhadrakali.

From the last week of the Nepali month of Chaitra to the first week of Baisakh, Bhaktapur city is filled with the festive fanfare of Biska Jatra.

According to Guthi Santhan of Bhaktapur, work to prepare the wooden chariots of Bhairavnath and Bhadrakali is progressing at full speed.

The construction of the chariots of Bhairavnath and Bhadrakali, which are essential for the Jatra, has been almost completed. This work began on the premises of the five-storey temple of Taumadi. Ananda Karmacharya, head of the Guthi Sansthan, Bhaktapur, informed that the work of painting the chariot wheels and other minor tasks is ongoing.

The painting of both chariots' wheels will be completed by April 9, he said. The Bhairavnath chariot will be taller than the Bhadrakali chariot.

The roof of the three-story chariot of Bhairavnath is made of brass plates. The windows and doors of the chariot are engraved with mythological art.

The craftsmen play an important role in building the chariots. The Shilpkar, Nakrami, Manandhar and Chirakar communities have been playing a vital role in building the chariots. For the past few years, the craftsman Prem Lal Shilpkar has been responsible for making the chariot.

The painting and decoration of the chariot are done by the Chitrakar community, woodwork by the Shilpkar community and ironwork by the Nakarmi community. As thousands of devotees and tourists participate in this festival, its originality and religious and cultural significance become evident.

The book titled 'Some Festivals of the Nepal Valley,' published by Nepal Academy, defines the Biska Jatra from many angles. Earlier, only the chariot procession of Bhadrakali was held. After some time, the procession of the Bhairavnath chariot began.

For nine days, the festive vibes of the festival can be seen throughout Bhaktapur. Locals are seen excited to play traditional music and perform ritual worship. The main attractions of the Jatra are considered to be the Rath Yatra and the wooden pole raising and pulling down ceremonies.

A wooden pole brought from Sallaghari in Suryavinayak Municipality-10 Chittapol of Bhaktapur will be raised on April 13. As per some historians, the Biska Jatra has been celebrated since the beginning of the Bikram Sambat era, while others speculate that it was started by Shivadev II.

Adhikari's lyrics still capitivate audiences



BY AMAR RAJ NAHARKI
Tanahun, Apr. 7

Anand Adhikari is one of the few individuals who have consistently contributed to Nepali music.

Born on 17 January 1967 in Maharajgunj, Kathmandu, Adhikari is the eldest son of the late Madhav Raj Adhikari and the late Alka Devi Adhikari. With a passion for poetry from his school days, he has written around 400 melodious songs during a career spanning more than three and a half decades.

A defining characteristic of Adhikari's work is the seamless integration of nature and human emotion. A notable example is the iconic song Himnadi Jhai Yo Maya from the film Aafno Manche.

Reflecting on its creation, Adhikari said, "The director requested a song that could link nature with love. Based on that, I used the metaphor of a glacier to reflect the vastness of nature and the depth of love."

This song, featuring the voices of world-renowned singers Udit Narayan Jha and Deepa Jha, with music by Shambhujeet Baskota, remains a favourite among Nepali music lovers. In his lyrics, natural elements such as rivers, hills and mountains often seem to echo human emotions.

Another major hit in his career is Baanchunjelilai, which holds the distinction of being the last Nepali song recorded by the legendary late singer Lata Mangeshkar.

Adhikari's musical journey began in 1990 through Radio Nepal with the song Timi Haansi Deu Jindagi Haanscha.

Since then, many of his creations, including Orali Lageko Harinko Chaal Bho, Hira Katne Hiraima Rakhera, and Phoolko Thunga Mathi Mutu, have become timeless classics.

Even in the digital era, his lyrics continue to break records. The song 'Maya Luki Luki' has garnered over 165 million views on YouTube.

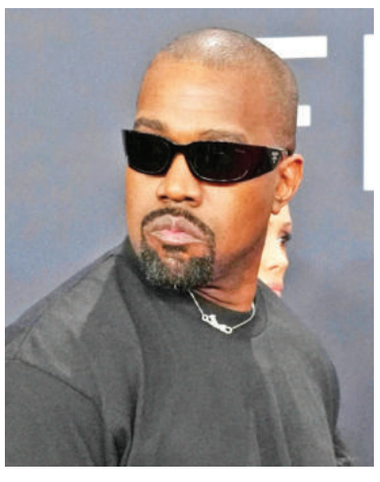
An accomplished academic, Adhikari holds Master's degrees in four different subjects. He has been honoured with prestigious awards like Prabal Gorkha Dakshin Bahu and Suprabal Janasewashree for his service to the nation.

In the field of music, he has received awards including the Chhinalata Geet Puraskar and the Natikaji Bishishta Sangeet Samman.

Having travelled to over 67 countries, Adhikari views life through the profound philosophy of music.

Pressure mounts over Ye's Wireless Festival appearance

AP
London, Apr. 7



A senior member of the British government said on Tuesday that Ye should "absolutely not" perform at the Wireless Festival, as the artist offered to meet members of the UK's Jewish community and demonstrate that he has changed following previous antisemitic remarks.

The rapper, formerly known as Kanye West, is scheduled to perform before around 150,000 attendees from 10–12 July at Finsbury Park in London. However, organisers are facing increasing pressure from sponsors and politicians to cancel his appearance after widespread condemnation over his past statements, including antisemitic comments and expressions of admiration for Adolf Hitler.

In response, Ye said he would welcome the opportunity to meet representatives of the Jewish community in the UK in person to listen and learn. He acknowledged that words alone are insufficient and stated that he would need to demonstrate change through his actions.

Several sponsors, including Pepsi, Rockstar Energy and Diageo, have withdrawn their support since his booking was announced. Meanwhile, UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer described the decision to book Ye as "deeply concerning".

Phil Rosenberg, president of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, said the group would be open to meeting the musician if he withdrew from the festival, adding that the community would need to see genuine remorse and meaningful change before accepting his return to such a prominent platform.

'Charlie's Angels' stars reunite for 50th anniversary celebration

AP
Los Angeles, Apr. 7



Once upon a time there were three little girls who grew up to become private detectives, working for a mysterious, never-seen boss in a television show that would become a pop culture phenomenon called Charlie's Angels.

Kate Jackson, Jaclyn Smith and Cheryl Ladd reunited to celebrate the programme's 50th anniversary at PaleyFest LA on Monday evening. They received a standing ovation, along with cheers and applause from the audience at the Dolby Theatre.

The hour-long crime drama first aired on 22 September 1976, in a time before the internet and streaming, when only three major television networks existed. It became a top-10 success for ABC during its first two of five series, concluding in 1981.

"I knew the show was different, special and unique," Smith told the audience. "Three women chasing danger instead of being rescued."Jackson added, "We made an impact, I think."

Farrah Fawcett became a 1970s icon, known for her feathered hairstyle and famous swimsuit poster. She departed after the first series to pursue a film career and passed away in 2009.

She was replaced by Ladd, who arrived on her first day wearing a Farrah Fawcett T-shirt. She had initially turned down producer Aaron Spelling three times, aware of how beloved Fawcett had been.

"I knew there was no replacing Farrah, so I made a joke of myself," Ladd said on the red carpet. "Everyone laughed. Farrah would have done something like that.""Cheryl stepped in and we didn't miss a beat," Jackson added.

Despite its popularity, critics were less favourable, labelling the show "jiggle television" due to the characters' revealing disguises and dismissing it as superficial. "It didn't bother me," Jackson said. "I knew what we were doing, and Gloria Steinem knew what we were doing. We were helping to break through that glass ceiling, and that made a difference."

Fifty years on, the show remains popular through reruns and DVD releases, and it inspired a film franchise starring Drew Barrymore, Cameron Diaz and Lucy Liu. "We gave people an hour to relax, put their feet up and forget everything," Jackson said, "while quietly reinforcing the idea that women are just as capable, intelligent, and able as men."

The largely older audience responded warmly, laughing and applauding as clips from various episodes were shown. These included appearances by Shelley Hack, who replaced Jackson for one series, and the late Tanya Roberts, who appeared in the final series. Smith and David Doyle, who played Charlie's intermediary, remained throughout the show's entire run.

HOROSCOPE

tarot.com

ARIES: Quiet moves can fuel surprisingly strong momentum. Practical security grows quietly as enterprising Mars works in your 12th House of Alone Time, where it sextiles inconsistent Uranus in your 2nd House of Analytics.

CANCER: Gentle words carry kindness far. With the Moon in your 7th House of Partnership, one-to-one bonds glow, platonic or romantic. Stay present with friends, especially when seeking their advice or sharing meaningful moments together.

LIBRA: Tiny tweaks can change the whole day. Today's Mars-Uranus trine crosses your practical 6th house with your depth-focused 8th house.

CAPRICORN: Your presence commands attention effortlessly. With the Moon in your sign, confidently express your needs without apology. Heightened self-awareness guides choices—from style to major life decisions—helping you align actions with your true desires today.

TAURUS: Change feels better when friends are cheering you on! Your 11th House of Hopefulness hosts Mars, which is presently sextiling defiant Uranus in your determined sign. Take this as a reminder that it's okay to be seen by your peers.

LEO: Your power strengthens when shared wisely. With Mars in your 8th House sextiling Uranus in your 10th, propose a clear budget for a joint work project—leaders will notice your courage, fairness, and strategic influence.

SCORPIO: Creativity seeks a stage and open collaborators. Today's trine between Mars and Uranus sparks unexpected opportunities.

AQUARIUS: Stability grows when you improve simple systems. With warrior Mars in your resource zone and quirky Uranus in your home zone, the domestic and material spheres of your life are probably where improvement is most urgent.

GEMINI: Deep conversations help you feel closer to your loved ones. As the emotional Moon enters your 8th House of Intimacy, your mind turns to how shared money rests on trust.

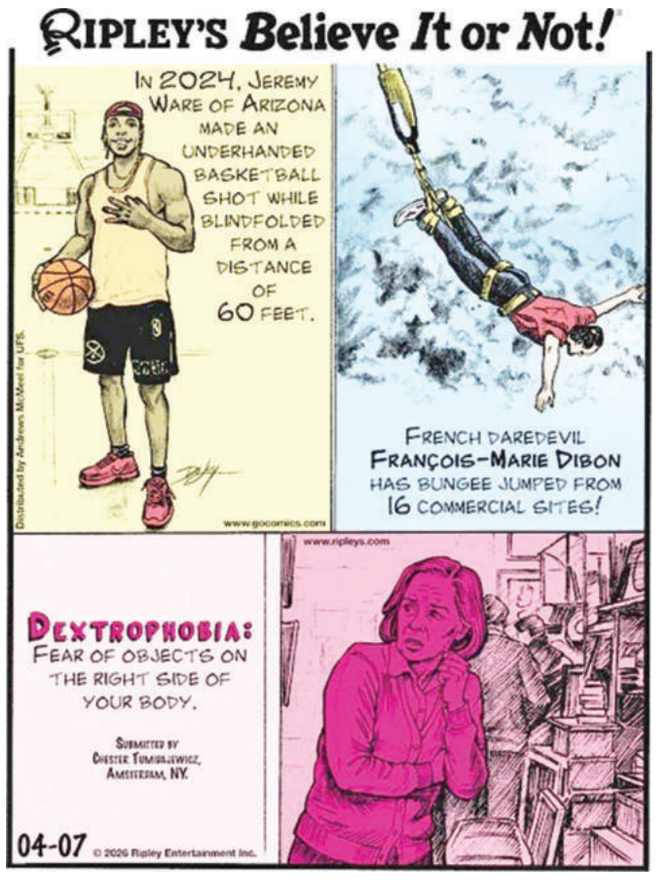
VIRGO: Joy fuels progress as the Moon enters your 5th House of Euphoria. Embrace playful experimentation instead of dull routines. Chores may remain, but approaching them with creativity and fun brings unexpected delight and energy today.

SAGITTARIUS: Your mood may lift as possibHome rhythm sets the pace for progress. Mars in your 4th House of Inner Needs teams up with unconventional Uranus in your 6th House of Habits to support smoother routines.

PISCES: Your courage speaks clearly when words are simple. Brave Mars is encouraging your intuitive sign, while its sextile to sudden Uranus in your 3rd House of Communication favors outreach.

CARTOON

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ARMY SAIL INTO HJBL FINAL

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 7

Tribhuwan Army Club have booked their place in the final of the Himalayan Java Basketball League (HJBL) 2026, following a thrilling victory over Golden Gate International College on Tuesday.

Army defeated Golden Gate 90–71 in the first qualifier played at the Covered Hall of Dasarath Stadium. The final is slated on Saturday.Golden Gate led 25–17 after the first quarter and held a 38–30 advantage at half-time, with the second quarter ending level at 13–13.

By the end of the third quarter, Golden Gate were still ahead 62–51. However, Army produced a stunning turnaround in the final quarter, outscoring their opponents 29–9 to clinch the match 90–71.

Army have now beaten Golden Gate in all three meetings this season, maintaining their dominance. They had already won both league-stage encounters.Army captain Binod Maharjan was named Man of the Match.

While Army are assured of a place in the final, GoldenGate will have another chance to qualify.

They will face the winner of the eliminator between Times and KVC Hounds in the second qualifier.

Arika to compete in WKF Karate 1 Premier League in China

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 7

Historic medal-winning karate player Arika Gurung will compete in the WKF Karate 1 Premier League to be held in Leshan, China.

A three-member Nepali team, including Gurung, will depart for China on Wednesday.

The League runs from 10 to 12 April, with Gurung set to represent Nepal in the women's over-68kg weight category.

Earlier in January, she won a historic silver medal at the Premier League event held in Istanbul, Turkey. The Premier League is staged four times a year.

According to national team coach Kushal Shrestha, Gurung is currently ranked 11th in the world. Based on her achievements in 2026 she is ranked fourth

The three-member Nepali delegation includes Shrestha as coach and Rabi Maharjan as manager. The team was formally bid farewell on Tuesday by Ramcharitra Mehta, Member-Secretary of the National Sports Council, and Dawa Gurung, General Secretary of the Nepal Karate Federation.



PHOTO: NSC

Nepal's karate player Arika Gurung (left), head coach Kushal Shrestha (right) and team manager Rabi Maharjan (centre) during the farewell ceremony at the National Sports Council in Kathmandu on Tuesday.

Speaking at the farewell programme, Member-Secretary Mehta said he was working to ensure athletes receive the cash rewards they have not yet been granted for winning medals in international competitions.

"I have taken serious steps with the concerned authorities to secure the cash prizes that athletes deserve for their medals."

"Among the 18 urgent tasks presented at the minister's welcome programme, I placed athletes' rewards at the top. I have also personally discussed with the minister to ensure these prizes are delivered within this financial year, and the minister is positive about it," Mehta said.

Shureido sponsors Gurung

Japanese karate equipment manufacturer Shureido has formally announced its sponsorship of to Gurung on Tuesday.

She becomes the first Nepali athlete to receive such support from the company. According to national team head coach Kushal Shrestha, Gurung has been provided with four sets of karate uniforms, one bag, four shin guards, four belts, four pairs of gloves and five T-shirts.

The agreement will remain in place for two years. Coach Shrestha said that international backing of this kind would lift athletes' morale and positively influence their performance.

He described the sponsorship by a globally recognised brand as a significant milestone for Nepal's karate sector, expressing confidence that it would encourage further international interest in Nepali players. Coach Shrestha himself initiated the approach to secure the sponsorship.

PREETI RAI JOINS CAMBODIAN CLUB SVAY RIENG



BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 7

Nepal women's national football team midfielder Preeti Rai has completed a move to Cambodia after a successful spell in Jordan.

Following her title-winning season with Etihad FC in Jordan, Rai has signed for Preah Khan Reach Svay Rieng FC, who compete in the Cambodian Women's League.

On Monday night she shared photos on social media wearing the club's jersey, captioned: "Season 2026. Here we go."Svay Rieng are joint champions of the inaugural Cambodian Women's League in 2020, while their men's team are the current Cambodian Premier League holders.

Nepali side Manang Marsyangdi Club previously faced Svay Rieng's men team in the 2014 AFC President's Cup, winning the encounter. Rai enjoyed a standout campaign last season, winning both the Jordan Women's Pro League and the Jordan Women's Cup with Etihad.

She joined the Jordanian club in 2025, becoming the second Nepali woman to play in the Arab region after Rekha Paudel, who plays from Abu Dhabi Country Club in the UAE.

At home, Rai represents APF Club in Nepal and previously featured for Kickstart FC in India during the 2023 season.

Nepal to host League 2 Series from April 25

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr 7

The ICC Cricket World Cup League 2 series involving Nepal, Oman and the UAE, which had earlier been postponed, will now take place in Kathmandu from 25 April to 5 May. The Cricket Association of Nepal (CAN) announced the revised schedule through a press release on Tuesday.

Immediately after the conclusion of this series, Nepal will host another tri-nation event featuring Nepal, the United States and Scotland. That competition will run from 12 to 22 May.

The Nepal–Oman–UAE fixtures were originally scheduled earlier but were postponed due to the crisis in West Asia.

In the eight-team League 2 standings, Nepal currently sit seventh with 12 points from 20 matches. The UAE have 10 points from 20 games, while Oman are on 27 points from 22 matches.

Napoli boost Serie A title defence

AFP
Milan, Apr. 7

Napoli are still in the hunt to retain their Serie A title after the champions beat Scudetto rivals AC Milan 1-0 on Monday.

Matteo Politano came off the bench and lashed home the only goal of the game with 11 minutes remaining in front of delighted fans in Naples as the hosts racked up a fifth straight win.

Napoli leapfrogged Milan into second place but still have a battle on their hands to deny Inter a 21st league crown as they sit seven points off the pace with seven matches remaining.

Antonio Conte's team were superior at the Stadio Diego Armando Maradona, where Politano's second goal of the season decided a largely stodgy contest not helped by Milan only being able to select star attackers Rafael Leao and Christian Pulisic.

"It's a happy moment for us because we're back in second place, I thanked the boys for what they've done this season as it could have finished badly," said Conte of an injury-ravaged season.

"We've got back to what we're were like last season, we've got to keep going without getting ahead of ourselves."

Milan now trail their local rivals Inter by nine points and will in all likelihood have to content themselves with a return to the Champions League."I think we're done with the Scudetto race. We're nine behind Inter and Napoli are ahead of us now," said Allegri.

Napoli's win came without Romelu Lukaku who has incurred the wrath of the club hierarchy after staying in Belgium for treatment for a hip injury, while Denmark striker Rasmus Hojlund ruled out with a stomach bug.

SNIPPETS

Maguire extends ManU contract

London (AFP): Manchester United defender Harry Maguire is set to remain at Old Trafford for at least another season after signing a new one-year contract. The 33-year-old England centre-back was in the final months of his current deal but Maguire, who joined United from Leicester in an £80 million ($106 million) move in 2019, has agreed new terms that include an option for a further year. "I am delighted to extend my journey at this incredible club to at least eight seasons and continue to play in front of our special supporters to create more amazing moments together," Maguire said in a statement issued Tuesday.

Ramsey retires

Cardiff (AP): Former Wales and Arsenal midfielder Aaron Ramsey announced his retirement from soccer on Tuesday. The 35-year-old Ramsey has been without a club since leaving Mexican team Pumas last year after a brief, injury-hampered stint in which he missed league matches and several training sessions while looking for his lost dog. "This has not been an easy decision to make. After a lot of consideration, I have decided to retire from football," Ramsey said in a statement as he also thanked the supporters of Wales and the clubs he represented in his career.

Warner charged with drink-driving: reports

Sydney (AFP): Former Australian opener David Warner has been charged with drink-driving af-ter he was pulled over in Sydney during the weekend, reports said Tuesday. The 39-year-old, who still plays Twenty20 cricket for franchises around the world, was allegedly at the wheel of a van that stopped and parked short of a random testing site on Sunday. National broadcaster ABC said officers approached the vehicle and breath-tested Warner who returned a positive re-sult. He was arrested and taken to a local police station where he was charged with mid-range drink driving, ABC and other local media reported. He is due to appear in court on May 7. Police in a statement outlined the incident but did not name Warner, who retired from international cricket in 2024 after racking up 8,786 runs across his 112 Tests.

Departing Griezmann back at Barcelona in search of Atletico grand finale

AFP
Barcelona, Apr. 7

Antoine Griezmann's Barcelona story ended in the depths of misery but as he returns to Camp Nou in the Champions League quarter-finals, the French forward is desperate to close out his time with Atletico Madrid on the greatest of highs.

Diego Simeone's side, defeated in the 2014 and 2016 finals, have never lifted the trophy and veteran forward Griezmann, who will move to MLS side Orlando City at the end of the season, has not won a trophy with Atletico since the 2018 Europa League and subsequent UEFA Super Cup.

Griezmann switched Atletico for Barca in 2019, lasting just two years in the Catalan capital before returning to Simeone's side on loan, and making the return permanent in 2022.

During that short stint in Barca colours Griezmann missed out on Atletico's La Liga title win in 2021, a trophy that has eluded him through his career.

At Barca he was on the receiving end of the brutal 8-2 thrashing by Bayern in the 2020 Champions League quarter-finals, and failed to fit into the team alongside Lionel Messi.

Griezmann wants to leave Atletico, where he is the all-time top scorer with 211 goals, with major silverware in his hands at last, to add to the 2018 World Cup he won with France.

The first step towards that, since announcing the decision to depart last week, is at Camp Nou on Wednesday in the fifth meeting between Atletico and Barca this season.

Orlando wanted him to join by the end of March, but Griezmann said he would stay at Atletico, in no small part for a final shot at biggest trophy in the club game, as well as the Copa del Rey final.

The 35-year-old, one of Simeone's very greatest soldiers during the coach's 14-year reign, combined the work ethic the Argentine demanded with immense skill and quality.

"Griezmann is a maverick, it's unbelievable how he plays football," enthused Barca coach Hansi Flick last week. "It seems so light, it's like he's dancing."



'Something big'

Griezmann may not have won as many trophies as he would have liked, but has often dazzled with his elegance and vision.

"I hope we can do something big," said Griezmann after helping Atletico crush Spurs 5-2 in the last 16 first leg, netting his side's second goal.

Griezmann has rocked Barca before, scoring twice in the 2016 quarter-finals a decade ago to send Atletico through and knock out Messi, Luis Suarez, Neymar and Co, although that campaign ended in tears in the Milan final at the hands of rivals Real Madrid.

After Griezmann started in the 2-1 La Liga defeat by Barca on Saturday, there is the chance he may be used from the bench on Wednesday.

For much of this season Simeone has been sparing with his minutes, perhaps tipping him towards the decision to leave.

Another Atletico player who might one day follow the Frenchman's path to Barcelona is striker Julian Alvarez, who is likely to start at Camp Nou and has been frequently linked with the Catalans.

The Argentine caused consternation in the Spanish capital earlier this season when he said "maybe yes, maybe no" over whether he was planning to stay at the club beyond the summer.

Barca, still not in a healthy financial position, may not be able to produce the hefty transfer fee the Rojiblancos would demand, after Alvarez arrived from Manchester City for £81.5 million ($108m) in 2024.

Alvarez has had a mixed bag of a season, but Simeone has repeatedly backed the forward who is in better form after a winter drought.

"Thank God he is back," said Simeone after Alvarez netted against Barca in a 4-0 win in the Copa del Rey semi-final first leg in February, with Griezmann also on target as Barca collapsed at the Metropolitano stadium.

Five-time winners Barca may be favourites for the tie but between Griezmann's desire for a grand finale and Alvarez's chance to dazzle his suitors, Atletico have the tools they need to cause an upset.

PSG look to pile misery on Liverpool

AFP
Paris, Apr. 7

When Paris Saint-Germain and Liverpool last met in the Champions League a year ago, the Anfield outfit were marching towards the Premier League title and were described as "an almost perfect team" by the French club's coach Luis Enrique.

Fast forward to this season and a formidable PSG appear clear favourites as the sides clash again in the Champions League quarter-finals, with the first leg in Paris on Wednesday.

PSG's triumph on penalties against Liverpool in the last 16 last season was pivotal on their run to a first ever Champions League title.

They had to overturn a 1-0 defeat at home in a first leg they completely dominated before holding their nerve at Anfield, and the two teams have set off on different trajectories since.

Arne Slot's side somewhat ran out of steam after that, albeit having done more than enough to get over the line in the Premier League.

This season has been a huge disappointment, however, and they return to Paris in especially downbeat mood after a chastening 4-0 defeat against Manchester City in the FA Cup quarter-finals.

That had Slot saying his team lacked fighting spirit, while captain Virgil van Dijk suggested they had given up and admitted it would be "very difficult" for Liverpool to lift themselves against PSG.

"But we have a responsibility, not only to ourselves but especially to the fans and, if we want to make something out of this season, we have to try and do something special in the next three games," he said, with the Champions League tie taking place either side of an awkward clash with Fulham.

"The matter of fact is now, PSG are waiting for us. It will be so tough again. So we have to be ready mentally as soon as possible," Van Dijk added.

Liverpool have won just one of their last five matches and have suffered 15 defeats in this campaign.

Securing a return to Europe's top table for next season has to be the main aim now for a team currently lying fifth in the Premier League.

PSG, in contrast, have had a tricky season at times due to injuries but look like they might be returning to their very best form at the right time.

A 3-1 win over Toulouse last Friday, featuring one marvellous goal from reigning Ballon d'Or Ousmane Dembele, helped them extend their lead atop Ligue 1 to four points from nearest challengers Lens, with a game in hand.

But the Champions League is what really matters -- the French league even accepted their request to postpone this Saturday's key trip to Lens to allow them to concentrate fully on Liverpool.

"I think we have shown for a long time that we are ready, regardless of the competition, but there are obviously things we can improve," warned Luis Enrique.

Dembele is fully fit and firing, but Khvicha Kvaratskhelia was the inspiration in the last round, when PSG destroyed Chelsea 8-2 on aggregate -- Wednesday's game will be their 14th against Premier League opposition since January 2025.

There is one obvious weakness in PSG's ranks, however -- they have not successfully replaced goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma, the hero in last season's shoot-out against Liverpool who is now at Manchester City.

Lucas Chevalier was signed as the Italian's successor but has lost his place to Matvey Safonov, the Russian who made two glaring mistakes to cost his side a goal at the weekend.

"A goalkeeper is like any other player. They can make mistakes, because that's normal in football," said Luis Enrique.

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