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THE RISING NEPAL

ALL BE HAPPY, ALL BE WELL



RSS

Prime Minister Balendra Shah addressing the collective courtesy meeting attended by ambassadors and heads of diplomatic missions based in Nepal on Wednesday.

Nepal keen to boost ties with friendly nations: PM Shah

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 8

Prime Minister Balendra Shah has said that his government is keen to further strengthen Nepal's relations with the friendly nations represented by ambassadors and heads of diplomatic missions based in the country.

Speaking at a collective courtesy meeting held at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) on Wednesday, he said that the government accords high importance to its relations with all countries, places trust in them, and remains committed to strengthening partnerships based on mutual benefit.

"Nepal has been pursuing a balanced and pragmatic foreign policy. Our external relations are guided by the goal of shared prosperity," a PMO statement said. "We express our sincere gratitude to all partners and friends for their continued goodwill and support towards Nepal's development and prosperity."

Prime Minister Shah stressed that ongoing conflicts around the world have the greatest impact on ordinary citizens and that peace should be a shared priority.

"As ongoing conflicts affect ordinary people the most, peace must remain our common priority. I believe we all agree on this and expect collective efforts in this direction," he said, thanking all partners for their continued friendship and cooperation.

PM Shah said the government is committed to creating an investment-friendly environment, promoting entrepreneurship, and supporting sustainable development. He also noted that Nepal aims to integrate more strongly into regional and global economic frameworks in line with its national interests.

"A new government does not mean a break from continuity. We are firmly committed to maintaining political stability and ensuring that policy direction remains stable and predictable," he said.

He also added that the government is willing to advance cooperation in areas such as development, trade, investment, climate action and people-to-people relations, while emphasising that the safety and welfare of Nepali citizens abroad remain a priority.

ARREST WARRANTS ISSUED AGAINST DEUBA COUPLE

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 8

Former Prime Minister and Nepali Congress ex-president Sher Bahadur Deuba, along with former Foreign Minister Dr. Arzu Rana Deuba, has had arrest warrants issued against them.

Officials at the Kathmandu District Court confirmed that the warrants were issued based on a letter from the Department of Money Laundering Investigation. "The bench led by Judge Mahendra Bahadur Karki authorised the arrest on Tuesday," a source said on condition of anonymity.

Following this, the Deuba couple has been placed on the list of absconding individuals. Investigations into money laundering allegations against the couple had been ongoing.

According to Secretariat at the Ministry of Home Affairs, the arrest warrants were issued as a formal first step to initiate a Red Notice of the Interpol.

A Red Notice is issued by Interpol to apprehend individuals abroad and bring them back to Nepal; the process begins with an official arrest warrant.

Director General for the Department of Money Laundering Investigation, Gajendra Thakur, said that the investigation into the Deuba couple's assets is still ongoing. He added, "All matters are currently under investigation."

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Vaidyakhana awaits cure from new government

BY RAMAN PAUDEL
Kathmandu, Apr. 8

Prime Minister Balendra Shah's father, Dr. Ram Narayan Shah, who passed away a few months back, was once the chief of the Singha Durbar Vaidyakhana, Nepal's oldest herbal medicine production factory.

Most of the Vaidyakhana employees were excited when Shah was appointed Prime Minister, hoping he would be aware of the institution's struggles and understood how to improve the centuries-old company.

However, senior officials at the Vaidyakhana were shocked when the Prime Minister excluded the issue from the government's 100-point reform list.

A team of senior officials, including Dr. Prakash KC, head of the Vaidyakhana, met with Dr. Sudha Sharma Gautam, the then Minister for Health and Population, aiming to improve the Vaidyakhana.

However, the Vaidyakhana team felt discouraged after meeting the Minister. The Vaidyakhana medical officials stated that the crisis remains, as the Ministry has ignored the issue for decades.

Speaking with The Rising Nepal, Dr. Prakash KC, Executive Director of the Singha Durbar Vaidyakhana, said that they have briefed the real challenges of the Vaidyakhana many times.

"We have briefed the Ministry on our problems many times. Vaidyakhana requires a sufficient budget, staffing



issues, and patent rights issues. But after Shah was appointed new PM, we haven't visited the Health Ministry, as I hoped the PM knows the Vaidyakhana issues well," said Dr. KC.

Many officials, including Dr. KC, are disappointed over the omission of the Vaidyakhana issue in government's 100-point reform list. It has been struggling to meet the national medicine demand with its limited resources.

Vaidyakhana's contribution in medicine production

Vaidyakhana is Nepal's oldest herbal medicine production factory. It was established 400 years ago. But in recent years, the company has been facing several challenges related to finance, staffing, and resources.

According to Dr. KC, the company is in crisis, facing structural instability, a lack of infrastructure and manpower, and outdated technology.

Even in the modern era, many staff burn wood fires in the Vaidyakhana to produce medicine, rather than using modern technology.

Likewise, many private companies have been producing and selling copies of Vaidyakhana's medicines. But the company is unable to obtain patent rights for its original medicines.

The company has been unable to meet its annual targets, as its production capacity has significantly decreased. Vaidyakhana officials informed that the company is unable to achieve even 20 per cent of its annual target. Each year, the company records approximately Rs. 30 million in income while its expenditure doubles to around Rs. 60 million.

Despite these challenges, Vaidyakhana has made an effort to scale up the annual production and to expand the market in recent times, said Dr. KC.

"Despite many challenges, we are elevating the growth in the current situation, as the government has not been concerned about basic facilities, modern technology, and adequate staffing. I hope, the new government would solve the problem of Vaidyakhana. For this, the Minister needs to show concern in these matters and make necessary decisions," Dr. KC said.

About 400 years ago, King Pratap Malla established the company, aiming to produce medicines and treating the royal family members.

Later, since the factory was shifted to Singha Durbar, the industry has been operating under the Singha Durbar Vaidyakhana Bikash Samiti. Since then the company came to be known as Singha Durbar Vaidyakhana.

» SEE PAGE 6

US, Israel and Iran agree to a 2-week ceasefire



PHOTO: AP

A man feeds birds on a street in Tel Aviv, Israel, after the announcement of a two-week ceasefire with Iran on Wednesday.

AP
Tehran, Apr. 8

Iran, the United States and Israel agreed to a two-week ceasefire in an 11th-hour deal that headed off U.S. President Donald Trump's threat to unleash a bombing campaign to destroy Iranian civilisation. But hours after the announcement, Iran and Gulf Arab countries reported new attacks on Wednesday.

It was not clear if the strikes would scuttle the deal, which U.S. Vice President JD Vance called "fragile."

Even before the new attacks, much about the agreement was unclear as the sides presented vastly different visions of the terms.

— Iran said the deal would allow it to formalize its new practice of charging ships passing through the Strait of Hormuz, a crucial transit lane for oil. But the details were not clear, nor was whether ships would feel safe using it. It also was unclear whether any other country agreed to this condition.

— Pakistan, which helped to mediate the deal, and others said fighting would pause in Lebanon, where Israel has launched a ground invasion against the Iran-backed Hezbollah militant group. Israel said it would not, and strikes hit Beirut on Wednesday.

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Education Ministry directs to refund illegal school fees

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 8

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology has directed that fees collected illegally from students be refunded.

Issuing a press statement on Wednesday, the ministry said it had received complaints that some private (institutional) schools are still charging fees in violation of the law.

It has therefore instructed all concerned to return such unlawfully collected fees to students.

The ministry further stated that if any school is found defying this directive, additional legal action will be initiated in accordance with the relevant provisions of the law and other prevailing regulations.

It has requested necessary coordination from the Ministry of Home Affairs, concerned District Administration Offices and local levels in such cases.

In addition, the ministry informed that a help desk has been established at the Centre for Education and Human Resource Development to receive complaints and facilitate issues related to student fees.



Those wishing to file complaints or seek assistance may contact the help desk. The designated contact person is the Centre's Director, Nim Prakash Singh Rathaur (Phone: 9851214638; Email: rathour@gmail.com), the Ministry informed

Earlier, on April 5, the ministry had issued a notice expressing serious concern that some private schools had been enrolling students before the start of the academic session 2026 and charging excessive fees beyond approved standards, in violation of existing laws and a Supreme Court order.

It had urged schools to admit students only after the official commencement of the new academic session.

The ministry had also requested all local levels to ensure that such unlawful practices are not carried out and to initiate legal procedures to refund any admission fees collected from parents in violation of the law.

World Bank cuts this year's growth projection to 2.3%

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 8

The World Bank has projected that Nepal's economic growth in the current Fiscal Year 2025/26 will drop down to 2.3 per cent from 4.6 per cent of the FY 2024/25.

The impact of the ongoing conflict in West Asia and the lingering effects of the September 2025 unrest are the reasons behind this slowdown, according to the World Bank's latest economic update.

Looking ahead, reconstruction activities, continued hydropower expansion, and consumption linked to the 2027 subnational elections are expected to support a pickup in growth to an average of 4.4 per cent over the next two fiscal years, it said in its report published on Wednesday.

The Nepal Development Update, titled 'Growth Under Pressure: Navigating Domestic and Global Shocks', said that the services sector is expected to be most affected in 2025/26, due to slower tourism activity, higher transport costs, and potential supply chain disruptions.



"The outlook remains highly uncertain. A prolonged conflict in the Middle East could dampen tourist arrivals, reduce remittance inflows, weaken consumption, and slow overall economic activity," read the report.

On the upside, improved political stability following the elections in March, sound macroeconomic management, the availability of ample buffers, and continued structural reforms could strengthen investor confidence, boosting private investment and growth.

"Boosting private sector-led growth will be critical to strengthening economic resilience and creating more jobs in Nepal," said David Sislen, World Bank Division Director for Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. "To achieve this, Nepal must improve the business environment, develop foundational infrastructure, mobilize private finance, and support priority sectors such as tourism, the IT sector, and agribusiness."

Sislen suggested that in order to attract more Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) to Nepal, the country should improve its transport infrastructure and implement reforms in information technology sector.

Talking about the recent concessional loan the multilateral donor recently approved, he said that the WB only provides financial supports and the country designs projects as per its development priority.

The Nepal Development Update is a companion piece to the World Bank Group's South Asia Economic Update, a twice-a-year report that examines economic developments and prospects in the South Asia region.

Likewise, the latest South Asia Economic Update, Working with Industrial Policy, projects growth in South Asia to slow to 6.3 per cent in 2026—from 7 per cent in 2025—due to disruptions in global energy markets.

Despite the near-term slowdown, South Asia continues to grow faster than other emerging-market and developing economies. Growth is expected to recover to 6.9 per cent in 2027.

"South Asia's mixed success on industrial policy in part reflects the region's limited implementation capacity, fiscal space, and market size in some countries," said Franziska Ohnsorge, World Bank Group Chief Economist for South Asia.

BULLION
(Rs. per tola)

Hallmark Gold	: Rs. 299,000/-
Worked Gold	: NA
Silver	: Rs. 5,025/-

STOCK

NEPSE	: 2,802.52
Total Amount	: 8,318,908,441.52
No. of Share	: 18,816,808

3 FIRMS FINED FOR VIOLATING BUSINESS CODE

RSS
Kathmandu, Apr. 8

The Department of Commerce, Supply and Consumers' Rights has fined three firms for violating business code.

The firms were found violating business code and rights of consumers during market monitoring on Tuesday.

Shankar Grocery and MDR Confectionary at Kuleshwor were fined Rs 20,000 each.

Gupta Gudpak, a confectionary shop, at Gongabu, was fined Rs 5,000. These firms were punished as per Consumers Protection Act, 2075.

Total 39 stores were monitored by the authority. Among those, 36 were directed for correction in business practice, thereby adhering to consumers' rights.

The monitoring team comprised the representatives from Department, consumers' rights defenders and local level representatives. The Department has been conducting the market monitoring regularly.

Minister Shrestha vows timely irrigation projects

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 8



PHOTO: TRN

Energy Minister Biraj Bhakta Shrestha and officials during 73rd Irrigation Day programme.

Minister for Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation Biraj Bhakta Shrestha has said that irrigation projects such as Sikta, Bheri–Babai, Rani Jamara Kulariya, and Sunkoshi–Marin will no longer be left incomplete or neglected.

Addressing a programme organised on the occasion of the 73rd Irrigation Day on Wednesday, he said that preparations are underway to complete the re-procurement process of the Sunkoshi–Marin Diversion Multiple Purpose project within 90 days.

He also said that the Bheri–Babai Diversion Multipurpose project is targeted to be completed within two years.

Minister Shrestha said that the government has given priority to the repair, restoration, and management improvement of large irrigation systems such as Gandak, Narayani, Bagmati, and Sunsari–Morang irrigation projects.

He urged stakeholders to identify real obstacles, saying, "Where are the actual barriers? Inform us, and we will try to resolve them."

He added that the technical knowledge of employees cannot be replaced by any policy document and expressed his intention to work in partnership rather than merely enforcing directives.

He emphasised that irrigation will no longer be viewed solely as a means of supplying water to fields but will be developed as an integrated system linking water with energy, food security, environment, and livelihoods.

"Water does not recognise which ministry or department is responsible for energy, irrigation, or agriculture," he said, stressing that coordination among ministries and agencies is essential to remove obstacles.

He also said that issues such as downstream benefits, flood control, and benefits for riverbank communities have been incorporated into the ministry's policies.

Minister Shrestha urges fast-track action to meet fiscal-year plans

Meanwhile, Minister Shrestha emphasised the need to expedite plans and programmes that can be completed within the remaining period of the current fiscal year.

During discussions with the leadership of the Nepal Electricity Authority, the Water and Energy Commission Secretariat, and the Alternative Energy Promotion Centre, he instructed subordinate bodies to prepare a checklist of tasks that need immediate action.

Although he said he is not in favour of budget transfer, he expressed willingness to facilitate adjustments if funds remain unused under certain headings while other programmes face shortages.

He stressed that future planning should ensure that past state investments are not wasted and highlighted the need for policy stability. "Policies should be introduced to facilitate development, not hinder it," he said.

He also directed that programmes be designed in line with the principles of fiscal federalism and instructed authorities to prepare action plans in coordination with local governments to achieve energy self-reliance.

Emphasising the need to increase domestic electricity consumption, he called for strategic planning based on classification of industrial and household consumption. He also directed agencies to formulate plans through inter-agency coordination.

The minister instructed officials to develop models for energy development in collaboration with universities and to focus on energy startup projects in the future. He also suggested that pilot projects could be developed in coordination with local governments to generate energy from waste and establish successful examples.

During the discussion, secretaries at the Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation Sarita Dawadi and Chiranjeevi Chataut, Secretary of Water and Energy Commission Secretariat Dinanath Mishra, Managing Director of NEA Hitendra Dev Shakya, among others, briefed on existing challenges and future strategies in the energy and water resources sector.

VIVO DEBUTS 50MP TELEPHOTO PHONE

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 8

Vivo has launched the vivo V70, the latest model in its V Series, featuring a 50 MP ZEISS Super Telephoto camera system, in the Nepali market.

The device is equipped with a 50 MP telephoto camera designed for long-distance photography and low-light conditions. It supports zoom functionality for capturing subjects at varying distances, including stage and portrait photography, the company said in a statement on Wednesday.

The camera system also includes ZEISS Multifocal Portrait features and ZEISS Style Bokeh, with support for 85 mm focal length portrait shots.

The new phone supports 4K video recording at 60 frames per second. It includes an AI Stage Mode, which allows image capture across a zoom range from 1x-10x and up to 20x.

According to the company, this mode is designed to maintain subject clarity and detail in complex lighting environments.

"The smartphone features a 1.5K ultra clear OLED display with a 120 Hz refresh rate. It is powered by a 6500 mAh battery and supports 90W fast charging. The device also carries IP68 and IP69 ratings for dust and water resistance," read the statement.

In terms of build, the V70 uses a six-series aluminium alloy frame. It has a flat display with rounded corners and a metallic camera module. The device is available in dune grey and sandalwood brown colour options.

The vivo V70 is priced at Rs. 83,999 for the 12 GB RAM and 256 GB storage variant, and Rs. 94,999 for the 12 GB RAM and 512 GB storage variant.

Farmers demand support price for wheat

RSS
Tikapur (Kailali), Apr. 8

Farmers here are worried over not getting good price for their produce. The farmers who sold wheat for Rs 4,000 per quintal last year are compelled to sell it for Rs 3,800 for the same amount this year.

A farmer Ruplal Chaudhari said they were worried after they did not get adequate price for the wheat they produced with much investment- time and cost.

"We are bound to sell wheat at lesser price this year, while we deserve more," he said, explaining that there were hassles unbound- unavailability of chemical fertilizers and seeds, difficulty in timely irrigation. "We toiled much but are getting little price," he added.

Manjit Rawal from Tikapur argued the problem surfaced because the government did not fix the support price of wheat on time. On the other hand, the storm occurred some weeks back caused decline in wheat production.

Even the collection centre does not provide proper rate, causing loss to farmers. A trader at Tikapur, Bhim Bahadur Thakulla, said he was selling per quintal of husked wheat for Rs 3,800. But the wheat requiring husking is sold for Rs 3,600 per quintal. Even the quality matters, according to him.

On the other hand, Pahalman Saud from Tikapur, said they purchased four quintals of wheat grain for Rs 4,200 per quintal. He observed the price he paid was normal compared to the last year.

"Last year, I had bought the wheat grain at the same price this year. I came here to buy it on time, reasoning the price would increase later," he shared.

Last year, the government had fixed the minimum support price of wheat at Rs 3,867.38. The support price was in increasing trend every year. But, it is not fixed yet this year.

However, the Agriculture Ministry at province informed that it has sent a proposal at the federal Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supply for support price conducting study.

A technician at agriculture section of Tikapur municipality, Moti Sing BK, also said if the support price of wheat is fixed on time, the farmers would not bear loss.

LIMESTONE MINE LEFT IDLE FOR FOUR DECADES

BY RAJANI YOGI
Surkhet, Apri.8

A limestone mine discovered four decades ago in western Surkhet has yet to be brought into operation.

The deposit, identified in Chaukune in 2039 B.S. was confirmed to be suitable for cement production. However, plans to establish a cement industry there remain stalled till date.

The government granted permission to set up a cement factory 27 years after the discovery. Yet, even 16 years after obtaining the licence, the project has failed to move forward. The plan to produce cement from the Chaukune limestone mine has been held up primarily due to land disputes.

In 2066 B.S., Muktishree Cement Industries Pvt. Ltd. obtained a licence to extract limestone and operate a cement factory in Chaukune.

However, the company has been unable to begin construction, citing ongoing land-related issues. Company coordinator Lok Bahadur Adhikari said efforts are underway to acquire the required land.

NAIMA urges to raise auto loan ceiling to 80%

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 8



Nepal Automobile Importers and Manufacturers Association (NAIMA) has urged the government to ensure easier financial access by maintaining a hire-purchase system allowing up to 80 per cent financing with a 20 per cent down payment.

In a meeting with Finance Minister Dr. Swarnim Wagle on Monday, a delegation from NAIMA has urged the government to reduce the overall tax burden, simplify and rationalise the tax structure, and increase the auto financing to 80 per cent - about 20 per cent up from the current arrangement.

Presenting detailed suggestions on policy and systemic reforms related to the automobile sector, President of NAIMA Ritu Singh Vaidya stressed the need for a stable, predictable policy environment based on consultation with stakeholders, and called for the automobile sector to be recognised not as a luxury but as a necessity.

The association noted in a press statement on Wednesday that even after customs clearance is completed, differing interpretations at the audit level have led to irregularities being raised, creating business uncertainty. It called for a clear, uniform and transparent system.

It also highlighted the need for customs facilitation, development of testing infrastructure, revision of the Transport Act, integration of digital systems, improvement of road safety and pollution control, promotion of assembly industries under the 'Make in Nepal' initiative, and ensuring long-term policy stability.

There is a need for clear, stable and incentive-based policies for electric vehicles, said NAIMA and called for proper classification of hybrid vehicles and the formulation of balanced and fair policies based on their technological features.

In response, FM Dr. Wagle said the government remains positive about creating a business-friendly environment and is working towards making the overall tax system more balanced and practical. He also expressed commitment to incorporating the suggestions, as far as possible, into upcoming policies, programmes and the budget for the Fiscal Year 2026/27.

In a separate meeting, the NAIMA delegation also held discussions with Physical Infrastructure and Transport Minister Sunil Lamsal on current issues in the mobility and automobile sector. Minister Lamsal said the government is taking positive steps towards a policy arrangement that would reinvest a certain percentage of tax revenue generated from the sector back into its development.

He also assured that the practical suggestions put forward by NAIMA would be taken forward for implementation without delay.

Koiralo blooms ignored in hills, valued in cities

BY SHER BAHADUR SARKI
Bajura, Apr. 8



PHOTO: SHER BAHADUR SARKI/TRN

Koiralo flowers blooming in the forests of Bajura, often going to waste.

The koiralo (Bauhinia variegata) flower, which blooms abundantly in the forests and hills of Bajura and often goes to waste, is seeing increasing demand in urban areas.

Locals in the hills have traditionally given little importance to the koiralo flower, whereas people in cities have begun to recognise its value, leading to a rise in demand.

The koiralo flower is considered highly beneficial for health. It can be used as a vegetable or made into pickles, and it typically blooms from mid-March to mid-May.

Karan BK, a local of Budhiganga Municipality, said that the flower blooms profusely across forested slopes from mid-March to mid-May.

He informed that koiralo is found more in the lower regions than in higher altitudes, and is widely available in warmer areas such as Badeda, Sigada, Banegaun and most parts of Triveni Municipality.

While the flower is increasingly sought after in cities as a vegetable, it continues to go to waste in the hills. BK added that if local governments raise awareness about its importance, locals could generate good income from the koiralo flower.

The plant itself is known as the koiralo tree. It is of medium size, with distinctive leaves that appear split into two parts. The flowers bloom in white, pink and purple shades and are large and attractive, with a mild, sweet fragrance.

The buds (tender parts) of the koiralo can be cooked as a vegetable and are considered highly beneficial for health. Its bark and flowers are also used in various Ayurvedic medicines, helping improve digestion and treat a range of skin-related ailments.

Koiralo generally grows in warmer regions, particularly in lowland areas. It is a small tree and is also used as fodder. In some places, it is even cultivated.

Dr. Krishna Belbase, chief of the District Ayurveda Health Centre, Bajura, said that the Ayurvedic name of koiralo is Kanchanar. She explained that its flowers, bark, fruit, leaves and roots can all be used.

"It is beneficial in treating various conditions such as obesity, digestive disorders, blood-related issues and skin diseases," she said. She further added that it is also used in the treatment of thyroid disorders, lipoma, cancer and PCOS.

Although koiralo is not widely cultivated in Bajura, the Agriculture Knowledge Centre stated that it grows abundantly in forest areas across the district. Information Officer Prem Raj Neupane said that it is commonly found in areas such as Budhiganga and Gaumul.

He added that since it is primarily used as fodder, locals tend to use it more for feeding cattle, buffaloes and goats rather than for human consumption. "If the branches are cut, it rarely bears fruiSaplings have been distributed through veterinary services, but they are mainly used for fodder rather than for consuming the flowers. Neupane added that commercial cultivation of koiralo has not yet started in Bajura.

South Asian trade fair slated for May 7-11

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 8

The South Asian trade fair is scheduled to take place in the second week of May. This year's trade fair will be held at the Exhibition Hall, Bhrikutimandap, from May 7 to May 11.

The event will be organized and managed by Introduction Trade Shows Nepal Pvt. Ltd., in collaboration with the Ministry of Industry, Bangladesh, and the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB), Bangladesh.

According to Suman Maharjan, Fair Coordinator, over 150 exhibitors are expected to participate in the fair. Similarly, with an anticipated footfall of around 100,000 local visitors, and 5,000 international and business delegates are expected to visit the fair.

The press kit released by the organizer stated that the exhibition will focus on increasing consumer awareness about quality products and promoting export-oriented goods. It aims to encourage the business community to explore new markets and opportunities through productive engagement.

The fair will also showcase a wide range of sectors, including garments and readymade products, cosmetics and beauty products, handicrafts, leather and shoes, automobiles and spare parts, furniture, agricultural and organic products, and food items.

Likewise, several companies, such as Nepal Chamber of Commerce, Lalitpur of Commerce and Industry, Bhaktapur Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Chamber of Industries Morang, are supporting organisers. eTicketNepal.com will be the official online partner for the event, while Biratbazar will be the B2B partner.

The fair will include participants from countries such as India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, and Nepal.

Put citizens first, IGP Karki instructs officers

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 8

Inspector General of Police Dan Bahadur Karki has directed police personnel to prioritise service delivery in line with citizens' expectations, placing the public at the centre of policing and ensuring that their concerns and grievances are addressed appropriately.

Addressing officers virtually from Nepal Police Headquarters on Wednesday, the IGP instructed them on contemporary issues.

IGP Karki emphasised that middlemen attempting to influence service seekers by offering quick or preferential services through inducements must be immediately brought within the ambit of the law.

He instructed all police offices to ensure transparent, lawful, and efficient service delivery free from intermediaries. He further directed them to appoint citizen facilitators to assist service users and to provide updates on service progress via SMS notifications.

Reiterating a policy of zero tolerance to corrupt practices, IGP Karki stressed that all personnel must remain committed to delivering impartial, transparent, and complaint-free services in strict adherence to prevailing laws, procedures, and systems.



PHOTO:TRN

IGP Dan Bahadur Karki instructing officers.

Highlighting the need for transparent and objective criminal investigations, he instructed officers to take firm action against criminal activities at border points, including organised crime, smuggling, and the exploitation of natural resources.

He also called on personnel to demonstrate high levels of professionalism, discipline, integrity, and honesty, and to carry out assigned responsibilities with exemplary conduct and communication.

IGP Karki underscored the importance of adopting strategic security plans to prevent criminal incidents in respective jurisdictions, ensuring effective and planned mobilisation of police resources. He also directed closer coordination with relevant agencies to reduce road traffic accidents and to enhance public awareness initiatives.

On disaster preparedness, he instructed officers to remain vigilant and prioritise pre-disaster drills to minimise loss of life and property. He urged optimal utilisation of available resources during emergencies, greater public awareness in high-risk areas, and stronger coordination with other agencies to improve rescue operations.

He further directed improvements in crowd control and management by addressing past shortcomings and adhering to the principles governing the use of force, with increased emphasis on preparedness through regular drills. He also reminded personnel to maintain high professional standards while using social media and while performing their duties.

During the programme, Additional Inspector Generals (AIGs) Sushil Singh Rathor (Crime Investigation Department) and Uma Prasad Chaturvedi (Operations Department) also issued directives.

The event was attended virtually by central police spokesperson Deputy Inspector General Abhi Narayan Kafle, along with representatives from the Kathmandu Valley Police Office, all seven provincial police offices, Nepal Police provincial offices, highway security and traffic management offices, provincial training centres, special security units, district police offices, and subordinate investigation units.

Digital pass mandatory for lawyers

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 8

Lawyers will no longer be permitted to enter Singha Durbar, the main administrative hub of the government, on the basis of their professional identity cards, as authorities have introduced a new rule mandating digital entry passes.

Under the revised system, legal practitioners must now obtain a gate pass through the 'Nagarik App,' similar to other members of the public. The move has drawn dissatisfaction from some within the legal community.

In a notice, Saroj Raj Regmi, Registrar of the Administrative Court located on the Singha Durbar premises, stated that entry for lawyers would only be granted upon presentation of a Singha Durbar gate pass issued via the Nagarik App.

According to the notice, officials and staff of the Administrative Court may enter on the basis of their official identity cards issued by the concerned authority. All lawyers must present the Nagarik App gate pass, while litigants or their authorised representatives will be allowed entry upon showing relevant hearing documents. All others will require a daily e-pass issued by the Administrative Court.

Previously, lawyers were allowed access to Singha Durbar and most courts across Nepal upon presenting identity cards issued by the Nepal Bar Council. However, stricter provisions have now been enforced specifically for entry into Singha Durbar.

The new rule has been criticised by some legal professionals.

Advocate Binod Mani Bhattarai argued that the requirement to obtain a pass even to access the Administrative Court within Singha Durbar is impractical. He has called for a reconsideration of the new system.

Absconding defendants in banking offence held

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 8

Police have arrested two absconding defendants involved in banking offence cases. The arrested individuals have been identified as 31-year-old Nikesh Tamang, a resident of Tarakeshwar Municipality-5 in Kathmandu, and 36-year-old Rita Pradhan Paudel, originally from Kathmandu and currently residing in Balkot, Suryabinayak Municipality-4, Bhaktapur.

According to police news bulletin section of the Police Headquarters on Wednesday, Tamang had been on the run despite a verdict issued by the Kathmandu District Court on June 10, 2025 and January 18, 2026.

The court had sentenced him to a fine of Rs. 475,000, imprisonment for four months and five days, and compensation of Rs. 19,000 in connection with a banking offence case. A team deployed from the Kathmandu Valley Crime Investigation Office, Teku, apprehended him from Tarakeshwar Municipality-5 on Monday.

Unseasonal rain affects SEE students in Baitadi

BY KESHAB RAJ BHATTA
Baitadi, Apr. 8

Unseasonal rainfall during the month of April has disrupted daily life in Sudurpaschim Province, particularly in Baitadi.

Students have been forced to reach their examination centres drenched in rain, while farmers are increasingly worried as their wheat and barley crops remain unharvested.

Spring is typically a time when hillsides are covered in colourful blossoms, with rhododendrons, bauhinia, silk cotton and other flowers adorning the landscape, while the melodious song of the cuckoo fills the air with joy.

However, this year presents an unusual scene. As mid-April draws to a close, flowers have yet to bloom and persistent rain and cold weather have silenced the cheerful calls of the cuckoo.

Over the past two months, it has rained ninth time. This prolonged rainfall and cold have significantly affected daily life. For students appearing the Secondary Education Examination (SEE), the weather has posed an added challenge.

Waking early in the morning, completing their daily routines and heading to examination centres, they have had to endure rain and cold conditions.

Dipika Bista, a student at the Gurukhola examination centre in Dasharathchand–2, said, "It feels as cold as in the months of winter, it is difficult even to write in the answer sheets."

Students travelling from Sunarya Rural Municipality–2 have to leave early in the morning, and the rain has made the journey even more difficult.

Ashok Chand from Sunarya–1 said that extreme cold has made movement uncomfortable. "It would have been better if transport facilities were available in such weather, but we still have to sit for the exams," he added.

For farmers, the continuous rainfall has also become a matter of concern. Ganesh Mahara of Patan–4 said, "This is the time to harvest the year's grain, but the rain has delayed it. There is little one can do against nature."

According to Haridatta Joshi, chief of the Agriculture Knowledge Centre, Baitadi, the usual harvesting period for crops such as wheat, barley, lentils, peas and mustard in hilly areas falls between the last week of Chaitra and the month of Baisakh. However, this year's persistent rainfall has made harvesting difficult. He added that, on the positive side, the rainfall has been beneficial for winter crops such as sugarcane, potatoes and fruits.

The sight of drenched students and unharvested wheat fields has made this year's spring in Baitadi somewhat subdued and reflective.

Although the hills are yet to display their usual vibrant colours, the challenges brought by the rain have woven together a deeper story of resilience and struggle in everyday life.

Electric faults spark devastating fires in districts

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 8

Property worth hundreds of thousands of rupees has been destroyed in a series of fire incidents reported across multiple districts.

In Bara, a cowshed belonging to Khem Prasad Adhikari of Kolhabi Municipality-5, Ramwan, was gutted after a fire broke out due to an electrical short circuit on Tuesday afternoon. The blaze caused damage wprth around Rs. 500,000.

Similarly, a fire that started on Tuesday night at the house of Bhikhari Ram in Simraungadh Municipality-2, Mahuwahi, spread to seven neighbouring houses, destroying property worth approximately Rs 1.8 million.

In Dhading, a house owne of Jeevan Bahadur Thapa Magar in Tripurasundari Rural Municipality-3, along with an adjacent organic agriculture and livestock development farm, was completely destroyed in a fire late last night. The full extent of the damage is yet to be ascertained.

In Rupandehi, a house belonging to Radheshyam Malla of Mayadevi Rural Municipality-2, Teharo, was reduced to ashes following an electrical short circuit on Tuesday afternoon, resulting in losses estimated at around Rs. 600,000.

In a separate incident in the same district, a tailoring shop operated by Shankar Chaudhary in Omsatiya Rural Municipality-1, Thuti Pipal, caught fire due to an electrical fault last night, causing damage worth approximately Rs. 1.5 million.

Gajuri Rural Municipality
Office of Rural Municipal Executive
Gajuri, Dhading

Invitation for Online Sealed Quotation

Second Date of Publication: April 9, 2026 10:00 am

The Office of the Rural Municipal Executive, Gajuri Rural Municipality, Gajuri, Dhading, has budgeted a portion of its funds for the implementation of activities tied to the contract mentioned here.

Contract ID	Name of Project	Bid Security (NRs)	Fee for Bid Documents (NRs)	Deadline
GRM/G/ SQ/10/2082/083	Procurement of Mini Tiller, Combined Mills, Multi Threser, Conseller, Push row seeder etc	45,000/-	1,000/-	April 24, 2026, 12:00 pm
GRM/G/ SQ/11/2082/083	Procurement of necessary medical supplies for Gajuri Primary Health Center	75,000/-	1,000/-	April 24, 2026, 12:00 pm

Eligible Bidders may obtain further information at the office of Gajuri Rural Municipality, Dhading, email : ito.gajurimun@gmail.com, website: www.gajurimun.gov.np and contact no. 9851338362 or may visit PPMO website www.bolpatra.gov.np/egp . Also, visit our Facebook: www.facebook.com/gajurururalmunicipality

Chief Administrative Officer

Madi Municipality
Office of Municipal Executive
Basantapur, Chitwan
Bagamati Province, Nepal

Invitation for Sealed Quotation

First date of Publication: 2082/12/26 (9th April 2026)

1. Madi Municipality, Office of The Municipal Executive Chitwan invites electronic bids from duly eligible and qualified registered bidders for the Procurement of Works under Sealed Quotation (SQ) Procedure.

S.N.	Contract No.	Description of Works	Estimated Amount (Without VAT & PS)	Bid Security Amount (NRs.)	Bid Document Price (NRs.)
1.	SQ/MMO/W/ 03/2082-83	Baghauda Khel Maidan, Madi-3.	13,16,107.79	44,000.00	1,000.00

2. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be downloaded from the PPMO E-Portal- www.bolpatra.gov.np/egp .

Chief Administrative Officer

कोशी प्रदेश सरकार
उद्योग, कृषि तथा सहकारी मन्त्रालय
पशुपन्छी तथा मत्स्य विकास निर्देशनालय
भेटेरिनरी अस्पताल तथा पशु सेवा विज्ञ केन्द्र ताप्लेजुङ
कोशी प्रदेश, नेपाल

क्याटलग सपिङ्ग विधिबाट खरिद सम्बन्धी प्रस्ताव आव्हानको सूचना ।

प्रथम पटक प्रकाशित मिति : २०८२/१२/२६

यस कार्यालयको आ.व. ०८२/८३ को स्वीकृत कार्यक्रम अनुसार निम्न अनुसारको सवारी साधन सार्वजनिक खरिद ऐन,२०६३ संशोधन समेतको दफा ८ को उपदफा (१)क (८) तथा सार्वजनिक खरिद नियमावली, २०६४ संशोधन समेत को नियम ३१ ख(१) बमोजिम त्यस्तो सवारी साधन उत्पादक कम्पनी वा सो को आधिकारिक विक्रेताहरु बीच मात्र प्रतिस्पर्धा गराउने (क्याटलग सपिङ्ग) विधिबाट खरिद गर्नुपर्ने भएकोले सार्वजनिक खरिद नियमावली, २०६४ को नियम ३१ख को उपनियम (२) अनुसार देहाय बमोजिमको सवारी साधन विक्री गर्न चाहने उत्पादक वा सोको आधिकारिक विक्रेता तथा प्रतिनिधिले आ–आफ्नो उत्पादनको आधिकारिक स्पेसीफिकेशन, गुणस्तर, मूल्य र सुविधा सहितको विवरण (क्याटलग वा ब्रोसर), सवारी साधन उत्पादक कम्पनी वा सो को आधिकारिक विक्रेता प्रमाण पत्रको प्रतिलिपि, स्थायी लेखा (PAN) दर्ता प्रमाणपत्रको प्रतिलिपि, आ.व. २०८१/८२ को कर चुक्ता प्रमाणपत्रको प्रतिलिपि, व्यवसाय संचालनको इजाजतपत्रको प्रतिलिपि संलग्न राखी यो सुचना प्रकाशन भएको मितिले १५ औं दिन, दिनको १२.०० बजेसम्म यस कार्यालयमा सिलबन्दी प्रस्ताव दर्ता गर्नु हुन जानकारी गराइन्छ, दर्ता भएका प्रस्तावहरू सोही दिन दिनको २.०० बजे खोलिने हुँदा सम्बन्धित उत्पादक कम्पनी वा सोको आधिकारिक विक्रेताहरूको जानकारीका लागि यो सूचना प्रकाशित गरिएको छ । यस सम्बन्धी विस्तृत प्राविधिक स्पेसिफिकेशनको लागि यस कार्यालयमा सम्पर्क राख्न सकिनेछ ।

सम्पर्कको लागि :– **Email : vhlsectaplejung@gmail.com**, फोन नं. ०२४–४६०१७६

सवारी साधनको विवरण

Type of Vehicle	*General specification*
4WD DOUBLE CAB PICKUP	**Double Cab 4WD Pick Up, Right Hand Drive model with four wheel/ All wheel drive, suitable for driving in Nepal at an altitude upto3000 meter and in ambient temperature -10 to 50 degree centigrade. Gross Vehicle shall not be less than 2700 kg and shall have seating capacity for at least 5 Persons including driver. Water cooled diesel Engine, developing Maximum rated power output not less than 45 KW and maximum torque should not be less than 190 NM at governed RPM. (engine fully equipped with accessories) for efficient full load operation of jeep at operating conditions, shall be equipped with cold starting device, direct electric starting system, heavy duty fuel filter. Manual shift at least five forwards and one reverse, 4WD engaged through control of driver. Color: Standard Color. Ground clearance: - High Ground clearance preferred. Minimum 200 mm. Manufacturer shall provide a minimum of One-year warranty after acceptance. etc .**

अन्य विषयको हकमा स्वीकृत स्पेसिफिकेशन बमोजिम हुनेछ ।

कार्यालय प्रमुख
भेटेरीनरी अस्पताल तथा पशु सेवा विज्ञ केन्द्र, ताप्लेजुङ ।

Government of Nepal
Ministry of Education Science and Technology
Central Level Project Implementation Unit
Sanothimi, Bhaktapur
Disaster Resilience of Schools Project (DRSP)
ADB Project No. 51190-001

Request for Expressions of Interest (EoI) for National Individual Consultant

Date of First Publication: 9 April 2026

- Government of Nepal has received a loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) towards the cost of Disaster Resilience of Schools Project (DRSP). Part of the proceeds of the loan is intended to finance eligible payments under the contract for which this Request for Expression of Interest (EOI) is issued.
- The Central Level Project Implementation Unit (CLPIU) of the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MoEST) is planning to engage following national individual consultant positions having appropriate management, technical and geographical competence for the management and technical support to CLPIU.

Contract ID	Expert's Position	Required Person Months	Number of Position
DRSP/ CLPIU/ICS-01	Construction Supervision Engineer/Structural Engineer for Remote School Construction	12	1
DRSP/ CLPIU/ICS-02	Project Management/Contract Management Expert	6	1
DRSP/ CLPIU/ICS-04	Social Safeguards, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Specialist	7	1
DRSP /CLPIU/ ICS-05	Financial Management Expert	12	1

- The details of the package are accessible from ADB's consulting services recruitment notice (http:/csrn.adb.org), and interested individual national consultants are required to submit their EOI through ADB's consultant management system only (registration and access through http:/csrn.adb.org). Individual Consultant must furnish list of similar projects executed in past seven years with summary of such projects and important financial details.
- To ensure that all data required to assess for short-listing are obtained, interested consultant(s) are required to provide information following ADB's standard EOI form which can be downloaded directly from http:/csrn.adb.org.
- Last date for submission of EOI through CMS (online) is 23 April 2026. Late submissions will not be accepted.Recruitment of the Consultant shall be done as per "ADB Procurement Policy 2017 (Policy) and Procurement Regulations for ADB Borrowers 2017 (as amended from time to time) (Procurement Regulations)".
- The highest scoring short listed expert will be invited for the contract negotiation.
- It is expected that the consulting services will commence from May 2026 and will continue approximately for 12 months.
- CLPIU reserves the right to reject any or all of the EOIs at any stage without assigning any reason whatsoever and without incurring any liability to the affected applicant(s). CLPIU will not be responsible for any cost of expenses incurred by the consultants in connection with the preparation or delivery of their EOI.

For further queries, the address will be

The Project Director
Central Level Project Implementation Unit
Ministry of Education Science and Technology
Sanothimi, Bhaktapur, Nepal
Contact no. +977-9851422340
Email: info@moepiu.gov.np; dpdclpiu2@gmail.com

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

The most wasted day of all is that on which we have not laughed.
- Nicolas Chamfort

EDITORIAL

Mitigating Fuel Crisis

The disruptions of fuel supply via the Straits of Hormuz have caused a global energy crisis. Countries like Nepal, which rely solely on imported petroleum products, have faced an unprecedented shortage. The prices of petrol, diesel and aviation fuel have skyrocketed, with knock-on effects on every sector of the economy. The Nepal government has taken a series of measures to mitigate the negative impacts on people's daily lives. A Cabinet meeting on Tuesday decided to reduce taxes - customs duty and infrastructure tax — on fuel by 50 per cent to ensure the smooth supply of PoL products. The government currently imposes Rs. 10 per litre infrastructure tax on petrol, with customs duty rates fixed at Rs. 25 per litre for petrol and Rs. 12 per litre for diesel and kerosene. Due to the price hike in the international markets, the NOC increased the fuel prices three times within a month. Petrol now costs Rs. 202 per litre and diesel Rs. 182 per litre. Their prices will go down only with stability in the energy markets. Although the tax waiver will not reduce the retail prices of PoL items, this will enable the Nepal Oil Corporation (NOC) to ease payment to the Indian Oil Corporation, Nepal's sole supplier of PoL products. According to a new report of this daily, the country has incurred losses of nearly Rs. 11.72 billion in the past 15 days while purchasing the petroleum products from abroad. Now, the NOC's financial loss will be reduced by Rs. 1.5 billion.

To address the energy crisis, the government has urged people to reduce their fuel consumption. It has been estimated that the country currently consumes around 2,300–2,500 kilolitres of petrol and 4,800–5,000 kilolitres of diesel daily. It has also unveiled the policy of a two-day holiday – Saturday and Sunday – in a week for government offices and educational institutions, with office hours from 9 am to 5 pm. The authorities are also working on legal provisions to convert the petrol- and diesel-powered vehicles into electric ones. It is mulling to implement the odd-even rule for vehicles. Similarly, the people have been urged to work from home to reduce fuel consumption. The work-from-home policy came into effect during the COVID-19 pandemic, when public mobility was strictly limited to contain the spread of the coronavirus.

The government has also decided to scrap the fuel quota for high-level government officials, begin the new academic session at the end of April, and regulate the retail sale of fuel. It is prudent for people to switch to electric vehicles to save fuel and protect the environment. This energy emergency calls for public support of government measures. Everyone has a responsibility to support the government's efforts to overcome the current crisis. Meanwhile, the United States and Iran have reached a deal on a two-week ceasefire to de-escalate the conflict. Iran has also agreed to reopen the Strait of Hormuz for the passage of fuel-carrying ships. This has given a big respite to people all over the world. There is hope that the ceasefire will lead to lasting peace in West Asia and bring an end to the energy crisis.

No More Attacks

SUGAM GAUTAM

Following the arrest of former prime minister and UML chair KP Sharma Oli, UML cadres have been conducting protests across various parts of the nation, demanding his release. At the moment, the public has formed two different opinions on this matter. A large section of society believes that the arrest of Ramesh Lekhak and KP Sharma Oli is valid and that it duly aligns with the investigation report commanded by Gauri Bahadur Karki. The other section, including the UML rank and file, has expressed disagreement over the arrest. However, the Nepali Congress and Gagan Thapa have decided that they will follow the legal course and not engage in any sort of protest programmes.

It was just a day after ministers were sworn in and assumed office that the former prime minister and the former home minister were arrested, as recommended by the investigation report. However, the report is yet to be made public. The situation has opened room for questions. Had the government prioritised widely disseminating the report first, there would have been fewer concerns about its credibility.

The CPN UML is a cadre-based party, and its loyalists appearing on the streets to criticize the arrest of the party chair is only natural. During the protest programmes, there were also instances where journalists on duty were affected. The attack on journalists, who were simply performing their duties, has once again raised a serious question: why are journalists attacked time and again for capturing the news?

In a broader scope, this attack is viewed as an attack on democratic norms. It was an attack on the institution responsible for bringing accountability into the system. Some years ago, the Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP) chair vented against the mainstream media for covering news about his alleged involvement in cooperative scams. The statements against media houses and some renowned journalists made the public rethink their faith in mainstream media. Such was his fan following that mainstream media lost credibility among some sections, allowing YouTubers and independent journalists to flourish in the evolving political landscape.

To understand the declining audience of mainstream media, it is important to recall the incident where Rabi Lamichhane renamed mainstream media as "12 Bhai." Following this, there was a surge in YouTube channels where individuals covered political issues and scandals related to traditional parties and their leaders. These content creators resonated with the younger generation because they presented themselves in a simple way, avoiding political jargon. Today, many young people in Nepal rely on YouTube videos of popular influencers and form their opinions accordingly.

The investigation report prepared by Gauri Bahadur Karki has recommended legal charges against several independent journalists for spreading false information during the Gen Z movement. However, mainstream media circulated the news while maintaining integrity and fairness. This example highlights the significance of mainstream media in moments of crisis. For budding journalists trying to establish themselves through YouTube and other platforms, this will serve as a valuable lesson. In the end, all that matters is authentic and reliable information.

Nepali mainstream media have withstood crises at different times with caution and resilience. They will continue their endeavours, but the state and political parties should cooperate by providing a conducive environment. Any attempt to undermine journalism should be viewed as an anti-democratic action.

Making Old-age Allowance Sustainable



Dr. Lok Nath Bhusal

Social security ensures a welfare state by protecting citizens from economic and social shocks and vulnerabilities. As a redistributive mechanism, social security also contributes to reducing inequality. It stands as one of the most significant measures in terms of coverage, costly in terms of public fiscal burden and long-standing social protection programmes. Although politically motivated by design, this categorically targeted allowance reflects Nepal's commitment to a welfare state. Over time, the old age allowance has expanded in both coverage (about 2 million beneficiaries) and fiscal allocation (about Rs. 90 billion annually). With the rise in both old-age population and fiscal burden, it has become a pertinent issue to debate whether it can be remodelled and made more pro-poor, need-based, and cost-friendly.

With its welfare orientation, the Constitution of Nepal guarantees social security as a fundamental right. Article 43 explicitly states that senior citizens, economically weak, and vulnerable groups have the right to social security. The Social Security Act, 2017, and other related regulations provide a legal framework for implementation. These laws mandate federal, provincial, and local governments to ensure the effective design and delivery of social security benefits, including old-age allowances. Consequently, several local governments have topped up these allowances with their cash or kind contributions.

Amount and eligibility

The old age allowance has evolved significantly in terms of amount and eligibility since its inception in 1995. Introduced with only Rs. 100 per month to citizens 75 years and above, the allowance was increased to Rs. 500 per month in the early 2000s. In the 2010s, it was further increased to Rs. 2,000 to 3,000 per month. In recent years, it has been raised to Rs. 4,000 per month. The eligibility criteria were set at 75 years initially. It was revised to 70 years later and further reduced to 68 years for a brief period. Now, it has been revised to 70 years. There are also special provisions for the Dalit and Karlali citizens, with an eligible age set at 60 years.

While the federal government formulates related policy and allocates the required budget, the local governments identify, register the beneficiaries and distribute the allowances. Payments were made in cash for the past several years. They are done now through the bank and digital systems to reduce possible irregularities. Although it has not been targeted at the poor, the old-age allowance has contributed to various aspects of Nepal's socio-economic development. Some research evidence shows that it helps reduce poverty. Many low-income elderly citizens rely on this for their livelihoods, even though Rs. 48,000 per annum is clearly less than the above poverty line income of Rs. 72, 908 determined by the Nepal Living Standards Survey (NLSS) survey.

Old age allowance has also contributed to social inclusion as it enhances dignity and reduces marginalisation of elderly people, particularly those without sufficient income, family support and savings. The allowance has also boosted family food security and thereby reduced healthcare expenses. Since a large proportion of the allowance beneficiaries are elderly women and widows, it has also contributed to gender equity. It has also contributed to the local economy as cash is spent across the country.

> Strengthening digital governance systems and integrating the allowance with broader social protection policies are equally useful measures to carry out required reforms.

Despite these contributions, the allowance programme faces several challenges. First, with a growing elderly population, the fiscal burden on public finances is increasing. Social security expenditure accounts for about 15 per cent of the annual federal budget, and nearly half of this is spent on old age allowances. Without significantly increasing revenue, this burden is not fiscally sustainable. Second, since it is only categorically targeted, the allowance is largely universal. Both non-poor and poor get it. Since the non-poor live longer, they are capturing most of the benefits. Pro-poor targeting can ensure efficient resource allocation, but this risks programme termination.

Third, there are still some administrative inefficiencies, such as delays in payments, errors in beneficiary lists and limited monitoring mechanisms. National ID has become very instrumental in reducing some of these inefficiencies. Further, Rs. 4,000 a month is clearly not adequate to cover even the minimum costs of living. For the non-poor, its marginal utility is insignificant. Also, due to the predominance of informal sector workers, people lack contributory pension systems. This demands for non-contributory social security benefits during old age.

Reforms

These challenges demand policy debate and meaningful reforms in the old-age allowance. Considering the contradictory goals of increasing coverage and reducing fiscal burden, various policy measures can be applied. First is to raise the eligibility age to ensure fiscal sustainability. This is quite rational because many senior citizens are found to be working and earning until 75 years. Therefore, why not set the eligible age at 75 years? This will significantly reduce the number of beneficiaries and thereby the fiscal burden. It is good to note here that the recently publicised Good Governance Roadmap, 2082, has suggested raising the eligibility age to 75 years to reduce fiscal pressure. This truly reflects our increased life expectancy. Many innocently suggest going for means-testing to target the cash transfers only to those identified as poor, but this is a hugely costly, divisive, stigmatising and cumbersome approach.

Nepal's poor household identification scheme has largely become unsuccessful. For long-term fiscal sustainability, there is a need to expand contributory pension schemes through increasing social security fund affiliation of workers (now 28.82 million), both in the formal and informal sectors, as well as the self-employed. Strengthening digital governance systems and integrating the allowance with broader social protection policies are equally useful measures to carry out required reforms. Taking into account the crucial role of old age allowance in furthering various development outcomes, there is a pertinent need to expand coverage without further cost to our treasury through the application of the above-stated multidimensional measures.

(Dr. Bhusal writes on developmental issues.)

Education System Demands Radical Reforms



LB Thapa

Under previous governments, putting an end to student politics in schools, colleges, and universities seemed nearly impossible. Likewise, abolishing exams until the fifth grade or renaming institutions with foreign-sounding names was unthinkable. But all of this has changed under the leadership of Prime Minister Balen Shah's new Nepal. The country now has a young prime minister — 35-year-old Balen Shah, a man of his word. Shortly after taking office, his government introduced a hundred-point reform agenda that has captured the attention of parents and students alike.

It is important to understand why student politics and student unions have been banned from Nepal's educational institutions, why exams have been eliminated up to the fifth grade, and why the government has prohibited schools from using foreign names. Point 86 of the government's 100-point agenda clearly states that all student political parties and groups must remove their offices and structures from schools and university campuses within seven days.

Political battlegrounds

Why was this step necessary? The reality is that many educational institutions had turned into political battlegrounds, where education was neglected and politics thrived. Student leaders often served as pawns for political parties, receiving donations and wielding immense power from behind the scenes. As a result, they engaged in hooliganism, intimidated professors, and frequently shut down universities through strikes.

Prime Minister Balen Shah's logic is straightforward: educational institutions should be centers of learning—and not only students but also teachers must stay away from politics. Civil servants, too, are banned from joining any political party or trade union. However, this does not mean that student voices will be silenced. The government has announced that within 90 days, a non-political student council must be formed. Campus elections will be held, but without party flags or money. Students will vote purely on student-related issues, not political ones.

Another revolutionary decision in the 100-point agenda is the immediate elimination of all internal examinations up to the fifth standard. This move is designed to ease the overwhelming burden of homework on young children. The traditional education system forced children to cram, regurgitate information in exam halls, and earn marks based on rote memory. This approach has been ingrained in society for years, placing immense psychological pressure on children, leading to negativity and even personality disorders. Many young children develop a fear of going to school simply because they dread failing.

Looking at the world's best education systems—such as Finland's—there are no exams for young children. Nepal's government now plans to introduce an alternative assessment system on similar lines. Teachers will assess children based on daily activities, behaviour, creativity, and learning skills. No longer will a child be judged by a one- or two-hour written exam once a year. This is a commendable step toward returning childhood to children.

> Education is not merely a money-making machine; it is a means of passing on a country's culture to the next generation.

Across South Asia—including India, Pakistan, Nepal, and Bangladesh—educational institutions suffer from chronic delays: late academic sessions, delayed results, and exams stretching for months. As a result, hundreds of thousands of young people, especially from poor families, become frustrated and go abroad for education.

Nepal's new government has now mandated that universities must declare results on time according to the academic calendar. Another long-standing issue was that degrees were withheld without citizenship certificates, preventing young people from enrolling in higher education. The government has changed this rule: no bureaucratic document will hinder a child from pursuing higher education in the country.

It has become fashionable across Nepal to name schools after foreign institutions—Oxford School, Cambridge School, Lincoln School, The British College, and so on. These English names are found on nearly every lane and alley. Undoubtedly, such names reflect a form of mental slavery. Many people assume that if a school has an English name, the education must be superior. The new government has issued a strict directive: any educational institution with a foreign name must change it to a native Nepali name by the end of this year, based on Nepali identity.

National identity

There are two main reasons behind this decision. First, the government wants to connect the new generation with national identity. Education is not merely a money-making machine; it is a means of passing on a country's culture to the next generation. Second, the move aims to stop fraud. Many private schools charge exorbitant fees and exploit parents by overcharging for books and supplies. A great deal of exploitation takes place in the name of education. The obsession with English names, the government argues, reflects a desire for quick wealth.

The Balen government's 100-point agenda is not just a manifesto—it is a blueprint for transforming the nation's mindset. The government seeks to shake the old, rotten system by introducing a job-oriented education system. However, let us not forget that creating new policies and laws is one thing, but implementing them properly is entirely another.

(Thapa is a Pokhara-based writer and a regular contributor to The Rising Nepal. writerlbthapa@gmail.com.)

50 YEARS AGO

THE RISING NEPAL

April 9, 1976

Afforestation At Karyabinayak Launched

Lalitpur, April 8: Assistant Minister for Land Reform Labaru Rana Tharu yesterday took part in the afforestation programme launched in Karyabinayak forest of Bungmati model village panchayat, reports RSS.

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READER'S MAIL

Aanbukhaireni's Commendable Initiative

This is about the news report headlined *"Aanbukhaireni launches campaign for 100% school enrolment,"* which appeared in this daily on April 6.

Education is not just about reading and writing; it shapes a person's future and opens doors to many opportunities. A child in school today is an empowered citizen tomorrow. That is why campaigns focusing on increasing admissions are so important. They directly contribute to improving the literacy rate of our country and building a more informed society.

One of the biggest challenges facing the education sector is the high drop-out rate. Many children leave school not because they lack interest, but because of financial difficulties. Families struggling to make ends meet often prioritize immediate survival over education. In some cases, children are expected to work at home or in the fields. This reality makes initiatives like the door-to-door campaign in Aanbukhaireni even more meaningful, as they connect directly with



families and raise awareness about the value of education.

Schools across the country should adopt similar campaigns. Reaching out personally to parents can make a big difference, especially in marginalised communities. At the same time, parents must also be encouraged to see education not as a burden, but as a long-term investment in their children's future.

Education is a basic right, and every child deserves the chance to learn and grow. Efforts like this should be supported and expanded nationwide to ensure that no child is left behind.

Palpasa Bohara
Maitighar, Kathmandu

TAILPIECE

As an older man was driving down the freeway, his car phone rang. Answering, he heard his wife's voice urgently warning him, "Herman, I just heard on the news that there's a car going the wrong way on Route 290. Please be careful!"

"Hell," said Herman, "It's not just one car. It's hundreds of them!!!"

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The father of five children had won a toy at a raffle. He called his kids together to ask which one should have the present. "Who is the most obedient?" he asked. "Who never talks back to mother? Who does everything she says?" Five small voices answered in unison. "Okay, dad, you get the toy."

NKorea taunts South, fires missiles

AP
Seoul, Apr. 8

North Korea fired multiple short-range ballistic missiles toward the sea Wednesday in its second launch event in two days, South Korea's military said, hours after a senior North Korean official released crude insults against Seoul's hopes for warmer relations.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said several missiles lifted off from North Korea's eastern coastal Wonsan area on Wednesday morning and flew about 240 kilometers (150 miles) each in a direction toward the North's eastern waters.

It said an additional North Korean ballistic missile fired later Wednesday traveled more than 700 kilometers (435 miles) off the North's east coast.

South Korea's military said it maintains a readiness to repel any provocations by North Korea under a solid military alliance with the United States. It earlier said it detected the launch of an unidentified projectile from North Korea's capital region Tuesday.

South Korean media reported the projectile, also likely a ballistic missile, disappeared from South Korean military radars after displaying an abnormal development in the initial launch stage. This indicated the launch ended in failure, according to the reports.

The back-to-back launches came after North Korea made it clear that it has no intentions of improving ties with South Korea, whose liberal government has steadfastly expressed its hopes to restore long-dormant dialogue.

On Tuesday night, Jang Kum Chol, first vice minister at Pyongyang's Foreign Ministry, said South Korea would always remain North Korea's "most hostile enemy state." He derided South Korea as "world-startling fools" engaged in wishful thinking over a recent statement by Kim Yo Jong, the influential sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.



PHOTO: AP

A TV screen shows a file image of North Korea's missile launch during a news programme at Seoul Railway Station in Seoul, South Korea, Wednesday, April 8, 2026.

After South Korean President Lee Jae Myung expressed regret over alleged civilian drone flights into North Korea, Kim Yo Jong late Monday praised him for what she called honesty and courage, but reiterated a threat to retaliate if such flights recur. South Korean officials responded by describing Kim Yo Jong's statement as meaningful progress in relations.

Jang said her statement was intended as a warning. He cited Kim Yo Jong as calling South Korea "the dogs affected by mange that blindly bark to the tune of neighboring dogs" as she criticized it for recently co-sponsoring of a U.N. resolution on the North's purported human rights violations.

North Korea has refused to return to talks with South Korea and the U.S. and pushed to expand its nuclear arsenal since Kim Jong Un's diplomacy with U.S. President Donald Trump collapsed in 2019.

North Korea has instead sought to strengthen ties with Russia, China and other countries embroiled in confrontations with the U.S. Last September, Kim Jong Un traveled to Beijing to attend a military parade alongside other foreign leaders and held his first summit with Chinese President Xi Jinping in six years.

North Korea's state media said Wednesday that Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi will visit North Korea on Thursday for a two-day trip.

Earlier this week, North Korea said Kim Jong Un had observed a test of an upgraded solid-fuel engine for weapons and called it a significant development boosting his country's strategic military arsenal.

Missiles with built-in solid propellants are easier to move and conceal their launches than liquid-fuel weapons, which in general must be fueled before liftoffs and cannot last long.

South Korea's spy agency told lawmakers Monday the engine test was likely related to an effort to build a more powerful solid-fuel intercontinental ballistic missile that can carry multiple nuclear warheads, according to lawmakers who attended the meeting.

Experts say North Korea wants multi-warhead missiles to penetrate U.S. missile defenses, but they doubt Pyongyang has mastered the technology needed to acquire such a weapon.

Australian PM welcomes Iran ceasefire

AFP
Sydney, Apr. 8

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese welcomed a two-week ceasefire between the United States and Iran on Wednesday but said US President Donald Trump's threat to destroy Iran's civilian infrastructure had not been "appropriate".

Trump had warned that "a whole civilization will die tonight, never to be brought back again" if Iran failed to meet his deadline for a deal. Asked about the comments on Sky News Australia, Albanese said: "I don't think it's appropriate to use language such as that from the president of the United States, and I think it will cause some concern."

But he welcomed news that the United States and Iran had agreed to a ceasefire, barely an hour before Trump's deadline expired. "What we have called for is a de-escalation, and that is what has occurred, and that's a good thing," the Australian leader said.

"This is positive news. We've been calling for a de-escalation for some time. We want to see a resolution of the conflict." Tehran said it would temporarily reopen the vital Strait of Hormuz and cast the ceasefire as a victory after more than a month of attacks by the United States and Israel.

Iran has effectively closed the strait since US-Israeli strikes on February 28 sparked a larger regional conflict, causing global oil and gas prices to soar.

Speaking to national broadcaster ABC, Australia's top diplomat Penny Wong also condemned Trump's remarks. "I don't think anyone should be threatening the destruction of a civilisation," she said.

Australia, reliant on imported fuel and holding roughly 39 days' supply of petrol, has been hit hard by the global impact of the war. "The damage that is happening to the global economy, to global energy markets, means that the world does need this ceasefire to hold," Wong said.



FILE PHOTO: AFP

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese welcomed a two-week ceasefire between the United States and Iran on Wednesday, but said President Donald Trump's threat to destroy Iran's civilian infrastructure had not been "appropriate".

She also rejected the Israeli government's claims the ceasefire did not apply to Lebanon, where Israel's attacks in recent weeks have killed more than 1,500 people and displaced over a million, according to Lebanese authorities. "The world expects the ceasefire to apply to the region," Wong said.

Having initially backed US-Israeli strikes on Iran, Albanese said last week the original aims of the war had been met and it was not clear what more remained to be achieved. Canberra has sought to soften the impact of soaring prices by cutting petrol taxes.

ICE shoots man in immigration arrest

AP
California, Apr. 8

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents shot and wounded a man in central California while trying to arrest him Tuesday, federal authorities said.

The Department of Homeland Security said agents fired defensive shots at the suspect after he tried to run over one of the agents with his car.

DHS said the suspect, Carlos Ivan Mendoza Hernandez, is wanted in El Salvador for questioning in connection to a murder.

Attorney Patrick Kolasinski, who is representing Mendoza and his family, disputed that account and said authorities may have mistaken him for someone else with a similar name.

Mendoza was wounded and taken to a hospital, officials said. His family has not been allowed in to see him at the hospital but were told by a social worker that he is stable, Kolasinski said.

Kolasinski said his client works as a laborer, doing rehabilitation of fire damage. He has a 2-year-old daughter and is engaged to a U.S. citizen, he said.

The shooting occurred in Patterson, a city about 74 miles (119.09 kilometers) southeast of San Francisco. Dashcam footage obtained by KCRA-TV shows three officers standing around a vehicle stopped on the side of a road.

One of the officers appears to be touching the driver-side window of the car when the car begins to back up and turn, hitting a vehicle behind it.

At least two of the agents have weapons drawn, pointing at the car. The driver then pulls forward toward where the men are standing and turns sharply, driving over the roadway median.

The video has no sound and its unclear when the shots were fired and if words were said. The Stanislaus County Sheriff's Office said they were not involved in the encounter and the FBI is leading the investigation.

India considers reptile river guards

AFP
Kolkata, Apr. 8

India is considering releasing snakes and crocodiles along its frontier with Bangladesh, the Border Security Force said Wednesday, as New Delhi seeks to stave off unauthorised crossings.

Bangladesh is almost entirely encircled by India and the border stretches for more than 4,000 kilometres (2,485 miles), large parts of which are unfenced across delta regions where Himalayan rivers wind toward the sea.

Senior Border Security Force officer Manoj Barnwal told AFP that "the use of reptiles" was discussed in a February meeting with the Home Ministry. "We have been asked to explore the feasibility of deploying reptiles such as snakes or crocodiles in vulnerable riverine gaps," said Barnwal, deputy inspector general of the paramilitary force based in Kolkata, near the border with Bangladesh.

"The plan revolves around leveraging natural deterrents like crocodiles and snakes in flood-prone zones, along the unfenced area where traditional fencings are either ineffective or not possible," he added.

The border between India and Bangladesh cuts through the Sundarbans, the world's largest mangrove forest. "It's an innovative move, but there are several challenges and it raises safety concerns," Barnawl said. "How do we procure the reptiles? What impact might it have on the people in the villages sitting along the riverine border?"

"We have asked our field units to study the feasibility of the approach and send the report as soon as possible," he added. Relations between New Delhi and Dhaka soured after a 2024 revolution in Dhaka ended the autocratic rule of the then-prime minister Sheikh Hasina, who fled to India.

Bangladesh's Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman is in New Delhi on Wednesday -- the most senior envoy from Dhaka to visit since the 2024 uprising -- in a bid to rebuild frosty diplomatic relations.

India has constructed border fencing stretching hundreds of kilometres (miles), and arrested scores of Bangladeshis attempting to cross the frontier in the wake of Hasina's overthrow.



FILE PHOTO: AFP

The border between India and Bangladesh cuts through the world's largest mangrove forest.

PRISM

Pizza errand sparks record lottery win

Michigan: A Michigan woman made a pizza run on her lunch break and ended up winning a record-breaking $822,159 Club Keno The Jack prize from the Michigan Lottery.

Shelby Township resident Sue Strong, 65, told Michigan Lottery officials she was picking up pizza on her lunch break and dipped into Party Palace Liquor on Schoenherr Road in Shelby Township for a Club Keno ticket.

"I regularly play Club Keno, and I always add The Jack to my ticket," Strong said. "I went out and bought a Club Keno ticket and pizza on my lunch break and then watched the drawings on my phone while I ate. When I saw all my The Jack numbers come in and the jackpot reset to $10,000, I was shocked! It was nerve wracking and exciting, and to be honest, I've hardly slept since!"

Lottery officials said Strong's $822,159 jackpot is a new record for Club Keno The Jack. The previous record was a $677,141 jackpot won in March 2025.

World's tiniest arcade under an inch tall

India: A 24-year-old electronics enthusiast in India has constructed the world's smallest arcade machine -- a .98-inches-tall device that runs Space Invaders.

Kiran Patil said he has been fascinated by electronics since he was a child, and over the years his interest has led him to experiment with multiple microelectronics projects.

"I have built many electronic projects before involving microcontrollers and displays, but this is the first gaming arcade project that I have attempted," Patil told Guinness World Records.

Agencies

TODAY IN HISTORY

193 – The distinguished soldier Septimius Severus is proclaimed emperor by the army in Illyricum.

475 – Byzantine Emperor Basiliscus issues a circular letter (Enkyklikon) to the bishops of his empire, supporting the Monophysite christological position.

537 – Siege of Rome: The Byzantine general Belisarius receives his promised reinforcements, 1,600 cavalry, mostly of Hunnic or Slavic origin and expert bowmen. Despite shortages, he starts raids against the Gothic camps and Vitiges but is forced into a stalemate.

1241 – Battle of Liegnitz: Mongol forces defeat the Polish and German armies.

1288 – Mongol invasions of Vietnam: Yuan forces are defeated by Trn forces in the Battle of Bach Dang in present-day northern Vietnam.

Rwanda tries to protect farmland in Africa

AP
Kigali (Rwanda), Apr. 8

The rhythmic sounds of construction muffle the thud of farmers' hoes on a chilly morning in Rwanda 's capital, where new efforts aim to protect remaining agricultural land from relentless development in Africa's most densely populated country.

Eighty-four-year-old Mukarusini Purisikira had been a farmer before she fled the country to Congo during the 1994 Rwandan genocide. Upon returning, she said, her family's land, which had stretched across the hills, had been taken away for construction. She gestured toward Kigali's high-rise buildings.

Now she grows maize and sweet potatoes on a piece of land the size of a small cottage, which she said is barely enough to feed her.

"It is all I have," she said, looking warily at construction equipment on a ridge nearby.

Now she has a measure of protection. Since September, Rwanda's government has been mapping agricultural land and using satellite imagery to track any development encroaching on farmlands and forests in a country where the population is expected to reach 22 million in a couple of years.



PHOTO: AP

Farmers prepare the soil for planting at a farm in Kigali, Rwanda, March 17, 2026.

Rwanda is striving to ensure food security amid the latest global pressures on farm inputs like fertilizer, whose prices have been rising since the Iran war began.

The government has imposed fines of up to $3,000 and jail terms of up to six months on developers found to be encroaching.

Some buildings in Kigali have been torn down, though people associated with them didn't want to comment for fear of government retaliation. The government now plans to incorporate drones for better real-time monitoring.

Meanwhile, land use data from the mayor's office shows that the Kigali master plan has dedicated nearly a quarter of land — 22% — to agriculture.

City authorities acknowledge that housing construction is attractive due to demand but say future projections show that "farming will be even more productive." They say the demand for food is also rising and believe that, with innovation, it can be grown on smaller pieces of land.

While most of the food consumed in Kigali comes from other districts in Rwanda, farmland in those areas is shrinking, too, a spokeswoman for the mayor's office, Emma-Claudine Ntirenganya, told The Associated Press.

The government last year printed and displayed maps showing areas in districts across Rwanda that are designated for construction and reserved for agriculture.

Ntirenganya spoke of going into agriculture "in an urban way. We will be able to show Kigalians that they can also do agriculture and be productive."

The city administration, which is setting up a greenhouse on its roof, requires developers seeking building permits to include green spaces and gardens in their designs.

Other approaches in Kigali include vertical farms, where vegetables and fruits such as strawberries are grown in stackable plastic containers.

Christian Irakoze co-founded a local company, Eza Neza or "grow well," that sets up vertical farms in the city and described them as scalable. The AP visited two of them at local homes and another that provides stocks to a grocery store. One grows 600 plants in vertical rows stretching about 50 meters (yards) along a perimeter wall.

Irakoze described his work as "a different way of thinking about farming, from traditional large-scale upcountry farming to something smaller, modular, and that anyone can really do."

Through the use of locally available inputs such as manure and volcanic sediment in place of soil, Irakoze said farming should be adapted to lessen outside impacts.

"We really have to find ways to find our own solutions, whether through inputs like fertilizers or seeds. Some of these global events are always a reminder that we should definitely have some alternatives," he said.

Elsewhere in Kigali, a group of young agronomists are training farmers to adopt technologies such as hydroponics to maximize productivity, using water instead of soil.

"The population is increasing, yet our land is not increasing. We make sure that we find solutions that can help farmers to overcome that, and then they produce more," said one of the agronomists, Richard Bucyana.

SWISS ENVOY CALLS ON HOME MINISTER

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 8

Minister for Home Affairs Sudan Gurung has requested the Swiss Ambassador to Nepal to facilitate the repatriation of any funds allegedly siphoned off through corruption by Nepali politicians and high-ranking officials and deposited in Swiss banks.

During a courtesy call held at the Ministry of Home Affairs on Wednesday, Minister Gurung made the appeal to Ambassador Dr. Danielle Meuwly. He also called for cooperation in investigating whether illicit earnings from corruption and other offences have been deposited in Swiss banks, urging that any such funds be returned to Nepal upon the government's request.

On the occasion, Ambassador Meuwly congratulated Minister Gurung and extended her best wishes for a successful tenure. The ambassador also raised the issue of cooperation between the two governments on migration-related matters. Minister Gurung informed her that the issue is currently under discussion.



KABIN ADHIKARI/TRN

A porter heading towads destination in Basantapur, Kathmandu, during rainfall on Wednesday.

HoR to elect Deputy Speaker on April 10

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 8

The House of Representatives is set to elect a new Deputy Speaker on April 10, following a decision announced by Speaker Dol Prasad Aryal during Wednesday's meeting.

The election process, initiated under Rule 8(2) of the House of Representatives Rules, 2022, comes after the position remained vacant following the formation of the new government and the earlier election of the Speaker. The Federal Parliament Secretariat is expected to publish a detailed election schedule, with voting to determine the new Deputy Speaker.

During the session, lawmakers raised a range of pressing national concerns. Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP) lawmaker Prakash Pathak criticised frequent curriculum changes, stating that parents are being unfairly burdened.

He noted that despite a government decision to waive admission fees, families of nearly 2.4 million students are spending an average of Rs. 5,000 annually on textbooks. Pathak also highlighted widening disparities between community and private schools, calling for uniform standards in curriculum and dress to reduce inequality in the education system.

Similarly, MP Lima Adhikari urged the government to prioritise the revival of closed and dilapidated industries, including historic establishments such as the Biratnagar Jute Mill. Welcoming recent government announcements, she stressed the need for implementation, arguing that reopening industries would generate employment and stimulate economic growth. She also underscored the importance of good governance and accountability, noting that the public now expects tangible results rather than assurances.

Concerns over corruption and public health were also raised prominently. MP Rajib Khatri alleged large-scale irregularities in the pricing of medicines, claiming that billions of rupees had been embezzled through unlawful price hikes. He pointed to increases of up to 33.99 per cent in several pharmaceutical products and criticised delays in investigations by oversight bodies. Emphasising the financial burden on citizens, he warned that high medical costs are pushing vulnerable populations away from essential treatment.

Lawmakers also highlighted a variety of regional and sectoral issues during the zero hour. These included demands for land rights and rehabilitation for marginalised communities, improved disaster risk management ahead of the monsoon, better road and transport infrastructure in remote districts, and expanded access to healthcare services, particularly in underserved areas such as Achham.

PRESIDENT TO ADDRESS JOINT HOUSE SESSION TOMORROW

RSS
Kathmandu, April 8

President Ramchandra Paudel is set to address the joint session of both houses of the Federal Parliament on Friday.

According to the Office of the President, President Paudel, at the recommendation of the Council of Ministers, is scheduled to address the joint session of both Houses of the Federal Parliament at 3:00 pm on Friday as per Article 95 of the Constitution.

Panel holds meeting on constitutional amendments

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 8

The first meeting of the task force formed to prepare a debate paper on constitutional amendment was held at the Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers on Wednesday.

Chaired by Asim Shah, political advisor to Prime Minister Balendra Shah and coordinator of the task force, the meeting decided to thank the government of Nepal for constituting the panel to draft the discussion paper on constitutional amendments.

The meeting assigned Member-Secretary Liladhar Subedi, a Joint Secretary at the Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers, the responsibility of identifying key issues for amendment by compiling matters raised during the meeting and written submissions from political parties, as well as preparing and presenting the task force's future work plan, read a statement received from the secretariat of the Prime Minister Wednesday evening.

Coordinator Shah informed the meeting that the task force aims to advance constitutional amendment issues in a comprehensive manner. According to him, the amendment process will be based on national consensus, broad participation, and evidence.

Referring to Article 274 of the Constitution of Nepal, he clarified that there are clear provisions governing amendments and that no amendment can be made in a manner that undermines sovereignty, territorial integrity, independence, or the sovereign authority vested in the people.

He also recalled that a Cabinet meeting held on March 26 had decided to prepare a discussion paper to build national consensus on constitutional amendments, as part of a 100-point governance reform agenda approved by the Council of Ministers.

He said discussions would be held on a range of issues, including the electoral system, a directly elected executive, full proportional representation, provisions barring Members of Parliament from serving as ministers, non-partisan local governments, and restructuring of provinces.

On behalf of the Prime Minister, Shah also expressed the government's commitment to move forward based on consensus through dialogue with all stakeholders, assuring all political parties and citizens.

He said he was confident that open discussions among all participants would lead to logical conclusions on the assigned responsibilities.

Representatives from various political parties participated in the meeting. Also present were Law Secretary Pushkar Sapkota at the Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers and Indira Dahal, Secretary at the Nepal Law Commission.

Unexpected rainfall cools Kathmandu

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 8

The western low-pressure system, combined with local winds, affected almost all provinces on Wednesday, bringing cooler conditions. Many people were seen wearing warm jackets, although it is already April, when they are normally not needed.

Sanjeev Adhikari, a meteorologist at the Meteorological Forecasting Division under the Department of Hydrology and Meteorology, said the weather conditions observed on Wednesday were not related to pre-monsoon activity. He explained that the conditions were caused by a western low-pressure system combined with local winds, which led to cooler temperatures.

"Pre-monsoon activity usually brings isolated rainfall, mostly in the afternoon and evening, accompanied by thunderstorms and lightning. However, this was more like continuous monsoon rainfall," he said, adding that pre-monsoon conditions are expected to resume from Thursday.

In the 12 hours leading up to 6 pm on Thursday, Tikathali recorded 19 mm of rainfall, followed by Kapan with 12.6 mm, Godavari with 11.8 mm, Panipokhari with 11.2 mm and Babarmahal with 7.4 mm.

Vaidyakhana awaits cure from new...

This company used to produce more than 100 types of herbal medicines and distributed them across the country. However, in the recent times, the company is struggling to produce even 70 types of medicines.

Dr. KC also warned that if the government cannot operate the company properly, it could face the fate of Gorakhkali Tyre, Bansbari Leather Shoe Factory, and Biratnagar Jute Mill.

He informed that the government currently allocates around Rs. 60 million annually, an amount which is considered insufficient. Of this budget, about 70 per cent is spent on recurrent expenditures, while only 30 per cent is allocated for capital expenditure, Dr. KC informed.

When Janata Samajwadi Forum leader Upendra Yadav was the Minister for Health and Population in the KP Oli-led government, the Rastriya Swatantra Party had submitted a 26-point statement for the health sector reforms. In which the RSP had emphasised basic health.

Similarly, the Vaidyakhana reform issue was one of the major health agendas in the RSP's election manifesto for the March 5 election.

Nevertheless, the historic pharmaceutical factory expects radical reforms from PM Balendra Shah, whose father witnessed the problems of the company firsthand.

Arrest warrants...

The government has launched a comprehensive investigation into money laundering allegations involving former PM Deuba, KP Sharma Oli of CPN-UML, Pushpa Kamal Dahal of Nepal Communist Party, and former ministers Dr. Arzu Rana Deuba and Deepak Khadka of Nepali Congress. The Deuba family is currently abroad reportedly for medical reasons.

Sher Bahadur Deuba travelled to Singapore on February 25, 2026, while his wife had already reached Singapore via India. Both had also travelled to Hong Kong for medical treatment before returning to Singapore. The couple had initially gone to Singapore on September 27, 2025 for medical reasons following the Gen Z movement.

Nepal is a member of Interpol, the international police organisation. If an individual involved in criminal activity flees abroad to evade investigation or legal action, the authorities of the host country can seek Interpol's assistance to bring them back under the law.

Interpol then issues a Red Notice, which circulates worldwide to all member nations. However, issuing a Red Notice requires following a formal process. A police official involved in the investigation explained that the investigating agency must first record the offence in the crime register and obtain an arrest warrant from the court for the absconding individual. This procedure was completed with the issuance of arrest warrants against the Deuba couple.

Inspector General of Police serves as ex-officio on Interpol. In every member country, the head of the national criminal investigation agency is appointed by Interpol as the head of the National Central Bureau (NCB). Through the NCB, a member country can request Interpol to issue Red Notice or other types of notices for tracking absconding individuals.Once the request is reviewed and approved, Interpol circulates the notice to all NCBs in its member states to locate the individual.

Deuba denies allegations

Meanwhile, Deuba has said he and his family are currently abroad for medical treatment, rejecting what he described as "misleading and false propaganda" regarding reports of an arrest warrant.

In a statement on social media on Wednesday, Deuba said he learned through media reports that an investigation into alleged money laundering involving his family had begun. He insisted that all asset details had been duly submitted to the concerned authorities in accordance with Nepali laws during his time in public office.

Deuba also highlighted his longstanding commitment to democratic governance, rule of law, and transparency, noting his role in introducing key anti-corruption legislation during his tenure.

He urged the public not to be misled by exaggerated reports, stating that the truth would come to light over time.

Public transport fares go up

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 8



The government has increased public transport fares, with the new rates coming into effect from Wednesday.

According to the Department of Transport Management, the adjustment has been made in line with the provision that mandates fare revisions when fuel prices fluctuate by Rs. 5 per litre.

Passenger vehicle fares have risen by 16.71 per cent. Freight charges have also gone up, with a 21.68 per cent increase for goods transport vehicles operating on hilly routes and a 15.75 per cent rise for those plying on Tarai routes, the Department said.

The Department said that fares were last adjusted on January 6, 2025, when the price of diesel stood at Rs. 150.83 per litre.

The revised rates apply only to inter-provincial routes, while fares within a province will be determined by the respective provincial governments.

Electric vehicles (EVs), however, are not subject to the new fare hike.

Omsatiya Rural Municipality
Office of the Rural Municipal Executive
Hatifarsatikar-3, Rupandehi
Lumbini Province, Nepal

Invitation for Sealed Quotation

First Date of Publication: 2082/12/26

Omsatiya Rural Municipality invites E-bids for the construction of following works under Sealed Quotation Procedure. All other information and Bid document can be downloaded from PPMO's Website www.bolpatra.gov.np/egp. All eligible bidders are requested to submit E-Bid as per instruction within the mentioned period in Bid Documents.

S. N.	Contract ID	Work Description	Estimated Amount (excluding VAT and Contingency) Nrs.	Bid Security Amount (NRs.)	Bid Fee (NRs.)	Late Submission and opening of bid
1.	SQ/ORM/ WORKS/ 09/2082-83	Construction Of Redcross Building and Road Drainage, Omsatiya-2,Rupandehi	836,595.83	24,000.00	1000	2083/01/11 12:00 Noon and 1:00 Pm

Chief Administrative Officer

Phalewas grapples...

He said that although the previous administration had initiated discussions on the issue, the current leadership has not taken further steps.

"A proper dumping site is essential for waste management," Lamsal said, adding that the municipality has not been able to implement necessary measures such as safe disposal, health safeguards and environmental protection.

He also pointed out that the lack of data, studies, long-term planning, appropriate technology, scientific management and regular monitoring has made the situation more complex.

Waste continues to pile up along roadsides every year in Phalewas. Although the government has introduced programmes to turn waste into a resource, their implementation has remained ineffective.

The Solid Waste Management Act, 2011 assigns responsibility for waste management to local governments, but authorities have yet to act decisively.

US, Israel and Iran agree...

— The fate of Iran's missile and nuclear programs — the elimination of which were major objectives for the U.S. and Israel in going to war — also remained unclear. Trump said the U.S. would work with Iran to remove buried enriched uranium, though Iran did not confirm that.

In the streets of Tehran, pro-government demonstrators screamed: "Death to America, death to Israel, death to compromisers!" after the ceasefire announcement and burned American and Israeli flags.

The chants underscored the anger animating hard-liners, who have been preparing for what many assumed would be an apocalyptic battle with the United States. Trump warned Tuesday that "a whole civilization will die tonight," if a deal wasn't reached.

Varying reports of ceasefire's terms

Trump initially said Iran proposed a "workable" 10-point plan that could help end the war the U.S. launched with Israel on Feb. 28. But when a version in Farsi emerged that indicated Iran would be allowed to continue enriching uranium — which is key to building a nuclear weapon — Trump called it fraudulent without elaborating.

Vance later said the deal was being misrepresented within Iran, though he did not offer details.

Iran's demands for ending the war include a withdrawal of U.S. combat forces from the region, the lifting of sanctions, and the release of its frozen assets.

In his post Wednesday, Trump said: "We are, and will be, talking Tariff and Sanctions relief with Iran."

It's not clear if other Western nations would agree to that — and the other points are likely nonstarters.

Pakistan said that talks to hammer out a permanent end to the war could begin in Islamabad as soon as Friday.

Israel backed the U.S. ceasefire with Iran, but Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said early Wednesday that the deal does not cover fighting against Hezbollah.

श्री शारदा माध्यमिक विद्यालय
इलाम नगरपालिका वडा नं ०३
वेतेनी, इलाम
स्थापना : वि सं २०१२/विद्यालय कोड नः ०३०३६०००२

विद्युतीय बोलपत्र आह्वान सम्बन्धी सूचना

(प्रकाशन मितिः २०८२/१२/२६)

यस विद्यालयको भवन निर्माणसंग सम्बन्धित तपशिल बमोजिमको कार्यका लागी इच्छुक, योग्य बोलपत्रदाताहरू सबैमा निम्न शर्तहरुको अधिनमा रही रितपूर्वक इजिपी सवमिशनको माध्यमबाट मात्र विद्युतीय बोलपत्र आह्वानका लागि यो सूचना प्रकाशन गरिएको छ ।

तपशिल

क्र.सं.	बोलपत्र संकेत नम्बर	बोलपत्रको नाम	लागत अनुमान रकम रु. (पि.एस र मु.अ.कर बाहेक)	बोलपत्र जमानत वापतको रकम रु (बैंक ग्यारेन्टीको हकमा बोलपत्र पेश गर्ने अन्तिम दिन देखि १२० दिन म्याद भएको)	बोलपत्र खरिद दस्तुर रकम रु. (फिर्ता नहुने गरी)	कैफियत
१.	sssilam/ ncb/ work/01-2082/83	Construction of School Building, Ilam Municipality-03, Beteni, Ilam	५६,८३,८५७/२२	१,७०,०००	३,०००	

● बोलपत्र खरिद/पेश गर्न सकिने अन्तिम मिति तथा समय : २०८३/०१/२८ गते दिउंसो १२ बजे भित्रमा
● बोलपत्र सम्बन्धी कागजात खोलिने मिति तथा समयः २०८३/०१/२८ गते दिउँसो १२:१५ बजे

उल्लेखित कार्यसँग सम्बन्धित विस्तृत जानकारीको लागी नेपाल सरकारको विद्युतीय खरिद प्रणाली (https://bolpatra.gov.np/egp), यस विद्यालयको सूचना पाटी तथा कार्यालय समयमा यस विद्यालयमा सम्पर्क राख्न सकिनेछ ।

Ancient indigenous culture still alive in Chimkhola



PHOTO: THAKUR PRASAD ACHARYA

Chimkhola residents celebrate Bhume Puja by joyfully smearing black colour to each other.

BY THAKUR PRASAD ACHARYA
Myagdi, Apr. 8

A centuries-old indigenous culture is still alive in Chimkhola, Raghuganga Rural Municipality–7, Myagdi. Locals celebrated Bhume Puja with great enthusiasm, following traditional customs.

In the month of Chaitra, after performing ritual worship at Bhumethan in Sewang Dhuri, locals sing and dance while smearing black colour each other.

Thak Prasad Paija, Ward Chairman of Chimkhola, Raghuganga Rural Municipality–7, said that they celebrate Bhume Puja as a cultural festival, preserving traditions that are gradually disappearing due to the impact of modernity.

He said, "The tradition that has continued since the time of our ancestors is still alive. The younger generation has also started showing interest in preserving our original culture. On the occasion of Bhume Puja, young people living in cities also return to their villages and actively participate in preserving their culture and traditions."

He added that a large number of domestic tourists, including Chimkhola residents living both in Nepal and abroad, as well as people from neighboring villages, participate in the festival.

La Bahadur Pun, an 84-year-old senior citizen of Chimkhola, said that the tradition of invoking gods and goddesses through songs in the Sedo tune (bhaka) during Bhume Puja has been preserved.

This year, senior citizens La Bahadur Pun and Pa Bahadur Tilija also reached Bhumethan to perform the Sedo tune, which holds special significance during the puja.

After worship, which includes the sacrifice of a bull, home-brewed alcohol prepared by the chhemas and the priest is offered. It is then customary to drink the alcohol and celebrate by dancing, singing and smearing black color (moso) on one another.

A month prior to Bhume Puja, a woman is selected by the village assembly to prepare alcohol. Separate groups are formed in different villages to collect millet, rice, and cash from each household for its preparation.

Traditional performances such as the Topa dance, the dance of the bride and groom carrying kalash, and the Thali dance showcase the community's rich cultural heritage.

Trailer of Pahad released



BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 8

The trailer for Pahad, set to be released simultaneously in Nepal and around the world on April 14 on the occasion of the Nepali New Year, has been released.

Directed by Tulsi Ghimire, the film highlights the issues of unemployment, depopulated hills, and water scarcity.

Ghimire said, "The hills are beautiful places, and we have depicted the story of the hills, which are gradually becoming empty. Although this story is set in the hills, it represents the portrayal of the entire country."

Artistes, including Dan Krishna Shrestha, Bipin Karki, Rabindra Singh Baniya, Sunil Thapa, Renunath Yogi, Uma Giri, and Arun Chhetri have done the film.

Director Ghimire mentioned that he selected the storyline and made the film over a span of several years.

"I felt that this subject needed to be brought to the general audience through the medium of film, which is why I made it. Alongside entertainment, it also carries an important message," said Ghimire.

"The film conveys messages through its songs about rural beauty, the necessity for young people to leave the village to earn a living, and that the village can be more suitable than the city."

Director Ghimire has also cast Madan Krishna Shrestha, Shiv Shrestha, and Sunil Thapa in the film.

The cinematography is handled by Pramod Pradhan, who has previously shot films, web series, and telefilms in India. Pradhan has collaborated with Director Ghimire on films such as Anyay, Koseli, Chino, and Dakshina.

Produced under the banner of Bhagyaratna Films, Pahad marks the acting debut of Director Ghimire's youngest daughter, Panchami Ghimire.

Additionally, Director Ghimire's elder daughter, Bhawana Ghimire, has taken responsibility as the production designer.

Money generated from cultural show handed to Dutta



BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Dhalkebar, Apr. 8

The amount collected from a cultural programme was handed over to Ashok Dutta, a lyricist and communications professional from Janakpur who has been suffering from oral cancer for a long time.

According to Ritesh Sah, president of Rangadarpan, Rs. 547,100 collected from the cultural programme was handed over to Dutta, who is receiving cancer treatment.

He said that various cultural groups in Janakpur had organised a special cultural programme at the hall of the Maithili Development Fund on April 4 to raise financial support for Dutta's treatment

From ticket sales of the programme, Rs. 443,500 was collected, while Rs. 113,600 was received as cash support from various individuals and organisations.

Out of the total amount, Rs. 10,000 spent on diesel for the generator and tea for the audience during the programme was deducted.

The remaining amount was then handed over at Dutta's residence by officials of various organisations, including Jeevanath Chaudhary, president of the Maithili Development Fund, he added.

After it became public that Dutta, who has been battling cancer for the past three years, had been deprived of regular treatment due to financial hardship, various social and cultural organisations in Janakpur had jointly decided to organise the cultural event.

President Sah expressed his belief that the amount handed over would provide at least some relief for Dutta's treatment.

Caption: Officials hand over the amount collected from the cultural programme to cancer patient and lyricist Ashok Dutta.

RAY STEVENS RECOVERING AT HOME AFTER BREAKING HIS NECK

AP
Nashville, Apr. 8

Grammy-winning singer-songwriter Ray Stevens broke his neck and is recovering at home after being briefly hospitalised, according to a statement published on Tuesday.

The 87-year-old country star, known for his topical satire, fell late last month, according to the statement released on his X account. He will need to wear a neck brace for about a month.

"He remains fully mobile and in good spirits," the statement said.

Stevens' decades-long recording career has included hits such as the Grammy-winning "Everything Is Beautiful" as well as the zany "The Streak", which captured the mid-1970s craze for running naked in public.

Born Harold Ray Ragsdale, Stevens' music was also known for its social commentary. In 1961, he recorded "Jeremiah Peabody's Poly Unsaturated Quick Dissolving Fast Acting Pleasant Tasting Green and Purple Pills", which poked fun at the advertising industry.

His latest album is expected to be released on Friday by Curb Records.

In July, Stevens suffered a mild heart attack and underwent heart surgery, according to a post on his X account. His performances at his CabaRay Showroom in Nashville, Tennessee, were cancelled for the rest of the month as he recovered.

India's Got Latent set for bold return with Season 2

AGENCIES
New Delhi, Apr. 8

India's Got Latent is officially set to return for a second season, with Samay Raina confirming the comeback during his latest stand-up special. Following a controversial exit, the show is poised to re-emerge with an even bolder and more unpredictable format.

The announcement puts an end to months of speculation about the show's future. Known for its chaotic, roast-driven style, the series had built a loyal following before being taken down amid controversy. Raina, however, remained true to his candid, self-aware and slightly irreverent tone while addressing its return, suggesting that this is less a comeback and more a continuation of something he genuinely enjoys creating.

During his set, Raina shared that he had spent considerable time reflecting on whether to revive the show. He acknowledged that the first season had concluded on a high note, making the decision to revisit it a deliberate one. He confirmed that Season 2 is in development and hinted that it will push boundaries even further. A 'wild' version of the show is reportedly in the works, alongside a comparatively toned-down version that may be released online.

The show's return follows a turbulent period. It was pulled in early 2025 after backlash over a controversial segment involving Ranveer Allahbadia, which led to widespread criticism and the removal of all episodes from public view.



Raina also joked about experimenting with new formats, including restricting audience phone usage and introducing more provocative interactions, reinforcing that unpredictability will remain central to the show's identity.

HOROSCOPE

tarot.com

ARIES: Aries, your spark lights a clear path ahead. Warrior Mars in your sign fires up thoughts about your identity -- and simultaneously heightens your initiative.

TAURUS: Truth gives your journey direction. As the Moon brightens your 9th House of Higher Learning, curiosity deepens and beliefs seek grounding.

GEMINI: Fresh influences could be arriving from your wider circles. Your 11th House of Community gains drive as ambitious Mars enters, energizing ongoing collaborations while uplifting hope for what comes next.

CANCER: Honesty makes everything feel more possible. The nurturing Moon moves through your 7th House of Cooperation, highlighting needs in close bonds.

LEO: This morning stirs a taste for adventure. Destiny calls loudly as passionate Mars charges into your 9th House of Distance, urging you to attempt things that are literally or metaphorically far from your comfort zone.

VIRGO: "Optimistic pessimism" is today's reigning philosophy -- you might expect the worst, but you know you can handle it with a smile on your face. When anxiety or sadness creep in, you can find solace in familiar structures.

LIBRA: Your promises should be meaningful right now. Your 7th House of Partnership heats up as combative Mars enters, raising the volume on agreements and close bonds that need clearer give-and-take.

SCORPIO: Steady focus turns effort into visible progress. Motivated Mars activates your 6th House of Well-being as of today, motivating you to reconfigure routines and direct your formidable focus toward the tasks that truly count.

SAGITTARIUS: Your inner fire may need some outlets very soon. Smoldering Mars is soaring into your optimistic 5th house, encouraging you to take risks or play around with as little seriousness as possible.

CAPRICORN: Honor your inner needs. With Luna in your sign, emotions sharpen and your priorities become clear. Opposing Jupiter in your 7th House of Partnerships, balance self-care with generosity by expressing boundaries openly.

AQUARIUS: This afternoon favors truthful words and choices. Your 3rd House of Debate surges as fiery Mars arrives, pushing you to say the important thing plainly -- and to move on it soon.

PISCES: Making choices can strengthen your sense of personal value. As Mars parades into your 2nd House of Self-Worth, you're urged to settle decisions about money and time while securing the tools you need for future work.

CARTOON

gocomics.com





Diaz, Kane give Bayern CL edge at Madrid

AFP
Madrid, Apr. 8

Luis Diaz and Harry Kane scored the goals that gave dominant Bayern Munich a crucial 2-1 Champions League quarter-final first leg win away to Real Madrid on Tuesday.

Kylian Mbappe's strike 16 minutes from time gave record 15-time winners Real a lifeline at their Bernabeu home in a gripping battle.

Vincent Kompany's side, arguably the strongest team in Europe this season, produced a masterclass in the first half and could have been several goals ahead.

Instead they had only one from Diaz, which Kane added to after the interval, but French superstar Mbappe's goal kept Alvaro Arbeloa's side in the tie.

"It's a shame it wasn't 2-0 at the end to be completely honest," said Bayern goalkeeper Manuel Neuer, who made several good saves in the second half as Madrid ramped up the pressure.

"You know how dangerous Real Madrid are, we saw that again today. They had plenty of chances and could've scored more.

"First up we're happy about the victory here away from home, but it'll be a tough challenge back in Munich."

Real Madrid defender Antonio Rudiger said that Mbappe's goal had kept the tie open.

"I think we're alive, everything is open with that goal from Mbappe. I think we had many chances to score goals, but in the end this is how it is."

The round's glamour fixture was a European classic -- a record 29th time these heavyweights have faced each other in the competition.

Bayern flew out of the blocks and Konrad Laimer's rasping effort narrowly over the bar showed that Kompany's side had come to the Spanish capital to attack.

After nine consecutive matches against Madrid without a win, Bayern were determined to put an end to that streak and show why many consider them favourites to lift the trophy this season.

Bayern should have taken the lead through defender Dayot Upamecano, who fluffed his lines from point-blank range, after Kane cushioned the ball into his path, allowing Alvaro Carreras to hack the ball off the line.

Madrid were largely pinned back as Bayern dominated the ball, but the hosts sought to send through rapid strikers Mbappe and Vinicius Junior on the counter, with Neuer saving from both.

Madrid's defensive work was nearly undone by a moment of madness from 18-year-old midfielder Thiago Pitarch, starting in place of Jude Bellingham, whose poor back pass under pressure was straight to Serge Gnabry in front of goal, but goalkeeper Andriy Lunin deflected the German's shot behind.



PHOTO: AP

Bayern Munich's Luis Diaz celebrates scoring his side's first goal during the Champions League quarterfinal first leg soccer match against Real Madrid.

Bayern toyed at times with Real, who ceded possession far too often, and their opening goal was a slick combination play which caught the hosts on their heels.

Gnabry exchanged a one-two with Kane and pushed the ball in behind Trent Alexander-Arnold for the Madrid defender's former Liverpool team-mate Diaz to reach and stroke home past Lunin in the 41st minute.

Kane, who was a doubt to start because of an ankle problem, did not seem fully fit but made an even bigger impact less than a minute into the second half.

Olise cut the ball back to him on the edge of the box and Kane fizzed a curling effort into the bottom corner to double Bayern's lead.

It was his 11th Champions League strike this season, trailing only Mbappe on 14, and his 49th goal across all competitions.

Vinicius had a fine chance to pull one back for Real when Upamecano badly underhit a header back to Neuer, but the Brazilian sliced his shot into the side-netting. Neuer made a brilliant save to thwart Mbappe once more and left with the man of the match trophy.

With Bellingham on as a substitute, Madrid stepped up a level and eventually found the net with Alexander-Arnold guiding a low cross to the far post where Mbappe beat Neuer, smashing home off the crossbar after 74 minutes.

Bayern angrily roared back with Kane volleying wide as they tried to restore their advantage, but instead they take a slender lead back to Bavaria for next Wednesday's second leg.

Havertz gives Arsenal advantage against Sporting

AFP
Lisbon, Apr. 8

Kai Havertz snatched a last-gasp winner as Arsenal bounced back from their domestic distress to steal a 1-0 victory at Sporting Lisbon in the Champions League quarter-final first leg on Tuesday.

Mikel Arteta's side arrived at the Jose Alvalade Stadium rocked by successive defeats against Manchester City in the League Cup final and Southampton in the FA Cup quarter-finals.

Once again, the Gunners were below their best but they emerged with the win thanks to David Raya's fine saves and Havertz's clinical finish in stoppage-time.

Arsenal will be firm favourites to advance to the semi-finals in the second leg in north London on April 15, but they will have to improve significantly to win the tournament for the first time.

Those agonising losses to City and second-tier Southampton marked the first time that Arsenal had been beaten in successive matches this term, with the embarrassing FA Cup defeat just the Gunners' fifth of the season.

The after-shocks were still being felt as Arsenal struggled to find any momentum in Lisbon, but not for the first time this season they found a way to win ugly.

"We had to be a little bit crisper, faster, more efficient to break them down when they had that block," Arteta said.



PHOTO: AP

Sporting's Maximiliano Araujo, center, watches as Arsenal's Kai Havertz scores his sides first goal past Sporting's goalkeeper Rui Silva during the Champions League quarterfinals, first leg.

"We had a goal disallowed and there were two or three occasions where we were close but we lacked that final pass. In the end a magic moment from the finishers win us the game.

"It's beautiful and that's the impact you need when you get to this stage of the season. Everybody has to make an impact and they certainly did that tonight."

Praising the outstanding Raya, Arteta added: "He had two moments where he made two big saves.

"At the moment he's phenomenal and extraordinary since he joined us. We are very lucky to have him."

Aiming to finally banish accusations that they are English football's nearly men by winning their first major trophy since the 2020 FA Cup, Arsenal have faced pointed questions about their perceived lack of mental strength.

Grinding out the win in Lisbon was a suitable riposte to the critics.

Insisting his players were "hungrier than ever", Arteta had urged Arsenal to use the "pain" of their recent defeats as motivation and they rose to the challenge.

Playing in the last eight for the first time since 1983, Sporting's 17-game winning run at home made them dangerous opponents for Arsenal.

Super subs

Unable to establish any attacking rhythm in a cagey half, it took Arsenal 42 minutes to muster a shot on target.

Even then Martin Odegaard's blast from the edge of the area was straight at Sporting goalkeeper Rui Silva.

Arteta's frustration was palpable, but Arsenal did improve after the break.

Leandro Trossard dragged his shot wide from 18 yards before Odegaard almost caught out Silva with a free-kick immediately after half-time.

Sporting went close to snatching a late goal when Luis Suarez's cross reached Catamo for a flicked header that Raya pushed away.

But Arsenal grabbed the winner in stoppage-time via Arteta's substitutes.

Gabriel Martinelli played a superb pass over the Sporting defence and Havertz beat the offside trap to slot past Silva from 10 yards as Arteta punched the air in delight.

LAMICHHANE'S FIFER POWERS BAGMATI, MADHESH WIN BY DLS



BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr 8

Captain Sandeep Lamichhane claimed five wickets as Bagmati Province registered a seven-wicket win over Koshi Province, while Madhesh Province defeated Gandaki Province by 18 runs under the DLS method in the Prime Minister Cup men's national cricket tournament on Wednesday.

At the Ramjanki Multipurpose Stadium in Janakpur, Lamichhane invited Koshi to bat first after winning the toss.

Koshi were bundled out for just 99 runs in 28.2 overs, with skipper Sujan Thapaliya top-scoring on 21. Ankit Subedi (19), Rohan Shah (18) and Shiwash Bajgain (10) offered brief resistance. Lamichhane was the chief destroyer, returning figures of 5 for 33 from 7.2 overs. Rijan Dhakal took two wickets, while Pratis GC and Ishan Pandey claimed one apiece.

Chasing a modest target of 100, Bagmati raced to victory in only nine overs, losing three wickets. Bibek Magar starred with an unbeaten 61 off 28 balls, supported by Pratis GC (17 not out) and opener Ringzin Lama (17).

For Koshi, Bipin Mahato picked up two wickets. Bagmati's third win lifted them to seventh place with six points from seven matches, while Koshi remain bottom with just one point.

Meanwhile, at the Narayani Cricket Ground in Birgunj, Madhesh posted 172 all out in 34.5 overs after being asked to bat first.

Opener Mayan Yadav struck 43, captain Anil Sah added 36, and Bishal Shusling anchored the innings with an unbeaten 40. Bishal Patel chipped in with 18.In reply, Gandaki were 80 for 5 in 22 overs when rain forced the match to be abandoned. With the DLS calculation applied, Madhesh were declared winners.

Arjun Kumal (49) was on the crease when the rain disrupted the match. The result gave Madhesh their fourth win, moving them to third place with nine points from six matches. Gandaki are at 8th place with five points from seven matches.

SNIPPETS

Khamboo named Gift of Chess ambassador



Kathmandu (TRN): The United Nations-recognised American organisation The Gift of Chess has appointed Himalayan Chess Academy founder Monalisha Khamboo as its official ambassador for Nepal. The New York-based charity announced the appointment on its social media platform, X (formerly Twitter) and Instagram accounts, on Wednesday. With this, 34-year-old Khamboo becomes the first Nepali ambassador for an international chess organisation. The Gift of Chess said she was chosen for her achievements both on and off the board.

Sharing Khamboo's two-decade journey in chess, the organisation also pledged to distribute 1,000 chess sets across schools, prisons and community centres in Nepal. Founded in December 2020, the charity aims to deliver one million chess sets worldwide by 2030, and has already distributed 200,000 sets in 70 countries. Khambu is Nepal's first women's national chess champion, the country's highest-rated female player (FIDE rating 1877), and the first Nepali woman to qualify as an International Arbiter. Currently serving as deputy general secretary of the Nepal Chess Federation, she is also a member of FIDE's Commission for Women's Chess.

Nepali taekwondo duo for World Juniors



Kathmandu (TRN): A three-member junior taekwondo team is taking part in the World Taekwondo Junior Championship. The tournament will be held in Uzbekistan from 12–17 April. Nepal will be represented by two athletes, Kritika Katuwal and Dillika Bholan. Katwal will compete in the under-46 kg category, while Bholan will contest in the under-59 kg. They will be accompanied by their coach, Sandipa Amgain. The team was bade farewell by Member Secretary of the National Sports Council (NSC), Ramcharitra Mehta, on Wednesday. Mehta extended his best wishes for success during the farewell ceremony held at the NSC office. NSC executive committee member Bhan Bahadur Chand also offered encouragement to the players.

Dahal shines with double Gold in South Asian badminton

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 8

Nepal's top shuttler, Prince Dahal, captured two gold medals at the Badminton Asia–South Asian Regional Championship held in Islamabad, Pakistan, from 1–7 April.

In the men's singles final, Dahal defeated Pakistan's Abdul Manan Raj 21–11, 9–21, 21–5 to secure the title. He then partnered Rasila Maharjan in the mixed doubles, where the Nepali duo overcame Pakistan's Raja Hassan Mujtaba and Ammarah Ishtiaq 21–14, 21–13 in the final.

Earlier, they cruised past Muhammad Zaid and Sana Hanif 21–13, 21–10 in the semi-final, and edged out Rai Abdul Manan and Umama Usman 19–21, 21–13, 21–18 in the quarter-final.

In the men's doubles, Dahal teamed up with Kshitiz Khanal to win silver.



PHOTO: NBA

Prince Dahal with trophy in Islamabad, Pakistan.

The Nepali pair lost the final to Bangladesh's Nazmul Islam Joy and Sifat Ullah 21–15, 18–21, 21–14, after defeating Pakistan's Umar Jehangir and Abdul Manan Rai 21–16, 21–18 in the semi-final.

In the women's singles, both Maharjan and Sheshna Sirpali finished third. Maharjan lost her semi-final to Pakistan's Alja Tariq 21–18, 25–23, having earlier beaten Umama Usman 21–17, 21–18 in the quarter-final and Bhutan's Kunzang Choidon 21–7, 21–7 in the group stage.

She also fell to Ammarah Ishtiaq 13–21, 18–21 in the round robin. Sirpali, meanwhile, lost her semi-final to Ishtiaq 21–15, 21–4 after receiving a bye in the quarter-final.

In the women's doubles, Maharjan and Sirpali reached the semi-final but were beaten by Pakistan's Sana Hanif and Tariq 21–19, 14–21, 1–21.

Nepal also claimed silver in the mixed team event, with Dahal, Khanal, Maharjan and Sirpali combining to secure the runners-up spot.

Medvedev smashes his racket 7 times

AP
Monaco, Apr 8

Former No. 1 Daniil Medvedev lost his temper, smashed his racket on the red clay court seven successive times, and then deposited the mangled frame in a trash bin midway through a 6-0, 6-0 loss to Matteo Berrettini at the Monte Carlo Masters on Wednesday.

Medvedev, who is currently ranked 10th, received a code violation for unsportsmanlike conduct and will also likely be hit with a hefty fine for his actions early in the second set.

Medvedev was already struggling when he landed a forehand in the net to drop his opening ser-vice game of the second set and fall behind 2-0 and he slammed his racket near the baseline. Then he picked the racket up and threw it toward a tarp at the end of the court.

Still not through, Medvedev then continually picked his frame up and kept on smashing it until it was destroyed enough to fit through an opening in a courtside trash can as the crowd sarcastical-ly cheered him on.

Medvedev, who won the U.S. Open in 2021, lost the match in 49 minutes. He had five dou-ble-faults to Berrettini's none; put only 36% of his first serves in play to Berrettini's 65%; and won only 17 of the 67 points.

"I wouldn't expect to win like that and it doesn't happen that often," Berrettini said.

Sooryavanshi hailed as 'amazing, fearless'

AFP
New Delhi, Apr. 8

Vaibhav Sooryavanshi was hailed as "amazing" and "fearless" after the 15-year-old underlined his rare talent with an audacious display against superstar Indian bowler Jasprit Bumrah in the IPL.

Rajasthan Royals opener Sooryavanshi faced the 32-year-old pacer Bumrah, of Mumbai Indians, for the first time Tuesday and immediately hit him over the wide long-on fence for a six.

Bumrah smiled as he walked back to his run up, then three balls later the precocious teenage batsman did it again with a pull shot that went over deep backward square leg.

Sooryavanshi hammered 39 off 14 balls and put on 80 runs with opening partner Yashasvi Jaiswal, who hit an unbeaten 77, as Rajasthan won by 27 runs in a rain-shortened 11-overs-a-side contest in Guwahati.

Mumbai skipper Hardik Pandya said it had been "fascinating" to see Sooryavanshi take on one of the world's best bowlers.

"Amazing to see the way he bats, the kind of fearlessness he has, the kind of shots he has," said Pandya.

Sooryavanshi took on another



senior pace bowler in the New Zealander Trent Boult to pummel an attempted yorker into the crowd over backward square leg.

His knock was cut short by a stunning catch in the deep by Tilak Varma after attempting another big hit off Shardul Thakur. Sooryavanshi was angry at himself, covering his face and letting out a scream, before trudging back to the pavilion.

Fellow left-hander Jaiswal watched the blitz from the other end captivated.

"The way he has been playing, it's tremendous," said player of the match Jaiswal. "He's working so hard as well. So I also get motivated -- okay, I also need to develop some different shots.

"And if he's taking on someone, I'll just keep giving him positive messages that you can go after him and whatever, just play freely."

Jaiswal, 24, said he doesn't need to play the big brother. "He's amazing and he understands the game very well. He's quite capable to do it himself. He's enjoying his game and he's playing unbelievably well."

Sooryavanshi made history in last year's IPL in a dazzling debut season highlighted by a 35-ball century, the second fastest in the history of the T20 tournament.

He started this edition with a blazing fifty to live up to big expectations and received praise from former cricketers including spin legend Anil Kumble, who said the prodigy should be fast-tracked into the senior Indian national team.

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