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THE RISING NEPAL

ALL BE HAPPY, ALL BE WELL

Commission formed to investigate assets of senior officials, politicians



PHOTO: RSS

Prime Minister Balendra Shah chairing the meeting of the Council of Ministers held at the PM's Office in Singha Durbar, Kathmandu, on Wednesday.

BY PURUSHOTTAM P. KHATRI
Kathmandu, Apr. 15

The government has decided to constitute a high-level Asset Investigation Commission to examine the property details of senior political leaders and high-ranking civil servants who have held public office since 2005/06.

CABINET DECISIONS

A meeting of the Council of Ministers held at the Office of Prime Minister and Council of Ministers (OPMCM) on Wednesday evening took the decision to this effect.

According to government spokesperson and Minister for Education, Science and Technology, Sasmit Pokharel, the commission will be chaired by former Supreme Court Justice Rajendra Kumar Bhandari and will comprise five members.

The commission has been mandated to collect, verify, and investigate the asset declarations of individuals who have held key political positions and senior administrative roles between 2005/06 and 2024/25.

The members of the commission include former Supreme Court Justices Purushottam Parajuli and Chandi Raj Dhakal, former Deputy Inspector General of Police Ganesh K.C., and Chartered Accountant Prakash Lamsal.

In a series of Cabinet decisions, the government also approved several other measures, including the acceptance of a Swiss Franc 1 million grant assistance from the Government of Switzerland for the Enforced Disappearances Inquiry and Truth and Reconciliation Fund.

The government has also assigned designated anti-excise duties responsibilities to senior officials across the Inland Revenue Department, Large Taxpayer Office, Medium Taxpayer Office, and various Revenue Offices. Similarly, heads of 52 Customs and Revenue Control Offices have been given additional authority as excise duty officers for specified jurisdictions.

The Cabinet further approved the Third Amendment to the Economic Procedure and Fiscal Accountability Rules, 2025, and endorsed the National Standards on Organisation and Management Survey, 2025, according to the Minister.

In another decision, the government agreed to present information to Parliament regarding the Nepal–India Agreement on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, signed on February 17, 2026.

» SEE PAGE 6

First Int'l Wellness Day marked



PHOTO: TRN

Speaker of the House of Representatives Dol Prasad (DP) Aryal (centre), along with other dignitaries, attending the First International Wellness Day organised by the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation at Tundikhel in Kathmandu on Wednesday.

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 15

The first International Arogya (wellness) Day was celebrated at the Army Pavilion, Tundikhel, on Wednesday, following its recognition by the United Nations.

On the occasion, Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, Khadka Raj Poudel 'Ganes', announced 'Nepal Arogya Year 2027'.

Speaking at the event, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Dol Prasad Aryal, said that the concept of wellness should be linked to overall human life and established as a global priority.

"Wellness is not just the absence of disease, it is a state of physical, mental, social, cultural, emotional, spiritual and environmental balance," he said.

Highlighting growing global conflicts, climate crisis and mental stress, Aryal said wellness should be seen as a ray of hope for humanity.

» SEE PAGE 6

Sujan pierces tongue for the fourth time



PHOTO BY SUJAN GURUNG.

Sujan Baga Shrestha pierced his tongue for the fourth time.

BY BINU SHRESTHA
Kathmandu, Apr. 15

Sujan Baga Shrestha, a resident of Khasi, Bode, Madhyapur Thimi, has pierced his tongue for the fourth time to commemorate the tongue piercing festival held on Wednesday.

Aiming to preserve the dying culture, the 30-year-old Shrestha of Bode Ward No-8 has been performing the tongue-piercing act for the last three years. Shrestha's tongue was pierced with a 10-inch long iron needle today.

Krishna Chandra Baga Shrestha, Sujan Baga's uncle had pierced his tongue 12 times in the past to give continuation to the tradition.

Naike Krishna Chandra Baga Shrestha performed a special worship of various gods of the locality before the ceremony. The person who pierces the tongue is brought to the courtyard of the Ganesh Temple playing various musical instruments and the tongue is pierced in front of everyone.

The traditional music called 'Nathakhi' was played amid the ceremony.

After the tongue piercing ceremony, Shrestha visited different localities of Bode for two to three hours carrying a half-moon-shaped Mahadeep, made using 13 sticks of Nigalo (a type of bamboo).

After circumambulating the Bode area, the iron needle was taken out at the Mahalaxmi Temple and the hole in the tongue was filled with mud from the temple's premises. The needle was then kept at the Ganesh Temple door, located on the right side of the Nrityanath Temple.

Sujan observed a three-day fast drinking only water, and he abstained from non-vegetarian meals. It is believed that things can go wrong while piercing the tongue if he violates the custom.

As per the legend ghosts, vampires, spirits and skeletons lived on the right and left side of Neelbarahi in Bode and inflicted pain on the Bode people. According to the tantric lore, after knowing this, tantric Bhimadatta Karmacharya came there and laid a trap.

Karmacharya forbade people from working in the fields for a month. When evil spirits looked at the field from the courtyard of the Neelbarahi and did not see anyone, they tried to enter Bode.

A vampire (Khyak) who tried to enter through the western door of the four entrances to Bode, fell into tantric Bhimadatta's trap.

Khyak's tongue was pierced and he was made to carry a heavy load of wood. Unable to bear the pain, the Khyak pleaded for mercy, assuring that he would comply with the order.

The Khyak then promised to not cause trouble to the Bode people and came to pierce his tongue on the same day for seven years.

After Nilbarahi expressed his anger in a dream that he would not spare Bhimadatta because he had insulted his doorman, Bhimadatta repented and performed a ritual of forgiveness by piercing his tongue, which is still practiced today.

According to the promise, the tongue of the vampire was pierced seven times and after that, it did not come. It is believed that Bhimdatta Karmacharya established the tradition of piercing the tongue of Bode residents.

Records show that 13 people have had their tongues pierced in the festival's 111-year-old history.

As per the age-old tradition, only the locals of Bode from the Shrestha clan can volunteer to get their tongue pierced.

It is believed that the festival began from the time of King Jagajyoti Malla.

With its long and illustrious history, the locals of Bode eagerly await the festival and celebrate it with much fervour every year.



BULLION
(Rs. per tola)

Hallmark Gold	: Rs. 302,700/-
Worked Gold	: NA
Silver	: Rs. 5,220/-

STOCK

NEPSE	: 2,866.87
Total Amount	: 10,537,008,796.56
No. of Share	: 26,438,521

WALMART UNVEILS NEW PACKAGING

AP
New York, Apr. 15

Walmart is redesigning the packaging of its Great Value store brand to help customers instantly spot whether that bag of spicy chips is gluten free or how much protein is packed in its chicken nuggets.

Great Value is Walmart's biggest private label food brand and one of the largest food and consumer packaged goods labels in the U.S.

The redesign of the brand, which spans 10,000 different products, also reflects how shoppers are looking at its store brands in food not as a step-down from national labels but more as an equivalent.

Among the changes are better images of its food. For example, new packaging for Great Value lasagna shows the meal garnished with a basil leaf served on a full plate displayed on a red checkered table cloth.

Daunne highway blacktopping to complete before monsoon

BY BOMLAL GIRI
Nawalpur, Apr. 15

Travel along the Narayanghat–Butwal section of the East–West Highway is expected to be easier during the upcoming monsoon compared to previous years, according to the project office.

It is set to complete one-side concreting and blacktopping the Daunne section before the rainy season. The project said contractors are working to meet the deadline, which is expected to ease movement during the monsoon.

In the Daunne section, only 330 metres in the eastern stretch and 701 metres in the western stretch remain to be concreted and blacktopped out of the total 14 km. The eastern stretch includes 4 km that requires full concreting, while in the western stretch, 7.2 km is to be concreted and 2.8 km blacktopped under the agreement.

Information officer of the project, Engineer Shiva Khanal said one-side concreting in the eastern section will be completed by the end of April. He added that there is an earlier agreement to cut payments if the work is not concluded within the set timeframe.

The project has reported 80 per cent physical progress in the eastern section and 82 per cent in the western section. Two bridges at Arun Khola and Dumkibas are yet to be connected to the main road.

In the western section, work is under way to complete one-side blacktopping and concreting by the end of June. It will take one additional month to complete the entire section, said the project.

However, delays in the supply of bitumen due to the ongoing conflict in West Asia have raised concerns over timely completion. Officials said that reduced imports of bitumen could delay the project and increase costs. Contractors have also indicated they may seek compensation due to rising transport costs linked to higher petroleum prices. A decision on cost adjustments is a matter to be addressed by the government.



PHOTO: BOMLAL GIRI/TRN

Construction worker busy with bridge construction in Dumkibas.

Beyond Daunne, works such as plantation under bio-engineering, service lane construction and road marking are in progress. The 113.5 km project includes upgrading 70 km to four lanes, adding service tracks in 29 km, and expanding 14 km in the Daunne hill section to three lanes.

The project began in 2019 with a completion target of 2022, but deadlines have been extended four times. The latest deadline ends on July 24 this year.

The project is being implemented with financial support from the Asian Development Bank, with a total cost of Rs 16.99 billion.

INDIGENOUS SKILLS EXPO TO KICK OFF IN BUTWAL

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Siddarthanagar, Apr. 15

An exhibition of indigenous skills, arts and products is set to take place in Butwal, Rupandehi.

Organisers of the expo announced at a press conference on Wednesday that the event, titled 'Rathane Skill, Art and Product Exhibition–2083', will be held on Saturday, April 18 to mark World Heritage Day.

The exhibition aims to preserve, promote and market traditional skills, crafts and local products.

The event is being organised through the collaboration of Janautthan Samudayik Laghubitta Bittiya Sanstha, Local Handicraft and Heritage Foundation Nepal, and Khasyauli Bazaar. It will be held at the premises of the old cinema hall near Traffic Chowk in Butwal Sub-metropolitan City–6.

According to coordinator of the event Rewant Bahadur BK, the expo will feature live demonstrations of local skills, around 50 stalls showcasing handicrafts and local products, traditional food items, cultural tableaux and performances.

Chairperson of the Foundation, Dr. Man Bahadur Bishwakarma, said the exhibition is expected to help preserve endangered skills, expand market access for local products, raise awareness about cultural heritage, and contribute to employment and income generation.

He also claimed that organising such an exhibition on the occasion of World Heritage Day is a new and first-of-its-kind initiative in Nepal. He stressed that traditional local products contribute to the national economy and require greater attention for preservation and market expansion.

SY Panel begins installation of new UPVC plant

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 15

SY Panel Nepal, a subsidiary of SY Company Limited, has laid the foundation stone for a new UPVC industry in Ratnanagar Municipality–14, Pithuwa, in Chitwan.

The foundation was jointly laid on Monday by Ratnanagar Mayor Pralhad Sapkota and the company's CEO Hong Sung-bu during a formal ceremony.

Speaking at the event, Mayor Sapkota said the municipality would facilitate investors willing to establish industries in the area. "While local authorities would provide necessary support, priority in employment should be given to local residents," he added.

Once operational, the plant is expected to produce UPVC door and window profiles and other construction materials using advanced technology. According to the company, UPVC products are considered a durable, lightweight and environmentally-friendly alternative to traditional wood and metal materials, and the decision to establish the factory was based on growing market demand in the country.

Hong said the factory represents a combination of Korean technology and Nepal's workforce, adding that it would serve as a centre for industrial development. He said that the project would help strengthen economic cooperation between Korea and Nepal and contribute to the development of Chitwan.

He also noted that Nepal is entering a phase of political stability and economic opportunity, and said the company aims to support job creation and technology transfer in collaboration with the government.

The company recently issued an initial public offering (IPO), and said the funds raised are being utilised for the establishment of the uPVC plant. The estimated cost of the project is Rs. 560 million.

National Economic Census 2082 begins

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 15

The National Statistics Office (NSO) has officially begun field-level data collection for the second National Economic Census 2082 since Wednesday.

The NSO, under the Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers, started the data collection with the slogan "Economic Census for Measuring the Economy," marking a major step towards building a comprehensive and reliable picture of the country's economy.

The campaign is expected to serve as the backbone for formulating the country's overall economic policies and plans.

Presenting details about the National Economic Census 2082 at a press conference on Wednesday, NSO spokesperson and Deputy Chief Statistician Dhundi Raj Lamichhane said that around 4,000 trained enumerators have been deployed across the country.

He added that the collected data will be compiled at the central level by mid-July 2026, with a goal of publishing a preliminary report at the beginning of the next fiscal year.

Enumerators and supervisors will be deployed to establishments and business locations for on-site data collection from April 15 to June 21, 2026.

The activities have been divided into 21 categories according to the International Standard Industrial Classification, and the contribution of these sectors to the economy has been measured accordingly.

In this National Economic Census, basic data will be collected from 18 out of those 21 classified sectors.

The trained enumerators will collect detailed information from a wide range of economic establishments, including industries, trade businesses, service providers, cooperatives, private firms, schools, hospitals, and public enterprises. Both registered and unregistered economic units are being covered to ensure inclusiveness.

Both registered and unregistered economic units are being covered to ensure inclusiveness. The census aims to gather key data on the number, geographic distribution, employment, production, and service activities of economic entities across Nepal.



He emphasised that this effort is crucial for strengthening estimates of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), updating the base year of national accounts, and supporting evidence-based policy-making and planning.

To facilitate efficient data collection, the NSO has established 84 district-level census offices across all 77 districts. The use of digital tools, including an e-census platform, GIS-based mapping systems, and a daily reporting mechanism, is expected to enhance accuracy and timeliness.

According to NSO, all collected information will remain strictly confidential under the Statistics Act, 2019, and will only be used for statistical purposes without revealing individual or institutional identities.

Chief Statistician Dr. Kamal Prasad Pokhrel expressed his hope that the census plays a vital role in building a strong institutional foundation for economic statistics.

Likewise, it is expected to generate essential data needed for the formulation of short-term and long-term economic plans, promotion of investment, and creation of employment opportunities, he said

The census is considered a cornerstone for developing a reliable system of economic statistics in the country, and it is also expected to establish a foundation for improved statistical coordination among different agencies.

He called on all stakeholders—including entrepreneurs, business owners, institutions, and the general public—to actively cooperate by providing accurate and complete information.

He believes that broad participation will be key to the success of this national initiative, which is expected to produce vital economic insights starting from the fiscal year 2026/27.

Halkarapurwa: A village of 34 families raising over 600 buffaloes

BY SIRAJ KHAN
Nepalgunj, Apr. 15

Halkarapurwa village, located in Duduwa Rural Municipality-3, has emerged as a leading buffalo-rearing village in Banke District.

Despite having only 34 households, all from the Yadav community, the village is home to more than 600 buffaloes.

It is rare to find a household in the village that does not rear buffaloes. For this reason, locals have started calling Halkarapurwa a "milk-producing village". Around 600 litres of milk are supplied daily from the village to the nearby Nepalgunj market.

Ramsohan Yadav, 60, owns the largest number of buffaloes in the village. He has around 150 buffaloes, including calves, of which 52 are milking buffaloes. From his household alone, about 300 litres of milk is transported daily to Nepalgunj via the Kamdi Milan Chowk market.

Yadav said that all family members -- from children to daughters-in-law and grandchildren -- are involved in managing the buffaloes and milk production. His day begins at 3 am and continues until late evening, revolving entirely around buffalo rearing, a profession he has continued for generations.



PHOTO: SIRAJ KHAN/TRN

High milk-yielding buffaloes reared in Halkarapurwa, Ward No. 3 of Duduwa, Banke.

Younger people in the village are also increasingly drawn to buffalo farming. Bishnu Prasad Yadav, 31, keeps 19 buffaloes. He said that the income from buffalo farming is higher than jobs in Nepal or abroad. "Unlike jobs where you must follow orders, this is our own work, and we are happy doing it," he said.

Another local youth, Rampheran Yadav, is rearing 37 buffaloes. He said the work feels easier and more reliable as he has been involved in it since childhood and it brings a good income.

Farmers in the village are now increasingly shifting from local breeds to Murrha buffalo, known for higher milk production. Rampheran Yadav said he bought a Murrha buffalo for Rs. 150,000.

Although expensive, he said that the higher milk yield helps recover the investment quickly. His household alone produces over 50 litres of milk daily.

Despite large-scale buffalo farming and milk production, farmers in Halkarapurwa said they are still deprived of government support. Local farmer Dinesh Prasad Yadav said that subsidies meant for farmers have yet to reach them.

TeleTalk introduces POCO X8 Series

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 15

TeleTalk has unveiled POCO X8 series and introduced two major devices, X8 Pro 5G and X8 Pro Max 5G with greater performance in the Nepali market.

POCO X8 Pro 5G provides enhanced performance and optimized power consumption with Flagship Dimensity 8500-Ultra. With a battery of 6500mAh, 100W HyperCharge and 27W reverse charging, it delivers ultra-long battery life.

It features a 50MP main camera, 8MP ultra-wide camera and 20MP front camera, ensuring clarity and precision while capturing pictures or making videos.

It has a 6.59" 1.5K 120Hz ultra-bright AMOLED display with peak brightness and dimming feature. POCO X8 Pro has IP68 water and dust resistance, keeping the mobile phone protected and durable for a long time.

Similarly, POCO X8 Pro Max 5G delivers equally good performance through Flagship Dimensity 9500s. It features a massive 8500mAh battery, 100W HyperCharge, 27W reverse charging, and smart charging, delivering up to 2-days' battery life. X8 Pro Max 5G has a 6.83" 1.5k 120Hz ultra-bright AMOLED display, ultra-brightness, and dimming feature to help during prolonged use.

A 50MP main camera, 8MP ultra-wide camera and 20MP front camera give image clarity, preserve facial details and highlight the background with precision. X8 Pro Max 5G has IP68 dust and water resistance, and has protection against splashes, drops, bends and pressure.

TeleTalk Executive Director, Pratik Jalan said that the POCO X8 series is not just built for gamers but is crafted for performance enthusiasts who demand excellence in every aspect.

The X8 Pro 5G is available in two variants: 8+256GB priced at NPR 63,999 and 12+512GB priced at NPR 73,999, with both variants in color Black, Green, and White. Similarly, the X8 Pro Max 5G comes in variants 12+256GB priced at NPR 79,999 and 12+512GB priced at NPR 89,999, both available in Black, Blue and White.

With consumers' convenience in mind, POCO has introduced an EMI facility of up to nine months, along with a 1-year brand warranty across all models. Both devices are now available for purchase at TeleTalk's official showrooms, outlets and Daraz as well.

Humla residents air grievances against police treatment



PHOTO: TRN

Public hearing programme organised by District Police Office, Humla.

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Humla, Apr. 15

Local residents in Humla have voiced a series of complaints against the police during a public hearing programme organised by the district police.

Participants raised concerns over domestic violence, public disorder, theft and child marriage, accusing police of failing to address such issues effectively.

Simkot Rural Municipality executive member Guhela Rawat said widespread alcohol consumption in the district had led to violence against women in households, but police had been unable to bring the situation under control. She said police needed to be more proactive in maintaining security in society.

She added that although patrols were regularly deployed, incidents of theft and disputes continued to occur, suggesting police efforts had not been fully effective.

Businessman Gorkha Bohara complained that despite signs prohibiting the use of horns near schools, drivers continued to sound horns indiscriminately while police appeared to ignore the matter. He also said police sometimes failed to tackle growing social disorder and misconduct.

Another participant, Umakala Rawat, urged police to focus more on prevention rather than merely responding after incidents had occurred. She also expressed concern over the rise in child marriage in Humla and said police should intervene directly instead of waiting for complaints to be filed.

Participants further complained about late-night drinking, public disturbances and gambling in the market area, saying police had failed to control such activities.

Deputy Superintendent of Police Shankar Khadka said the public hearing had been organised for the first time and would now be held every three months. At the beginning of the programme, DSP Khadka presented a report stating that police had succeeded this year in apprehending those involved in criminal offences, including theft, illegal firearms possession, assault and transport-related irregularities.

A video message warning against the dangers of drug abuse was also shown during the event. Responding to the grievances, DSP Khadka pledged improvements in police performance.

Acting Chief District Officer Rajendra Chand, Armed Police Force DSP Shankar Singh Ayer, National Investigation Department chief Meghraj Kandel, Nepali Congress vice-president Basanta Rokaya, Chamber of Commerce first vice-president Prakash Rawat, journalists and members of the public were present at the programme.

Two brothers granted citizenship in mother's name



BY CHANDRA PANDAK
Taplejung, Apr. 15

Two brothers in Taplejung have been granted Nepali citizenship in their mother's name. The brothers, from the same household in Sirijangha Rural Municipality-8, Yamphudin, received their citizenship certificates through their mother's identity.

According to the District Administration Office, the brothers are Mehraman Rai and Deukumar Rai of Yamphudin. Their citizenship certificates were issued in the name of their mother, Bhoteni Rai, as their father's identity could not be established, said Durga Devi Paudel, Nayab Subba at the citizenship section of the office. Officials said the mother is disabled and unable to speak, and because of her condition she could not clearly provide details needed to identify the father.

As his identity remains unknown, the administration office issued citizenship certificates to the two sons using their mother's name and surname, Poudel said.

Yadav Bhattarai, Information Officer and Assistant Chief District Officer at the District Administration Office, said this is the first time citizenship has been issued in the mother's name in the current fiscal year. He said the brothers were granted citizenship by descent under the provisions of the Nepali Citizenship Amendment Bill-2063 BS.

According to the law, if a mother self-declares that the father's name cannot be disclosed, citizenship by descent may be granted where the father's identity cannot be determined.

Krishna Kumar Gurung, ward chair of Yamphudin, said the brothers, born to the same mother with no confirmed paternal identity, received citizenship after a long effort. He added that both brothers have mental disabilities.

Former ward chair Tashi Lama said attempts to secure their citizenship had been under way since his tenure.

Internal discrimination persists among Dalits

BY SHER BAHADUR SARKI
Bajura, Apr. 15

In Bajura, caste-based discrimination is severe even within the Dalit community itself. Communities such as Sarki, Bishwakarma, Sunar, Mijar, Chandara, Kami, Ukheda, Tiruwa, Lohar, Damai, Badi, and Bhand reside here.

The practice of one Dalit discriminating against another has been passed down from ancestors and continues to be upheld by the younger generation, which has intensified internal caste discrimination.

Prem Nepali, a local from Badeda of Budhiganga Municipality-10, said that he faced discrimination both from non-Dalits and from within the Dalit community while performing religious rituals at temples.

He said, "During festivals like Dashain and Tihar, and other village rituals, I am invited to play the traditional damaha (drum). I go and perform. However, when it comes to eating food or participating in worship inside the temple, I still face discrimination."

He added that earlier, he even had a separate water source. That well was called 'Damai ko naula' in the local language. Now, he is allowed to use public taps, but discrimination still exists at homes, temples, and other private and public spaces.

Similarly, another resident and executive member of Budhiganga Municipality, Prem Damai, said that although discrimination might not be visible outwardly, it still existed internally in villages. Non-Dalits discriminate against Dalits, and Dalits also discriminate among themselves.

He said, "The municipality provides funds for building temples, but in those same temples, Dalits are discriminated against. Not only that, caste-based discrimination still occurs even in public places. No one can speak up alone, and others remain silent."

He said that once, while monitoring grade 5 and 8 examinations in Selapakh, he experienced caste discrimination during meals and lodging. "I have shared this issue many times with colleagues. I tell them that Dalits should not discriminate against each other and that we must work together to end it. But instead, they get angry at me. Because of this, I too continue to suffer from such discrimination."

Compared to other districts, untouchability is widespread in the rural areas of Bajura. In some places, Dalit communities are still denied entry into temples and face various forms of discrimination.

Caste-based discrimination and untouchability refer to unequal treatment based on caste, religion, occupation, region, gender, disability, or physical condition.

Various Dalit groups such as Sarki, Bishwakarma, Lohar, Nepali, Chandara, Gandharva, Sanai Od, Kumal, Sunar, Kami, Kadara, Tiruwa, and Pari live here.

Even among these groups, discrimination persists. Kami, Lohar, and Sarki do not accept water touched by Nepali, Damai, or Badi communities. Likewise, Nepali communities do not accept water from Gandharva and Bhand groups.

Since both non-Dalits discriminate against Dalits and Dalits discriminate among themselves, eliminating caste discrimination has become even more challenging. The state has criminalised such practices, making caste-based discrimination legally wrong.

Instead of uniting to find solutions, Dalits discriminating against one another have made it more difficult to end the problem.

Although caste discrimination and untouchability are said to have been abolished externally, they persist internally in many villages of Bajura. The Constitution of Nepal (2015) guarantees the right against untouchability and discrimination.

It clearly states that no person shall face discrimination or untouchability in any private or public place based on their origin, caste, community, occupation, or physical condition.

Bir Bahadur Bishwakarma, Chairperson of the Trishakti Dalit Network, Triveni, said that discussions and programmes were being conducted with stakeholders to end oppression, exploitation, injustice, and caste discrimination within the Dalit community itself.

He said, "Leaders and members of various political parties in the district claim outwardly that discrimination does not exist, but internally they continue to practice it."

He added that just as people claim there is no discrimination externally, all political parties, social workers, and Dalit women must work from their respective sectors to eliminate internal discrimination as well.

Ram Bahadur Baniya, Mayor of Budhiganga Municipality, said that the municipality had been running various awareness campaigns to eliminate caste discrimination and harmful practices like Chhaupadi.

He said, "The Constitution has clearly addressed caste discrimination. It is not just our responsibility; all citizens must follow it. Many have, but older generations in some villages have not accepted it. They may still practice discrimination when they go there."

He further added that there is a municipal-level Dalit network, to which the municipality allocates around Rs. 600,000-700,000 annually. The network uses these funds to conduct programmes aimed at eliminating caste discrimination and Chhaupadi. Compared to the past, such practices have decreased.

श्री नीलकण्ठ माध्यमिक विद्यालय
उत्तरगया गा. पा. ५, बोगटीटार, रसुवा

बोलपत्र स्वीकृत गर्ने आशयको सूचना

सूचना प्रकाशित मितिः २०८३/१/३

यस विद्यालयको देहायको कार्यको लागि मिति २०८२/११/२९ मा विद्युतीय बोलपत्र तथा राष्ट्रिय पत्रिकामा सूचना प्रकाशित गरी बोलपत्र आह्वान गरेकोमा रितपूर्वक पेश भएका विद्युतीय बोलपत्रबाट तपसिलको बोलपत्र न्यूनतम मूल्याँकित एवं सारभूत रुपमा प्रभावग्राही देखिन आएकोले स्वीकृतिको लागि छनौट भएको हुँदा सार्वजनिक खरिद ऐन २०६३ को दफा २७ (२) र ४७ प्रयोजन तथा सबैको जानकारीको लागि यो सूचना प्रकाशित गरिएको छ ।

सि नं	ठेक्का नम्बर	योजनाको नाम	बोलपत्रदाताको नाम र ठेगाना	बोलकबोल अंक भ्याट सहित
1	SNSS/ NCB/W/ 02/2082-83	Shree Neelakantha Namuna Bidhyalaya Bhautik Nirman-2082-83 (II)	Bulun Construction Pvt. Ltd, Uttargaya-4, Rasuwa	2145331.77 NPR

Ghatal Baba's Bishu Festival showcases power through sand-eating ritual

BY PUSHKAR BHANDARI
Dadeldhura, Apr. 15

A unique and mysterious tradition rich in religious belief, culture, and folklore takes place every year on Baisakh 2 of Nepali calendar, in Sudurpaschim Nepal, the grand Bishu festival of Ghatal Baba.

Located to the west of Bagbazar, near the district headquarters, Ghatalthan lies in Amargadhi Municipality–3 along the Doti River.

It is believed to be the abode of Ghatal deity, identified as Ghatotkacha. According to Krishna Bohara, Chairperson of the Ghatal Area Development Committee, this is not merely a fair, but a living expression of faith, power, tradition, and collective identity.

This year too, on Wednesday, the second day of the New Year, a large crowd of devotees gathered at Ghatalthan.

A striking feature of the festival is the sight of shamans, believed to be possessed by the deity, trembling and eating sand as a demonstration of divine power. This spectacle makes the festival one of Nepal's most distinctive religious traditions.

Faith linked to Ghatotkacha

Ghatal Baba is associated with Ghatotkacha, the legendary warrior from the Mahabharata, son of Bhima and Hidimba.

According to religious texts, Ghatotkacha displayed extraordinary bravery in the Kurukshetra war. After attaining martyrdom on the battlefield, folklore holds that Lord Krishna granted him a boon to be worshipped as a deity in the Kali Yuga. With this belief, people from far-western Nepal and beyond revere Ghatal Baba as a powerful god.

The sand-eating ritual

The most popular and enigmatic aspect of the festival is the practice of sand-eating by the dhami. After rituals and prayers, the shamans, believed to be possessed by the deity, begin to shake violently. They then pick up sand from the riverbank and eat it, either by hand or directly from the ground. For locals, this is not merely a performance but proof of divine power.

According to Bohara, this act symbolises the power of Ghatal Baba, or Ghatotkacha. Folklore suggests that in earlier times, shamans could consume up to seven suppa (around one and a half quintals) of sand.

This is why a place near Jogbuda along the Rangun River is known as "Saat Suppa." Although the quantity consumed today is smaller, the tradition remains alive.

The Deuro procession

Another important aspect of the Bishu festival is the ceremonial procession of the deity, known as deuro. This includes traditional musical instruments, an ornamented palanquin, conch shells, bells and sacred flags.

The procession travels to the Mahakali River at Parashuram Dham, where the deity is ritually bathed. This act is considered a purification and renewal of divine power.

Bohara explains that this journey is not just a ritual, but also a communal celebration, with hundreds of devotees accompanying the procession.

Interestingly, Ghatalthan is a cremation ground (masaan), typically associated with fear and mystery.

However, here it serves as a centre of deep faith. As local cremations are performed at this site, people share a strong emotional connection with Ghatal Baba. Many believe that wishes made here are fulfilled, drawing thousands of visitors during the Bishu festival.

The area is also home to around six temples, further enhancing its religious significance.

Ghatal Baba is regarded as the gatekeeper of the Asigram deity. Additionally, four temples of Duneshwar deity, considered the honour and prestige of Ghatal, are located in different areas. During the festival, shamans of Duneshwar and Masani deities also participate in the sand-eating ritual, creating a collective display of divine power.

Krishi Samagri Company Limited
Head Office, Kuleshwor, Kathmandu

Invitation For Electronic Bids

For the Supply and Delivery of Chemical Fertilizer-(UREA 46-0-0), 30,000±2% MT
Contract Identification No: KSCL/U/ICB-197/082/083
(Published Date: APRIL 16, 2026)

1. Krishi Samagri Company Limited (KSCL), Head Office, Kuleshwor, Kathmandu, Nepal has annual program towards the cost for the procurement of Supply and Delivery of Chemical Fertilizer, (UREA 46-0-0) Contract Identification No: KSCL/U/ICB-197/082/083 and intends to apply part of the funds to cover eligible payments under the contract. Bidding is open to all eligible Bidders from all countries.
2. Krishi Samagri Company Limited (KSCL), Head Office, Kuleshwor, Kathmandu, Nepal invites electronic bids from eligible bidders for the procurement of Supply and Delivery of Chemical Fertilizer as mentioned below, ***under International competitive bidding*** – **Single Stage Two Envelope** ***procedures specified in Public Procurement Act and Regulations.*** The fertilizer must be delivered through Kolkata/Haldiaat CIP Nepal basis (Biratnagar, Birgunj and Bhairahawa KSCL warehouses) with insurance up to the final destination as mentioned in the bid document.

Invitation for Bid No.	Commodity	Quantity	Cost of the bid document (NRs)	Required bid Security In USD
KSCL/U/ICB-197/082/083	UREA 46-0-0	30,000±2% MT	20,000	700,000

3. Under the Single Stage, Two Envelope Procedure, Bidders are required to submit simultaneously two separate sealed envelopes, one containing (i) the Technical Bid and the other (ii) the Price Bid, both in turn enclosed in one sealed envelope as per the provision of ITB 23 of the Bidding Document.
4. Eligible Bidders may obtain further information and inspect the bidding documents at the office of Krishi Samagri Company Limited (KSCL), Head Office, Kuleshwor, Kathmandu, Nepal (Tel: 977-01- 5374819, Email: procurement@kscl.gov.np) or may visit KSCL's website: http://kscl.gov.np
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be downloaded from PPMO's e-GP system www.bolpatra.gov.np/egp. Bidders, submitting their bid electronically should deposit the cost of bidding document as mentioned above in the account as specified below. Purchased bid document will be valid only for specified Principal Supplier.
   Information to deposit the cost of bidding document in Bank:
   Name of Office: Krishi Samagri Company Limited (KSCL), Head Office, Kuleshwor, Kathmandu.
   Current Account of Nepal Investment Mega Bank Ltd. Kalimati with account No. 01701030001922.
6. Pre-bid meeting shall be held at Krishi Samagri Company Limited (KSCL), Head Office, Kuleshwor, Kathmandu, Nepal at 14:00 hours, MAY 15, 2026.
7. Electronic bids must be submitted to the office Krishi Samagri Company Limited (KSCL), Head Office, Kuleshwor, Kathmandu through PPMO's e-GP system www.bolpatra.gov.np/egpon or before 13:00 hours on JUNE 01, 2026. Bids or any part thereof received after this deadline will be rejected.
8. The bids will be opened in the presence of Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at 14:00 hours on JUNE 01, 2026 at the office of Krishi Samagri Company Limited (KSCL), Head Office, Kuleshwor, Kathmandu. Bids must be valid for a minimum period of 30 days from the date of bid opening and must be accompanied by scanned copy of the bid security in pdf format, amounting as mentioned above, which shall be valid for 60 days from the date of opening of the bid (i.e. July 30, 2026)
9. If the last date of purchasing and /or submission falls on a government holiday, then the next working day shall be considered as the last date. In such case the validity period of the bid security shall remain the same as specified for the original last date of bid submission.

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

Life is not a problem to be solved,
but a reality to be experienced.
-Soren Kierkegaard

EDITORIAL

Consensual Approach

The new government, led by Balendra Shah, has adopted a consensual approach to spur development, good governance, and social justice. The initiative to take all national political forces into confidence regarding the matters of economic development will set a new political culture in the country. Following the resounding victory of the Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP) in the March 5 general elections, the old political parties harboured an inkling that they would not be given due importance in the affairs of the state. But the new administration has adopted a democratic tone and sought inputs from them so that its policies and programmes will be effectively implemented and avoid controversy.

In the spirit of collaboration and co-work, the government on Tuesday unveiled an 18-point National Commitment that includes the policies and agendas of six political parties represented in the new parliament. They are based on their election manifestos and promises made before the people. The common ground covers the topics of governance efficiency, the private sector, digital transformation, global information and environmental sustainability. Policy intervention forms the cornerstone of the document. In the past, flawed policy and partisan tendencies took a heavy toll on development and the governance system. A handful of elites used to influence the governments and their policies to suit their vested interests.

In a bold step to promote good governance and carry out sweeping reforms, the government is geared towards ending rent-seeking, policy capture, cartels and artificial shortages, thereby ensuring fair competition, entrepreneurship and a business-friendly environment, according to a news report of this daily. For this, predictable tax policies (at least 10-year stability) and simplified procedures are on the anvil. With the frequent changes of governments, the country suffered policy inconsistencies in the past, affecting a wide gamut of the public and private sectors. The government must enforce a paperless digital system to overcome these inherent anomalies.

Currently, Nepal has a 65.5 per cent active population according to the 2021 Census. But the country is unable to benefit from the demographic dividend. The National Commitment aims to capitalise on the energetic youths who can unlock development potential with enabling laws and investment. Without the meaningful participation of youths, Nepal can't push structural changes and attain middle-income status through production-led growth. Nepal's constitution has recognised the role of the private and public sectors in the development endeavours. The document considers the private sector the engine of growth and the government as a facilitator and regulator. The government will bring out a time-bound Economic Charter based on consensus among major political parties.

The government has set ambitious goals of achieving 7 per cent economic growth, US$ 3,000 per capita income and US$ 100 billion gross domestic product in the next five years. Likewise, it aims to generate 30,000 MW of electricity in the next decade. The document spells out strategies regarding health, education, good governance, foreign policy and ecology. It is imperative to implement national and sectoral policies to form capital, create employment, boost exports, and maintain macroeconomic stability. With a strong government in place, the country is in a better position to revamp policy and restructure the bureaucracy. The political parties are expected to welcome the government's initiative and offer their constructive suggestions to the government poised to take the nation in the direction of lasting peace, stability and prosperity.

Justice For Inisha

REETI K.C.

The brutal rape and murder of sixteen-year-old Inisha BK in Surkhet has recently sparked a massive wave of national grief and public anger. Social media platforms like TikTok are currently filled with videos exposing the faces of the underage suspects involved in this horrific and violent crime. Many citizens are now demanding that the law stop protecting these juveniles due to the extreme and heinous nature of their alleged actions. While the public demands immediate vengeance, the Act Relating to Children 2018 continues to guard the identities of these young, often misunderstood, legal perpetrators. This legal wall often feels like a shield for the guilty, but there are deep psychological reasons why our modern society chooses this protection.

From a scientific perspective, the adolescent brain is under a massive reconstruction process that affects how a young person perceives both risk and reward. The prefrontal cortex, which controls impulses and understands long-term consequences, does not reach its full maturity until an individual is in their mid-twenties. Because of this biological delay, the law views a minor as someone who has a much higher potential for significant and lasting psychological change. International legal standards suggest that children should be treated as subjects for correction rather than just being discarded as irredeemable and violent adult criminals. Nepal's current legal framework follows these global principles by viewing the child in conflict with the law as a candidate for deep rehabilitation.

Psychologists often warn about the dangers of "Labeling Theory," which occurs when society attaches a permanent and negative criminal status to a very young person. When we expose a teenager's face to millions on the internet, we effectively destroy their chance of ever returning to a normal and law-abiding life. Therefore, the law uses anonymity as a psychological tool to keep the door open for future reform and eventual reintegration into our shared community. We must ask if a moment of digital satisfaction is worth the risk of creating a lifelong criminal through our own public shaming.

However, cases like Inisha's challenge these theories when the actions show a high degree of premeditation and a total lack of basic human empathy. Psychologists identify this as Moral Disengagement, where an individual convinces themselves that normal ethical standards do not apply to their specific and violent actions. In such extreme situations, the public's psychological need for justice and accountability often outweighs the legal focus on the suspect's potential for future rehabilitation. The current "TikTok trials" are a clear symptom of a society that feels the formal justice system is failing to address this moral gap.

This "Secondary Victimisation" occurs when the state's focus on the offender makes the survivors feel like their loss is being treated as less important. Exposing a juvenile's identity might satisfy a temporary urge for revenge, but it fundamentally breaks the principles of a fair and highly scientific trial. Instead of doxing children, we should demand that our government provide better forensic psychologists and real therapy programmes inside every single correctional centres. Nepal currently lacks the professional infrastructure to actually rehabilitate violent youth, which makes the "protection" of the law feel like total and complete impunity.

We must find a balance where we respect the developmental science of the young mind while ensuring that justice for Inisha is truly visible. Protecting a name is not the same as ignoring a crime, and our legal system must prove that accountability exists behind the closed scenes. True justice for Inisha BK requires a system that is as intellectually honest as it is emotionally compassionate toward the victims of crime.

Give Diplomacy A Chance In Middle East

Mukti Rijal



Back-channel negotiations held under the auspices of Pakistan had nudged both the US and Iran last week to agree to halt the war for at least two weeks, with prospects of enduring de-escalation for peace and normalcy in the region. This had given new hope towards the pursuit of peace at a time when war rhetoric and threat of all-out destruction had been at its climax with President Trump's apocalyptic warning to annihilate Iran, the cradle of Persian civilization, in one flash.

In this regard, Jacobin, a left-leaning US magazine, comments saying, 'Trump's announcement of a two-week ceasefire with Iran on Tuesday and coming negotiations for a permanent settlement of hostilities in Pakistan was a rare acknowledgment of reality by the US president'. There were hopes that hostilities would cease in the Middle East (ME) for long, giving way to the resumption of supplies and economic recovery. Countries across Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Gulf have welcomed the ceasefire agreement. However, the Islamabad talks failed to hammer out a solution. US president Trump threatened to begin a blockade of the Strait of Hormuz to ensure that every ship has a safe passage in the Hormuz waters without paying illegal tolls to Iran.

Global supply chains

Almost a month-long war in the Middle East had inflicted misery across the world. The war not only affected the countries in Europe, Asia, and Africa but also destroyed their ability to supply food and medicine to millions of people in need. The ME war revolved around the issue of the Strait closure by Iran, which ruptured the global supply chains, halting the transshipment of fuels, goods, and materials across Asia, Europe, and Africa. Following the cessation of hostilities, Iran has started to levy tolls and let the ships pass through the strait, even though President Trump is not happy with the Iranian move. It may therefore take time to ensure that the worsened situation gets fully normal and the supply rupture is restored to deliver supplies.

The Strait of Hormuz is a narrow but extremely important sea passage located between Iran to the north and Oman to the south. It connects the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman, and ultimately the Arabian Sea. Around 20–25 per cent of the world's oil supply passes through it daily. Major oil exporters like Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates depend on it to send oil to global markets. At its narrowest point, it is only about 33 km wide, with shipping lanes even narrower. This makes it a chokepoint—easy to control, monitor, or block. The Strait is heavily influenced by Iran, which has repeatedly threatened and selectively closed it during conflicts. The control over the Strait is tantamount to control over a key global trade artery.

The Strait is thus a "narrow gate" for the world's energy supply. Whoever influences this gate has significant power over global economics and geopolitics. Every day that the Strait remains closed brings the world economy closer to a crisis. While the closure has acutely affected oil and gas supplies and prices, it could soon send convulsions through supply chains for other commodities, such as plastics and fertilisers, foundational to the global economy and food supplies.

> It is anticipated that the Islamabad dialogue between Iran and the US would be instrumental in resolving key issues to herald an enduring peace in the Middle East.

If the closure persists for even a few more months, it could become the single-largest and most consequential energy and supply chain disruption in modern history, all but ensuring a global period of stagflation. It will have a consequential geopolitical fallout amid outages in the petrochemical complex across Asia and the Middle East. The direct and second-order consequences could reverberate through petrochemical markets with major economic and geopolitical implications. In the upstream segment, the Middle East normally supplies about thirty percent of global seaborne exports of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), which can be used for petrochemicals feedstock.

Joseph Webster, a senior fellow at the Atlantic Council's Global Energy Centre and the Indo-Pacific Security Initiative, argues that apart from the upstream outage, downstream facilities in East Asia could face closure due to insufficient electricity, while Middle East petrochemical export facilities are facing massive disruptions. South Korea, Taiwan, and Japan hold significant petrochemical export capacity. But petrochemical plants are highly electricity-intensive, and powering the electricity grids of these East Asian democracies relies heavily on a now severely constricted LNG market. Accordingly, if Middle East LNG production outages force these countries to ration electricity, they could choose to curtail certain petrochemical products in favour of higher priority use cases for LNG, such as air conditioning or the manufacturing of semiconductors or high bandwidth memory for artificial intelligence (AI) supply chains, writes Webster.

Enduring peace

Not only has the closure interrupted global energy trade, but it has also suspended the movement of fertiliser covering roughly 30 per cent of globally traded ammonia-based nitrogen fertiliser that is vital before planting season. While the United States is one of the largest fertilizer producers, it relies on ammonia imports to lower costs and meet demand. Although US ammonia imports do not primarily route through the Strait of Hormuz, the closure constricts global supply, driving up prices that US markets cannot escape. The US will feel the economic impact of rising input costs on multiple fronts.

When the cost of producing crops increases, farmers and food processors will pass those expenses through the supply chain, directly increasing the final price consumers pay for goods. Farmers may also be less incentivised to grow nitrogen-intensive crops, such as corn. This could also have cost implications for livestock feed, and thus meat and dairy products for consumers. Disrupted fertiliser supply chains hold important geopolitical consequences. It is anticipated that the Islamabad dialogue between Iran and the US would be instrumental in resolving key issues to herald an enduring peace in the Middle East.

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New Education Policy Under Scrutiny

Mahabir Paudyal



One of the agenda items in the 100-point governance reform work plan, the point also reiterated in the 'national commitment' paper unveiled on March 14 by the government, relates to keeping schools and colleges free from political-party interference. Partisanisation and politicisation are two different, though not mutually exclusive, concepts. Nepal's public institutions have suffered because of partisan politics, with the members of these institutions becoming loyal to certain political parties and allowing them to influence, interfere and even dictate policies and practices and using that loyalty to commit dereliction of duty with abandon. We tend to mistake the first for the second and vice versa.

Departisanising, not depoliticisation, is what would work well for educational institutions because they are also the platforms for political debates, where students become politically aware and develop their preferences or convictions for political ideologies and faiths. This issue calls for a separate discussion. This article aims to analyse some new policies introduced by the government for school education reforms and their possible impacts on the learning outcomes of students. First, the government has decided to scrap internal exams for students up to grade five. Yes, there are countries like Finland, Norway and the UK which do not give periodic exams to kids, even those in higher grades than five.

Formative assessment

Doing away with exams is often justified because it frees students from the exam burden, stress, and fear of failure. Thus, one could argue that students should not be subjected to standardised exams until the last year of high school (like in Finland). One will find merits and demerits of giving exams, rigorous follow-up on homework, and strong disciplinary rules for kids. It's largely a question of which side you want to stand on. For example, a 2024 research paper entitled "The Role of Formative and Summative Assessment in Improving Learning Quality and Student Learning Outcomes" by Riska Mustamin, published in "Journal of Strategy and Transformation in Educational Management," shows that both formative and summative assessments are important to achieve the learning goals of the students.

The Nepali school education system has been following periodic examinations as a tool to assess and evaluate the learning of students and to track their progress or lack thereof. It is a reliable means for the teachers to understand how well, or not well, their students are understanding the lessons, identify their weaknesses, and plan remedial measures. How well removing internal exams will work in Nepal is yet to be seen, but exams, in the Nepali context, are believed to encourage students to study consistently. In Nepal, learning needs of students vary based on geography, type of school (private or government funded), and the availability (or lack of) trained teachers. The majority of schools, both private and government-funded, give tests that motivate students to do homework and study the lessons properly. In other words, exams are thought to keep students engaged with studies.

The second issue is related to the Secondary Education Examination (SEE). Whether the SEE should be scrapped for once and all or should be entrusted to the concerned school has been a matter of debate. But the kind of technique the government adopted this year to ensure publication of SEE results within a month was beset with loopholes. The government asked the respective SEE exam centres to evaluate the papers of SEE students. This has had two unintended results. First, the teachers knew whose papers they were evaluating. Second, more so in places outside of Kathmandu, parents knew who was evaluating their wards' papers, making it easier for them to influence the teachers to grade their wards generously. Teachers jokingly say this year nearly every SEE student is going to get a 4 GPA. Only if the coding system had been implemented, this situation would have been partly corrected.

> The government has unveiled new policies for school education reforms. Will they contribute to achieving better learning outcomes for students?

The third decision is related to running schools five days a week (Monday through Friday). This will drastically reduce the number of teaching days in schools in a country that already has too many public holidays. Having kids stay at home for two days a week is bothersome for most parents, as it raises the risks of kids using screen time even more. Besides, unless the curriculum content and credit hours are significantly reduced, it is going to make it difficult for schools to manage the academic calendar.

Look before you leap

When it comes to pedagogy, there is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach. Students have different aptitudes and learning abilities—low, medium and high. While some learn by memorisation, others learn better if they are given creative tasks, a little bit of persuasion, some kind words, and encouraging remarks work well with others. Some others have to be forced, or even chastised, to get the tasks done. What works best with one type may prove to be useless with others.

The education ministry must have looked into different aspects and assessed the weaknesses and strengths of the existing system before devising the new policies they are trying to implement. There is no doubt that we need a robust school system that allows children to learn with fun and achieve desired outcomes. For that, we have to lay down the basic infrastructure–revising the curriculum, investing in teacher education, providing schools with required resources and materials, among many other things. School education is a tripartite collaboration. Students follow the guidelines of teachers, parents rely on teachers for learning outcomes of their children and expect schools to keep the students engaged in studies. Teachers rely on policies formulated by the government. A policy, however progressive and impressive in paper, will amount to nothing if it does not align with the ground realities and contribute to visible, measurable learning outcomes of the students.

(The author is a journalist and educator based in Kathmandu.)

50 YEARS AGO

THE RISING NEPAL

April 16, 1976

Afforestation Programme In Ilam

Ilam, April 15: Nearly fifty per cent of the work have been finished on the establishment of a nursery over two acres land at Manebhanjyang in Ilam, reports RSS.

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READER'S MAIL

Follow Lalitpur's Example



This is about the news report titled *"LMC brings 11 electric waste collection vans into operation,"* carried by this daily on April 15. According to the report, the Lalitpur Metropolitan City has adopted electric waste-collection vans as part of its policy to make the city fossil fuel-free.

The mayor of the city, Chiri Babu Maharjan, has said that the city would avoid using petrol and diesel whenever and wherever possible. This commendable step should incentivise other cities to follow suit. The skyrocketing fuel prices in recent months have given a pinch to nearly all households that rely on imported petroleum products to fulfil a range of necessities, from cooking to transportation. For a poor country like ours, this is indeed an unsustainable strain on our finances.

Given this context, what better time to ditch fossil-fuel powered vehicles in favour of electric vehicles (EVs)! Other cities need to follow the LMC's lead and embrace EVs if they really care for the health of their citizens as well as the environment.

Nikeesa Neupane Dang

TAILPIECE

A middle-aged guy is out to dinner with his wife to celebrate her fortieth birthday. He says, "So what would you like, Julie? A Jaguar? A sable coat? A diamond necklace?" Joke Submission Platform

She says, "Bernie, I want a divorce."

"My goodness," he says, "I wasn't planning on spending that much."

+++

Donald is walking out of the White House and heading toward his limo, when a possible assassin steps forward and aims a gun. A secret service agent, new on the job, shouts 'Mickey Mouse!' This startles the would-be assassin and he is captured. Later, the secret service agent's supervisor takes him aside and asks, 'What in the hell made you shout Mickey Mouse?' Blushing, the agent replies, 'I got nervous. I meant to shout 'Donald, duck!'

250 missing in Andaman boat capsize

AP
Dhaka, Apr. 15

At least 250 people, including Rohingya refugees and Bangladeshi nationals, were missing after a boat capsized in the Andaman Sea recently on the way to Malaysia, according to the U.N. refugee and migration agencies.

While details remained sketchy, Bangladesh Coast Guard spokesperson Lt. Cmdr. Sabbir Alam Suzan told The Associated Press on Wednesday that nine people, including three Rohingya and six Bangladeshis, were rescued on April 9.

Suzan said that the Bangladesh flag carrier M.T. Meghna Pride rescued the nine people when the crew found them floating at sea after the capsizing. The status of any search on Wednesday or when the boat sank weren't immediately clear.

UNHCR, the U.N. refugee agency, and the International Organization for Migration, or IOM, said in a joint statement on Tuesday that the trawler departed from Teknaf in the southern Bangladeshi district of Cox's Bazar carrying a large number of passengers to Malaysia.

Overcrowding, strong winds and rough seas caused the vessel to lose control and sink, the agencies said. Shari Nijman, a UNHCR communication officer in Cox's Bazar, said Wednesday that the agency had no other updates.

Another coast guard media official told the AP by phone Wednesday that the rescued people, eight men and one woman, were all safe, after being handed over to the coast guard, which brought them to the police in Teknaf.

The official said that the rescue wasn't part of any official search operation, because the area is outside Bangladeshi territory, and that the crew of the M.T. Meghna Pride saved the people while it was on its way to Indonesia from Bangladesh's Chittagong.



File Photo: AP
Fishing boats sit on a beach in Teknaf, Bangladesh.

The official spoke by phone on condition of anonymity in line with official policy. UNHCR and IOM said that the disappearance reflected the protracted displacement of Rohingya people and the absence of durable solutions.

They said that ongoing violence in Myanmar's Rakhine state has made the Rohingya's safe return to Myanmar uncertain, while limited humanitarian assistance, as well as restricted access to education and employment in refugee camps, continue to push vulnerable Rohingya refugees to choose risky sea journeys, often based on false promises of higher wages and better opportunities abroad.

UNHCR and IOM urged the international community to strengthen funding and solidarity to ensure lifesaving assistance for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, which has sheltered more than 1 million Rohingya from Myanmar.

Xi, Lavrov talk on energy security

AFP
Beijing, Apr. 15

China's President Xi Jinping met with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on Wednesday, Chinese state media said, as a string of leaders of countries impacted by the Middle East war flock to Beijing.

Lavrov joins Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and Vietnamese leader To Lam in meeting with Xi this week. The Russian diplomat told a news conference after meeting Xi that Moscow could "compensate" for China's energy shortages as shipping through the Strait of Hormuz remains choked by the Iran war.

Xi, meanwhile, has sought to position China as a mediator and stable partner in the face of the US- and Israeli-led conflict. Xi told Abu Dhabi's crown prince on Tuesday that China would play a "constructive role" in promoting peace talks in the Middle East.

In talks with Spain's Sanchez, Xi warned that the world was facing "chaos and turmoil" and "a contest between justice and force", urging closer cooperation. The Spanish prime minister, meanwhile, welcomed China's role in seeking to resolve the conflict in the Middle East.

Though the level of diplomatic activity is normal for Beijing, the Middle East war and particularly the issue of energy security have taken on new urgency in diplomatic discussions, according to Dylan Loh, associate professor at Singapore's Nanyang Technological University.

"China has got leverage and influence over Iran, and there are some hopes and expectations that China can use this influence in a more direct way," Loh said. Countries, particularly in the Gulf, could be hoping China can pressure Iran to stop its attacks on Gulf countries and to persist with diplomatic negotiations, he said.



Photo: AFP
Chinese President Xi Jinping meets Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in Beijing.

The string of visitors "demonstrates that various actors are adjusting to the realities of an uncertain world. Engaging with the PRC, including over areas of difference, is part of this adjustment", according to Ja Ian Chong, a political scientist at the National University of Singapore.

While many visits were likely planned before the Middle East crisis, those from Gulf countries' representatives and Lavrov "seem more of a direct result of the conflict and the desire to de-escalate", Chong said. Lavrov, who is on a two-day visit to China to boost bilateral ties, said Russia could help China with energy resources following the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz.

China is a net importer of oil and has seen prices for petrol, plastics, and fertilisers spike due to the war. "Russia can, without doubt, compensate for the shortfall in resources that has arisen both for the PRC and for other countries that are interested in working with us", Lavrov said during a news conference in Beijing, Russian state media reported Wednesday.

Afghans comb riverbed in search of gold dust

AFP
Ghaziabad, Apr. 15

In the jagged Hindu Kush in eastern Afghanistan, hundreds of men dug into the rocky bed of the Kunar River searching for a few grams of gold dust as an alternative source of income.

At the foot of imposing peaks, some still covered in snow in April, they toiled near the border with Pakistan to find the valuable glinting specks in a country where wages are low. Below a village of mud-brick houses and small terraced wheat plots in Kharwalu, Kunar province, they dug into a dry section of the riverbed before sifting through their piles of rocks using river water.

Fifty-year-old Shahzahdah Gollalah was among the gold prospectors, having abandoned construction work a seven-hour drive from his home in Kabul. "There are not many job opportunities in the country, and in this way, we have created work for ourselves," said the father of eight.

But "the gold nuggets we find are usually smaller than a grain of wheat," he added. Downstream, in Ghaziabad, hundreds of men hacked into the mountain with picks, then carried a sack down on their backs along a steep slope and emptied it onto a sieve to filter gold from the sand.

Others scooped river water into yellow jerrycans attached to long wooden handles, pouring it over the sieve so that the smaller stones, which may contain gold flakes, slid down onto a mat. A nugget would sometimes appear in a metal pan after two further rounds of sifting.

Gul Ahmad Jan, 35, said he can earn a substantial amount in just a week. "We can get up to about one gram of gold," which can fetch up to 8,000 Afghanis ($125), he told AFP. Afghanistan's resources were rarely exploited during years of conflict, although a Kunar official said gold panning has happened there for more than a decade.

Najibullah Hanif, the province's information chief, said residents learnt the techniques from miners who arrived from gold-rich provinces. "Some started to dig with machines, an excavator; some locals came and asked the Islamic Emirate (of Afghanistan) to stop them because it destroys the river and the mountains," said Hanafi.

He estimated thousands of people in Kunar were gold panning, using the traditional method allowed by the authorities. Afghanistan's resources have attracted domestic and international investors in recent years, with the Taliban authorities promoting mining in various parts of the country.

Indonesia, France to boost bilateral defence ties

AFP
Jakarta, Apr. 15

Indonesia, fresh off concluding a defence pact with Washington and an oil deal with Russia, has also agreed to boost defence industry cooperation with France, Jakarta said Wednesday after the countries' presidents met in Paris.

President Prabowo Subianto was hosted by counterpart Emmanuel Macron at the Elysee Palace Tuesday, where they "discussed strengthening strategic cooperation," a statement from the government said.

"This includes the procurement of defence equipment and the strengthening of the defence industry," it said, citing France as a strategic partner for Indonesia in Europe. The leaders also agreed on cooperation in "energy transition and the development of new and renewable energy", it said. Prabowo met Putin at the Kremlin on Monday, flying directly from the Russian capital to Paris.

With Putin, he had discussed "strengthening their strategic partnership, particularly in the sectors of energy, mineral resources, and national industrial development", according to Cabinet Secretary Teddy Indra Wijaya.



Photo: AFP
France's President Emmanuel Macron (left) welcomes Indonesia's President Prabowo Subianto prior to their meeting at the Elysee Presidential Palace in Paris.

Prabowo, who recently travelled to South Korea and Japan, has justified his slew of foreign visits. "Brothers and sisters, it's to secure oil, I have to go everywhere," he said in an address to his cabinet this month. Like many nations, Indonesia has come under pressure from soaring global oil prices over the war in the Middle East.

Jakarta, while defending a non-aligned diplomatic posture, last year joined the BRICS bloc of emerging economies that includes Russia and US-rival China. Prabowo has also signed a trade deal with US President Donald Trump and joined his so-called "Board of Peace", although has insisted his country would not pay the $1 billion joining fee for permanent membership.

Indonesia is a major arms buyer from France, with then-Defence Minister Prabowo inking a $8.1-billion deal in 2022 to purchase 42 French-made Rafale jets. Prabowo, a former military general who was elected president in 2024, has sought to modernise Indonesia's ageing military assets.

PRISM

Lottery luck inspires $500,000 ticket purchase

Maryland: A Maryland man said a locally-won $1 million lottery prize inspired him to buy a ticket from the same location -- and he won $500,000.

The Anne Arundel County man told Maryland Lottery officials he and his wife arrived at the Walmart in Severn last month and he remembered the store had recently sold a scratch-off ticket that scored a $1 million prize.

The couple decided to try their own luck at the lottery vending machine. "I had $40 in my purse so we decided to each pick out a $20 scratch ticket," the man's wife said.The wife's ticket was a non-winner, but the man's Gifts of Green scratch-off scored a $500,000 windfall. The couple said it took them about 30 minutes before they felt calm enough to drive home.

Australian man becomes world's oldest grandfather

Australia: An Australian man was certified by Guinness World Records as the oldest first-time grandfather at the age of 91.

The record-keeping organization said Charles Smith was 91 years and 209 days old when his granddaughter, Isla, was born to his son, Ashley, and daughter-in-law, Hanna. Smith, who was 55 when Ashley was born, said he and Isla formed a fast bond."All I can say is I picked her up and didn't want to give her back. Except for the nappy changes," Smith told Guinness World Records. Ashley Smith said his father is impressive in more ways than just being a Guinness World Record-holder.

"The most impressive thing about my dad is his independence," he said. "He lives a great retirement, traveling around Australia in his camper van and heading out on the boat around Moreton Bay.

Agencies

TODAY IN HISTORY

1746 – The Battle of Culloden is fought between the French-supported Jacobites and the British Hanoverian forces commanded by William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland, in Scotland.
1780 – Franz Friedrich Wilhelm von Fürstenberg founds the University of Münster.
1797 – The Spithead mutiny begins, immobilising the Channel fleet.
1799 – French Revolutionary Wars: The Battle of Mount Tabor: Napoleon drives Ottoman Turks across the River Jordan near Acre.
1818 – The United States Senate ratifies the Rush–Bagot Treaty, limiting naval armaments on the Great Lakes and Lake Champlain.

US farmers hit as fertiliser costs surge

AFP
United States, Apr. 15

On Andy Corriher's farm in North Carolina, planting and preparations are underway for his corn and soybean crops -- but fertilizer costs have surged on war in the Middle East, and orders he placed weeks ago have yet to arrive.

The 47-year-old is among US farmers facing a double whammy of soaring fertilizer and diesel prices after US-Israeli strikes on Iran triggered Tehran's blockage of the Strait of Hormuz, a critical waterway for such shipments. "This time of year is when the majority of fertilizer is put out in this country," Corriher told AFP.

"We got hit at the worst possible time, because we're trying to buy fertilizer when it skyrockets and when the supply also gets cut." The cost hikes strike at a major support base for President Donald Trump, who won 78 percent of the 2024 vote in farming-dependent counties, said news service Investigate Midwest. Trump blamed "price gouging from the fertilizer monopoly" on Saturday, vowing: "American Farmers, we have your back!"



Photo: AFP
Andy Corriher examines his crops during spring planting season.

But spring planting is already ongoing, with Corriher loading bags of dry fertilizer onto a tractor, hauling them to his fields. Russell Hedrick, a farmer in North Carolina, prepares a fertilizer blend to be sprayed on his fields as they are being seeded. "I've ordered several loads of liquid nitrogen a few weeks ago, and they're still saying they're not sure when it'll be delivered," Corriher said.

Since the war, Corriher estimates that the nitrogen fertilizer he uses rose by at least 40 percent in price. The cost of urea -- a common nitrogen-based fertilizer -- had jumped by around 50 percent at the port of New Orleans. Corriher has reduced usage by a third, a decision he worries might hurt his yields.

Russell Hedrick, who farms up to 1,000 acres including corn and soybeans around Hickory, North Carolina, said around 75 percent of his fertilizer purchases were made after prices rocketed.

Like himself, many US farmers lack storage to stock up far ahead of planting, the 40-year-old told AFP, after blending fertilizers and nutrients to be sprayed on his fields. He has cut fertilizer use to the "bare minimum," with an option to add more later.

Even before the war, rising costs meant "farmers have essentially become like Breaking Bad chemists with fertilizer, to get the most out of it," he said. Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins said 80 percent of American farmers had bought fertilizer for the spring planting season before the conflict. But that's cold comfort to those who lacked funds and capacity to do so.

Those remarks were "a gut shot," said Marshville-based farmer Derrick Austin. Austin, 55, called his supplier upon learning of the strait's blockage, knowing that costs would jump. "Thankfully, he let me buy three loads of nitrogen at the old price per ton so I could at least fertilize my wheat crop," he said. "It was devastating."

Fertilizer supply has diminished before, like in 2021 when China restricted phosphate exports to prioritize domestic needs. Usually, farmers can see that coming, Hedrick said. "This year, we just kind of got blindsided."

Corriher said he has been a supporter of Trump, but added of the war: "It didn't seem like we had really thought out all the consequences to the American people."

"I feel like these things were kind of overlooked as part of collateral damage," he said. The surge in gas and diesel prices have hit farmers and other American households: "Everybody seems to be suffering." Asked if the war has changed perceptions of Trump, Austin said: "I'm starting to question some of his reasoning."

But to him, the Trump administration "still beats some of the alternatives." He said if the conflict's resolution brings "long-term peace" and a reopened Strait of Hormuz, "that's all I can hope for." The US agriculture economy has "been in a recession for the last couple of years," said Iowa State University professor Chad Hart.

IRAN COURT ORDERS TO RELEASE AMRIT JHA

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 15

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) informed that the local court in Tehran of Iran has issued an order for the release of Nepali citizen Amrit Jha, who was arrested in Iran.

According to the Ministry, it received informal information about the release through the Honorary Consul General of Nepal in Tehran.

It further said in a statement on Wednesday evening that efforts are ongoing through the Honorary Consul General in Tehran and the Embassy of Nepal in Doha to obtain detailed information about the order and to facilitate the completion of necessary procedures for Jha's return to Nepal.

Likewise, the government also expressed its appreciation to the Government of the United Arab Emirates for granting pardon to 128 Nepali inmates.

The UAE government granted pardon to them on the occasion of the Holy Month of Ramadan.

"The Ministry highly values this kind gesture of pardon on the basis of humanitarian ground as a demonstration of cordiality in the bilateral relations between Nepal and the UAE," read a statement from the Ministry.

According to it, the decision of pardon was taken following the request of the Government of Nepal made through the Embassy of Nepal in Abu Dhabi, UAE.



PHOTO: RSS

Domestic tourists enjoying the scenic beauty of Beldhunga, situated at an altitude of 2,614 metres above sea level, on the border of Beni Municipality-3 of Myagdi and Kathekhola Rural Municipality-3 of Baglung district.

Communication Ministry issues code of conduct

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 15

The Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (MoCIT) has issued a-nine-point code of conduct for employees working under or within its subordinate agencies.

The Ministry released the directive on Wednesday, introducing nine key provisions aimed at strengthening professional discipline and administrative efficiency.

According to Joint Secretary Subash Chandra Siwakoti of the Administration and Planning Division, the new arrangement will make staff more accountable in carrying out their assigned responsibilities promptly and efficiently.

According to the conduct, all employees are required to fully comply with the conduct, rules, and statutory obligations set out in the Constitution and prevailing laws and policies.

The staff members must report to office regularly at government-designated hours and are expected not to remain absent without prior approval of leave, wherever possible.

The directive also requires adherence to an official dress code while at work or when representing the office externally. Employees must visibly display their identity cards at all times within the workplace, according to Shiwakoti.

Employees are expected to complete tasks assigned to their desk or system, preferably on the same day or, at the latest, by the following day. In cases of ambiguity or anticipated delay, the respective supervisor must be informed promptly.

Any employee initiating a note, correspondence, or decision is required to ensure proper tracking and follow-up, while keeping their supervisor duly informed of progress.

The staff are expected to remain consistently committed to performing their assigned duties in a prompt, efficient, complete, and high-quality manner.

Priority in service delivery is to be given to elderly persons, individuals with disabilities, pregnant and postpartum women, children, and other vulnerable or disadvantaged groups.

Employees are instructed to maintain cleanliness within office premises and their respective workspaces.

The directive further emphasises the judicious and effective use of public resources.

The Ministry has also obtained formal commitment from all concerned employees regarding adherence to the newly issued code of conduct.

SUBEDI APPOINTED TRN'S ACTING MANAGING EDITOR

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 15

Ritu Raj Subedi has been appointed as the Acting Managing Editor of The Rising Nepal, the English-language daily of Gorkhapatra Corporation, effective from April 16 until further arrangements are made. Subedi, who is an Executive Editor at Level 10, has been working as the head of the Features Section of the daily.



Born in Kamalamai Municipality-10 of Sindhuli on October 21, 1971, Subedi did his Master's in English literature from Tribhuvan University in 1995. He started his journalism career from Naya Pailo, a provincial weekly from Janakpur in 1991. He took basic journalism training conducted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka in 2003.

He participated in the South Asian Journalist Fellowship and the Korean Press Foundation Fellowship in Seoul in 2006. Subedi has attended and covered various international events, including WTO Summits held in Geneva and Hong Kong. He has been a columnist of this daily for more than one-and-a-half decades.

NC seeks clarification from Khadka

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 15

The Nepali Congress Central Disciplinary Committee has decided to seek clarification from former vice-president Purna Bahadur Khadka over the alleged unauthorised use of party letterheads and issuance of statements contrary to the party statute.

A meeting of the committee, held at the party's central office, B.P. Smriti Bhawan in Lalitpur under the coordination of Taraman Gurung, concluded that Khadka had issued a press release despite prior warning from the disciplinary body.

The committee stated that Khadka had earlier been cautioned for circulating statements using a fake party letterhead and claiming responsibility within the party without authorisation. However, he is accused of repeating the act on January 14, which the committee said violates the party's statute.

Citing provisions under Article 34, Clause 8(d) of the Nepali Congress Statute 2017 (with amendments), the committee has directed Khadka to furnish a written clarification within seven days. The committee noted that failure to comply or provide satisfactory explanation could lead to further disciplinary action.

In a separate decision, the committee extended the deadline for lodging complaints related to violations of party discipline during the House of Representatives elections. The new deadline has been set for April end, replacing the earlier cut-off of mid-March 2026. The committee also clarified



that complaints received after the revised deadline will not be entertained.

Meanwhile, the Nepali Congress Central Work Performance Committee has taken a series of organisational decisions at a meeting held on Wednesday, in Lalitpur under the chairmanship of party president Gagan Kumar Thapa.

During the meeting, General Secretary Gururaj Ghimire presented proposals, while members discussed a report prepared by a committee led by Yadunath Khanal reviewing findings of an inquiry commission headed by Gauri Bahadur Karki.

The meeting approved the formation of several key bodies, including the Central Policy, Research and Training Institute under Bishwo Prakash Sharma and the Election Bureau led by Pushpa Bhusal. Other committees on membership management, organisational coordination and inter-party dialogue were also constituted.

The committee endorsed a new Public Programme Operation Procedure, set to take effect from mid-May, and authorised Thapa to lead efforts to strengthen party unity and ensure the timely completion of the 15th General Convention.

Stakeholders concerned about keeping autistic children in residential schools

BY RAMAN PAUDEL
Kathmandu, Apr. 15

Researchers, stakeholders, including rights activists, have argued that the recent decision to construct autism residential schools made by the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology would segregate children with disabilities from inclusive education.

They also argued that such a decision violated the constitution and the UNCRPD, a disability rights document recognized by the UN.

Organising a dialogue between researchers, rights activists, and other stakeholders, concerns were raised about the impact on students' learning and development due to hostels established in the name of resource classes.

Lakpa Sherpa, hailing from Solukhumbu, who is one of the parents of children with disabilities, said that the government's new announcement to operate separate residential schools for autistic children will ultimately have a serious impact on the development of disabled children.

"We want our children to have the opportunity to receive quality education and other facilities within the family. If we keep our children in hostels for years in the name of special classes, they will reach a point where they may not be able to do anything on their own in the future. Also it will be very difficult to reunite them with their families. Separating children from their families means increasing conflict in the family in the future," said Sherpa.

During the programme, Dhruba Niure, TU Professor, presented his comprehensive research on children with disabilities in several hostels. His research has revealed some serious facts, raising a big question about the government policy.

Presenting the research, Prof. Niure revealed some serious conditions in hostels. The research shows several cases of suicides, sexual harassment, and mental health issues happening.

"Children who are separated from their families and live in resource centres for years are at risk of sexual abuse, suicide attempts, and mental health problems," said Prof. Niure.

"Compared to children living in families, children living in resource classes are 10 times more likely to engage in prostitution, 40 times more likely to engage in criminal activity, and 500 times more likely to attempt suicide," the research stated.

The research showed that most parents choose institutional care for their children with disabilities due to the lack of appropriate educational services in the community. Similarly, the parents prefer to keep their children with their families in areas where health and education facilities are available at the local level. According to the research, the parents agree that their children with disabilities would be better cared for within their families rather than in residential schools.

The research also stated that most services offered by the local governments are limited to providing disability ID cards and social security allowances. Many residential classes have been violating the law. Most children living in residential resource classes are alienated from their families, meeting them only once or twice a year.

"The major goal of the residential classes was not to alienate the children from their families. Rather, it was to train specific skills in a short period and to reintegrate into the mainstream classes. However, the reality turned out to be different, as the huge amount of money invested in most residential classes has been misused," said Prof. Niure.

Shiva Acharya, an international human rights expert, remarked that the principles of inclusive education have not yet been truly implemented.

"Some policies state that children should not be separated from their families for the sake of education, while others include provisions allowing for such separations. This creates a contradiction among policymakers. However, the UNCRPD clearly asserts that all individuals, including persons with disabilities, have the right to choose their opportunities," said Shiva Acharya.

Acharya emphasized that every child with a disability should be treated according to a rights-based approach rather than a welfare-based approach.

"There are five fundamental indicators for assessing the rights of children with disabilities, such as Availability, Accessibility, Acceptability, Adaptability, and Affordability," said Acharya.

Some officials at the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology stated that the government aims to assess children with disabilities to provide them with special skills within the mainstream schools.

Speaking with The Rising Nepal, Bir Bahadur Dhami, Under Secretary at the Ministry, informed that a technical team, formed by new minister Sashmit Pokharel, is currently working on it and will submit a report next week.

Dhami added that the initial discussions on operating special classes for children with autism focused on inclusivity rather than segregation.

"A committee has been established under the leadership of Joint Secretary Roshan Shrestha, which will submit its report to the ministry next week. Based on suggestions received from various sources, preparations are underway to facilitate the learning process for autistic children. This will involve providing special training and therapy in the remaining schools to reintegrate these children into mainstream classes," said Dhami.

Commission formed to investigate...

A separate committee has also been formed under former High Court Judge Prem Raj Karki to review the implementation of a report submitted by a commission investigating the incidents of September 8 and 9 only related to security bodies.

The committee will assess security arrangements and make recommendations, with former Armed Police Force Additional Inspector General Subodh Adhikari and former Nepal Police Additional Inspector General Tek Prasad Rai as members.

Speaking after the Cabinet meeting, Minister Pokharel stated that most ministers have already disclosed the sources of their assets and reiterated that all individuals who held major political positions since 2005/06 would come under asset scrutiny.

He emphasised that the current government has prioritised transparency and accountability, adding that the commission has been formed to ensure a comprehensive investigation of assets held by all senior political officeholders since that period.

First International Wellness Day observed...

He also said that Nepal has a strong potential to become a major destination for wellness tourism. "We have mountains, culture, spiritual traditions and natural resources. Now we must focus on quality tourism rather than numbers and position Nepal as a destination offering high value and meaningful experiences," he added.

Minister Paudel stressed that wellness should be connected to lifestyle, saying Nepal can offer new guidance to the world.

"Wellness is not about escaping from life's rush, but about returning within oneself. It is the art of understanding the silence of the soul," he said.

Citing World Health Organization data, Minister Poudel said more than one billion people globally suffer from mental stress, making wellness highly relevant today. "People have everything, but lack a moment of peace. Nepal can offer the peace the world is searching for," he added.

According to him, the government has adopted a policy to develop wellness tourism as a form of soft power. "The government's 100-point action plan aims to make Nepal a global hub for wellness tourism, and 2027 has been declared Wellness Year accordingly," he said.

The government aims to link wellness tourism with sustainable development, cultural preservation and local prosperity. Minister Poudel said Nepal will be promoted not only as a travel destination but also as a place for self-discovery and inner peace.

Life science expert LP Bhanu Sharma stressed the need for long-term structures to promote wellness. "Ownership must come before leadership. There are three stages of wellness and more than five million people in Nepal are engaged in self-awareness meditation," he said.

He also suggested forming a high-level commission, developing wellness circuits, and introducing wellness visas and long-term stay policies to promote the sector.

The event began with mantra chanting by Buddhist nun and singer Ani Choying Dolma, followed by meditation and yoga sessions.

Representatives from the Spa Association also shared insights on healing practices. Meditation and yoga programmes, a wellness tourism strategy and a logo were also unveiled at the event.

The United Nations General Assembly had officially recognised April 15 as International Wellness Day following a proposal by the Government of Nepal. This year marks the first global observance of the day.

Meanwhile, The Embassy of Nepal, Dhaka, organised a 'Wellness Walk' programme this morning in Dhaka to mark International Wellness Day-2026.

The event, aimed at raising awareness of the Wellness Day and promoting the importance of balance and harmony within ourselves and with nature, was held under the theme 'Harmony with Mind, Body, and Nature'. It featured a 45-minute walk, followed by a brief formal session and a Nepali 'wellness breakfast' said a press statement issued by the Embassy on Wednesday.

Speaking during the formal session, Ambassador Ghanshyam Bhandari underscored the relevance of wellness in today's world, marked by multiple challenges, including wars and armed conflicts, economic inequality, social fragmentation, and the escalating climate crisis. Highlighting wellness practices as living heritage deeply rooted in Nepal's history and civilization, he shed light on centuries-old Hindu, Buddhist, yogic, and indigenous practices that embrace self-discipline, ethical living, and harmony with nature.

Similarly, the Embassy of Nepal in Seoul organised a hiking programme at Namsan Mountain Park on Wendesday to mark the first International Wellness Day, said a press statement issued by the Embassy.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Shiva Maya Tumbahamphe stressed the importance of maintaining physical and mental health in today's fast-paced world. She said that due to growing professional responsibilities, individuals often fail to give due attention to their physical and mental wellbeing.

At the same time, Consulate General of Nepal in Guangzhou hosted a special event marking International Wellness Day 2026 under the theme "Holistic Wellness for All" in Guangzhou. The event aimed to promote accessible, inclusive wellness practices that nurture the rind, body, and spirit, aligning with the United Nations' recognition of the day.

Similarly, the first International Arogya Day was observed in Kapilvastu through yoga and meditation. The event was organised by the Kapilvastu Ayurvedic Health Centre under the slogan, "Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah, Sarve Santu Niramayah" (May all be happy, may all be free from illness). Participants marked the day by practising yoga and meditation.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief District Officer Janardan Gautam said the importance of yoga and Ayurveda in promoting a healthy lifestyle is increasing day by day. He noted that regular practice of yoga and meditation has positive effects on both physical and mental health and expressed confidence that such programmes help raise public awareness.

Sindoor Jatra celebrated in Madhyapur Thimi



PHOTO: SUJAN GURUNG

The famous Sindoor Jatra of Madhyapur Thimi, showing palanquins being brought from different localities to the Balkumari Temple premises.

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 15

Residents of Madhyapur Thimi joyously celebrated Sindoor Jatra on Wednesday. The festival is observed annually by the Newar community in Madhyapur Thimi on Baisakh 2.

The famous Sindoor Jatra, also known as Suthasiyu (Morning Jatra), was celebrated with great enthusiasm in Madhyapur Thimi, Bhaktapur, from early morning. Residents painted the idols of neighborhood deities with vermilion and carried them around the city.

As per tradition, the festival is marked by people smearing vermilion powder (sindoor) on one another, accompanied by singing and dancing to the tunes of traditional Newari music.

Sindoor Jatra is one of the biggest festivals for the people of Madhyapur Thimi and also marks the arrival of spring.

The vibrant celebration involves carrying idols of various deities through the city while participants smear vermilion powder on each other.

There is a tradition of circumambulating the city with 32 palanquins carrying idols of different deities. Of these, 23 palanquins are brought from Thimi and nine from Nagadesh, Bode, and Tigani.

However, in recent years, the Jatra has been held with 26 palanquins. In the procession that began in the morning, 26 idols of deities were brought to the premises of the Balkumari Temple, where they performed a circumambulation.

The red hue of vermilion and the sound of musical instruments made the Madhyapur Thimi area appear vibrant and festive. From local youth to the elderly, everyone participated in the celebration dressed in traditional attire.

In the ancient municipality of Madhyapur, the Newar community of Thimi has its own spectacular way of celebrating the festival.

Today, 26 palanquins were carried by men, while the music of dhime (a traditional Newari drum) and other instruments filled the air.

The processions converged in front of the town's Balkumari Temple for the final ceremony.

Folk singer Pariyar honoured



BY NABINRAJ KUINKEL
Lamjung, Apr. 15

During the ninth Smart Village Invitational Gold Cup- 2026 and a series of cultural programmes held in Ghalegaun, recognised as a model tourist village of SAARC nations, four individuals, including folk singer Raju Pariyar, were honoured.

Khwolasothar Rural Municipality honoured Pariyar, also known as 'Lok Swar Samrat', at a function held at Swargabhumi Stadium in Ghalegaun in recognition of his contributions to Nepali folk music.

Former minister for communications and vice chairman of CPN-UML, Prithvi Subba Gurung, Rural Municipality Chairman Surya Prasad Gurung, and Vice Chairman Gami Maya Gurung presented him with a certificate of appreciation and a traditional blanket (radi). Chairman of the Tourism Management Committee of Smart Village Ghalegaun, Prem Bahadur Ghale, felicitated him with a traditional bakkhu, while the Aama Samuha presented him with a ceremonial shawl.

Similarly, Laxmi Ghale, a resident of Ghalegaun working at Radio Marsyangdi, was also honoured for her contribution to promoting tourism in Ghalegaun through the media. Former minister Gurung, Committee chairman Ghale, and Rural Municipality Chairman Gurung, presented her certificates.

At the same event, Kebindra Jung Gurung of Ghanpokhara of Marsyangdi Rural Municipality-2, was honoured for his leadership role in initiating football competitions in the Dashthar region for the first time. About four decades ago, under his leadership, a football tournament was organised at the present Swargabhumi Stadium, then known as 'Nasarkon Bazaar.' A former British Army serviceman, he also pledged to contribute Rs. 50,000 annually to support this event in Ghalegaun.

Late Tej Bahadur Gurung was posthumously honoured for his pioneering role in launching the football tournament by contributing Rs. 50,000 at the time. His son, Devendra Gurung, received the certificate and 'bakkhu' on his behalf, informed Umal Bahadur Bik, Secretary of the Tourism Management Committee of Smart Village Ghalegaun.

The event also featured musical performances by singers Pariyar, Kesh Bahadur Gurung, Anuj Adhikari, and female artists Madhu Thapa Magar, Usha Gurung, and Priya Gurung, among others.

Literature: 'Mirror to society'

BY AMAR RAJ NAHARKI
Tanahun, Apr. 15



The Gandaki Literary Foundation Tanahun has honoured two distinguished littérateurs for their outstanding contributions to literature, language and culture. The awards were presented on Wednesday in Damauli under the motto, 'Promotion of language, literature, and culture; literary awakening is our mission.'

This year, the Foundation honoured literary scholar and theorist Prof. Dr. Nirmal Mani Adhikari with the 'Gandaki Literary Award-2026' and also presented a special honour to poet, lyricist, and former chairperson of the Foundation, Sagar Udas. Prof. Dr. Adhikari received the Gandaki Literary Award along with a cash prize of Rs. 10,000. Mayor of Byas Municipality, Baikuntha Neupane, Foundation Chairman Gau Kumari Neupane, and senior literary figure Kashinath Neupane jointly presented the certificate of appreciation and draped him with a ceremonial shawl.

Addressing the programme, Chief Guest and Mayor of Byas Municipality, Neupane, stated that honouring littérateurs is, in fact, honouring society. He said, "Literature and art are mirrors of society. The Gandaki Literary Foundation's initiative to promote literary awakening at the beginning of the New Year by recognising creators is highly commendable." Foundation Chairman Neupane said that the organisation had long played an active role in sustaining literary activities in Tanahun, as well as preserving and promoting local talents.

Upon receiving the honour, Prof. Dr. Adhikari and creator Udas expressed that the recognition has provided them with renewed energy for their creative work. The Foundation has been honouring distinguished creators in this manner every year.

THE WALT DISNEY CO. BEGINS LAYING OFF 1,000 EMPLOYEES

AP
New York, Apr. 15

The Walt Disney Co. on Tuesday began layoffs expected to lead to 1,000 job cuts across the company.

Josh D'Amaro, who in February succeeded Bob Iger as chief executive, announced broader layoffs following a January consolidation of Disney's marketing division. The cuts are expected to fall across the Burbank, California-based company's traditional television businesses, including ESPN, as well as its movie studio. Employees in product and technology, and in certain corporate functions, will also be affected.

"Over the past several months, we have looked at ways in which we can streamline our operations in various parts of the company to ensure we deliver the world-class creativity and innovation our fans value and expect from Disney," D'Amaro said in a memo to employees obtained by The Associated Press.

"Given the fast-moving pace of our industries, this requires us to constantly assess how to foster a more agile and technologically-enabled workforce to meet tomorrow's needs."

Neha Dhupia goes deglam for her international debut

THE INDIAN EXPRESS
India, Apr. 15

The first look and trailer of Neha Dhupia's debut international film, 52 Blue, have been officially unveiled, offering a powerful glimpse into one of the most transformative roles of her career. Known for her versatility, Neha steps into uncharted territory with a raw, deglam avatar, marking a first in her on-screen journey.

Directed by acclaimed Egyptian filmmaker Ali El Arabi, 52 Blue is a poignant coming-of-age drama that follows a young Indian football enthusiast's journey as a migrant worker to the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar. The film delves into themes of identity, aspiration, and resilience, set against a deeply emotional family narrative.

The film also stars Adil Hussain, who plays Neha's husband, marking their first on-screen collaboration. In a significant departure from her previous roles, Neha portrays the mother of a young man, bringing emotional depth and quiet strength to a character that anchors the story.

Shot extensively in Kochi, the film traces the journey of Ashish (played by Yadav Shashidhar), a young boy growing up under the isolating control of his father on a remote island.



Speaking about the film, Neha Dhupia described 52 Blue as one of the most emotionally moving and transformative experiences of her career. She shared that the character's quiet strength deeply resonated with her, as it required her to explore raw and instinctive emotions. The actor also revealed that shedding the glamour was liberating, allowing her to fully immerse herself in the role's vulnerability and resilience.

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ARIES: Aries, your instincts speak in surprising ways. You may feel more 'you' than usual, allowing you to introduce yourself with fewer walls between your soul and your words.

CANCER: Stay focused, Cancer! Right now, Mercury and Neptune are allying with your motivated 10th house, empowering your public path. You can build a strategy for boosting your reputation – one that also shows sensitivity to your peers and teammates.

LIBRA: Where can fairness and care meet today? Clarify expectations for a shared chore, set a boundary with a client, or define check-in times with a friend who needs support.

CAPRICORN: Capricorn, small home shifts boost stability. Feel free to rearrange your desk, organise papers at home, or otherwise shift your habits to function that much better.

TAURUS: Quiet effort builds visible respect. Draft your proposal on your own, rehearsing your talking points until you can deliver them in your sleep. If a decision-maker requests changes, breathe and adjust small details to keep your progress smooth.

LEO: This afternoon favours bold, collaborative steps. Co-design a course with a teammate, set shared goals with friends, or start a first draft of a group project. If pride bristles, breathe and frame feedback as an invitation to make the work shine brighter than any ego.

SCORPIO: When effort stays grounded, healing becomes doable. Warrior Mars powers your 6th House of Work and Wellness, sextiling unearthing Pluto in your 4th House of Roots to update habits shaped by history.

AQUARIUS: Morning words set your pace. Refresh your bio, introduce yourself, and ask for any needed changes with a grounded, direct tone. If nerves rise, steel your voice and lead with the headline, since plain language travels farther than frills.

GEMINI: Which friend lights up your best ideas? Start a group message to align roles for a project, recording decisions so everyone remembers what they promised. If a plan sounds too perfect, look at the details to ensure none of them has been overlooked.

VIRGO: Deep work clarifies what truly matters. Your 8th House of Intimacy unfurls under this conjunction of Mercury and Neptune, as they bring sensitive numbers and tender truths into view. Audit a shared expense, note what feels ready for healing, then document agreements.

SAGITTARIUS: Taking a risk doesn't have to be a serious gamble. You could be practising the arts, potentially sharing previews with trusted supporters, letting early feedback guide stronger choices.

PISCES: Gentle values guide today's choices. This is a cosmic reminder to ask for clear terms before agreeing to an open-ended task that could consume the rest of your day. If mental fog rolls in, permit yourself to take a break and let it clear away naturally.

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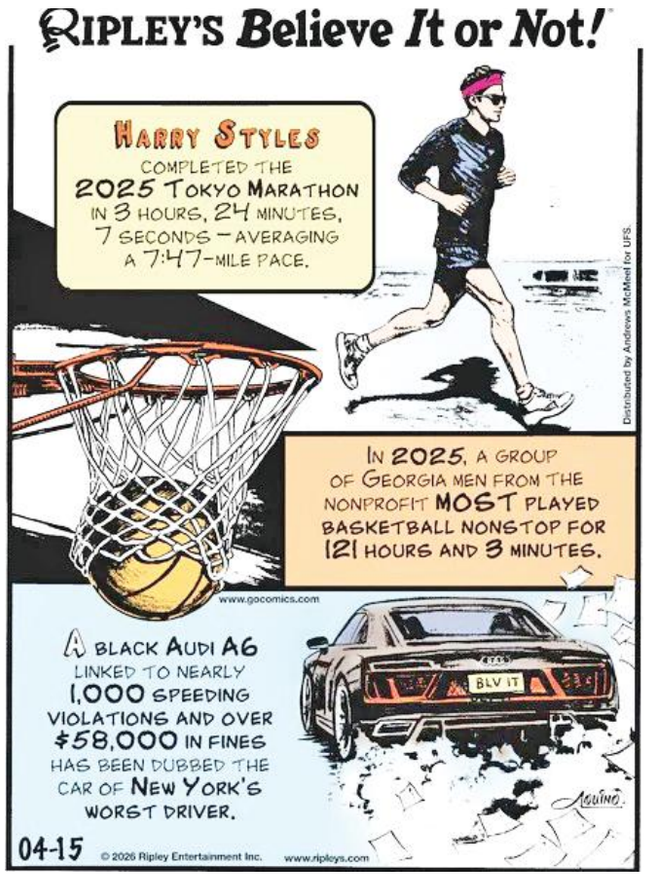



Champions League

PSG, Atletico reach semifinals

AP
Liverpool, Apr. 15



PHOTO: AP

PSG's Ousmane Dembele celebrates after scoring during the Champions League quarterfinal second leg soccer match against Liverpool in England, Tuesday.

Paris Saint-Germain's grip on the Champions League trophy remains strong.

The defending champion advanced to the semifinals of European club soccer's biggest competition by dumping out six-time winner Liverpool on Tuesday.

A 2-0 win at Anfield sealed a 4-0 aggregate victory and moved PSG a step closer to becoming only the second club to retain the trophy in the modern era after all-time king of Europe Real Madrid.

"It's difficult to defend the Champions League, we know that," said coach Luis Enrique. "We are here again and we need to make the most of these opportunities."

Ballon d'Or winner Ousmane Debele scored two second-half goals to kill off Liverpool's fight and book a semifinal clash against either Bayern Munich or Madrid.

It takes something special to hold onto the Champions League and PSG is a special team. Madrid won a hat trick of titles between 2016-18, but no other team has managed back-to-back wins since the European Cup was rebranded in 1992.

PSG is out to make history after ending its long wait to conquer Europe for the first time last year. It is the second time in as many seasons that the French giant has knocked out Liverpool, which was in search of another famous Champions League comeback and dominated PSG for periods.

"It is a real pleasure for me to know that my team is at that level and can play at that level no matter who they are playing against," said Luis Enrique, who is a two-time Champions League-winning coach, having triumphed with Barcelona as well.

"You can see what sort of team we are, what players I've got. We've got confidence and belief. It's wonderful to be living this experience with this team."

Dembele's first goal ended Liverpool's hopes — a left-footed shot from the edge of the area in the 72nd minute. His second came at the end of a sweeping move in stoppage time.

Dembele had been guilty of wasting chances in the first leg to effectively put the tie to bed and he failed to capitalize on two more first-half opportunities to put the French champion further ahead at Anfield.

But his opening goal was dispatched with precision — nestling in the bottom corner. His second was a clinical finish from close range.

Liverpool had been dominated in Paris last week. But the Merseyside club knows all about comebacks in this competition.

It was 3-0 down to AC Milan in the 2005 final and powered back to win on penalties. More recently, it routed Barcelona 4-0 in the 2019 semifinals to overturn a 3-0 first-leg loss and go on to lift the trophy.

Liverpool had its chances despite losing Hugo Ekitike to an early injury. Virgil van Dijk was denied a first-half tap-in when Marquinhos pulled off a last-ditch block.

In the second half, belief among the home fans began to grow as Liverpool applied the pressure.

And a comeback looked on when referee Maurizio Mariani pointed to the spot for a foul by Willian Pacho on Alexis Mac Allister shortly after the hour.

With the score at 0-0, this was the chance to test PSG's resolve. But celebrations soon turned to disappointment when the penalty was overturned after review.

"We are very disappointed because I think there were parts in the second half where you could just feel that if we can score now this is going to become a special night," said Liverpool coach Arne Slot. "But the future looks very bright for this team, for this club, because we've shown that we can compete with the champions of Europe in our stadium."

Atletico withstand Barca's early blitz

Long after the game against Barcelona ended, Atletico Madrid players were back on the field at the Metropolitano stadium to celebrate.

They chanted along with the fans, and jumped and danced among themselves. It was a big night for Atletico.

Diego Simeone's team held on after an early charge by Barcelona to make it back to the semifinals of the Champions League for the first time in nearly a decade.

Atletico lost 2-1 but advanced 3-2 on aggregate after having won the first leg 2-0 in Barcelona last week. It will be the team's first last-four appearance in the European competition since 2017.

"To play in a Champions League semifinal, how nice, how nice..." said Simeone, who was visibly moved after the thrilling back-and-forth game.

"It's been 14 years and honestly, seeing the team still competing really moves me," Simeone said. "The players have changed, we've had to start over many times and yet here we are again among the top four in Europe."

Simeone has been in charge of the club since late 2011. Atletico, seeking its first Champions League title, lost in the 2017 semifinals to Real Madrid. It also lost to Madrid in both finals it played against the city rival in the Champions League, in 2014 and 2016.

Barcelona, trying to return to the last four for the second season in a row, scored twice in the first 24 minutes to even the series, with Lamine Yamal and Ferran Torres finding the net.

Atletico struck back still in the first half with a goal by Ademola Lookman.

The Catalan club played a man down from the 79th after defender Eric García was shown a red card for fouling Alexander Sorloth to stop a breakaway.

"We played a very good match, we gave our lives out there, we tried everything," Barcelona midfielder Frenkie de Jong said. "Luck wasn't on our side this time. When you go a man down it's always harder."

"Extremely happy to eliminate a Barcelona team that has a lot of quality," Atletico midfielder Koke said. "We struggled in the beginning but we found a way to recover. It was a great effort by the entire team."

Yamal opened the scoring four minutes into the match at Metropolitano stadium, entering the area free from defenders after Atletico lost possession on a passing mistake by defender Clément Lenglet.

With his goal, Yamal became the top Champions League scorer under the age of 19 with 11, one more than Kylian Mbappé.

The visitors added to the lead on the night — evening the tie at 2-2 — in the 24th, with Torres picking up a through ball by Dani Olmo and finding the top corner by the far post.

The hosts struck back in the 31st with Lookman scoring from inside the area in a breakaway after a low cross by Marcos Llorente.

"We're disappointed. We had plenty of chances, especially in the first half. We had the chance to score a third goal, but instead we conceded," Barcelona coach Hansi Flick said.

"That's just how football is. We need to do better, but in the end, in terms of mentality and attitude, the team gave it their all. They did a fantastic job, but we just didn't come through."

Army finish league unbeaten, Jay Trophy line-up confirmed

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 15



PHOTO: CAN

Tribhuwan Army Club's Kushal Malla batting against Lumbini Province during the Men's PM Cup in Janakpur on Wednesday.

Tribhuwan Army Club ended the league stage of the Men's PM Cup unbeaten as the six teams qualifying for the Jay Trophy were finalised.

Army, already assured of a final berth, edged Lumbini by one wicket to finish with 17 points from eight wins in nine matches.

Madhesh beat Nepal Police Club by four wickets to secure fourth place with 11 points and a spot in the Jay Trophy.

With Madhesh's win, the six qualifiers were confirmed: Army, Sudur Paschim Province, APF Club, Madhesh, Police and Lumbini.

Despite defeat to Army, Lumbini edged Gandaki on net run rate to claim sixth place, both tied on nine points. Police also finished on nine points but ranked fifth on run rate.

At Ramjanki Multipurpose Stadium, Army struggled chasing 139. They lost nine wickets before scraping home in 25.2 overs.

The innings faltered early at 30-3, with Tritaraj Das out for 10, captain Binod Bhandari for a duck and Bhim Sharki for 18.

Kushal Malla and Arjun Saud steadied the chase with a 69-run stand.

Malla made 41 off 36 balls with seven fours and a six, while Saud scored 28. Wickets tumbled after Malla's dismissal.

In the 25th over, Basir Ahmed struck a boundary with five runs needed and four wickets in hand.

But Santosh Yadav removed Basir (12), Naren Saud and Sahab Alam in the same over, leaving Army nine down.

With five runs still required, Imran Sheikh added three before Aakash Chand hit the winning four in the 26th over. Sheikh finished unbeaten on 16.

Yadav claimed 5-17 in six overs, including a maiden, while Nirmal Gurung took four wickets.

Earlier, Lumbini were bowled out for 138 in 39.2 overs.

The top five reached double figures but the rest collapsed.

Ranjit Khadka top-scored with 28, Dev Khanal made 23, Akash Tripathi 21, Prajwal Thapa 15, Yadav 11 and Dinesh Bohara 10.

Malla took 4-26 in eight overs, while Saud and Sharki picked up two wickets each.

At Narayani Cricket Ground in Birgunj, Madhesh chased 131 in 24.1 overs, losing six wickets.

They recovered from 65-3 after Mayank Yadav (5), captain Anil Shah (1) and Himanshu Dutt (18) fell cheaply.

Arniko Yadav guided the chase with an unbeaten 65 off 44 balls, hitting three fours and six sixes.

Rupesh Singh added 27 not out. For Police, Gulshan Jha took three wickets and Sagar Dhakal two.

Batting first, Police managed 130 in 40.3 overs. No one played a big innings. Opener Kushal Bhurtel top-scored with 39 off 42 balls, striking six fours and a six.

Shankar Rana made 27, Rashid Khan 18, while Dinesh Kharel and Jha chipped in with 15 each.

Six batsmen failed to reach double figures and five were dismissed for ducks.

For Madhesh, Pawan Sarraf, Ranjit Kumar and Aashik Baitha each took three wickets.

Nagarkoti records biggest victory in first round

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 15



PHOTO: NGA

Bhuvan Nagarkoti teeing off during the NPGA Match Play at Royal Nepal Golf Club, Kathmandu, Wednesday.

Nepal No 1 Niraj Tamang, Bhuvan Nagarkoti, Sanjay Lama, Rame Magar, Jayram Shrestha, Rabi Khadka, Dinesh Prajapati and Tanka Bahadur Karki reached the quarter-finals of the Surya Nepal NPGA Match Play.

The seventh event of the Surya Nepal Golf Tour 2025-26 is happening at Royal Nepal Golf Club on Wednesday.

Nagarkoti, winner of the last three events, crushed 15th seed Krishna Man Rajbahak 7&6 for the biggest first-round win. The No 2 seed closed out the match on the 12th hole, going seven up with six holes to play.

Top pro Tamang beat Surya Prasad Sharma 3&2. Third seed Dinesh Prajapati eased past Bal Bhadra Rai 6&4. Fourth seed Lama defeated Ramesh Adhikari 3&2.

Fifth seed Shrestha advanced by walkover after Pradip K Lama was disqualified on disciplinary grounds. Sixth seed Khadka beat No. 11 Deepak Magar 4&2, while 10th seed Karki upset seventh seed Dhan Bahadur Thapa 2-up.

Thursday's quarter-finals pit Tamang against Magar, Lama against Shrestha, Khadka against Prajapati, and Karki against Nagarkoti.

The three-day event features the top 16 players from the 2024-25 Order of Merit. Quarter-finals and semi-finals are on Thursday.

The 36-hole final is on Friday, with the losing semi-finalists contesting an 18-hole play-off for third place.

The tournament offers a purse of Rs. 425,000. The champion takes Rs. 100,000, runner-up Rs. 75,000, third place Rs. 56,000 and fourth Rs. 42,000.

Quarter-final losers earn Rs. 18,000 each, while first-round exits receive NPR 10,000 apiece.

INDIA FACE NEPAL, SRI LANKA MEET PAKISTAN IN BOYS' SEMIS

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 15

The boys' semi-final line-up is set at the ITF Asia 12 & Under Tennis Competition, the South Asian regional qualifiers.

India topped Group A, with Sri Lanka runners-up. Pakistan and Nepal advanced from Group B as first and second. In Thursday's semi-finals, India play Nepal, while Sri Lanka face Pakistan. Winners will qualify for the Asian finals in Singapore from 15–20 September. Six nations are competing in the boys' category, with Bangladesh absent.

Teams were split into two groups and played on a league-cum-knockout basis. Four ties, two each in boys' and girls' events, were completed on Wednesday at Satdobato. Both Nepal sides lost 3-0.

In boys' singles, Pakistan's Muhammad Aayan beat Savya Jung Karki 6-0, 6-2, and Muhammad Gill defeated Aarit Malla 6-2, 6-1. In doubles, Faizan and Gill overcame Basnet and Karki 6-2, 6-1. India swept Sri Lanka 3-0.

In the girls' round-robin, India and Maldives recorded wins. India beat Nepal 3-0, with Chatterjee, Kaur and the doubles pair Singh/Kaur all victorious. Maldives defeated Pakistan 3-0.

After three days, India and Sri Lanka each have two wins from two matches, Nepal one win from two. Maldives have one win from three, while Pakistan remain winless. The top two girls' teams will also qualify for the Asian finals.

Nepal women depart for ICC Challenge Trophy in Rwanda



PHOTO: CAN

Nepali national women's cricket team during the farewell ceremony organised by Cricket Association of Nepal (CAN) in Kathmandu, Wednesday.

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Apr. 15

Nepal's national women's cricket team left for Rwanda on Wednesday to compete in the ICC Women's Challenge Trophy.

The tournament runs from 18 April to 1 May at Kigali's Gahanga Cricket Stadium. Nepal join the USA, Vanuatu, Italy and hosts Rwanda in the Twenty20 event. It is Nepal's first trip to Rwanda.

The competition will be played on a double round-robin basis, with the top side crowned champions. This is the ICC's first women's Challenge Trophy. Nepal open against the USA on 18 April and will play eight matches in total.

Captain Indu Barma returns after recovering from injury sustained in January's ICC Women's T20 Global Qualifiers against Scotland. She missed the Women's Asia Cup Rising Stars, with Puja Mahato leading in her absence.

Barma told reporters she is fully fit and confident. "The team is strong and ready for good results. We have improved tactically under the foreign coach. Players are handling pressure better, especially the youngsters. Everyone knows their role, from opening to bowling in powerplay and death overs."

Head coach Harshal Pathak said Barma's comeback has boosted the squad. "Training is complete. We worked on batting, bowling, fielding and tactical awareness, preparing for match scenarios," he said.

The Cricket Association of Nepal announced the 14-member squad on Monday: Indu Barma (captain), Puja Mahato (vice-captain), Bindu Rawal, Samjhana Khadka, Rubi Poddar, Kabita Joshi, Kabita Kunwar, Riya Sharma, Roma Thapa, Suman Bist, Anu Kadayat, Manisha Upadhyaya, Rubina Chhetri and Rachana Chaudhary.

CAN member Dhirendra Saud bid farewell to the team, handing the national flag to captain Barma.

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