

THE RISING NEPAL

ALL BE HAPPY, ALL BE WELL

FOUR ARYA TRUTHS ARE GUIDELINES FOR NATIONAL UNITY: PRESIDENT

RSS
Kathmandu, May 1

President Ramchandra Paudel has said the Buddha's principles of Panchasheel and the Four Noble Truths (Char Arya Satya) can serve as guidelines for fostering national unity, tolerance and inclusive development in the present context.

Addressing the Comprehensive Buddhist Assembly on the occasion of the 2570th Buddha Jayanti, the birth anniversary of Gautam Buddha, in the federal capital on Friday, the President stated that Buddha's teachings are even more relevant in today's world, which is marked by global challenges, conflict, intolerance, climate crisis and declining humanitarian values.

The Head of State said the practical implementation of Buddha's messages of non-violence, friendship, compassion and wisdom help us build a foundation for lasting peace and prosperity. The President added that the application of Buddha's teachings is capable of guiding the entire world toward positivity.

Buddhist philosophy which is based on peace, coexistence, the middle path and moral conduct is widely believed to have led the world toward stability, collaboration and mutual trust. He further said it is not only a matter of pride but also a responsibility that Nepal, the birthplace of Buddha, is echoing the need for the country to promote peaceful coexistence through the proper management of diversity and pluralism.

The President said, "Baisakh Shukla Purnima, which marks Buddha's birth anniversary, enlightenment (Samyak Sambodhi) and Mahaparinirvana, is a symbol of a unique and sacred moment."

TRUE REVOLUTION BEGINS WITH 'GNYA': PM SHAH

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, May 1

Prime Minister Balendra Shah has extended greetings to all on the occasion of the Buddha Jayanti – birth anniversary of Lord Buddha.

"On the occasion of the birth anniversary of the eternally great proponent of peace, the Buddha, I wish for world peace. Blessed is our Nepali land by the birth of the Buddha; it has always stood for non-violence and peace," he said in his Facebook post.

"There is suffering; there is a cause of suffering; there is the cessation of suffering; and there is a path leading to the cessation of suffering," he quoted Gautam Buddha, and said, the path shown by the Buddha is the path to ending suffering.

"Darkness is simply the absence of light; when a ray of light steps in, darkness disappears of its own accord. Our journey, likewise, should be in search of the light of knowledge, along the path of resolving problems, said PM Shah.

According to him, true revolution (kranti) begins not with 'ka' but with 'gnya' which signifies knowledge (gyana). 'Ka' and 'gya' are the first and last letters in Devnagari script or Nepali language.



PHOTO: KABIN ADHIKARI/TRN

President Ramchandra Paudel inaugurating a grand Buddhist assembly organised on the occasion of the 2570th Buddha Jayanti, marking the sacred Baisakh full moon that commemorates the birth, enlightenment, and Mahaparinirvana of Gautam Buddha, in Kathmandu, on Friday.

CIB exposes serial e-procurement hacking

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, May 1

The Central Investigation Bureau (CIB) of Nepal Police is investigating a major case involving alleged manipulation of the e-government Public Procurement Monitoring Office's online bidding system to unlawfully secure government contracts.

According to the investigation, sensitive bid-related information was leaked through fake websites targeting the office's online system, while financial proposals were also tampered with.

Security officials investigating the scandal have discovered that confidential data was accessed and altered during the procurement process.

The CIB investigation reveals that an organised group obtained unauthorised access to details of participating companies, their bid amounts, and competitors' offers. This information was allegedly used to contact contractors and "fix" tenders in exchange for money.

One of the CIB's investigation officers on condition of anonymity said, the group created a counterfeit website resembling the government system to collect bid-related data. Contractors were then contacted via Gmail and WhatsApp, where they were informed of competitors' bid amounts. The group reportedly demanded large sums of money in return for helping secure contracts, the sources said.

According to the investigation, Diwakar Deuja was identified as the main suspect and mastermind behind



this plotting. He had previously been convicted in a hacking case involving Nepal Telecom's server system. Deuja, who was arrested in 2020 for illegally accessing and misusing telecom systems, is now accused of infiltrating the public procurement system and influencing tender processes.

Investigators say Deuja built trust with contractors by sharing competitors' bid amounts, claiming he could alter financial proposals and guarantee contract wins. He allegedly charged between Rs. 8 and 9 million, often receiving payments through cryptocurrency. He is also reported to have provided login credentials, including usernames and passwords, to access the bidding system.

Under normal procedures, financial proposals cannot be changed after the bid closing date. However, the group allegedly used the unauthorized system to view and manipulate bid amounts before official opening, enabling them to undercut competitors and secure contracts.

Several construction entrepreneurs have also been linked to the case. Those under investigation include former minister and Kalika Construction operator Bikram Pandey, contractor Rishikesh Gauli associated with ADB projects, and

Prakash Dhungana of Kalpabriksha Construction, among others.

Authorities suspect that in some contracts, bid discounts were manipulated by 3 to 5 per cent, resulting in gains worth millions of rupees. Sources also indicate that the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has suspended some procurement processes after detecting irregularities.

So far, the CIB has taken more than a dozen individuals into custody for investigation. Those detained include Sanjay Bhatt of Soli Thumka Construction Services, Sagar Katwal of Hamro Katwal Construction, Jivan Kumar Das of Gitanjali Construction, Anil Shrestha of Shivansh Construction, Tanka Kumar Shrestha of Bhisani Construction, Amrit Bohara of Chapur Construction Services, and Swadesh Pokharel, shareholder and accountant of Incon Pvt. Ltd. They are being charged under the Electronic Transactions Act and organised crime laws.

The scandal is now being viewed not just as financial misconduct by a few individuals, but as a major challenge to the credibility of the country's entire procurement framework, raising questions about how secure transparency and fair competition truly are in government systems.

High-risk settlement residents supporting govt relocation drive

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, May 1

People living at high-risk settlements along the Bagmati River and its tributaries in Kathmandu have begun supporting government efforts to relocate them in search of a safer and more organised future.

Residents living in the Balkhu and Bansighat areas of Kathmandu, who said they do not own houses or land and have very low incomes, are currently busy registering their details at Dasharath Stadium.

At least 72 people have so far voluntarily visited the stadium and registered their details, while hundreds more are still waiting in line, according to the Prime Minister's Secretariat.

A joint team from the Department of Urban Development and Building Construction, the Kathmandu Valley Development Authority, the authorised Bagmati Civilization Integrated Development Committee and the Kathmandu Metropolitan Police is collecting details in a coordinated and supportive role at the stadium.

Alongside the data collection, health check-ups and necessary psychosocial counselling are being provided to those who have arrived, which has helped reduce fear and build confidence among them.

People who have been living in unsafe and difficult conditions for a long time are being treated with dignity, given refreshments and prepared for transfer in an organised manner to holding centres, the Prime Minister's Secretariat informed.

After registration, arrangements have been made for safe holding centres where they will be temporarily accommodated at several locations, including the TEWA office in Dhapakhel, Lalitpur; the Electricity Training Centre in

Kharipati, Bhaktapur; the Agricultural Development Bank Training Centre in Bode; the Nagarkot Drinking Water Training Centre; and the Red Cross building in Banepa, Kavre.

Health camp for displaced citizens

Meanwhile, the government has also launched a special multi-dimensional health camp at Dasharath Stadium for citizens displaced from high-risk settlements along the Bagmati River.

The camp provides paediatric, gynaecology, dental treatment and psychosocial counselling services. Specialist teams from Shukraraj Tropical Hospital (in a leading role), Kanti Children's Hospital, Paropakar Maternity and Women's Hospital, and Patan Mental Hospital are providing services.

Medicines and counselling are being provided on site, while patients with serious conditions are referred to government hospitals. So far, 68 people have received services. Considering the psychosocial stress and possible infections linked to displacement, the team from Patan Mental Hospital is offering counselling support.

At the same time, a separate health camp is also being operated in the Kirtipur area under the leadership of Bir Hospital, where eye and dental treatments have received strong response.

Adequate staff and medicines have been arranged in coordination with the Kathmandu Metropolitan City and the Department of Health Services, the Prime Minister's Secretariat informed.

Squatter found dead in Bagmati River amid demolition drive

Meanwhile, a man has been found dead in the Bagmati River at a time when the government is carrying out a demolition campaign in a squatter settlement area.

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US Special Envoy Gor calls on Ministers



BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, May 1

Sergio Gor, Special Envoy of the United States to South and Central Asia, paid a courtesy call on Foreign Minister

Shisir Khanal at the latter's office at Singha Durbar on Friday.

During the call, discussions were held on further strengthening Nepal-US relations, with an emphasis on promoting investment and trade, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed.

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Stolen 13th century Buddha idol restored

BY BINU SHRESTHA
Kathmandu, May 1

A stolen 13th-century idol of Buddha, originally from Bajradhatu Bihar in Ward No. 23 of Kathmandu Metropolitan City, was restored to its original location on Friday on the occasion of the 2570th Buddha Jayanti.

The idol was returned to Nepal from the United States in 2022 and had since been kept at the National Museum. It was formally reinstalled at its original site on Friday.

Acting Mayor of Kathmandu Metropolitan City Sunita Dangol, Ward No. 23 Chairperson Macharaja Maharjan, heritage campaigner Ganapati Lal Shrestha, advocate Sanjay Adhikari, and local residents brought the statue from the Hanumandhoka Palace Museum after completing the necessary formalities.

In the presence of Aruna Nakarmi,



Chief of the National Museum, and officials from the Hanumandhoka Palace Museum Development Committee, the statue was handed over to the

concerned trustees.

The statue, which had been stolen and later found in the Tibet House collection in Manhattan, USA, was

returned to Nepal and sent to the National Museum for safekeeping by the Department of Archaeology on March 2, 2022 (Falgun 8, 2078 BS).

Heritage campaigner Ganapati Lal Shrestha said that the idol had been stolen from its original location around 40 years ago. A replica had been installed by locals a few years after the original was stolen.

He further said that the replica was removed on Thursday and kept near the original idol after it was reinstalled. "We are very happy to reinstall the idol at its original place after such a long time," he said.

Ward Chairperson Macharaja Maharjan said that the ward is also responsible for the preservation and protection of heritage. He added that the ward has been carrying out conservation work by allocating a specific budget.

Aruna Nakarmi, Chief of the National Museum in Chhauni, said that after being displayed at the museum's

Boudha Art Gallery, the idol was restored to its original site on the occasion of Buddha Jayanti.

People dressed in traditional Newa attire, accompanied by music, carried the idol from Hanumandhoka Durbar Square to Om Bahal of Ward No. 23 with traditional folk music and reinstalled at its original place. The idol was brought Hanumandhoka from Chhauni Museum on Thursday.

The collection of repatriated artefacts at the National Museum's temporary exhibition hall has been increasing, thanks to the efforts of the Department of Archaeology, government bodies, and activists. A temporary exhibition hall has been developed at the National Museum to display these artefacts.

It currently holds 137 returned artefacts that are yet to be restored to their original locations. A total of 12 returned artefacts have been restored to their original places so far, according to the Chhauni Museum.

BASNET APPOINTED EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF GORKHAPATRA



BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, May 1

The management of Gorkhapatra Corporation has appointed Junar Basnet as the Editor-in-Chief of Gorkhapatra, TRN's sister daily. Earlier, he was serving as the Acting Editor-in-Chief of the daily.

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BULLION
(Rs. per tola)

Hallmark Gold

: Rs. 296100/-

Worked Gold

: NA

Silver

: Rs. 4,945/-



STOCK

NEPSE

: 2,738.72

Total Amount

: 4,916,626,848.56

No. of Share

: 10,977,783

NEPSE CEO stresses priority to cyber security

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, May 1

Chief Executive Officer of Nepal Stock Exchange (NEPSE), Choodamani Chapagain, has emphasised the growing importance of cyber security as the capital market becomes increasingly digital and automated alongside rapid technological advancement.

Speaking at the inauguration of a one-day training programme on Cyber Security and Information System (IS) Audit jointly organised by the Stock Brokers' Association of Nepal (SBAN) in collaboration with NEPSE on Thursday, CEO Chapagain highlighted that regular IS audits and a robust IT system are essential to maintain investor confidence, ensure data security, and meet regulatory compliance requirements.

On the occasion, SBAN President Sagar Dhakal said that the importance of cyber security is rising daily and stressed that all stakeholders must strictly adhere to security-related regulations.

The training was organised with the objective of strengthening cyber security and system audit practices in line with the increasing digitisation of capital market transactions.

According to a press statement issued by SBAN, CEOs and IT heads of member brokerage firms actively participated in the event.

Kumar Pudasaini served as the chief trainer for the programme.

Additionally, Nisha Timilsina, Head of NEPSE's IT Department, provided practical training on IT systems and the Trading Management System (TMS).

NEPSE reiterated its commitment to making the capital market more secure, transparent, and technology-friendly through such capacity-building initiatives.

Around 180 stakeholders participated in the event.

Credit extended to private sector increases significantly

BY LAXMAN KAFLE
Kathmandu, May 1

The credit extended to the private sector by banks and financial institutions (BFIs) has increased significantly over the past decade.

According to Nepal's Current Economic Situation Report, recently made public by the Ministry of Finance, the ratio of credit extended to the private sector to gross domestic product increased from 55.2 per cent in mid-July 2015 to 91.6 per cent in mid-July 2025.

This ratio is higher than that of any other South Asian country. In 2023, India had a similar ratio of 56.6 per cent, Bangladesh 35.7 per cent, Sri Lanka 27.3 per cent, and Pakistan 11.5 per cent.

However, credit expansion has slowed in recent years.

Credit extended to the private sector increased by only 8.1 per cent in the last fiscal year and by 4.4 per cent in the first eight months of the current fiscal year, reaching Rs. 5,741 billion by mid-March 2026.

According to the report, the credit demand has not been able to increase due to weak aggregate demand in the post-COVID period, declining business confidence caused by political instability, sluggish capital expenditure, and the lack of development of entrepreneurship.



The credit expansion has also been affected by problems in the cooperative sector and the slowdown in real estate transactions. Similarly, over the past decade, deposits in banks and financial institutions have grown at an average rate of 15.8 per cent. In the first eight months of the current fiscal year, such deposits increased by 6.6 per cent, reaching Rs. 7,746 billion by mid-March 2026.

Despite recent economic sluggishness, the report said that rising remittance inflows have continued to support deposit mobilisation.

Liquidity surplus persists amid weak credit demand
As credit expansion has remained

lower than deposit mobilisation, there is ample investable liquidity in the financial system.

On the one hand, there is a lack of demand for loans to support investment growth, while on the other hand, liquidity management for banks is becoming increasingly challenging.

Excess liquidity maintained by BFIs at the central bank increased from Rs. 654 billion in mid-July 2025 to Rs. 904 billion as of March 26, 2026.

Data show that over the past three years, credit and investment have remained lower relative to deposits, resulting in a persistent surplus of liquidity.

Likewise, interest rates on deposits

and loans of BFIs are low and continue to decline.

The average lending rate, which was 8.86 per cent in mid-July 2016 and rose above 12.5 per cent in FY 2020/21, declined to 7.06 per cent by mid-March 2026.

BFIs face rising pressure from growing NPL

The non-performing loans (NPL) of BFIs have started increasing.

The NPL ratio, which was 3.33 per cent in mid-July 2015 and 3.02 per cent in mid-July 2023, has reached 5.42 per cent in mid-July 2026.

The NPL ratio of development banks and finance companies is higher compared to that of commercial banks.

Meanwhile, the number of banks and financial institutions is decreasing. The number of licensed banks and financial institutions (including microfinance institutions) has fallen from 178 in mid-July 2025 to 106 in mid-March 2026.

According to the report, while overall financial access is increasing, access to credit is lagging.

Over the past decade, financial literacy has improved due to the expansion of bank branches, the expansion of information technology-based banking services, and the entry of new financial service providers.

According to the Nepal Rastra Bank, financial literacy was 57.9 per cent in 2022.

Loan accounts remain low

Over the past decade, the number of deposit accounts in banks and financial institutions has increased by 3.4 times to 62.6 million as of mid-March 2026.

However, access to credit is comparatively low. During this period, the number of loan accounts has increased by 1.7 times to 2.04 million.

In the coming days, it is necessary to significantly increase access to loans by promoting financial literacy, developing entrepreneurship, and providing project-based loans.

The report showed that microfinance institutions have contributed to the growth of financial access.

As of mid-February 2026, savings mobilisation worth Rs. 215 billion and loans worth Rs. 508 billion have been made through microfinance institutions.

The number of members taking loans from these institutions is 2.722 million.

According to the report, there has been a significant increase in electronic payment transactions in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As a result of policy facilitation for electronic payments and the development of various types of devices, the proportion of transactions involving cash and checks is decreasing.

Electricity production at Marsyangdi increases with rainfall

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Tanahun, May 1

With the increase in water flow in the river, electricity generation at the Marsyangdi Hydropower Station located in Anbukhaireni Rural Municipality-4, Tanahun, has increased.

Due to reduced water flow during the winter season, production at the 69-megawatt capacity had dropped significantly, reaching as low as 42 megawatts (MW).

However, recent rainfall has increased the river's water level, leading to a recovery in output.

According to Chief of Marsyangdi Hydropower Station Kapil Dev Manjan, electricity generation has now increased to 62.5 MW.

He added that on days with heavy rainfall, production reaches up to 65 MW, while the minimum currently



PHOTO: TRN
River dam on Marsyangdi river in Anbukhaireni Rural Municipality-4, Tanahun.

stands at around 50 MW.

The centre said that electricity generation is expected to gradually increase further as the river's water level continues to rise.

NOC hikes cooking gas price by Rs. 150 per cylinder

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, May 1

The Nepal Oil Corporation (NOC) has once again adjusted the prices of petroleum products following a new price list received from the Indian Oil Corporation, a petroleum supplier to Nepal.

A meeting of the NOC Board of Directors held on Thursday evening decided to increase the price of cooking gas by Rs. 150 per cylinder. Similarly, the corporation has also hiked the price of aviation fuel for domestic flights by Rs. 7 per litre and for international flights by USD 46 per kilolitre.

However, NOC has slashed the prices of diesel and kerosene by Rs. 12 per litre each and petrol by Rs. 2 per litre.

The revised prices came into effect from Friday morning.

With the latest adjustment, the price of cooking gas has reached Rs. 2,160 per full-filled cylinder. Consumers will have to pay Rs. 1,080 for a half-filled one.

NOC has already begun distributing



half-filled cylinders to ease supply across the country. Due to rising fuel prices, including cooking gas, in the international market amid Middle East tensions, the price of cooking gas has surged by Rs. 250 per cylinder.

Earlier, on April 9, NOC increased the price of cooking gas by Rs. 100 per cylinder. As per the latest revised rates, aviation fuel for domestic flights now costs Rs. 269 per litre, while international aviation fuel costs USD 1,831 per kilolitre in Kathmandu.

With the price reduction, petrol now costs Rs. 217 per litre in the Kathmandu Valley, while diesel and kerosene cost

Rs. 225 per litre each.

Under the new pricing structure, petrol will cost Rs. 214.5 per litre in first-category areas—Charali, Biratnagar, Janakpur, Amlekhgunj, Nepalgunj, Dhangadhi, and Birgunj—and Rs. 216 per litre in second-category areas, including Surkhet and Dang.

Similarly, diesel and kerosene will cost Rs. 222.5 per litre in first-category regions and Rs. 224 per litre in second-category regions. According to NOC, even after the latest price revision, it estimates a fortnightly loss of approximately Rs. 1.81 billion from the sale of petroleum products.

34 stalled projects resume in Bagmati

BY ANIL PARAJULI
Hetauda, May 1

The construction work on 34 long-stalled infrastructure projects under the Ministry of Physical Infrastructure Development of Bagmati Province has resumed.

According to the ministry, out of 43 previously stalled projects, work on 34 has now restarted under the policy of prioritising the completion of "sick" or delayed projects.

Projects under the Infrastructure Development Office in Makawanpur have regained momentum, including works in Samari, Sikre Dobhan, Laljhadi Bridge, and the Rapti Corridor in Makwanpurgadhi.

Minister for Physical Infrastructure Development of Bagmati Province, Dr. Dinesh Chandra Devkota, has directed concerned authorities to complete the projects within the stipulated time frame and instructed that stalled projects be immediately resumed.

He has also directed contractors to accelerate construction work by adding more workers as needed.

The box culvert bridge connecting Wards 6 and 7 of Hetauda Sub-Metropolitan City at Bhangtar Khahare Khola is in its final stage of construction.

The bridge, which was initially started by the sub-metropolitan city but remained incomplete, is now nearing completion after the provincial government allocated a budget of around Rs. 17.9 million.

The bridge is about 18 metres long and 8.40 metres wide, with

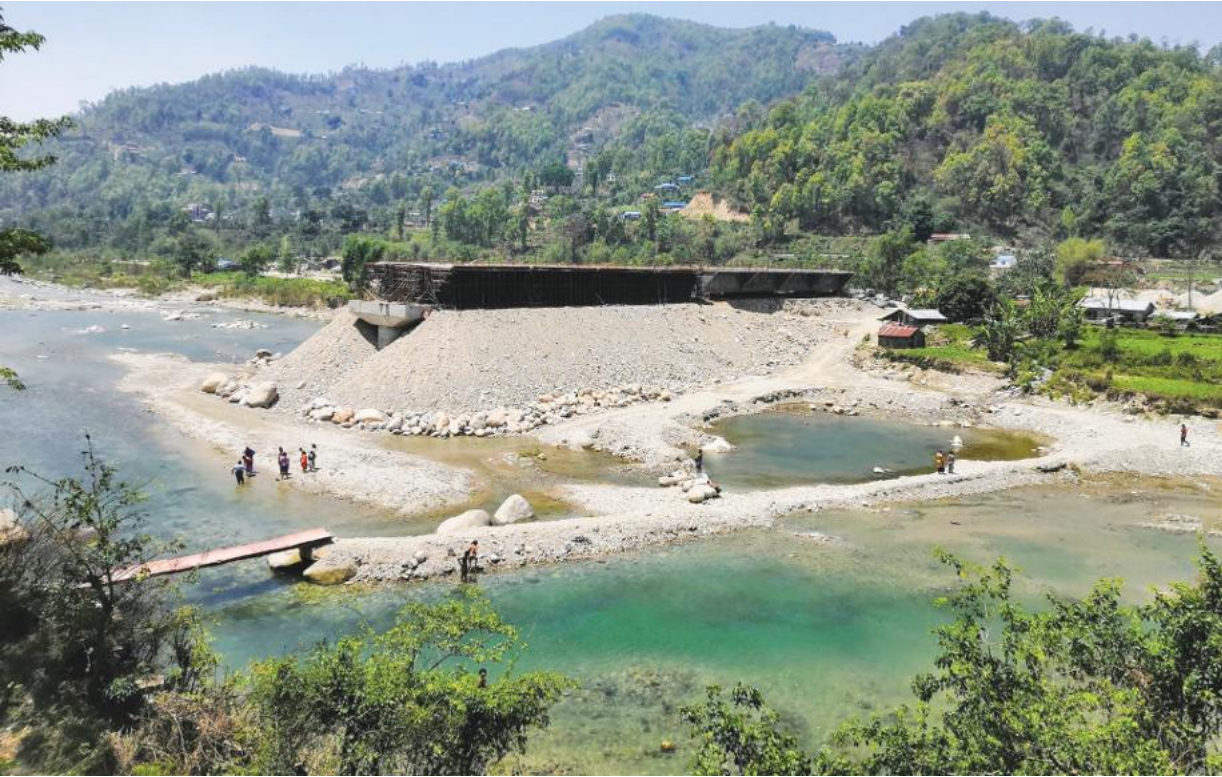


PHOTO: ANIL PARAJULI\ TRN
Bridge under construction over the Rapti river in Hetauda-1, connecting Laljhadi.

only the railing installation remaining.

Similarly, construction of the Laljhadi Bridge over the Rapti River in Hetauda-1, which had slowed due to design issues, has also progressed rapidly.

The concrete casting of two out of three spans has already been completed, while work on the third is about to begin.

The bridge has achieved 59 per

cent physical progress so far, with an estimated cost of around Rs. 93.2 million.

Likewise, construction of the 2.34-kilometre Rapti Corridor from Chaukitol to Rapti Bridge is also progressing rapidly after design and boundary disputes were resolved.

The project has achieved 63 per cent physical progress so far.

Likewise, construction of the Karra Khola Bridge connecting

Hetauda-17 and 18, which was 88 per cent complete but had been halted due to legal proceedings, is expected to resume after the dispute is resolved.

Under the Ring Road project, work including concrete paving, sidewalks, and gabion wall construction is ongoing in the Khahare area of Hetauda-14 and 15.

The project has reached 38 per cent physical progress.

Vision Lumbini to invest Rs. 700 million in hydro

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Siddharthanagar, May 1

Vision Lumbini Limited is set to develop the 3.44 MW Namobuddha Hydropower Project on the Tinau River. The project, estimated to cost Rs. 700 million, will be constructed near Jhumsa in Tinau Rural Municipality of Palpa.

The company announced at a press conference in Butwal on Thursday that the project is expected to be completed and brought into operation within approximately 15 months. The development of the small hydropower scheme on the Tinau River is being carried out through Namobuddha Hydro Pvt. Ltd.

Chairman of Vision Group of Companies, Jagat Bahadur Pokharel, stated that investment arrangements have already been secured through an agreement with Lumbini Development Bank.

He noted that the project is being advanced on the principle that collective investment forms the basis of prosperity, with the bank and institutional investors each contributing 50 per cent.

Pokharel also invited residents of Palpa and Rupandehi to invest in the project. "This project belongs to the people of this region," he said, adding that it presents an opportunity for the people of Butwal to invest.

"The project will be completed swiftly and brought into operation. We have successfully delivered 12 projects of various types in the past," he added.

Currently, Vision Lumbini Limited has an investment of around Rs. 140

million. Preparations are underway to issue rights shares and an initial public offering (IPO), after which the company's capital is expected to reach Rs 510 million, according to Pokharel.

The technical, environmental and ecological assessments of the hydropower project have been completed, and only the formal foundation-laying ceremony remains before construction begins.

The company has previously developed and commissioned a 25 MW Seti River Hydropower Project in Kaski, Pokhara.

Vision has also invested in and is working on around 12 large-scale projects, including Bajramadi (31 MW) and Chameliya (20 MW).

Board member Rajiv Gautam stated that preparations are underway to move forward with major hydropower projects in the Mahakali and Karnali regions.

Vision Lumbini was established by pooling investments from small-scale investors. The company has already diversified its investments across hydropower, hospitality, agriculture, education, insurance, finance, real estate and IT sectors in various parts of the country.

Director Kul Bahadur KC noted that since its establishment in 2016, the company has been working to institutionalise corporate culture and the rule of law.

At the programme, investors Yogesh Ghimire, Anupman Saiju, Govinda Prasad Lamichhane, and Vision Lumbini Manager Saraswati Pokharel, among others, emphasised the need for collective support for the successful implementation of the project.

Labour Day fails to ease hardship for Saptari daily wage workers



Daily wage labourers in Saptari.

PHOTO: TRN

BY DHIRENDRA PRASAD SAH
Rajbiraj, May 1

While much of the world marked International Labour Day on Friday, hundreds of daily wage workers in Rajbiraj spent the day grappling with a far more immediate concern: securing enough work to afford their next meal.

Fifty-two-year-old Somnath Yadav, a resident of Rupani Rural Municipality in Saptari, has been visiting the local labour market for more than a decade

in search of daily work. Like any other day, he arrived early on Friday morning, hoping to be hired.

Similarly, Kailu Sada of Rajbiraj Municipality-9 waited alongside others at the labour market, watching passers-by with the hope that someone might offer him work. However, by midday, he returned home empty-handed. Fighting back tears, he said he was worried about how he would buy rice for his family. “How will we eat today?” he asked.

At the makeshift labour market located along the roadside, south of

Gajendra Chowk, the commercial heart of Rajbiraj, hundreds of workers like Yadav and Sada gather daily. Despite the global recognition of workers’ rights and dignity on Labour Day, many here remain unaware of the occasion, preoccupied instead with meeting basic needs such as food and shelter.

According to 75-year-old local garment businessman Than Singh Bhan-sali, labourers from both rural and urban parts of the district have been coming here for years in search of daily employment.

173 PEOPLE UNDERGO CATARACT SURGERY IN KALIKOT

BY PREM RAJ SIMKHADA
Kalikot, May 1

The Himalaya Eye Hospital has been organising an eye camp each year in Gharipatan, Pokhara. This year, as well, a three-day eye treatment camp held within the district successfully restored vision for 173 patients through cataract surgeries. The beneficiaries included both elderly and younger individuals who had lost their eyesight due to various causes.

Prinkha Bk, a twelve-year-old girl from Shubha Kalika Rural Municipality-6, Haudi, expressed her joy after regaining her sight. Her vision, which had been impaired for the past three years, was restored on Thursday, resulting in a visibly joyful expression. She had suffered an eye injury in early childhood, and due to the lack of medical intervention, her eyesight was lost at a young age. Now, she can see the world once more. Her amazement was evident upon regaining her vision.

Previously, she had to travel to Surkhet for treatment, and she was unable to reach the hospital unaided. Her maternal aunt took her to the district headquarters, Manma, after which she received treatment and regained her vision after three years.

Prinkha remarked, “My family was concerned about the cost and believed it to be too expensive, so we did not seek treatment earlier. I had a check at the camp, received a free operation, and I am very happy.” Her aunt added, “She was checked at the camp, had a free operation, and is very happy.”

Drugs and poverty grip Sudurpashchim

BY GOKARNA DAYAL
Baitadi, May 1

Sudurpashchim Province is witnessing a worrying rise in drug-related offences, with police reporting that, on average, two young individuals are apprehended for narcotics trafficking every three hours.

This equates to more than 10 arrests daily, with the majority of those detained aged between 16 and 35, according to official data.

Authorities attribute the growing prevalence of drug smuggling to the province’s porous border with India. Of the province’s nine districts, Baitadi, Darchula, Dadeldhura, Kanchan-pur and Kailali share open frontiers, facilitating the illicit movement of substances such as brown heroin, hashish and cannabis, police say.

Padam Bahadur Bista, spokesperson for the Provincial Police Office, said that drug abuse, economic crime and suicide are among the most pressing concerns in the region. He said that an average of 10 individuals are arrested daily for involvement in drug trafficking or consumption, with seizures typically ranging between eight and 10 grams per case.

Police records show that in the month of Chaitra alone, 69 drug-related cases were registered across the province, involving 107 men and eight women. In response to the escalating crisis, law enforcement agencies have launched a province-wide anti-drug campaign, encompassing the destruction of illegal cannabis cultivation, community outreach, and awareness programmes in schools and colleges.



PHOTO: TRN

Youths in Baitadi after attending an orientation against drug abuse, economic crime and suicide organised by the District Police Office, Baitadi.

In Baitadi district alone, police have conducted 1,070 awareness initiatives in settlements and educational institutions during the current fiscal year, including 113 specifically targeting drug prevention, according to Police Inspector Baldev Badu.

Officials warn that the growing entanglement of the youth in narcotics is having far-reaching consequences for families, communities and the province at large. They stress that the anti-drug campaign must extend beyond policing and be embedded within the policies and programmes of local and provincial governments.

Poverty deepens crisis

Alongside the drug problem, poverty remains a structural challenge in Sudurpashchim. While Nepal aims to reduce its national poverty rate below 20.27 per cent, the rate in Sudurpashchim stands significantly higher at 34.16 per cent, making it the poorest province in the country, according to the fourth Nepal Living Standards Survey by the National Statistics Office.

An estimated 34 per cent of the province’s population lacks access to basic necessities such as adequate food, clothing and recreational opportunities. Experts warn that such deprivation

is pushing even skilled youth towards substance abuse.

Baitadi district exemplifies the severity of the issue, with a poverty rate of 48.65 per cent. Among the most deprived local levels are Shivanath and Sigas Rural Municipalities, where poverty levels reach 64.07 per cent and 66.87 per cent respectively. Out of a population of 241,157 across 49,405 households, more than 117,000 people in the district are living below the poverty line.

Social activist Mahesh Datt Bhatt attributes rising poverty and unemployment to the failure of provincial and local governments to generate

Structures built on compensated land

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Urbalari, May 1

Encroachment has yet to be cleared in areas where compensation has already been distributed for the construction of the Kanepokhari-Rangeli road in Morang district.

The Postal Highway Directorate Project Office in Itahari had disbursed compensation amounting to Rs. 50.65 million around 15 years ago during the road construction process. An additional Rs. 50 million was spent to remove houses and temporary structures falling within the Rangeli market section of the road.

According to the Detailed Project Report (DPR), the road was originally planned to be expanded to 100 feet—50 feet on either side from the centreline. Compensation was accordingly provided to landowners within that range. However, the road was later



PHOTO: TRN

Kanepokhari-Rangeli road in Morang district.

constructed with a reduced width of just 60 feet, maintaining 30 feet on each side. The Directorate has not provided a clear explanation as to why compensation was initially paid for a wider stretch and later reduced.

Following the reduction in road width, landowners began occupying the remaining areas from 2011 onwards, constructing

houses, sheds and boundary walls. From Bakraha Bridge in northern Rangeli market to Chopraha near the southern border, a stretch of approximately three kilometres has been developed as a 60-foot road.

Ward Chairperson of Rangeli Municipality-6, Sujit Kumar Mandal, stated that residents have been using approximately 20

feet on either side of the road. “We received a letter from the District Administration Office on 30 April and have begun discussions. This is not encroachment but utilisation, as the land was not ultimately used for the road. No permanent structures have been built there,” he said.

The Kanepokhari-Rangeli road passes through Ward Nos. 4, 6, 7, 8 and 9 of Rangeli Municipality, and Ward Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 of Kanepokhari Rural Municipality. Despite compensation being provided to affected landowners, locals say structures were built on the land as there was no immediate plan to expand the road.

Ravindra Baral of Rangeli-7 said residents constructed structures on the compensated land due to delays in road expansion.

Meanwhile, the District Administration Office in Morang has issued a circular to all 17 local levels, directing them to submit details of encroachments across the district.

Illegal opium cultivation destroyed in Jajarkot



BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Jajarkot, May 1

Police in Jajarkot have destroyed illegal opium cultivation spread across approximately 1,640 ropani of land.

A police team deployed from the District Police Office and its subordinate units carried out the operation between April 4 and mid-April, destroying opium crops grown unlawfully across large areas.

The illegal cultivation was destroyed in six local levels, excluding Shivalaya Rural Municipality. The operation covered areas in Bheri Municipality, Chedagad Municipality, Nalgad Municipality, Barekot Rural Municipality, Kushe Rural Municipality and Junichande Rural Municipality. Police uprooted and destroyed opium plants grown across various settlements in these areas as part of an ongoing campaign.

According to Deputy Superintendent of Police Basant Kumar Sharma, opium cultivation, which was previously concentrated in Nalgad Municipality, has now spread to six local levels this year. He said the crops were found in several wards and settlements, including Maide, Maidechaur, Ghulmeta and Syal in Bheri Municipality, and Bharkattiya, Gairikhark and Thapla in Nalgad Municipality.

Police teams from the District Police Office, Area Police Office Dalli, Area Police Office Rimna, Area Police Office Badawan, Police Post Paik and Area Police Office

Barekot were mobilised for the eradication drive.

DSP Sharma said police have been raising awareness among the public about the legal consequences and disadvantages of producing and trafficking narcotics. With locals increasingly encouraging opium cultivation, authorities have intensified efforts to identify production areas and destroy the crops.

Public awareness programmes related to drug abuse are also being conducted in villages across the district, police said.

Last year, opium was cultivated in ward Nos. 2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 13 of Nalgad Municipality. Although cultivation has declined in Ward 13 following awareness campaigns, it has increased in other wards and expanded into new areas where it was not previously grown, raising concern among authorities.

DSP Sharma noted that, as opium cultivation has turned into a livelihood in six out of seven local levels, local governments must strengthen awareness efforts to eliminate the practice, as it involves substances banned by the government.

He added that eradication was carried out during the flowering season of the crop. Although individuals involved in drug trafficking are being arrested and prosecuted, cultivation has not ceased. Opium is often grown in remote highland areas beyond the reach of authorities, requiring police to walk for more than four hours to reach and destroy the crops.

Call for decriminalisation of abortion in Nepal

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, May 1

The four-day global conference Women Deliver 2026, held in Melbourne from April 27 to 30, concluded successfully. On its final day, a special session focused on Nepal explored the country’s status, achievements, and challenges in sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).

The Nepal-focused session was jointly organised by Forum for Women, Law and Development (FWLD), Orek Nepal, and One Heart Worldwide. It brought forward a multidimensional discussion on Nepal’s legal framework, implementation gaps, social barriers, and opportunities for reform in reproductive health rights.

Speaking at the session, FWLD advocate Sabin Shrestha highlighted that Nepal’s Constitution guarantees reproductive health as a fundamental right and that the Safe Motherhood and Reproductive Health Rights Act, 2018 is in force.

According to him, Nepal’s legal framework defines reproductive health as a comprehensive right encompassing access to information, education, counselling, and health services, including privacy and the right to choose.

However, he noted that despite legal progress, the law does not cover all aspects comprehensively. It remains largely limited to safe motherhood, family planning, safe abortion, and reproductive diseases, leaving out more complex dimensions of reproductive health.

Nepal Moving Beyond Survival Imperative



Dev Raj Dahal

Foreign policy beyond the survival imperative requires the existential viability of the state and its ability to promote national interests shared by all people. It also requires fulfilling people's critical needs and defending the state's *raison d'être*. Survival is the supreme law of the state. Nepali constitution offers a cognitive template for this. But survival alone is not enough to fulfill the rights of people for a dignified living and projection of national identity in international politics. Certain tangible factors of its pivotal strategic geography and resources remain stable but the nation can improve the indicators of progress to boost its power potential through intangible factors of statecraft, art of diplomacy, connectivity and rearing the comparative advantage of the nation to escape from location determinism and force-field of great power politics.

Nepal's continued survival as sovereign state reflects the struggle of its people to defend security and self-transformation in the changing geopolitical context of imperial, hegemonic, nation-state and anarchic global systems nested in a hierarchy of power and adopted varied policies of isolation, dodging, balance and mildly tilting to bandwagon. It has sacrificed its territory, population and wealth as a price of peace and avoided a sphere of influence, buffer, tributary and client status that coordinates foreign policies with big powers. Nepali leaders since the unification times have esteemed the sovereign values of state and its heroes and builders have defied reducing the state either to regime, leaders, class, market, business or any institutions.

Ethics of its own integrity
It survived the desire of neo-liberal,

post-modernist and comprador classes to sap national narrative and evaded the state being dragged into a scramble for influence. The Nepali state has carried the ethics of its own integrity, defending the people, core values and institutions. It has fused will with credibility. Nepal's adaptive response to a range of geopolitical shifts is eased by its native knowledge, culture, sovereignty, identity and geo-strategy without entirely conforming to global power politics of coercion devoid of diplomatic contents.

Neat statecraft entails wisdom of statespersons able to think in generational terms, break the ties of deep state with outer predators and take prudent decisions benefiting people. In no way statespersons are governed by the standards of private passion. They enter into mutually beneficial cooperation with various actors without losing national psyche and conscience. Since the stakes of Nepalis are too high in the state, they must give priority to public and national interests over ideology and mini-identities and avoid being subject to other's policy.

The ultimate goal is not only to climb to the peak of power but to brace the state's interests without cultivating acrimony to enlightened ideals. Unlike his predecessor Prime Minister Balendra Shah will not reduce the state, polity and public institutions to partisan prejudice. Such act upends the internal cohesion of Nepal ditching decades of its non-alignment thus allowing macro-management and turning the state into an impotent buffer or bridge without choice. His government promises to follow diplomatic code while meeting foreign bigwigs and keep due diligence on those sowing discord among Nepalis through centrifugal forces.

Diplomatic acrobatics: The post-1991 regimes had shifted state-centric realism to state minimalism and tax-bearing to undue borrowing, thus spiking the size of debt and dependence. They had relentlessly pursued de-agrarianisation, de-industrialisation and globalisation and favoured the ideology of Anglosphere befitting regime compatibility, decoupled from Russia and put China's Belt and Road Initiatives

into sterility waiting for a right gear. Even continental Europe and East Asia remained outside its apt focus and broke air connectivity which the nation once boasted. These regimes have opened the state, economy and society to every kind of soft power influence and accelerators of social change, even some disruptive, which it could not close to keep international sub-culture within limits of national sovereignty.

It has left the Chinese policy to transform landlocked to land-linked nation through connectivity, access to transit and commerce almost moribund. India and the West feel unease over Nepal's strategic cooperation with China and find convergence in Tibetan issue, despite Nepal's reassertion of one-China policy and tightrope walk. Reaping the internal production of energy sources including hydropower, IT, tourism and import-substituting industries for trade and commerce and modernisation of agriculture can boost its leverage in foreign policy and utilise youth bulge for nation building. But the huge imports, remittance, aid and debt dependence need to be reversed to add stamina to Nepal's economic diplomacy. Only a self-reliant economy can renew its diplomatic aplomb and balance its participation in the parallel set of institutions of Sinosphere and Anglosphere.

A shift from reckless globalisation to territoriality is afoot. It is vital to control space and circulation to brace the organic view of the state, mother Nepal. National self-assertion is the leitmotif of Prime Minister Shah. It is luring a flurry of high level dignitaries' visits to Nepal and their offer of cooperation. Although he has dispelled the fear of the nation joining any security alliance, the apprehension of exploitation of its strategic commodities lingers. In the past, the trivialisation of the centrality of the state, power sharing with the business, civil society and international financial institutions in matters of economy and refusal to abide by diplomatic code has cut the prerogative of Nepali parliament and ministries in national self-determination of policies.

Now the return of geopolitics has subsumed other actors within the

Only a self-reliant economy can renew its diplomatic aplomb and balance its participation in the parallel set of institutions of Sinosphere and Anglosphere.

state's orbit. The key strategic challenges for Nepal are to rear institutional capacity, achieve political stability, reduce economic dependence and harness global creditworthiness. Prime Minister Shah has set high value to Nepal's relations with all nations and vowed to strengthen partnership based on mutual benefit. A policy of shared prosperity can lift the nation from dependence to interdependence. The creation of an "investment-friendly milieu, entrepreneurship and sustainable progress" through a predictable policy situation can spur the range of free maneuver. Economic self-reliance can lift the flow of public goods and set positive neutralism in the vicinity and global non-alignment.

Foreign policy innovation: Prime Minister Shah has sparked both new resonances to decide the fate of the nation without outside powers' involvement like former Prime Minister B. P. Koirala and new strategy to mobilise centripetal forces of the nation akin to King Mahendra. It can strengthen the linkage of the heartland, Kathmandu with the periphery, desh (state) with pradesh (local structures) and provide superhuman glue of Hindu-Buddhist philosophy to link hills with Tarai and Himalayan cultures, thus defining its own way of life. His interest to re-introduce ethical education can balance the rights of people with the fidelity to loyalties to Nepali state and augment its capacity to execute policies aligned with nonalignment. The pivot of Kathmandu is high for regional and global powers.

It is an idyllic listening post for them and a strategic site to watch each other's behaviour and activities. In this sense, it is important for Nepal to avoid diplomatic roller-coasters and adopt quiet diplomacy to settle differing territorial claims. The government's effort to synthesise the manifestoes of national political parties will help to optimise their interests, forge national consensus on vital matters and restore the bungled foreign policy to genuine non-alignment that rejects to bend to the will of other powers.

Multi-platform approach: For a relatively small nation like Nepal multi-platform approach enables to articulate its concern for survival, sovereignty and justice. Rival conception of security and security dilemma of neighbours limit the scope of trilateralism. India has adopted multi-alignment with many powers of the world, reaping leverage in international affairs while China is asserting its power with great strategic heft and considered by the USA as security, frontier technologies (solar, wind, batteries, AI, electric cars), trade, finance and strategic competitors. It is the biggest producer and exporters of rare earth minerals and largest trading nation. Its ascent and outreach can help Nepal revise many of its earlier policy options and escape from the buffer or bridge metaphor which puts the context above the cloud.

Its non-alignment has to keep balance among major powers - India, China, the USA, Russia, continental Europe and East Asia without alienating any one. The nation can adopt diplomacy of hedging not just as an event but a careful process of achieving national goals without countering them. King Mahendra's political realism utilised the help of the Soviet Union as a part of balancing strategy and global diversification while King Birendra introduced a zone of peace to project the nation's peaceful identity. The rise of Russia and its offer of cooperation may merit Nepal re-linking as India and China are in a common cause with it for another world order. It should equally utilise the goodwill of the US for its progress and leverage.

Integration
Freedom of maneuver: Cooperation does not flourish if Nepal pursues its absolute national interests without taking other's concerns. Prime Minister Shah speaks of creating a regional and global frame of integration in matters of development, trade, investment, climate action and people to people cooperation. Upgrading shared interests can overcome the flipside of geopolitics, proving that a small nation does not mean its judgments are wrong. While regional cooperation in South Asia is losing steam, a stable rule-based global order remains undefined. The decay of multilateralism in the phase of multipolar world order presents a paradox as the UN and WTO seem to fade the scope of their activities owing to the US retreat from many of its specialised agencies. Peace requires effectively working together in shared interests and resolution of differences by diplomacy.

The wars in West Asia and Ukraine are deadlocked. They have entered a phase of attrition causing global energy, food, job and livelihood crisis. The great wall of distrust between the US and China is triggering mutual containment while the crisis in West Asia might affect Nepal's remittance flow and soar up the prices of essential commodities. The nation's freedom of maneuver entails putting security, defense, foreign policy and economy in the right track and adopting reflexive development where outsiders do not subordinate its foreign policy through painful compromises on aid, trade, investment, debt, knowledge and connectivity but provides space to pursue its own priorities. The smartness of PM Shah is expected to shift from the distinctly shabby style of diplomacy of mere regime endurance to choose a fate of its own to navigate in the neighborhood and the wider world beyond survival imperative.

(Former Reader at the Department of Political Science, TU, Dahal writes on political and social issues.)

Apology To Dalits

RANJIT PRAKASH WAD

The government's decision to "apologise to the Dalit community" was hailed by some as historic. However, a fundamental question arises: Can an apology erase structural injustice? Is a mere apology from the state sufficient? Will a simple "sorry" solve the deep-rooted problems faced by the Dalit community?

When a small Dalit child in Rolpa is brutally beaten on the pretext of "entering a Khatri's house," or when 22-year-old Krishna BK in Sindhuli dies a suspicious death in custody after being slapped with a rape charge due to an inter-caste relationship, and when people are still publicly humiliated with slurs like "Dum" in Jumla, yet no major outcry follows nor strict action is taken, it reflects the grim reality of our society. These are just a few cases that gained traction on social media. Countless other incidents occur where no video is filmed, no voices are raised, victims find no justice, and perpetrators walk free.

Though these incidents occur in different places, they reveal a single truth: Nepal's democracy remains weak on the fundamental question of social justice. Article 24 of the Constitution of Nepal guarantees the "Right against Untouchability and Discrimination" as a fundamental right. It explicitly states that no person shall be subjected to any form of untouchability or discrimination in any private or public place based on their origin, caste, community, profession, or physical condition. Yet, in practice, caste still determines the value of a life. The gap between constitutional promises and the cruelty of reality proves the moral failure of both the state and society.

According to the 2028 BS (2021) census, Dalits constitute about 13-14 per cent of population. Article 40 of the constitution provides specific rights for Dalits, including proportional inclusion in all state bodies, free education, and land for landless Dalits. Despite this, their access to representation, education, land ownership, and employment remains abysmally low. This inequality is not just economic; it is a result of social exclusion. While some claim, "we do not discriminate," the "Brahmanical" mindset that excludes Dalits persists across every level of state and society.

The murder of Nabaraj BK and his friends in Rukum West over an inter-caste marriage, the denial of access to public taps and temples, the abuse of teachers based on caste, and the struggle to find rental rooms in Kathmandu are clear indicators that the end of caste discrimination exists only on paper. Therefore, treating

the incidents in Rolpa, Sindhuli, and Jumla as isolated events is a flawed analysis. They represent the peak of the state's failure to implement constitutional rights.

The role of the state is decisive here. An apology is an admission of guilt, but when the error is structural, the solution must also be structural. Article 24(5) recognises untouchability and discrimination as serious social crimes, entitling victims to compensation. However, when the state tries to downplay such incidents as "personal disputes" or "accidental events," law enforcement weakens, and criminals gain impunity.

Most importantly, we must change the mindset that Dalit issues concern "only Dalits." This is not just a Dalit problem; it is a "social disease" akin to cancer affecting our entire society. Its cure is everyone's responsibility. If any citizen feels unsafe due to their identity, it is a failure of the entire nation. The strength of a democracy is measured not by elections, but by the security of its most vulnerable and marginalised citizens.

The solution is clear, but it requires political willpower and a change in individual consciousness.

A specialised judicial mechanism is needed for caste discrimination cases. Delayed justice only discourages victims. Investigation must be independent and impartial. Every custodial death must trigger an automatic judicial inquiry. Laws like the 'Caste-based Discrimination and Untouchability (Offense and Punishment) Act, 2011' must be strictly implemented. The mere existence of law is not enough; the realisation of justice is what matters.

Education and public dialogue must be prioritised. Values of equality and respect must be integrated into curricula and media. Social justice is impossible without the economic empowerment of Dalits. Meaningful access to land, education, and employment must be ensured. The question today is not just "What happened?" but "Why do these incidents keep recurring?" As long as we refuse to accept the root cause, a solution remains impossible. The government knows the cause, the consequences, and the solution; now is the time for "surgery."

The government must understand that an apology is not enough. It must deliver justice, change the system, and transform society. Otherwise, the cycle of social media outrage followed by forced settlements and eventual forgetting will continue indefinitely. Ultimately, this is not just a fight for the Dalit community; it is a fight for the constitution, democracy, and humanity. In such a fight, remaining neutral is equivalent to standing with the oppressor.

Data And Information Are New Wealth



Namuna Gautam

For centuries, wealth was a concept of land, gold, silver, and other variable physical resources. Later on, when the era of the Industrial Revolution began, factories, machinery, and later oil became the main sources of economic power. But now in the 21st century, however, a new resource has emerged as the most valuable asset in the world: data and information. Nowadays, many countries and corporations are competing for control over data and information because this data helps in innovations, to shape economies, and influence societies.

We live in a digital world where nearly every activity generates data. When we log on to different sites for activities such as using Google, shopping on Daraz, scrolling through Facebook, or watching shows on Netflix, we create digital footprints. These activities we do on the internet create data containing information about our behaviour, interests, habits, our connections, our spending habits, etc.

Valuable resources
When the data is raw, it might have a limited value, but after it is processed and analysed using different data processing tools, Artificial Intelligence,

and machine learning, it can create valuable resources that provide meaningful information. This valuable information helps businesses, government, and other corporate companies to predict customer behaviour, identify their needs, and act accordingly to reduce risks and create more personalised services. For example, E-commerce platforms suggest products based on previous searches and purchases, streaming services suggest movies and series according to viewing history, banks detect suspicious transactions by analysing unusual patterns, and ride-sharing apps calculate demand and adjust prices in real time.

Companies that master data analysis often dominate markets. In fact, many of the world's most valuable corporations today are technology firms whose primary asset is not physical goods but data. Data isn't just valuable for companies, it's a big deal for entire countries, too. Governments rely on data every day to make real decisions about healthcare, roads, schools, and keeping people safe. In developed cities, traffic sensors and GPS keep cars moving and help cut down on pollution. Countries that pour money into digital infrastructure and better data systems are setting up to lead the global economy. They're in a head-to-head race when it comes to AI, and the main fuel for that race is data. The more high-quality data a country has, the better and smarter its technology gets.

This whole data-driven world has

The real winners will be the ones who treat data with respect, protecting privacy, building strong cybersecurity, and teaching people the skills they need to keep up.

spun up brand-new industries and jobs. Data scientists, cybersecurity pros, AI engineers, digital marketers, or anyone. There are startups out there built on nothing but analysing data and turning it into profit. But it's not just the big players cashing in. Even small businesses get a real boost from data. A small shop can check social media to see what people are into. Farmers pull up weather apps to figure out the best time to plant their crops. Content creators dig through their stats to tweak their videos or posts and keep folks coming back. Data isn't just for the big guys; when people can tap into it, it gives everyone an edge, from solo hustlers to family-run businesses.

Let's be honest, having all this data isn't just cool; it's a pain sometimes. Personal info gets stolen or twisted for scams all the time. We've all read about those massive data breaches where millions end up with their private details floating around. No wonder people stress about cybersecurity. Not

everyone gets a fair shot at technology. Some people just don't have the right tools or even decent internet, especially in rural areas or poorer countries.

Privacy
Data's only going to get bigger from here. Tech isn't slowing down; the flood of data is just starting. Imagine self-driving cars constantly scanning the road, smart homes picking up on our routines, health monitors tracking every tiny change, and in factories, machines are always talking to each other. All of it runs on as data is collected and shared, which makes sense of more data than ever before. The real winners will be the ones who treat data with respect, protecting privacy, building strong cybersecurity, and teaching people the skills they need to keep up.

Here's the bottom line: Data is the new gold. Actually, it's even better because when data is shared, it doesn't run out. It gets more valuable. It powers new ideas, lifts up economies, and quietly changes how we live every single day. Still, just like any kind of wealth, data needs to be handled carefully. We have to protect privacy, stick to strong values, and make sure everyone can benefit, not just a lucky few. Over the next few decades, the people and organisations that know how to gather, understand, and protect data will call the shots. No doubt about it, data and information are the real wealth of our age.

(Gautam is an IT officer at the Agriculture Development Bank Limited.)

50 YEARS AGO

THE RISING NEPAL

May 2, 1976

Drinking Water Projects For Nuwakot
Trishuli, May 1: Altogether 26 rural drinking water projects will be launched and seven suspension bridges will be constructed in the next fiscal year in Nuwakot district, reports RSS.

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READER'S MAIL

Make Roads Safe To Travel



This is about the news report headlined "*Twenty dead in Rolpa jeep accident*," carried by this daily on May 1. According to the report, they were killed after a jeep carrying pilgrims en route to the religious and tourist site in Jaljala in Rolpa district met with an accident.

Road accidents resulting in mass casualties have become a disturbingly regular occurrence in Nepal. It's been barely over a month since dozens perished in a road mishap in Dhading district. Before that, in February, nearly a dozen died in Baitadi when a bus carrying a wedding party plunged 200 metres off a cliff.

If this fact highlights anything, it is that road infrastructures in our country are in poor conditions, with many of them needing urgent repair. It's a pity that we've been unable to reduce road accidents when the rest of the world is making a leap in road safety. The growing of such mishaps and the resulting casualties have been a national disgrace. Decisive steps must be taken to change this.

**Kapil Basyal
Kathmandu**

TAILPIECE

A man who worked in a cruise liner as a magician had a parrot and every time the man did a trick the parrot yelled, "it's in the pocket," "it's in the pocket," the magician would do another trick and the parrot yelled, "it's in the hat", "it's in the hat."

One day during his act the cruise liner had a problem and the ship sunk. The parrot came up from the water and looking confused said; "NOW WHERE DID HE HIDE THE SHIP."

+++

A group of horses were moving down towards the horse court for horse jury.

One horse asks another, "Where do we enter again?"

The other horse replies indignantly, "Why the mane entrance of course!"

May Day protests over energy costs

AP
Paris, May 1

Activists worldwide gathered for May Day rallies and street protests Friday, calling for peace, higher wages and better working conditions as many workers grapple with rising energy costs and shrinking purchasing power tied to the Iran war.

May 1 is a public holiday in many countries to mark International Workers' Day, or Labor Day, when workers' unions traditionally rally around wages, pensions, inequality and broader political issues.

Demonstrations were being held from Seoul, Sydney and Jakarta to many European capitals and cities across the United States.

"Working people refuse to pay the price for Donald Trump's war in the Middle East," the European Trade Union Confederation, which represents 93 trade union organizations in 41 European countries, said. "Today's rallies show working people will not stand by and see their jobs and living standards destroyed."

In the United States, activists opposing U.S. President Donald Trump's policies are planning marches and boycotts. Rising living costs linked to the conflict in the Middle East emerged as a key theme in Friday's rallies.

In the Philippines' capital of Manila, large crowds marched to call for higher wages and lower taxes as protesters denounced the United States' role in the Iran war.

Some held banners reading "no troops, no bases, no war games, resist U.S.-led wars." Protesters clashed with police blocking the way near the U.S. Embassy.



Members of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions stage a rally on May Day in Seoul, Korea.

PHOTO: AP

"Every Filipino worker now is aware that the situation here is deeply connected to the global crisis," said Josua Mata, leader of SENTRO umbrella group of labor federations.

In Indonesia, President Prabowo Subianto joined a May Day rally in the capital, Jakarta, greeting tens of thousands of people amid a tight police and military presence. Workers called for stronger government protection amid rising prices and difficulties in finding raw materials for their industry.

In Pakistan, May Day is a public holiday marked by rallies, but many daily wage earners cannot afford to take time off. "How will I bring vegetables and other necessities home if I don't work?" said Mohammad Maskeen, a 55-year-old construction worker near Islamabad.

Rising oil prices have fueled inflation, which the government estimates at about 16%, in a country heavily reliant on financial support from the International Monetary Fund and allied nations.

In Istanbul, police detained some 15 protesters who tried to reach Taksim Square, the epicenter of landmark 2013 protests, in defiance of a government ban.

Turkey's government has long declared the square off-limits for demonstrations on security grounds, but some political parties and trade unions have vowed to march there.

In France, unions called for demonstrations in Paris and elsewhere under the slogan "bread, peace and freedom," linking workers' daily concerns to conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East.

In Italy, the government approved nearly 1 billion euros (\$1.17 billion) in job incentives this week, aiming to promote stable employment and curb labor abuses ahead of May Day.

The measures extend tax breaks to encourage hiring young people and disadvantaged women, and seek to address exploitation tied to platform-based work. Opposition parties dismissed the package as "pure propaganda." In Portugal, proposed labor law changes by the center-right government sparked a general strike and street protests last year.

There is still no deal after nine months of negotiations with unions and employers. Unions say the proposals would weaken workers' rights, including by expanding overtime limits and reducing some benefits.

Israel detains Gaza flotilla activists in Crete

AFP
Athens, May 1

Dozens of activists on a Gaza-bound aid flotilla which was intercepted by Israeli forces in international waters off Crete disembarked on Friday in the Greek island, an AFP journalist saw.

Escorted by Greek coastguards, around 175 activists, the majority of them nationals of European countries, were taken in four coaches to the port of Atherinolakkos, in the southeast of the island. As they approached the port, the activists chanted "Free Palestine," AFP saw.

Israel's foreign ministry earlier said around 175 activists had been taken off more than 20 boats on Thursday. Flotilla organisers put the number at 211. The flotilla comprising more than 50 vessels set sail in recent weeks from Marseille in France, Barcelona in Spain and Syracuse in Italy. Its aim, according to the organisers, was to break the blockade of Gaza and bring humanitarian aid to the Palestinian territory.

Israel controls all entry points to Gaza. It has been accused by the United Nations and foreign NGOs of strangling the flow of goods into the territory, causing shortages since the start of Israel's war against the Palestinian militant group Hamas in October 2023. The Gaza Strip, governed by Hamas, has been under an Israeli blockade since 2007.



FILE PHOTO: AFP

The flotilla comprising more than 50 vessels set sail in recent weeks from Marseille in France, Barcelona in Spain and Syracuse in Italy.

Israeli foreign ministry spokesman Oren Marmorstein on Friday said: "All the flotilla activists are now in Greece except Saif Abu Keshek and Thiago Avila." In a post on X, the ministry called the flotilla "another provocation designed to divert attention from Hamas's refusal to disarm". It also said the flotilla was serving "professional provocateurs".

It said Keshek was "suspected of affiliation with a terrorist organisation" and that he and Avila, suspected of "illegal activity", would be brought to Israel

EU-Mercosur deal enforced

AP
Sao Paulo, May 1

The long-awaited trade deal between South American bloc Mercosur and the European Union took effect Friday, at least provisionally. The initiative creates a trans-Atlantic market estimated at \$22 trillion with 720 million potential consumers, and some nations expect to boost their exports by more than 10% by 2038, once it is fully implemented.

The trade deal was signed Jan. 17 at a meeting of the South American group. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen's move to provisionally enact the deal, effectively sidestepping the EU Parliament, is being challenged by EU lawmakers at the bloc's judiciary. The agreement will be halted if the European body rules against it.

"This is good news for EU businesses of all sizes, good news for our consumers and good news for our farmers, who will gain valuable new export opportunities, with full protection for sensitive sectors," she said Thursday.

Von der Leyen is expected to hold a videoconference Friday with leaders of Mercosur nations Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, and Paraguay to celebrate the agreement.

Earlier this week, Brazil's President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, one of the key supporters of the agreement, signed a decree validating the deal in his country. He said it is a response to unilateral tariffs imposed last year by U.S. President Donald Trump and a reaffirmation of multilateralism.

"Nothing better than believing in the exercise of democracy, in multilateralism, and in cordial relations between nations," Lula said in a ceremony in the capital, Brasilia, to celebrate the milestone after more than 25 years of negotiations.

Last week, Brazil's vice president and one of the negotiators of the deal, Geraldo Alckmin, said in an interview with The Associated Press and other news agencies that not striking the deal with the EU would have meant staying behind while competitor nations made other agreements.

Brazil is by far Mercosur's largest economy, with a gross domestic product estimated at over \$2.3 trillion in 2025.

Lia Valls, an associate researcher at the think-tank Fundacao Getulio Vargas based in Rio de Janeiro, agrees that the deal offers better perspectives against unilateralism worldwide.

"The EU and Mercosur are showing that it is possible for big blocs to reach a deal in this world where that multilateral system is being very weakened and where the U.S. clearly operates to do that," Valls told the AP. "It is a very positive sign."

The agreement faced opposition from European farmers and environmental groups and was delayed in December, before being referred to the EU's top court.

South American agribusiness industries, chiefly beef, fruit and minerals, are expecting a boost in exports to Europe. European automakers, pharmaceutical companies and technology firms also look forward to making new inroads in Mercosur markets.

While companies based in Mercosur countries have expressed fear of tough competition from European peers in hi-tech industries, European farmers have shown concerns about price pressures and imports that do not follow similar environmental standards.

French President Emmanuel Macron, one of the critics of the deal, has long demanded safeguards to monitor and stop large economic disruption in the EU, increased regulations in the Mercosur nations like pesticide restrictions, and more inspections of imports at EU ports.

PRISM

Ohio cryptid bill

Ohio: A bill introduced in the Ohio House would designate the Loveland Frogman as the state's official cryptid. A bill sponsored by Reps. Tristan Rader, D-13th district, and Jean Schmidt, R-62nd district, calls for the local legend to be named Ohio's official state cryptid.

"This bill is about showcasing our communities," said Rader in a news release. "The Loveland Frog is uniquely Ohio. It reflects the stories we tell, the places we're proud of and the creativity that makes our state worth celebrating."

House Bill 821 describes the Loveland Frogman as "a frog-like, bipedal creature standing approximately four feet tall." The legend dates back to 1972, when two police officers reported spotting a large frog-like creature on different nights.

The Frogman made headlines again in 2016, when a couple claimed to have seen the massive amphibian while playing Pokémon Go.

Stranded dog rescued from high-rise apartment ledge

Australia: A dog who went missing from a high-rise apartment in Australia was spotted stranded on a ledge by a neighbor with a drone.

Jake Dobrin's 2-year-old Jack Russell terrier, named Elbie, went missing from her home on the 13th floor of Meriton apartments in Dee Why, a suburb of Sydney in New South Wales, on Friday. A neighbor using a drone spotted Elbie on a neighbor's balcony ledge after apparently squeezing past some potted plants and through a narrow gap. The canine was stranded between railings on the other side of the ledge from the balcony.

Firefighter Joel Spillane used vertical rescue equipment to rappel down from the top of the building to where Elbie was located. Spillane said it took some time to extract Elbie from where she was stranded, but she was eventually winched up to the roof and reunited safely with Dobrin.

Agencies

TODAY IN HISTORY

- 1906– Closing ceremony of the Inter-calated Games in Athens, Greece.
- 1920– The first game of the Negro National League baseball is played in Indianapolis.
- 1933– Germany's independent labor unions are replaced by the German Labour Front.
- 1945– World War II: The Soviet Union announces the fall of Berlin.
- 1945– World War II: The surrender of Caserta comes into effect, by which German troops in Italy cease fighting.
- 1945 – World War II: The US 82nd Airborne Division liberates Wöbbelin concentration camp finding 1,000 dead prisoners, most of whom starved to death.
- 1952– A De Havilland Comet makes the first jetliner flight with fare-paying passengers, from London to Johannesburg.

India promotes biogas amid energy crunch

AFP
Bulandshahr (India), May 1

Across much of India, an energy crunch caused by the Iran war has prompted long queues for cooking gas cylinders. That's not a problem for Gauri Devi.

On a stove with blue flames, she flips a chapati flatbread, burning biogas produced from cow dung -- an alternative fuel helping ease pressure on supplies. "It cooks everything," the 25-year-old said in her courtyard kitchen in Nekkpur, a village in Uttar Pradesh, about 90 kilometres (55 miles) from New Delhi. "If the pressure goes down, we let it rest for half an hour and it works again."

India consumes more than 30 million tonnes of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) annually, importing over half its needs. The government insists there is no shortage of cooking gas, but supply delays, panic buying and black marketers have created long queues for cylinders.

However, since the 1980s India has also promoted biogas as a low-cost rural energy source, subsidising more than five million "digester" units that convert farm waste into methane for cooking, and nitrogen-rich slurry for fertiliser.



PHOTO: AFP

A village woman collects cow dung from her stable near Uttar Pradesh's Bulandshahr district. India is promoting biogas as a low-cost rural energy source.

For Gauri, it requires mixing a couple of buckets of dung with water, then pouring the mixture into a car-sized underground tank topped with a storage balloon. methane supply so regular that she only uses an LPG cylinder for emergencies or large gatherings. The biogas works for everything -- "vegetables, tea, lentils", she said.

The residual slurry is later spread on fields as fertiliser. It has better nitrogen availability for plants compared with raw dung, farmers say. "The manure is so good," said farmer Pramod Singh, who installed a larger unit in 2025, enough for six people, fuelled by 30–45 kilogrammes of dung daily from four cows.

And he said the slurry fertiliser

is particularly valuable at a time when global supplies of artificial fertilisers have been hit by trade disruptions due to the war. "The real benefit is not just the gas -- that is like a bonus," local farmer leader Pritam Singh said. "The slurry is 'black gold'."

More than 45 percent of India's 1.4 billion people rely on farming, and the country has one of the largest cattle populations. India -- the world's most populous nation and third-largest fossil fuel polluter -- has pushed large-scale biogas production to achieve a goal of carbon neutrality by 2070.

The government last year required that biogas account for at least one percent of liquid gas fuelling both vehicles and for domestic use -- rising to five percent by 2028. Dozens of multi-million dollar production plants are now in the pipeline.

But small-scale rural producers are also being rolled out -- units cost around 25,000–30,000 rupees (\$265–\$318), often heavily subsidised by the government.

In a Hindu-majority nation where cows are revered and dung and urine are used in everything from floor plastering and fuel to ritual practices, it is easy to win supporters, said Pritam Singh. He installed his first plant in 2007, and has helped put in 15 more in

his village in the past year alone.

He said interest had shot up after the LPG shortages. "People who earlier were not interested now ask how to get it," he said. "Once they see food being cooked and crops benefiting, they are convinced."

But biogas is still a small fraction of household cooking fuel -- with LPG considered more convenient because companies manage the supply chain. "Biogas plants are not just equipment; they are mini factories," said A.R. Shukla, president of the Indian Biogas Association. "They need organised installation, regular operation and maintenance," he added.

"So, unless installation and upkeep are handled through community-based or cooperative enterprises, households will continue to treat biogas as secondary fuel." And even with government support, there are barriers to uptake, including cost and space.

"We work on other people's farms the whole day. We don't have land for it," said labourer Ramesh Kumar Singh, standing in a line of around 100 queuing for LPG cylinders in the nearby village of Madalpur. "I am standing in scorching heat, hungry and thirsty," said Mahendri, 77, who had failed to secure a cylinder for three days in a row.

PRESIDENT ISSUES
MONEY LAUNDERING
PREVENTION
ORDINANCE

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, May 1

President Ramchandra Paudel has issued the Asset (Money Laundering) Prevention (Third Amendment) Ordinance, 2083.

He issued the ordinance on Friday, on the recommendation of the Council of Ministers, in accordance with Article 114 (1) of the Constitution of Nepal.

Ritesh Kumar Shakya, spokesperson for the Office of the President, informed that President Paudel endorsed the Asset (Money Laundering) Prevention (Third Amendment) Ordinance, 2083.

President Paudel had issued the Cooperatives (First Amendment) Ordinance, 2083 and the Public Procurement (Second Amendment), 2083, on Thursday.

In addition to these ordinances, several other ordinances have also been forwarded to the President.

They include measures related to the Constitutional Council, amendments to certain Nepal Acts, and provisions concerning the Health Sciences Academy and universities, and making appointments of public officials.



A bulldozer clearing encroached settlements at Teku's Banshighat area in Kathmandu, on Friday.

KOICA to assist
digitalising legal access



BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, May 1

The Korea International Cooperation Agency and the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs (MoLJPA) have signed the Record of Discussion (RoD) for the project "Establishing Nepal Law Information Pilot System," marking an important step toward modernizing Nepal's legal information management system.

Funded by the government of the Republic of Korea with a total budget of USD 1.8 million, the project will be implemented through 2027 to improve public access to legal information and strengthen the efficiency of legal administration in Nepal.

Mooheon Kong, Country Director of KOICA Nepal Office, and Aruna Joshi, Joint Secretary of MoLJPA, have signed the RoD in the presence of Parashwor Dhungana, Secretary of MoLJPA and representatives from both sides.

The project aims to establish a comprehensive digital platform that will provide accurate, up-to-date, and searchable information on Nepal's laws, regulations, and amendments, according to a press statement by KOICA.

Key components include a centralised Law Information Centre portal, a Law Editing System for managing legal history and statutory linkages, and a Law Administrator System for institutional oversight.

To ensure sustainability, KOICA will

also provide advanced IT infrastructure, including servers, storage systems, and security firewalls, along with capacity-building programmes for government officials, system technicians, and legal practitioners.

Public awareness activities and community-based training sessions will also be conducted to help citizens effectively use the new law information portal.

The project is being implemented in close collaboration with the Ministry of Government Legislation of the Republic of Korea, a key partner working through KOICA Headquarters, and the Korea Law Information Service, Republic of Korea, which is providing technical expertise and support for the implementation of project activities.

Their contribution is instrumental in strengthening the institutional and technical foundation of the Nepal Law Information Pilot System.

During the signing ceremony, Secretary Parashwor Dhungana said that the system will transform internal legal processes through centralized legal data management and efficient search functions and emphasized that the initiative supports the government of Nepal's commitment to transparency, good governance, and equal public access to legal information.

Joint Secretary Aruna Joshi stated that the project will modernise legislative workflows and significantly improve the management of legal information through a reliable, keyword-searchable database.

High-risk settlement residents...

The deceased has been identified as Indra Bahadur Rai, 56, of Khotang district.

According to Superintendent of Police (SP) Pawan Bhattarai for the Kathmandu District Police Range, Bhadrakali, locals informed authorities after spotting a body near the waste collection centre in Kathmandu-14.

He said that the deceased's family had been living in a squatter settlement in Teku area.

The government deployed bulldozers

in the area on Friday morning. Earlier on Wednesday evening, authorities had issued a notice, instructing residents to vacate the settlement.

"According to locals, Rai had not returned home for a few days. Today, his body was found along with a bundle of clothes," SP Bhattarai said. "We are conducting further investigations into the matter."

In a separate incident earlier, a 17-year-old boy from the Thapathali squatter settlement committed suicide, though police have yet to confirm it.

US Special Envoy...

According to the Embassy of the USA in Kathmandu, they discussed deepening bilateral cooperation across several promising domains, with particular emphasis on expanding trade and advancing initiatives under the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC).

Likewise, Gor called on Finance Minister Dr. Swarnim Wagle at his office on Friday afternoon. The Finance Ministry informed that the discussions were focused on economic partnership and development cooperation between

Nepal and the United States.

Following the meeting, Gor said in a tweet that they talked on unlocking new avenues for economic cooperation that will benefit both the nations.

"We covered a broad spectrum of shared priorities, with a strong focus on improving the business climate and expanding technology-driven employment opportunities," he said.

Gor arrived in Kathmandu on Thursday evening. He is scheduled to call on senior government officials and business leaders.

Five families homeless after seizure
of land by Melamchi Water Project

BY CHITRA KUMAR MIJAR
Sindhupalchok, May 1

Five families in Bahunepati of Melamchi Municipality have been left homeless after their land was seized by the Melamchi Drinking Water Project.

The project occupied 12 ropani, five aana, one paisa and two daam of land belonging to Hiralal Shrestha, Ganesh Das Shrestha, Ram Chandra Shrestha, Bina Shrestha and Nani Maya Shrestha. As a result, the families have been displaced and are now living in temporary shelters along the banks of the Indrawati River.

According to the affected residents, an Italian contractor, Cooperativa Muratori e Cementisti di Ravenna (CMC), which arrived in Nepal in 2013 to work on the project, had initially rented their land to store construction materials. The land also included their homes.

The Italian contractor had constructed several concrete structures on the land during its stay. It remained there for three years and three months, paying rent for both the houses and land on time. However, after abandoning the project in December 2018, the contractor left behind equipment worth millions of rupees. The Melamchi project then took control of the land and houses to secure those materials. The site has since been locked, and security guards have been deployed.

Despite repeated requests by the



Victims of the Melamchi Water Supply Project forced to live in temporary shelters along the riverbank after their land was taken over by the project.

landowners to return their property -- especially on February 20, 2019 after clearing outstanding rent -- the project has yet to hand it back. "We have been forced to live in makeshift shelters by the river," said Hiralal Shrestha, who is now 71.

The situation worsened after the devastating Melamchi floods of 2021 swept away their remaining farmland, leaving them with no option but to stay on the riverbank in tin-roofed huts.

His son, Rajanlal Shrestha, visited Singha Durbar, the Melamchi Water

Identities of 20
Rolpa jeep accident
victims ascertained

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Rukum, May 1

The identities of those who lost their lives in a jeep accident in Rolpa on Thursday have been confirmed.

According to Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Birendra Kumar Bishwakarma of the District Police Office, Rolpa, all 20 deceased have now been identified.

The tragedy occurred when a Bolero jeep (registration number Lu 1 Ja 4167) carrying passengers en route to a fair in Jaljala, Rolpa, on the occasion of Baishakh Purnima met with an accident.

The deceased were from Sisne Rural Municipality-5, Takura village in East Rukum, Ward No. 15 of Ghorahi Sub-Metropolitan City, Ratanpur in Dang, and Bhumé Rural Municipality in East Rukum.

One person was injured in the incident, Samir Kami of Sisne-5, has already returned home after treatment,

police said. Authorities are currently retrieving the bodies from the accident site and handing them over to the respective families.

The deceased in the Rolpa jeep accident have been identified as Gorakh Bahadur Budhathoki, 32, Til Kumari Budhathoki, 53, Yuva Budhathoki, 28, Divyan Budhathoki, 10, Srijana Budhathoki, 24, Sudip Budhathoki, 13, Om Kumari Budhathoki, 40, Mina Kami, 60, Laxmi Shah, 60, and Rukmina Basnet, all from Sisne-5, Takura village in East Rukum.

From Bhumé Rural Municipality-5 in East Rukum, the deceased has been identified as Tek Prasad Budha Magar.

From Ghorahi Sub-Metropolitan City-15, Ratanpur in Dang district, the deceased include Dorpati GC, 54, Tila GC, 32, Jenis GC, 7, Jenisa GC, 12, Elina GC, 25, Sanyog GC, 7, Yam Bahadur GC (age not specified), and Dhanmaya Bista of Shantinagar, Dang, who was currently residing in Sisne-5, East Rukum.

The driver of the vehicle, Bedu Kami, 42, also died in the accident.

Basnet appointed...

Basnet, promoted to the Eleventh Level, has been appointed to the post as per a decision of the Board of Directors of the Corporation on 30th April, 2026. He will remain in the post for a maximum of two years with effect from May 1. The appointment was made in accordance with sub-clause 2 of Clause 44 of the Gorkhapatra Corporation Staff Service Regulations 2082.

Basnet is the first journalist to become the Editor-in-Chief of Gorkhapatra in more than three decades. Earlier, there used to be only Acting Editor-in-Chief.

Presenting the letter of appointment to Basnet, Chairman of the Corporation Gobinda Prasad Bhandari said that he got the opportunity after he was promoted to the 11th level.

Editor-in-Chief Basnet expressed his gratitude to the Board and management and expressed his commitment to work responsibly as long as he remains in office. He requested all the colleagues working in the editorial department to cooperate. He assumed his office as Editor-in-Chief Friday evening.

Basnet had joined Gorkhapatra as a Sub-editor in 1994. He worked Associate Editor, Deputy Executive Editor, Acting Managing Editor and also headed the Business Bureau of Gorkhapatra, and served as chief reporter of Gorkhapatra daily and Editor of Muna monthly.

Basnet, who was born in Nele of Solukhumbu district in 1969, has completed MPhil in Journalism. He also has a Diploma in Development Journalism from Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC), New Delhi.

Pre-monsoon phenomenon
brings rainfall in most
parts of country

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, May 1

If you are planning to travel across Koshi, Madhes, Bagmati or Gandaki provinces, carry an umbrella or raincoat, as meteorologists have warned that weather conditions similar to Friday are likely to persist for the next three days.

Hari Dhakal, meteorologist at the Meteorological Forecasting Division under the Department of Hydrology and Meteorology (DHM), said that pre-monsoon activity is currently influencing weather across much of the country, bringing cloud cover and rainfall to several provinces.

"At present, Koshi, Madhes, Bagmati and Gandaki provinces, along with the hilly and mountainous regions, are generally experiencing partly to mostly cloudy conditions," Dhakal said. "Meanwhile, the Tarai regions of Lumbini and Sudurpashchim provinces are seeing moderately cloudy skies."

He also said that moderate rainfall is occurring in most provinces except Sudurpashchim. Except for Sudurpashchim Province, many parts of the country are receiving light to moderate rainfall on Friday afternoon, he said.

According to Dhakal, the current weather pattern is driven by pre-monsoon systems. "This is a pre-monsoon activity. A low-pressure system has developed over India, and combined with westerly and local winds, it is causing rainfall across our country," he explained. The conditions are expected to persist for the next few days, he informed.

"Our forecast indicates that rainfall will continue for the next three days across many parts of the country, with moderate intensity," Dhakal said. "After that, the intensity may decline slightly, but rainfall is still likely to continue as this phenomenon is very common during the pre-monsoon season."

In Kathmandu as well, there is a possibility of moderate rainfall over the next three days," he said, adding that rainfall is more likely during the afternoon and evening hours, which is typical of the pre-monsoon season.

Dhakal said that the current pattern suggests a relatively wet pre-monsoon period. "At present, we are seeing continuous rainfall. Once the season progresses, we can compare it with climatological patterns to assess whether it is wetter than usual," he added.

He added that the pre-monsoon season typically lasts until early June, after which the monsoon season begins, Dhakal said.

KING CHARLES III
WINS PRAISE FOR
DEFT HANDLING
OF TRUMP

AP
London, May 1

President Donald Trump sang the praises of King Charles III after the monarch's state visit this week. He even lifted some tariffs on Scotch whisky as a favor to the British monarch.

The king delivered a diplomatic master-class on the trip, mixing praise for his host with subtle criticism. It's unclear, though, whether it will make a major difference to a trans-Atlantic relationship troubled by divisions over issues including the Iran war. "In the short term probably yes, in the long term probably no," said Kristofer Allerfeldt, a University of Exeter professor specializing in American history. But he said Charles had "definitely clawed back some of the prestige of the monarchy" in his homeland with his assured performance.

"He's done us proud," Allerfeldt said. Like all royal visits, the four-day trip to Washington, New York and Virginia by the king and Queen Camilla was a carefully choreographed diplomatic event carried out at the request of the U.K. government. Timed to help mark the United States' 250th birthday, it was a chance to heal rifts between the U.K. government and the Trump administration.

2570th Buddha Jayanti marked nationwide



PHOTO: TRN
Pilgrims queue in Lumbini on the occasion of Buddha Purnima on Friday.

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, May 1

The nation marked the 2570th Buddha Jayanti by organising various programmes in Lumbini, the birthplace of Gautam Buddha, as well as in Swayambhunath and Bouddhanath on Friday.

The birth, enlightenment, and death of Gautam Buddha coincide on the same day in Baishakh Shukla Paksha. Buddhists all over

the world celebrate it as an auspicious occasion to express their devotion to Buddha.

On the day, devotees visited chaityas, gumbas, viharas, stupas, and other Buddhist religious sites. The day is celebrated by organising various activities such as worshipping, praying, delivering speeches, meditation, and expressing devotion and respect towards Lord Buddha.

According to our district correspondent, Kapil Gyawali from Siddharthnagar, Buddha Jayanti was



PHOTO: KABITA THAPA/TRN
On the occasion of the 2570th Buddha Jayanti, the idol of Dipankar Buddha is being carried around Mahabouddha in Kathmandu.

celebrated in Lumbini, Rupandehi, the birthplace of Buddha.

The programme, scheduled for 5 am, was affected by rain and started at 8:30 am, concluding within an hour.

At a programme organised by the Lumbini Development Trust to mark the 2570th Buddha Jayanti, Speaker Dol Prasad (DP) Aryal and Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation Khadag Raj Poudel, along with monks, nuns and devotees from various monasteries in Lumbini, performed worship

and meditation at the Mayadevi Temple.

On the occasion of Buddha Jayanti, which falls on the full moon day of Baisakh, Lumbini bustled with domestic and foreign tourists.

The Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana sects performed pujas at the event. Lumbini Province Chief Krishna Bahadur Gharti, the United Nations Resident Representative for Nepal, and federal parliamentarians were also present.

Palpa gears up for Ghatu Nach



PHOTO: TRN
Girls from Magar community performing Ghatu Nach in Palpa on the occasion of Buddha Purnima.

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Rampur (Palpa), May 1

Preparations are underway for performances of Ghatu Naach in settlements across the eastern region of Palpa.

The Magar community, which has preserved this tradition for centuries, is once again organising the dance this year.

Preparations have been made to perform Ghatu Naach in Nisdi Rural Municipality from Friday, the day of Baisakh Purnima, in areas including Dunidanda ward-3, Bhorma, Khoplak, Maulathar and Bhirpani ward -4, as well as Belauji, Banglang, Gabudanda and Kharkadanda ward-5.

Meanwhile, in Batasa, Nisdi-7, the dance began three days earlier and is set to conclude on Friday, Baisakh Purnima. Ghatu is also performed in places such as Jalpa Dholimara in Purnakhola Rural Municipality.

According to Sumitra Thada, the traditional rhythm of Ghatu was initiated last Sunday in Bhorma, and formal performances will take place for three

days starting on Friday. She added that the dance has been carried forward under the leadership of 74-year-old Parbati Thada. Although Ghatu is traditionally led by a female, in Belauji, Nisdi-5, it is led by 78-year-old Humba-hadur Sunari.

Yambahadur Saru said that preparations are in place to continue the tradition under his leadership this year as well.

The Sati Ghatu form is performed in this region. It is named after the custom of a queen committing sati following the death of a king. The songs narrate the story of King Parashuram and Queen Yampawati, and the dance is based on this storyline. Alongside the singing, participants enact roles in accordance with the narrative.

In Ghatu, the Guruma begins the song, followed by other women participants, while young girls, known as Ghatu-sari, perform the dance. The performance begins with the invocation of the names of all deities through song.

According to Bhawani Sara Saru, a Ghatu dancer, the dance is performed with prayers for the well-being of the village and the safety of all.

Finland's 'Flamethrower' among top Eurovision favourites

AFP
Vienna, May 1

A vibrating violin behind a fiery curtain, a Greek cruise ship singer and a song about star-crossed planets are among the favourites to win this year's Eurovision Song Contest.

The bookmakers put Finland's string-laden "Flamethrower" well ahead of the entries from Greece, Denmark, France and Australia, for now.

Here are the top five favourites to win the world's biggest talent show, held in Vienna on May 16.

Linda Lampenius, a 56-year-old violinist, and 36-year-old pop singer Pete Parkkonen will try to strike a chord with the public with their passionate song "Liek-nheitin" ("Flamethrower"), performed in Finnish.

The handsome dark-haired singer laments his unreturned love, while his counterpart in a sparkling dress answers him by violently vibrating the strings of her instrument behind a curtain of fire, with her long blonde hair fluttering in the air.

Compelling listeners to dance, the song is "a duet of very high musical quality" and "a three-minute burst of drama", Finnish Eurovision expert Anna Muurinen told AFP.

"Flamethrower" has raised hopes across Finland -- whose only win so far dates from 2006 -- that the song will appeal to a broad audience without having to resort to English lyrics.

Akylas Mytilineos will sing "Ferto", meaning "Bring It". The energetic song with a pronounced Greek accent recounts a son's thirst for glory and fortune so that he can give his mother everything they lacked during his childhood.

Sporting black sunglasses and a trademark beanie, the 27-year-old singer identifies as a queer artist, highlighting the need for expression and acceptance throughout his music.

He started his career on cruise ships before his style charmed internet users. In 2022, he took part in the Greek version of The Voice. Greece won its only Eurovision title in 2005.

Soren Torpegaard Lund, a 27-year-old singer, will compete with "For vi gar hjem" ("Before We Go Home"), a pop song in Danish with a touch of electro music evoking the atmosphere of a hot late-night club.

Denmark "for once actually is sending a good song", said Lisanne Wilken, a Eurovision specialist and associate professor at Aarhus University in Denmark. She added that the Danish contestant will also benefit from an unexpected geopolitical boost as US President Donald Trump has made claims on Greenland, which is an autonomous Danish territory.

Kirant community marks Ubhauuli Parva

RSS
Kathmandu, May 1

Ubhauuli Parva, the most important festival of the Kirant community, is being marked on Friday with joy and fervor, and by offering worship to the Bhumesthan (the god of land). This festival is mostly celebrated in the districts of the Koshi Province and Kathmandu valley in the country.

Ubhauuli festival is celebrated every year on the full moon day of the month of Baishakh in the Lunar calendar, which also coincides with Buddha Jayanti, the birth anniversary of Buddha.

During the festival, the Kiranti folks gather together to celebrate the festival in an organised manner and exchange good wishes.

According to the religious book Mundhum of the Kirants, time is divided into two parts, Udhauuli and Ubhauuli. The Kirant community believes that these two periods are divided on the basis of farming. Ubhauuli is a festival celebrated to mark the beginning of farming. The festival is celebrated for good harvest, peace and prosperity in the community.

Kiranti community, known to be devoted to nature, celebrate



PHOTO: SUJAN GURUNG/TRN
People from Kirant community performing Sakela dance in Nakhipot, Lalitpur on the occasion of Ubhauuli festival on Friday.

Ubhauuli by worshipping the land and performing their traditional dance called Sakela.

The Kirant Rai Yayokhha has

prepared for worship at Sakelas than at Hatiban of Lalitpur.

Likewise, the people in Yes-elukharka in Khotang district

have decided to mark this festival only on Jestha 22 as per their longstanding tradition to mark this festival on that day.

HOROSCOPE

tarot.com

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ARIES: A deeper conversation shifts something important today in a noticeable way. A supportive Moon-Jupiter trine brings momentum through your 8th House of Intimacy.
- 

CANCER: Something feels lighter when you let yourself enjoy it fully today. The Moon in Scorpio forms a smooth trine to Jupiter in your 7th House of Partnership, opening the door to more honest and supportive connection.
- 

LIBRA: A decision around money or priorities becomes easier to settle today, and it feels relieving. As the Moon in Scorpio trines Jupiter from your 2nd House of Resources, confidence builds around what's actually worth your time, energy, and attention.
- 

CAPRICORN: The right connection helps something move forward today, faster than expected. The Moon in Scorpio connects with Jupiter through your 11th House of Friends, making support and collaboration easier to access.
- 

TAURUS: Someone meets you in a way that feels easy to trust today. The Moon in Scorpio forms a smooth trine to Jupiter in your 7th House of Partnership, opening the door to more honest and supportive connection.
- 

LEO: You set the tone at home more than you realize today. A flowing Moon-Jupiter connection moves through your 4th House of Home, helping you quickly sense what needs to shift to feel more grounded.
- 

SCORPIO: You feel sharper, more magnetic, and fully like yourself today in a noticeable way. With the Moon in your sign linking easily to Jupiter in your 1st House of Self, you come across as open, confident, and easy to connect with naturally.
- 

AQUARIUS: Something you've been building starts to get the recognition it actually deserves today. A Moon-Jupiter trine works through your 10th House of Career, helping your efforts land with more visibility and support.

- 

GEMINI: A good idea turns into real progress faster than expected. A steady Moon-Jupiter trine works through your 6th House of Work, helping small efforts turn into something tangible when you stay with them.
- 

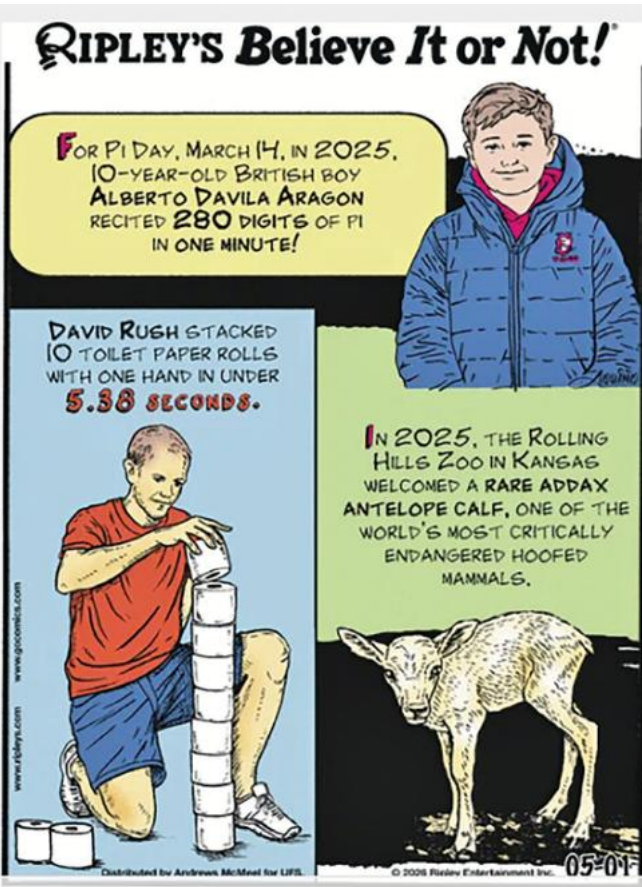
VIRGO: A broader perspective helps something click into place today. The Moon in Scorpio aligns with Jupiter across your 3rd House of Communication, making it easier to express yourself clearly and land your point.
- 

SAGITTARIUS: Something clicks when you finally give yourself space to step back and breathe today. A quiet Moon-Jupiter trine moves through your 12th House of Reflection, bringing a clear realization without needing outside input.
- 

PISCES: A new perspective shifts more than you expect and opens something meaningful today. The Moon in Scorpio forms a flowing trine to Jupiter across your 9th House of Perspective, opening up a clearer, bigger-picture view.

CARTOON

gocomics.com



Nepal edge UAE in rain-hit thriller as Airee’s strikes century



BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, May 1

Nepal registered a narrow six-run victory over the United Arab Emirates in a rain-affected ICC Men’s Cricket World Cup League 2 match at the Tribhuvan University Ground on Friday.

Set a revised target of 255 in 38 overs under the Duckworth–Lewis–Stern method, the UAE fell just short, finishing on 248 for eight despite a spirited chase. The result followed Nepal’s 37-run win in the earlier fixture.

The home side’s triumph was built around a composed century from Dipendra Singh Airee, who struck 100 off 94 balls, anchoring Nepal to 289 for seven in their allotted 50 overs after opting to bat first. He found useful support from Binod Bhandari at 56, Gulshan Jha added 44 and captain Rohit Paudel chipped in 39, helping Nepal post a competitive total.

In reply, the UAE kept pace with the revised target through contributions across the batting order. Mohammad Shahzad led the effort with 65 off 72 balls, while Tanveer added a brisk 49 and Harpreet Singh chipped in with 41. However, the visitors were unable to accelerate sufficiently in the closing stages.

Nepal’s bowlers held their nerve under pressure. Sandeep Lamichhane was the standout performer, claiming three wickets and reaching a personal milestone of 100 ODI wickets during the match. Sompal Kami and Nandan Yadav picked up two wickets apiece to restrict the UAE in the final overs.

With the victory, Nepal strengthened their position in the League 2 standings, while the UAE remained at the bottom of the table. Nepal will next face Oman in their final match of the series before hosting another round of fixtures involving the United States and Scotland later this month.

Nottingham Forest beat Aston Villa in Europa League

AP
Nottingham, May 1

Chris Wood scored from the penalty spot to give Nottingham Forest a 1-0 victory over Aston Villa in the first leg of their all-English Europa League semi-final.

In a clash between two clubs aiming to revive former European glory, the win at the City Ground moves Forest a step closer to what would be its first continental final in 46 years.

Wood struck his 71st-minute penalty high into the net, leaving goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez with no chance after defender Lucas Digne was penalised for handball.

“It’s nice to have the advantage, but going to Villa Park will be a tough game,” the New Zealand striker told TNT Sports. “We’ve done the job at home and now hopefully we’ll build on it next week.”

Vitor Pereira’s side extended their unbeaten run to nine matches in all competitions. Forest travel to Chelsea in the Premier League on Monday before the second leg in Birmingham next Thursday.

Forest remain involved in a relegation battle, sitting five points above the Premier League drop zone. The Europa League winners qualify for next season’s Champions League, raising the possibility of Forest being relegated domestically while competing in Europe’s top club competition.

Having returned to Europe after 30 years, Forest are into their fourth semi-final but their first since the 1984 UEFA Cup. The club famously won back-to-back European Cups in 1979 and 1980. Villa were crowned European champions two years later.

Villa, currently fifth in the Premier League, are well placed to qualify for the Champions



PHOTO : AP
Aston Villa's Lucas Digne handles the ball in the penalty area, conceding a penalty to Nottingham Forest during the Europa League semi-final first leg in Nottingham, England.

League domestically. Manager Unai Emery is a four-time Europa League winner, having lifted the trophy three times with Sevilla and once with Villarreal.

Braga edge Freiburg

In the other semi-final, Braga defeated Freiburg 2-1, with substitute Mario Dorgeles scoring a stoppage-time winner in Portugal.

Earlier, Freiburg goalkeeper Noah Atubolu saved a penalty from Rodrigo

Zalazar to keep the scores level at 1-1.

Braga are aiming to reach the final again after losing 1-0 to Porto in the 2011 showpiece.

The second legs take place next Thursday, with the final scheduled for May 20 in Istanbul.

Sarr fires Palace ahead

In the UEFA Conference League, Ismaila Sarr scored inside the opening minute as Crystal Palace beat Shakhtar

Donetsk 3-1 in the first leg of their semi-final.

Daichi Kamada and Jørgen Strand Larsen also scored for Palace after Oleh Ocheretko had equalised for Shakhtar.

The match was played in Kraków, Poland, due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The second leg is in London next Thursday.

Rayo Vallecano beat Strasbourg 1-0 in the other semi-final on Thursday. The final is set for May 27 in Leipzig, Germany.

Salah injury minor, boosting Liverpool farewell

AP
Liverpool, May 1

Liverpool forward Mohamed Salah will return from injury in time for a proper farewell, but he will not be ready for Sunday’s match at Manchester United.

The Egypt international, who is leaving the club at the end of this season, sustained what appeared to be a hamstring injury during the victory over Crystal Palace last Saturday.

Liverpool head coach Arne Slot confirmed on Friday that Salah will play again before the end of the campaign.

“Usually he is earlier fit than other players after a minor injury — because he has a minor injury — so we expect him indeed to be back in the final part of the season, but not for Sunday,” Slot said.

“It is a big relief that his injury is minor, so that he is able to play for us, and that he is able to play at the World Cup. If there is any time a player that deserves to have that kind of big send-off, it is definitely Mo.”

Salah announced in late March that he is leaving the club one year earlier than expected. This is his ninth season at Anfield.

The 33-year-old Salah has endured a subdued campaign that included a public disagreement with Slot. He has scored only seven Premier League goals after finishing as the league’s top scorer last season with 29.

Liverpool have four matches remaining this season, which



PHOTO : AP
Liverpool’s Mohamed Salah grabs his leg as he speaks with manager Arne Slot after being substituted during the Premier League match between Liverpool and Crystal Palace.

concludes on May 24 when Brentford visit Anfield.

Slot’s team are three points behind third-placed Manchester United, with both sides on course for Champions League qualification.

Egypt are in Group G at the World Cup and open their campaign against Belgium on June 15 before facing New

Zealand and Iran. Egypt have never won a World Cup match in any of their three appearances.

Their most recent appearance was at the 2018 tournament in Russia, where Salah was hampered by a shoulder injury sustained in the Champions League final weeks earlier, when Liverpool lost to Real Madrid.

Gujarat notches four-wicket win over Bengaluru in IPL

AP
Ahmedabad, May 1

Gujarat Titans avenged their defeat last week against Royal Challengers Bengaluru with a four-wicket victory over the defending champions in the Indian Premier League.

Gujarat’s four-man pace attack bowled out Bengaluru for 155, despite a brisk start from Virat Kohli, who scored 28 and struck Kagiso Rabada for five consecutive boundaries in the second over of the innings.

The home side reached 158 for 6 in 15.5 overs, with captain Shubman Gill scoring 43 and matching Kohli’s aggression as he took Josh Hazlewood for 24 runs in the Australian fast bowler’s opening over.

Bengaluru remain second on the table with 12 points, while Gujarat move up to fifth with 10 points. Last week, Gujarat had lost to Bengaluru by five wickets after posting 205 for 3.

“Feels very satisfying,” Gill said. “On a wicket like this, restricting them to under 160 was a tremendous effort from the bowlers. Our fielding was one of the key things, and the way we came back together after the second over was pleasing.”

Gill welcomed Hazlewood with a boundary over point before lifting him



PHOTO: AP
Gujarat Titans captain Shubman Gill plays a shot during the Indian Premier League match between Gujarat Titans and Royal Challengers Bengaluru in Ahmedabad, India.

over extra cover for another four. After a dot ball, he lofted the bowler for a six over mid-on, followed by another four through point, and finished the over with a further six over square leg.

Bhuvneshwar Kumar bowled four overs for 3 for 28, but Hazlewood conceded 37 runs from his first two overs, giving Gujarat early momentum. Jos

Buttler also contributed a quickfire 39 from 19 balls, including four sixes and two fours, before falling to Kumar.

Romario Shepherd took 2 for 30, dismissing Shahrukh Khan for 12 and Washington Sundar for 8 in the same over. Impact player Rahul Tewatia ensured Gujarat maintained the tempo with an unbeaten 27 from 17 balls.

BANKERS, BROTHERS WIN VETERAN CUP

BY SIRAJ KHAN
Nepalgunj, May 1

Bankers and Brothers have won the title of the fourth Veteran Cup Futsal Tournament held in Nepalgunj.

The Nepalgunj-based Bankers and Brothers defeated Dang’s Team Tulsipur 2-1 in the final to lift the trophy. Along with the title, Bankers received a cash prize of Rs 50,000, while runners-up Tulsipur were awarded Rs 25,000.

In the individual awards, Bankers’ Yadunath Khanal was named top scorer, Abhijit Singh of Bankers was declared the best player, and Nabin Devkota of Tulsipur was recognised as the best goalkeeper. The fourth edition of the Veteran Cup Futsal Tournament, organised by FC Sanghari Nepalgunj, featured participation from 18 teams.

Bottas credits Formula One mental health support

AP
Florida, May 1

Formula One driver Valtteri Bottas believes that support for mental health challenges in motorsport has improved significantly during his career, giving him the confidence to speak openly about his own personal struggles.

“The sport has changed a lot, the world has changed a lot,” Bottas said on Thursday, a day after detailing his experiences in an essay for The Players’ Tribune.

“There are better ways for people to communicate and share their issues, or anything from the past. It is definitely a more welcoming environment for everyone in Formula One, but I think also the whole world.”

Bottas said he was approached by the



FILE PHOTO: AP
Cadillac driver Valtteri Bottas, of Finland, poses in his team garage ahead of the Australian Formula One Grand Prix at Albert Park in Melbourne, Australia, Thursday, March 5, 2026.

outlet late last year and began writing the essay, titled Born Crazy, which was released ahead of the rookie Cadillac

team making its North American debut this weekend at the Miami Grand Prix. Bottas, from Finland, and Sergio Pérez

of Mexico are the drivers for the team, which describes itself as the only true American team in the global series.

He said he agreed to share his story in order to highlight the intense personal challenges drivers face in the highly competitive world of Formula One.

“I think it is important to highlight that we are all human and nobody is perfect. Everyone has their struggles or their issues,” Bottas said. “Hopefully somebody can learn from other people’s mistakes. Part of life is learning from your mistakes.”

Being a wingman ‘broke’ Bottas

In the essay, Bottas revealed that during his time as a Mercedes driver he was pushed to the brink of depression and came to despise Formula One when he was cast in a supporting role to seven-time world champion Lewis Hamilton. He also disclosed an earlier two-year battle with an eating disorder.

CYCLE RALLY HELD IN RAMGRAM–PANDITPUR

BY PURUSHOTTAM SUBEDI
West Nawalparasi, May 1

A cycle rally has been organised in Ramgram of West Nawalparasi, a historic site believed to house sacred relics and associated with the maternal lineage of Lord Gautam Buddha, on the occasion of Buddha Jayanti.

According to Ramgram Municipality, the rally began on Friday from Panditpur, an area linked to Buddha’s maternal home, and concluded at the Ramgram Stupa.

Similarly, a food festival was also begin in Parasi Bazaar on Friday evening. While Buddha Jayanti was previously celebrated mainly in Lumbini, in recent years it has also begun to be observed in Ramgram, gaining continuity and growing significance.