



# THE KATHMANDU POST

WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOUR

Nepal's largest selling English daily

Printed simultaneously in Kathmandu, Biratnagar, Bharatpur and Nepalgunj

Vol XXXII No. 70 | 8 pages | Rs.5  
Sunday, April 28, 2024 | 16-01-2081

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## TODAY

### NATIONAL

Nepal Media Society has condemned publication of a 'fake news' report with the malicious intent of defaming members of the media and the judiciary and demanded immediate action against those involved. **Pg 3**

### OPINION



BP Koirala is the only politician or writer who has written about the king's thinking over Nepali politics, writes *Abhi Subedi*. **Pg 4**

### MONEY

The transition to federalism has improved service delivery but there are challenges in devolving functions, functionaries, and funds in Nepal, says ADB vice-president *Yingming Yang* in an interview. **Pg 5**

### WORLD

Russia launched a "massive" missile strike at Ukraine overnight, damaging four power plants in the latest barrage targeting the country's energy supply, officials in Kyiv said on Saturday. **Pg 6**

### SPORTS

Skipper Rohit Paudel scored a blistering century as Nepal defeated West Indies A by four wickets in the first T20 and took a 1-0 lead in the five-match series at the TU Cricket Ground in Kirtipur on Saturday. **Pg 7**



A woman casts her ballot at Barbote of Ilam Municipality-5 on Saturday during the by-elections for a federal parliamentary seat.

## Polling peaceful in Ilam, Bajhang

As ballots are gathered, election officials are preparing to begin vote count early today.

PARBAT PORTEL & LAXMI GAUTAM IN ILAM  
BASANT PRATAP SINGH IN BAJHANG  
APRIL 27

The by-elections in Ilam Constituency 2 and Bajhang (A) on Saturday took place without any significant disturbances.

The polls, which began at 7am, witnessed a fairly low turnout, with only 60 percent eligible voters casting their ballots in Ilam-2, a federal constituency, while the turnout in Bajhang (A), a provincial constituency, stood at around 50 percent.

In Ilam-2, a total of 115,889 individuals were eligible to vote, but only around 69,287 did so on Saturday, said Chief Election Officer Keshav Prasad Ghimire.

"This is a good turnout. Efforts are on to bring all the ballot boxes to the district headquarters by midnight. The vote count will likely begin after an all-party meeting on Sunday morning," said Ghimire.

There were a total of 79 polling stations and 149 polling centres in Ilam-2. According to Chief District Officer Indra Dev Yadav, the by-elections were conducted peacefully throughout the constituency.

According to Yadav, a total of 1,363 police personnel were deployed for poll security.

As many as 19 candidates contested the Ilam-2 by-polls. The late Subas Chandra Nembang's son Suhang is contesting the election from the CPN-UML for the House of Representatives. Nepali Congress leader Dambar Khadka, Milan Limbu of the Rastriya

Swatantra Party and independent Dakendra Singh Thegim are among the candidates.

During the 2022 federal election, UML's Subas Nembang beat Khadka by a narrow margin of 114 votes.

The CPN (Maoist Centre) had supported Congress candidate Khadka then but the Maoist Centre has allied with the UML now.

In Bajhang (A), of the total 61,748 eligible voters, only 30,328 cast their ballot. According to the District Election Office, voter turnout in the constituency was around 49.11 percent.

Estimates put voter turnout in Ilam near 60 percent and below 50 percent in Bajhang.

"We were unable to contact poll officials in some places. They could be on the way, bringing the ballot boxes to the counting venue. The total turnout could reach around 50 percent," said District Election Officer Man Bahadur Dhimi.

There were 74 polling stations and 93 polling centres across the constituency in Bajhang.

Around 1,500 security personnel were deployed to provide security during the polls.

>> Continued on page 2

## Nepal investment summit begins today

More than 1,700 investors from 55 countries will take part in the two-day event. The last summit was held in 2019.

POST REPORT  
KATHMANDU, APRIL 27

The government has said that preparations are over for the third Nepal Investment Summit 2024 that opens in Kathmandu on Sunday.

More than 1,700 investors from 55 countries will be taking part in the two-day summit, said Pradyumna Prasad Upadhyay, joint-secretary at the Investment Board Nepal. "A total of 150 projects—both government and private—will be showcased at the summit."

According to the board, delegates are coming from India, China, the US, Japan, the UK, the UAE and Germany.

There are 385 Nepali delegates from the government and the private sector. The summit will see 500 delegates from Nepal's immediate neighbours—300 Chinese and 200 Indian.

Among the participants, 33 are from the US, 28 from Japan, 14 from the UK and 13 from Bangladesh.

According to the board, all preparations have been concluded. Among the 150 projects being showcased at the summit, 20 are ready to go, Upadhyay said.

"We have readied four projects for project development agreement (PDA) and project investment agreement (PIA) signing during the summit," he said.

The summit will showcase

hydropower projects totalling 1,200 MW, Nijgadh Airport, Kathmandu-Chitlang-Chitwan expressway project, and tunnel ways, Upadhyay said.

"The third investment summit is different from the past two ones. We have prepared a project ready to take investment so that interested investors can confirm their bid at the summit," he said.

"The current political leadership is also focused on bringing foreign investment to Nepal. So we can expect more foreign investment in this year's summit compared to past two summits," Upadhyay said.

The board has registered around 2,100 delegates online and this will be reviewed to ascertain the actual number of participants.

The event is being organised by the government of Nepal along with the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry, the Confederation of Nepalese Industry, the Nepal Chamber of Commerce and the Investment Board Nepal.

On the first day, there will be an inaugural session followed by a plenary session titled 'Exploring Investment Opportunities in Nepal' and 'Success Stories of Investment in Nepal', including project showcasing and market sounding.

The second day will see parallel panel discussions on various topics.

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Interview with  
Finance Minister  
Barsha Man Pun.

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## Government retains disputed provisions in new media council bill

The communications ministry on Thursday registered the bill, which envisions a committee led by its secretary to select the chairperson and members of the council.

BINOD GHIMIRE  
KATHMANDU, APRIL 27

The government has registered a Media Council Bill in the National Assembly, retaining some controversial provisions from the previous bill that the media fraternity decried.

The Ministry of Communication and Information Technology on Thursday registered the bill, which envisions a committee led by its secretary to select the chairperson and members of the council. The council is authorised to advise the government in formulating media policies and the media code of conduct. A similar provision in the bill registered by the KP Sharma Oli government in 2019 had met with criticisms. Though it was endorsed by the National Assembly, it couldn't become law as the term of the lower house came to an end before the bill was endorsed.

Five years later, the new bill envisions replacing the existing Press Council with a new entity called Media Council. The council, led by a chairperson who qualifies to become a Supreme Court justice, will have 11 members in total, as per the bill.

Any Nepali citizen who holds a bachelor's degree of law and has worked as Chief Judge or Judge of the High Court for seven years or has



PHOTO: PRESS COUNCIL NEPAL

The bill proposes replacing the existing Press Council with a new entity called Media Council.

practised law for at least fifteen years as a law graduate senior advocate or advocate or has worked for at least fifteen years in the judicial or legal field or has worked as a gazetted officer first class or above of the judicial service for at least twelve years is eligible for appointment as a Judge of the Supreme Court.

It says a three-member panel chaired by the secretary of the ministry has an expert and a government

joint-secretary as members. Media analysts and journalist associations have objected to the provision.

"How can a secretary-led committee select the chairperson who has the same status as a Supreme Court justice? This provision is objectionable," Suresh Acharya, former president of the Federation of Nepali Journalists, the umbrella organisation of Nepali journalists, told the Post.

>> Continued on page 2





An elderly woman is being taken to the polling booth at the Balmandır Basic School in Jayaprithvi Municipality, Bajhang on Saturday.

# Vote counting in Ilam 2, Bajhang (A) begins today

>> Continued from page 1

“The elections were conducted successfully without any dispute and violence. This was made possible by good coordination among security personnel, cooperation of political parties and voter awareness,” said Chief District Officer Bishwamitra Kuikel.

According to the District Election Office, ballot boxes of 90 polling centres in Saipal Rural Municipality were brought to the district headquarters by Saturday evening.

The office says that the ballot boxes

Officers expect Bajhang bypoll result to come out in 30 hours after counting begins.

of the three remaining centres—Kada, Dhuli and Yarangkuringdanda—will be brought to the district headquarters on Sunday morning by a helicopter.

“We will likely start vote counting from Sunday afternoon. Preparations are to conclude the counting within 30 hours after it begins,” said Prakash Bahadur Singh, information officer at the election office.

The Ilam-2 House seat has been vacant after Subas Nembang died of a heart attack in September last year. The UML leader had continuously won the constituency since the 1999 general elections.

The Bajhang (A) bypoll was conducted for a seat in the Sudurpaschim Assembly which remains vacant after

Prithvi Bahadur Singh, a member and provincial minister, died in a road accident in June last year.

**All women polling officers at Saptamai**

All women officers were deployed to the Saptamai Literature Study and Research polling centre in Ilam Municipality-5.

According to Chief Election Officer Keshav Prasad Ghimire, five election officials were deployed to the ‘model polling centre’ to manage 545 voters.

## DISTRICT DIGEST

### Lakhan Thapa’s statue unveiled

**CHITWAN:** Statue of Lakhan Thapa, Nepal’s first martyr, has been installed at Ramnagar in Bharatpur Metropolis-1. Bharatpur’s mayor Renu Dahal unveiled the bust amid a function on Saturday. The statue was constructed in an initiation of Lakhan Park Management Committee. According to Nil Kumar Magar, chairman of the committee, the 3.5 feet tall statue was constructed at the cost of Rs1.3 million. Lakhan Thapa attained martyrdom in 1877 while raising voice against autocratic Rana rule in Gorkha.

### Man dies in forest fire

**BAGLUNG:** A 48-year-old man was burnt to death while attempting to control forest fire in Tamankhola, Baglung, on Friday. According to the District Police Office, Devsingh Kami of Tamankhola Rural Municipality-3 died during his attempt to douse the wildfire. Kami died on the spot, said police. Two others—Gyan Bahadur Budha Magar and Prem Bahadur Gharti Magar—sustained injuries in the incident.

### Rape-accused under secretary ‘on the run’

**JANAKPUR:** Rupesh Kumar Sah, the under secretary at Office of Chief Minister and Council of Ministers in Madhesh who is accused of rape, is on the run after the victim lodged a complaint at police two weeks ago. Sah allegedly raped the wife of a fellow employee at her quarter on February 1. In her complaint, the victim said the suspect repeatedly raped her by issuing threat since February 1. Superintendent of Police Bhuwaneshwar Tiwari said an arrest warrant has been issued against Sah.

# Investment summit kicks off today

>> Continued from page 1

In March 2017, the government organised the first investment summit, drawing investment commitments worth \$13.5 billion from six countries. But when it came to realisation, only a fraction of the commitment trickled in.

The second investment summit held in March 2019 secured nearly \$12 billion for 50 projects. But only little was realised. In an interview with the Post on Saturday, Finance Minister Barsha Man Pun said that Nepal had learned a lot from the two previous investment summits. “We have also compared ourselves with our neighbouring countries in terms of attracting investment,” he said.

“For foreign investment, we are bringing a better policy than in the past. With policies related to taxes and investment, we are creating an environment that will make it easier to bring in investments and for investors to take the benefits back without hassles,” the finance minister added.

# Congress objects to last-minute ordinance to amend multiple laws

Government awaits President’s approval of the legislation aiming to streamline provisions to attract foreign investors.

POST REPORT  
KATHMANDU, APRIL 27

A day before the third Nepal Investment Summit, the main opposition Nepali Congress has expressed serious reservations over the government’s ordinance approach to amending some important laws. The two-day investment summit kicks off on Sunday.

The party’s attention has been drawn to the decision to amend some important laws through an ordinance by forwarding it to the President, Congress Chief Whip Ramesh Lekhak said in a statement on Saturday.

To attract investments into the country by removing the red tape, a Cabinet meeting on Tuesday decided to amend nine Acts through an ordinance and forwarded it to the President’s Office late Friday for authentication. An ordinance becomes effective only with authorisation by the President.

Sources in the government told the Post that officials, leaders, and other policymakers have already red-flagged some of the provisions of the Land Act; National Parks, and Wildlife Conservation Act; and Land Acquisition Act. These reservations have been quietly communicated to the President’s Office through different channels of which the government is aware, a secretary at the prime minister’s office said.

“If the President is not happy with some of the provisions proposed in the ordinance, it is likely that the President will send it back to the government for further consideration.”

The last session of the federal parliament had enough time and opportunity, the main opposition says. “Without resolving the problem of the cooperative victims and other problems that the country is facing, the government decided to prorogue the House session abruptly.”

And the ordinance did not reach the President’s Office by the end of office hours on Friday, clearly indicating a lack of urgency in the Pushpa Kamal Dahal administration. The failure to issue the ordinance ahead of the investment summit has drawn criticism because it does not boost investor confidence, nor does it guarantee to secure their investments.

The ordinance that reached Sheetal Niwas possibly after office time has not been registered, said Kiran Pokhrel, press adviser to President Ramchandra Paudel. He will study the content of the ordinance on Sunday and make a decision accordingly, Pokhrel added.

The Nepali Congress and other

opposition parties had demanded to constitute a parliamentary committee to investigate the embezzlement, misuse and fraud of the billions of rupees deposited by millions of cooperative members and urged the government to help the victims recover their deposits. “We concluded that by ignoring our call and denying our demand, the government has engaged in unparliamentary practice,” said the statement issued by Lekhak.

While the government had months to prepare for the investment summit, it forwarded an ordinance by misinterpreting the constitution to the President, the party said, adding that the decision goes against the spirit of parliamentary democracy.

“Such work undermines the dignity and importance of institutions that represent the people and the federal, democratic republican system. The Nepali Congress warns the government not to weaken Parliament by avoiding the House,” the party’s chief whip stated.

If the government’s claim is to be believed, various provisions of the Land Act; the National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act; the Land Acquisition Act; the Electronic Transactions Act; the Special Financial Act; the Public Private Partnership and Investment Act; the Foreign Investment and Technology Transfer Act; the Forest Act; and the Industrial Enterprises Act have been amended through the ordinance.

After the ordinance is issued, there will be no legal hurdles to project execution in forest areas, mainly those listed as national priority projects or those approved by the Investment Board Nepal. Payments in foreign exchange will also be easy once the ordinance comes into force, people informed on the matter said.

Easing the registration and operation of startup enterprises, allowing mining and extraction of minerals from forest areas and ensuring uninterrupted supply of construction materials to infrastructure projects are other legal arrangements coming up.

The amendments were decided just a few days before the summit. It was in November last year that the Dahal government decided to hold the summit to attract foreign and domestic investors.

The government in January had constituted a committee headed by Ek Narayan Aryal, then secretary at the Prime Minister’s Office, to identify laws and regulations that keep investments from flowing into the country and suggest ways to streamline laws and remove structural flaws.

# New media council bill under fire for retaining controversial provisions

>> Continued from page 1

A few months ago, a panel led by Acharya that had the sitting president of the federation among members, submitted a report to the ministry suggesting an independent panel for the selection of the chairperson and members but its recommendations were not adhered to while finalising the bill.

“We will object to any provision that is not in line with our report,” Bipul Pokharel, president of the federation, told the Post. “We will soon come up with our official position on the bill.”

The new bill also makes it mandatory for the owner of the media houses to disclose his/her sources of income and investments besides those in the media houses.

Every news related to the business operated by the media owner must

The bill will be presented in the upper house after the budget session commences.

have a disclaimer, as per the bill. The new bill, however, has removed several controversial provisions from the previous one.

The bill registered by the Oli government had proposed confiscation of media equipment and slapping fines up to Rs1 million and 15 years in jail for media persons found publishing offensive content or the content that undermined Nepal’s sovereignty, territorial integrity and nationality. It also provisioned manda-

tory licensing for all working journalists and licensing examinations for aspiring new journalists from the council.

The provisions, however, were removed by the National Assembly following widespread criticism from various quarters.

As per the new bill, if one deems the media content defamatory, they can file cases in district courts. The council will work to hold the media accountable through self-regulation, which is in line with the federation’s suggestions.

The bill will be presented in the upper house after the budget session commences. It will then be sent to a parliamentary committee for detailed discussions before it is presented for a vote. To become a law, it needs to be endorsed by both houses of the federal parliament.



Family members of Nepali youths fighting for the Russian army against Ukraine stage a hunger strike at Ratnapark in Kathmandu on Saturday. They demand immediate repatriation of their kin and compensation for the dead and injured recruits.

# Government initiates process for sovereign credit rating of the country

POST REPORT  
KATHMANDU, APRIL 27

The government has initiated the process to do a sovereign credit rating of the country, which had been halted for the past three years, just ahead of the Nepal Investment Summit that is scheduled to kick off on Sunday.

The government took the initiative with a view to present the country’s realistic economic picture to international investors who are interested to invest in Nepal. Foreign investors take sovereign credit rating as a basic reference before making investment in a new country.

The government has also signed an agreement with UK Aid for the technical support and has selected Standard Chartered Bank for the process.

Earlier, the process was halted as economic indicators were not positive due to the Covid pandemic.

The initiative aims to present the country’s realistic economic picture to foreign investors.

International investors who attended the investment summit three years ago had suggested doing the rating.

On Friday, the finance ministry convened a workshop aimed at capacity building of the agencies concerned on sovereign credit rating with stakeholders.

Finance Minister Barshaman Pun, Revenue Secretary Ram Prasad Ghimire and senior officials from the central bank and other agencies attended the event.

“Once the credit rating is done, investors from across the world can see Nepal’s financial face in the same document,” Minister Pun said at the workshop. “Then, we don’t need to explain facts and figures in each and every international event we attend.”

He said Nepal needs foreign investment as its own domestic resources aren’t sufficient to carry out development activities as per the need of the day.

“As we plan to graduate from the least developed country status, we should maintain over 7 percent economic growth and for that we need huge foreign investment,” Pun said. “For that, sovereign credit rating is necessary.”



# Nepal presents equal opportunity for all investors

## Finance Minister Barsha Man Pun discusses the third Nepal Investment Summit and his expectations from the event.

The third edition of the Nepal Investment Summit starts today. At the event, the Nepal government will present the prospects of investing in Nepal to investors and try to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). Nepal acknowledges that foreign direct investment plays a major role in its economic development, given the shortage of resources within the country. The Post's **Purushottam Poudel** sat down with Finance Minister **Barsha Man Pun** on Saturday to discuss the summit and what Nepal aims to gain from it.

**Nepal hosted two investment summits before this, in 2017 and 2019. Nepal hasn't been able to draw the investments promised in both editions of the summit. What different is Nepal doing this time to attract more investment?**

We have learned from the two previous investment summits. We have also compared ourselves with our neighbouring countries in terms of attracting investments. Data suggests that while they have attracted around 30 percent of the commitments made in similar summits, Nepal has received more.

We have drawn around 35 to 40 percent of the investment pledges, which should be considered good. However, we need more than this. This time, we have learned from our previous experience as to why more investment did not come.

This time, we have invited investors or people who are researching possible investment prospects to the summit. We are presenting the success stories of people who have invested in other countries of the world or in Nepal. So that it can inspire people to invest.

**The government brought an ordinance to amend the laws that were seen as obstacles to foreign investment just a few days ago. The ordinance awaits the President's approval. Potential investors must have noticed this. What do you say?**

The government has decided to amend some laws through the ordinance that we consider necessary from previous experience. The amended law has reached the President's Office for verification. By the time this interview goes to press, the ordinance may get certified. This will be strong evidence for national and international investors that Nepal is investment-friendly.

On the other hand, there is the matter of sovereign credit rating—we have already started work on this. It has not started, but it will be finished soon. Once the rating works get completed it will confirm that we are more open to foreign investment. After this, we will be able to know Nepal's investment rating without asking anyone.

Based on this, foreigners can come to Nepal for investment. All these reasons show we are becoming more investor-friendly. On foreign investment, we are bringing a better policy than in the past. With policies on taxes and investment, we are creating an environment that will make it easier to bring in investments, and for investors to take the benefits back to their country without hassle.

**There are examples of complications faced by investors to take back dividends. Axiata, the parent company of Nepal's private telecom company Ncell, faced the problem. How will investors be attracted when they cannot take profit home?**

There is a legal provision for withdrawing the return on investment. We are trying to make it simple and practical by learning from the experience of other countries. No multinational company has suffered losses in Nepal. Everyone is earning profits. Ncell has raked in profit many times its investment in Nepal. Dabur Nepal and Unilever are also making profits. There are other multinational companies that are making profits by investing in Nepal.

Similarly, foreign investments in the hospitality sector have also returned profits. These profits earned by the companies are no less than what they earn elsewhere. The problem seems to be that we are not presenting our data properly. We will also use this summit as a platform for investors to share their experiences of successfully investing in Nepal.

**Many investors appear to be attracted to hydropower. However, India has adopted a policy of not buying power from projects with Chinese investment. This also affects our investment climate. How will the government address this?**



Barsha Man Pun, finance minister

We have made plans for 10 years and plans for 15 years. We have also studied how much energy we need in the coming years. Our emphasis is on clean energy such as hydropower and solar. Our policy is to sell surplus energy to neighbouring countries. Our main markets are India and Bangladesh. China is also our market, to an extent. We have signed various energy-related agreements with India, Bangladesh and China.

Investments are coming into this sector from these countries. Business is also being done. Some infrastructure related to the cross-border transmission line is being built. A 400 KV high voltage transmission line has been built on the India side. Some others will be built soon. The Dhalkebar-Muzaffarpur transmission line has been built. Butwal-Sunauli is in progress. Similarly, Lamki-Bareli is also in the pipeline. A long-term agreement has been signed with India to sell 10,000 megawatts of hydropower in 10 years.

The agreement signed during Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal's visit to India last year is in the implementation phase. An agreement has been reached to sell 40 megawatts of hydropower to Bangladesh through India. Bangladesh has asked us for more electricity. We are coordinating with Bangladesh and India at various levels on this issue.

As far as the Indian policy is concerned, we will try to consume our own electricity first. We will try to sell the surplus energy to regional markets.

**Nepal's political instability is said to be distracting foreign investors. How do you convince them?**

There is no truth in this. Change of political leadership does not hinder foreign investment in Nepal. This is a normal practice in a democratic system with regular elections. Sometimes the government veers into the minority. Our mixed electoral system tends to give no single party the majority. As a result, we have a coalition government. And whether or not the government maintains policy consistency is important. We may not always have a stable government, but we have a stable policy.

We have adopted consistent policies in the fields of hydropower and cement industries for 10 to 15 years. The minister may be changed due to the change of government, but there is no change in policy. Any change in policy is meant for the convenience of investors.

When the government was led by the Congress-Maoist alliance, it was said that big investors—from India's richest man, Gautam Adani to the Tata Group—were interested in investing in Nepal. However, with the communist forces in

power, they are said to be reluctant.

This is just a rumour spread by those who do not want the prosperity of Nepal. It is true that some people close to Indian businessman Gautam Adani came to Nepal, and they showed interest in investing in Nepal. According to my information, Adani has invested in Nepal's cement industry. And even now he is positive about investing in Nepal. His representatives are coming to the investment summit as well. The summit is not a matter related to the views of any party. This is Nepal's investment conference.

Just because there is a particular coalition does not mean investment will not come. Pushpa Kamal Dahal was the leader of the government when the summit was announced and he is still leading the government. Such rumours are propaganda peddled by those who want to keep investments away.

Again, as far as Gautam Adani is concerned, I am personally in touch with people who work with him at various levels. When I became a minister, I invited Adani to Nepal, and we have interacted with him frequently. He is still looking at different areas of investment. He is especially interested in airport construction and management and the energy sector.

**Geopolitical factors are also believed to impact investments. Is the government prepared to ensure that geopolitics does not affect investment prospects?**

There are geopolitical conflicts all over the world. In Nepal, we are not against anyone's legal investment. We have always welcomed foreign investment that comes with good intent. If geopolitics affects investment, the most intense geopolitical competition is between the US and China. But these two countries are also the world's largest trading partners. When talking about India and China, there may be competition between them, but there is also cooperation. We need legitimate investment in priority areas. We want to ensure that the investments coming into our country are not targeted against any country. Let's invest in Nepal.

# Nepal Media Society condemns dissemination of fake news

## Organisation chair Subha Shankar Kandel expresses concern over the attempt to spread misinformation.

POST REPORT  
KATHMANDU, APRIL 27

The Nepal Media Society on Saturday condemned the publication of fake news with the malicious intent of defaming members of the media and the judiciary and demanded immediate action against those involved.

Issuing a statement, the society's chairman Subha Shankar Kandel expressed his concern on the attempt to spread misinformation.

On Friday, a video of an alleged 'sting operation', including an audio clip, was uploaded on the YouTube channel of 'Sidha Kura', a television programme previously broadcast on the now-defunct Galaxy Television, which was established with the money embezzled from various cooperatives.

The umbrella organisation called the video a condemnable attempt at attacking the democratic system, media and judiciary without any basis and demanded that the concerned authorities take action against all those involved in the act.

"The law enforcement agencies should take immediate action in the case of the YouTube channel publishing content with the intent of defaming established media houses, its owners and even a sitting judge without any facts or evidence," the statement reads.

It is necessary to clarify that such irresponsible and 'propaganda-producing factories' cannot be considered media, the society further added.

"There has been a rising trend of misusing technology to attack democratic systems and independent media and the judiciary, motivated by blind public support, worldwide," Kandel said. "The latest incident is also a similar attempt by some YouTube channel by producing tasteless 'fake news', which is a serious issue."

The organisation also claimed that the content posted on social media sites and online domains created using technological loopholes cannot be news or correct information.

Meanwhile, senior advocate Hari Prasad Upreti and advocate Kishor Bista also issued a joint statement denying the allegations levelled against them in the audio clip.

"We did not visit the Annapurna Post's office on April 12, 2021, as claimed in the audio. Nor were we a part of the decision-making constitutional bench in the case of petitioner Bishnu Prasad Ghimire mentioned in the audio clip," the statement reads.

The fact that the allegations are being made four years after the incident allegedly took place itself raises doubts, the advocates said.

The content in question and its publication is misleading and we believe that this is a deliberate attack on the judiciary and the media, they said. "We strongly object against all those who share and defend such content on social media."

Earlier, Bista had denied the accusation stating that the 'fake audio' had

been produced with a criminal intent.

"One of the two voices heard in the recording has been attributed to me, but I am not the one speaking. Nor have I ever been to the Annapurna Post's office," Bista said. "Also, the tone of the conversation, the noise of children playing in the background, and the comments being made on the case being discussed not only prove that the audio is a complete hoax but also suggest that the hosts of the show created this conspiracy on their own or on the direction of someone else."

Stakeholders from the media and legal fraternities have also called for the concerned video's immediate removal and demanded legal action against programme producers.



**Stakeholders have called for immediate removal of the video in question.**

Citing that the content was being disseminated with the motive of character assassination of those accused of being involved, the Press Council has directed that the content be removed and clarification be furnished within 24 hours.

Earlier, Nepal Press Council, the Nepal Bar Association and other concerned stakeholders had expressed their serious concerns over the issue.

Citing that the content was being disseminated with the motive of character assassination of those accused of being involved, the Press Council on Friday directed that the content be removed and clarification be furnished within 24 hours.

Supreme Court Justice Ananda Mohan Bhattarai, who is named in the clip, objected to the content saying that it was motivated by the intent of spreading disbelief not only against the media houses and individuals but also against professional journalism and the judiciary as a whole.

"I am shocked and surprised that my name has been linked with the news published by 'Sidha Kura.' My career, spanning almost 43 years, is an open book," Bhattarai said.

Filing a complaint at the Press Council, Kantipur Media Group chairperson Kailash Sirohiya, who is also accused of being involved in the case, requested that those involved in attempting to undermine the pillars of the democratic system be investigated and held accountable for their actions.

Similarly, Captain Rameshwar Thapa, chairman of the Annapurna Media Network, also filed a complaint at the Press Council on Friday, stating that the content was a fake story that had been created with the intention of creating a 'viral' product.

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# Liverpool title hopes fade after West Ham draw

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
LONDON, APRIL 27

Jurgen Klopp said he was “not in the mood” to discuss Liverpool’s Premier League title chances after a 2-2 draw at West Ham on Saturday effectively snuffed out their hopes.

Just weeks ago Liverpool were on course for a quadruple of trophies but Klopp’s final season at Anfield is fizzling out.

The latest blow came at the London Stadium, where the visitors realistically had to win to have any chance of staying in the hunt alongside Arsenal and Manchester City.

A goal from Andy Robertson and an own goal from West Ham goalkeeper Alphonse Areola put Liverpool 2-1 in front but Michail Antonio powered a header past Allison Becker to pull David Moyes’s side level.

The single point leaves Liverpool third in the table on 75 points, one behind defending champions City, who have two games in hand. Leaders Arsenal are two points clear of Liverpool, with a game in hand.

Klopp, whose side were dumped out of the FA Cup and Europa League at the quarter-final stage, brushed aside questions about the title race in the aftermath of the disappointing draw.

“I’m not in the mood to talk about that to be honest or look at that at all,” he told TNT Sports. “We had to win here, we knew that, and we didn’t, and now we have a little bit more time between now and the next game.”

The German bemoaned his side’s squandered chances, which have cost them dear in recent weeks.

“When we are 2-1 up we could control it, and still, as I said, in a lot of moments playing really well but the final situation we didn’t take,” he said.

“That has been the story of the last four weeks.”

**Missed chances**

Liverpool were on the front foot from the start at the London Stadium but energy quickly drained out of the encounter and the atmosphere went flat.

West Ham midfielder Lucas Paqueta was lucky to escape punishment after a reckless early tackle on Alexis Mac Allister.

The contest livened up in the closing minutes of the first period, with Luis Diaz hitting the post for the visitors after good work down the left.

Two minutes later Liverpool goalkeeper Allison was called into action, making a sharp save from Jarrod Bowen’s deflected shot. But he was powerless to keep out Bowen’s header from the resulting corner, which took the England forward to 16 Premier League goals this season.

Liverpool emerged for the second half with renewed intent and Ryan Gravenberch fired over from just inside the box.

They were back on terms in the 48th minute when Robertson squeezed a shot past Areola at his near post.

Gravenberch attempted a flick minutes later but the chance went begging.

Angelo Ogbonna then made a crucial block as the game opened up before Trent Alexander-Arnold’s shot from distance was saved.

Liverpool got their noses in front in the 65th minute after Cody Gakpo’s shot hit Ogbonna, Tomas Soucek and Areola on its way into the net.

The visitors had chances to pull further ahead but Antonio headed home a Bowen cross in the 77th-minute to level.

Klopp threw on Mohamed Salah, Darwin Nunez and Joe Gomez after the equaliser in a desperate search for a winner.

Salah, who appeared to direct angry words at Klopp before he was introduced, raced forward as the clock ticked down.

His pass fell behind Nunez but Harvey Elliott picked up the ball, rattling a shot off the crossbar—Liverpool’s final clear chance.

West Ham, eighth in the Premier League table, face a battle in their bid to secure European football next season.

Moyes last season delivered the club’s first major trophy for 43 years but has been coy over his future.



Nepal captain Rohit Paudel reacts during the first T20 cricket match against West Indies A at the TU Cricket Ground in Kirtipur on Saturday.

# Paudel ton gives Nepal thrilling win over West Indies A in first T20

The skipper scores 112 runs off 54 balls to help the Rhinos chase down a huge target of 204 runs.

SPORTS BUREAU  
KATHMANDU, APRIL 27

Skipper Rohit Paudel scored a blistering century as Nepal defeated West Indies A by four wickets in the first T20 and took a 1-0 lead in the five-match series at the TU Cricket Ground in Kirtipur on Saturday.

Paudel smashed 112 runs in his aggressive 54-ball knock that featured 10 fours and six sixes, helping Nepal chase down a big target of 205 runs with two balls to spare.

Coach Monty Desai gave the responsibility of opening the batting to Anil Sah in place of regular opener and wicket keeper Aasif Sheikh, who was rested for the opening T20.

In February, the 25-year-old Sah had announced his return to international cricket with a fifty and an unbeaten century against Canada during the Nepal-Canada home bilateral ODI series. He also scored an unconquered half-century in Nepal’s nine-wicket thrashing of the Netherlands during the ICC Cricket World Cup League 2 the same month.

However, Sah has lost his form since, scoring only 42 runs from his last five innings.

On Saturday, Sah left the crease in the 2.1 overs making just five runs facing nine deliveries, caught by Kadeem Alleyne off Mathew Forde.

Nepal’s another regular opener Kushal Bhurtel is experiencing the lowest point of his career—he was dismissed for a duck for a three match in a row in Nepal’s forgettable ACC Men’s T20 Premier Cup campaign in Oman. Bhurtel is one of the only three Nepali cricketers (alongside Dipendra Singh Airee and Paudel) to have crossed 1000-run mark in men’s T20Is but his dip in form just one month before Nepal’s 2024 ICC Men’s T20 World Cup has raised question whether he would be fit to travel to the West Indies and the United States.

Desai, who is now feeling the pressure to reinstall steel in a failing Nepali team ahead of their crucial World Cup tournament, still put faith in Bhurtel but the opener struggled with the bat again, as he returned to the pavilion making 16 runs off 12 balls.

But Paudel came at number three and showed the world Nepal can emerge from the ashes, shouldering the responsibility and batting all the way to the 19 overs, and steering his team closer to victory.

Kushal Malla’s form is also a big concern. His 16 off 15 against the visiting West Indies was his highest individual score in his last four games.

In fact, Paudel returned from Oman wearing the tag of the biggest flop after failing to lead the Rhinos to the 2025 Asia Cup and 2024 ACC Emerging Teams Asia Cup.

But, back at home, Paudel showed character and demonstrated his side could learn from mistakes.

He added 64 runs with Dipendra for the fourth wicket before Dipendra, one of the consistent batters and the only bright spot of Nepal in the Premier Cup, fell to Keemo Paul in the 15.3 overs.

Paudel kept on fighting and reached his century off 47 balls. It was his first hundred in an international (unofficial) T20 match. It will not be recognised by the International Cricket Council though.

New batter Bibek Yadav (7) also departed without making significant contribution, before Forde finally undid Paudel in the 18.5 overs.

But the skipper had already laid a strong foundation.

With Nepal needing 14 runs from the last seven balls, Pratis GC smashed a four off Forde to balance the equation and Gulsan Jha cracked two consecutive boundaries off Oshane Thomas, helping Nepal overhaul the target in style.

Forde and Obed McCoy took two wickets each for the West Indies A, while Paul pocketed one.

Earlier, West Indies A posted 204-5 from their 20 overs after being invited to bat first, thanks to impressive knocks from captain Roston Chase and Alick Athanaze.

The tourists lost their opener Johnson Charles for a duck to Kamal Airee in the first over but Athanaze played a brisk 25-ball 47 and Chase cracked 74 runs from 46 balls to guide their team to a huge total.

Keacy Carty was also brilliant as he made 38 off 26 balls and assisted Chase to add 60 runs for the fifth wicket.

Andre Fletcher contributed 5-ball 13, while Alleyne added 14 not out off 15 balls for the visitors.

Kamal Airee, who was one of the four additions alongside Lokesh Bam, Binod Bhandari, Sagar Dhakal, in the squad, took a wicket. Dipendra, Rohit Paudel and Abinash Bohara also picked a wicket apiece.

The second T20 takes place on Sunday. This tour is the first for a West Indies side in Nepal.

## WEST INDIES A TOUR OF NEPAL

FIRST T20, TU CRICKET GROUND, KIRTIPUR  
TOSS: Nepal, field first.  
**West Indies A 204-5** (20/20 overs)  
Roston Chase 74 (46), Alick Athanaze 47 (25), Keacy Carty 38 (26); Rohit Paudel 1-0-10-1, Dipendra Singh Airee 3-0-30-1  
**Nepal 206-6** (19.4/20 overs)  
Rohit Paudel 112 (54), Dipendra Singh Airee 24 (18); Obed McCoy 4-0-34-2, Matthew Forde 4-0-49-2  
*Nepal win by four wickets.*  
Player of the match: Rohit Paudel  
Series result: Nepal lead the five-match series 1-0.

## HOROSCOPE



**ARIES** (March 21-April 19)

The morning, dear Aries, reminds you of the impending work week. You'll feel hungry for success throughout the next two days, inspiring you to implement new structures that will allow you to approach Monday from a grounded and capable headspace.



**TAURUS** (April 20-May 20)

Your spiritual wisdom awakens, dearest Taurus, igniting the sector of your chart that governs higher thinking and intuition. Take a few moments to connect with the divine forces that swirl within and around you, asking for guidance or messages from beyond.



**GEMINI** (May 21-June 21)

An empowering and transformative energy washes over you early this morning. Use this energy to invest fully in the commitments that matter most, allowing yourself to evolve alongside these ambitions.



**CANCER** (June 22-July 22)

The air fills with the sweet scent of admiration and connection. Use this energy to express how much loved ones mean to you, being mindful to show some extra support to yourself as well. Take action toward spiritual guidance.



**LEO** (July 23-August 22)

Use your Sunday to catch up on personal errands. Though you should ask for assistance if teamwork is required. Passions grow later, causing you to get lost in your most intimate connections. Just be mindful to maintain healthy boundaries.



**VIRGO** (August 23-September 22)

Your spritely and fun-loving nature shines through this morning, dearest Virgo. Use this energy as an excuse to devote your Sunday to artistic pursuits, personal interests, and good times. Love could take you on a grand journey this afternoon.



**LIBRA** (September 23-October 22)

You'll feel most in control and grounded when in the comfort of home, dearest Libra. Use this energy to catch up on household chores or finally pull the trigger on any home improvement projects you've been meaning to start.



**SCORPIO** (October 23-November 21)

Your words carry an elevated level of finesse and refinement. Take a direct approach toward manifesting change, establishing your position, triggering relationship shifts, or cultivating new opportunities.



**SAGITTARIUS** (November 22-December 21)

Embrace the luxury only a quiet Sunday can provide, dear Sagittarius. This vibe promotes leisure, nudging you to treat yourself while indulging the senses. If possible, head outside to connect with the great outdoors and its healing touch.



**CAPRICORN** (December 22-January 19)

The morning gives you much to feel good about. Use this to recommit to your own goals, using your elevated charisma and natural drive to proceed at a comfortable pace. You'll feel inspired to act on your most visionary ideas.



**AQUARIUS** (January 20-February 18)

Hide away from the outside world if you feel so inclined, dearest Aquarius. Now is the ideal time to implement new boundaries, especially if you've been giving away too much of yourself recently. Reflect on your financial dreams this afternoon.



**PISCES** (February 19-March 20)

You'll feel in tune with your community this morning, putting you in the mood to connect. Carve out respect amongst your peers, demonstrating class, kindness, and maintaining friendships. Now is a good time to get involved with local charitable organisations.

## CROSSWORD

**ACROSS**

1 Daddy

5 Bit of statistical information

10 Radar dot

14 Regretted

15 Obliterate

16 River in England

17 Dies —

18 Fall drink

19 Russian range

20 What's playing sign

22 Convincing

24 "Exodus" author

25 "That's disgusting!"

26 "Thou — not ..."

28 Stopped

33 Settled on a branch

34 Daisy type

35 Big bird

36 The — the merrier

37 Stannum

38 Soon

39 Sian creature

40 Crime fighter — Ness

42 Acquires

43 Debauchery

45 Strike down

47 Kid

48 Jot

49 Tournament of Roses event

52 Plane figure

56 — Musk

57 Actress — Perez

60 Drink a lot

61 Plod

62 — garde

63 Utah city

64 Accept

65 Goes at an easy pace

66 "Biggest Little City"

**DOWN**

1 Straight-laced

2 Atmosphere

3 Pome fruit

4 Sufficient

5 Trickery

6 Star sign

7 Trace

8 Application

9 Messenger god

10 Branches

11 Bait

12 "No man — island ..."

13 Strike

21 Internet address

23 Pointed arch

26 Incline

27 Chartered

28 Self-evident

29 Torn

30 Doctrine

31 Chew the scenery

32 Demands payment

33 Wet nurse

34 — Spunkmeyer cookies

38 Provocateur

40 Geraint's wife

41 Generous

44 Spectrum color

45 Pages

46 Assortment

48 Complain

49 Troublesome one

50 — breve

51 Chess piece

53 Wound with horns

54 Golf event

55 "Finding —"

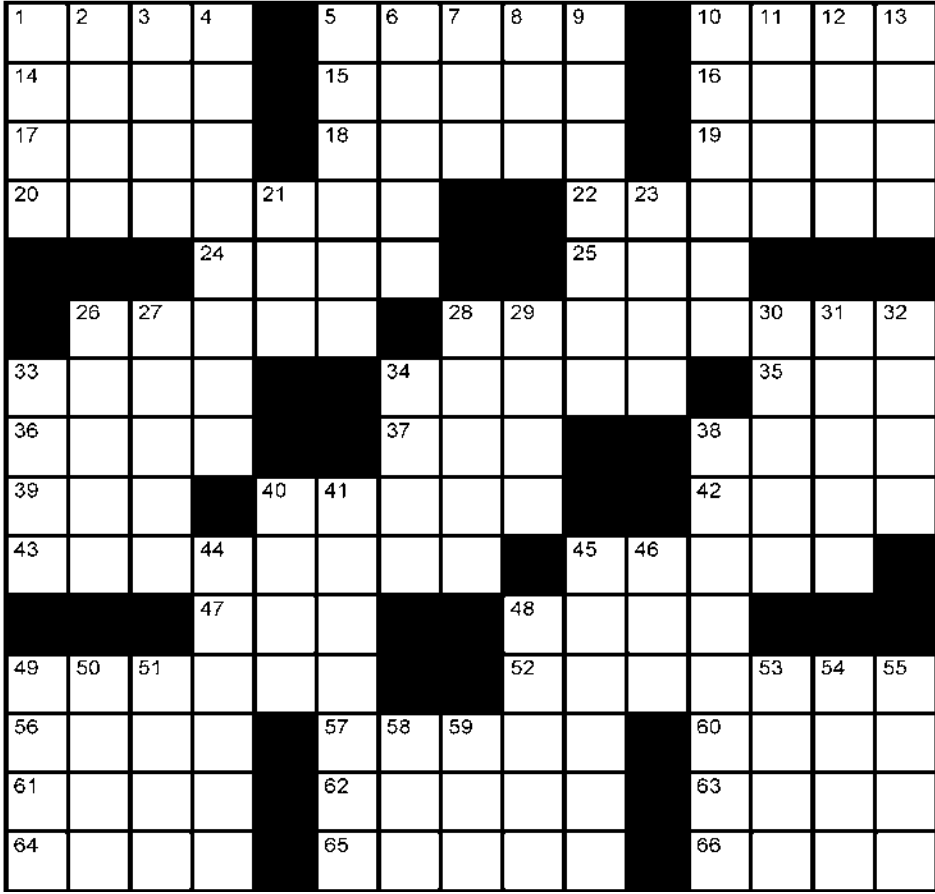
58 Ab — (from the beginning)

59 Juice

PREVIOUS PUZZLE SOLVED

S	L	A	M		P	A	V	E	D		A	P	S	E
P	E	R	U		I	R	A	T	E		C	O	O	L
E	V	E	R		G	E	N	U	S		C	O	N	E
D	I	A	D	E	M		D	I	V	U	L	G	E	
				E	R	E		H	E	R	E	S		
E	N	T	R	A	N	C	E		E	R	E	C	T	
T	O	E			T	H	A	T		B	R	A	W	L
A	R	T			S	A	V	O	R		B	A	A	
S	M	O	R	E		P	E	T	A		L	I	S	
	A	N	I	T	A		N	O	N	E	V	E	N	T
			S	U	R	F	S		D	O	E			
M	A	D	E	I	R	A		O	S	I	E	R	S	
A	L	A	S		E	R	R	O	R		L	E	A	P
T	O	L	U		S	C	A	R	P		E	L	B	A
S	E	E	P		T	E	N	T	H		D	Y	E	S

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## SUDOKU

4	8	7	3	1	5	2	6	9
5	2	6	9	7	8	1	4	3
1	9	3	2	4	6	7	5	8
8	3	5	1	6	7	9	2	4
2	6	9	5	3	4	8	7	1
7	4	1	8	9	2	5	3	6
9	5	4	6	2	1	3	8	7
6	1	8	7	5	3	4	9	2
3	7	2	4	8	9	6	1	5

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

7				6			2	9
2	4						3	
							1	8
				5		8		
			9	2	3			
		4		6				
3	8	1						
		2					7	1
	7	6			5			8

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★



FICTION PARK

# A promise of new beginning

With a baby on the horizon and a foreign land as her new reality, Kamana faced the daunting question of her place in this brave new world.

SANTOSH KALWAR

The sun dipped below Chitwan's horizon as Kamana wrapped up another long shift. Her feet ached for rest and her heart longed for the indulgence of a hearty dinner, but familial duty beckoned. With a sigh, she redirected her steps towards her family home. There, amidst the warm embraces and familiar chatter, stood Shankar—a dashing familiar face from her childhood, the man whose silent admiration had flourished from schoolyard glances.

With intentions as clear as the sky, Shankar sought her hand in marriage. Agreeing to a courtship, Kamana stepped into a dance of destiny with the man who once lived in her daydreams.

The days unfurled like the petals of a lotus, revealing a profound love that Kamana found herself enveloped in its bloom, wedded to the man of her reveries. But fate, ever the trickster, had surprises tucked up its sleeve. Shankar revealed plans for a new life in America, a land of dreams where opportunity beckoned like the stars. Yet, just as their American journey began, life stirred within Kamana—a child, a promise of new beginnings.

With a baby on the horizon and a foreign land as her new reality, Kamana faced the daunting question of her place in this brave new world, where a pregnant foreigner's prospects seemed as uncertain as the fluttering of a butterfly's wings.

"Shankar, I don't know how to find work here while pregnant."

"You are my wife now, so you don't need to worry about these things. I will provide for you and the children. You will stay home and care for the children and the house."

Kamana honestly didn't like the idea of staying at home, but for now, it seemed like the best decision for her. Soon, their son was born, and a little girl was born a couple of years later. Kamana seemed lost in the daily routine of caring for the children, cooking and cleaning. She had lost her identity as a person and was now just Shankar's wife. Before she knew it, ten years had passed, and she couldn't remember having an identity of her own anymore.

The days she worked and lived off her own money were gone, but she still missed those days. Having something to do that made her feel important and like she belonged.

Trapped in the existential void of being



SHUTTERSTOCK

known merely as Shankar's wife, Kamana grappled with the erasure of her essence.

For a decade, she had slipped through Kamana's fingers like grains of sand, each year amplifying her sense of isolation in a land that was home yet not entirely. She moved through her American life as though wrapped in a translucent veil, visible yet separated from those around her.

Her life in Nepal, vibrant with friendships and familiarity, now played out in distant echoes carried on the wind. As she tended to her children, a creeping realisation hollowed her spirit—she had become a mere shadow of her former self, an empty vessel where once a fierce soul blazed.

On an unremarkable day, amidst the mundane lull, a spark ignited within her. Kamana could no longer wither in the confines of her bubble; the time had come to reclaim her essence, to seek her rightful place in this sprawling tapestry. She yearned to rediscover the fire that once defined her, the unique essence of being that whispered, insistently—Kamana.

"Shankar, I can't live this way anymore. The kids are growing up, and I need something more in my life than just caring for them. I want to find who I am, get a job and

feel like I am doing something," Kamana tried to explain to her husband.

"How would I look? I can't support my family, so I have my wife go off and try to find her work. Your place is at home taking care of the children, and mine is going out and making money. You already have an identity; you are Kamana; you already have a belonging; it is here with the children," he replied.

He tried to argue with her, not wanting her to go out into the world and leave being a housewife.

"I feel empty compared to how I used to feel. When we first started seeing each other and I was working and helping people,

you could see how happy I was. Look at me and tell me that you see the same joy in me having to stay at home all the time. The children are now old enough to let themselves in after school."

Weeks of tension strained Kamana and Shankar's marriage as they grappled with her need for self-fulfilment. Eventually, Shankar recognised that her happiness was paramount and blessed her to seek what would give her a sense of belonging.

Lost at first, Kamana wandered the city, considering various roles that might reignite her sense of identity. It wasn't until her eyes met a billboard for nursing school that her path became apparent—an opportunity to nurture her true self.

"I want to attend school and become a nurse," She told her husband.

"You're not the cheery woman I married," Shankar replied.

He was unhappy and told her he didn't want her doing something that would take so long to learn. So that she could find something else that gave her a less time-consuming purpose, she was determined, though she knew that helping people medically would be the thing that made her feel whole again.

Trapped in the existential void of being known merely as Shankar's wife, Kamana grappled with the erasure of her essence.

Kalwar is a writer from Chitwan.

## A closer look at OCD

Psychologist Bohara explains obsessive-compulsive disorder, it's symptoms, coping strategies and myths.

ANISH GHIMIRE

From the outside, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) might seem like a simple case of being overly tidy or organised, but it goes far deeper than just cleanliness. It's a complex disorder characterised by intrusive thoughts, urges or images (obsessions) that cause anxiety, as well as repetitive behaviours or mental acts (compulsions) aimed at reducing that anxiety.

Psychologist **Gopal Bahadur Bohara** puts further light on the issue. He is currently working as a Psychologist Supervisor under the Centre for Mental Health & Counselling - Nepal (CMC - Nepal).

### What is OCD?

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, or OCD, is a mental health condition where individuals experience recurring unwanted thoughts known as obsessions, along with repetitive behaviours known as compulsions. Those with OCD often feel compelled to carry out these rituals to alleviate the anxiety triggered by their obsessions. However, the relief is usually short-lived, and the symptoms tend to recur.

### What are the common symptoms of this disorder?

Common symptoms of OCD include obsessions, which are recurring and unwanted thoughts. They can be about all sorts of things, like worrying about getting sick from germs, being afraid that something bad will happen to you or someone you care about, or constantly needing things to be just right. Compulsions, on the other hand, are the actions you feel like you have to do because of those thoughts. It's like you just can't help it. Maybe you find yourself washing your hands repeatedly, checking the locks on your door multiple times, or needing to count things or arrange them in a certain order.

These behaviours might give you temporary relief from the anxiety caused by your obsessions, but they can also take up a lot of your time and interfere with your daily life. That's why it's important to recognise the signs of OCD and seek help if you think you might be struggling with it.

### What are some common misconceptions about OCD?

Misconceptions about obsessive-com-



pulsive disorder (OCD) are widespread and can hinder proper understanding and treatment. One common misconception is the belief that individuals with OCD can simply stop their compulsions through willpower. In reality, these compulsions are often driven by intense anxiety, making them difficult to control without proper treatment.

Misconceptions about OCD are widespread and can hinder proper understanding and treatment.

Additionally, there's a misconception that OCD is rare when in fact, it affects about one to two percent of the population, highlighting its prevalence and importance as a mental health concern.

Another misconception is that OCD is solely about being neat and organised. While some individuals may have a need for symmetry or orderliness, OCD



PHOTO COURTESY: GOPAL BAHADUR BOHARA  
Psychologist Gopal Bahadur Bohara



involves intrusive thoughts and repetitive behaviours that can significantly disrupt daily life. These intrusive thoughts, coupled with compulsions, form a complex cycle that can cause distress and impairment beyond organisational preferences. It's crucial to understand the multifaceted nature of OCD and dispel misconceptions to ensure those affected receive appropriate support and treatment.

### What are some effective treatment options available for individuals with OCD?

Effective treatment options for individuals with OCD include cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), exposure therapy and medication. CBT helps individuals identify and change their thought patterns and behaviours related to OCD, while exposure therapy involves gradually exposing individuals to their feared situations or triggers to help them learn healthier ways of responding.

In some cases, medication, such as selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), can also be beneficial in managing symptoms. However, the best treatment approach may vary from person to person, so individuals with OCD need to consult with a psychiatrist or therapist to determine the most suitable treatment plan for their specific needs.

### How does this disorder impact daily functioning and quality of life?

OCD can greatly disrupt various aspects of a person's life, including daily routines, social interactions and work or school performance. It falls under the umbrella of anxiety-related disorders and manifests in various ways. For instance, someone with a fear of con-



tamination may struggle to touch surfaces that others have touched, such as doorknobs or windows, leading to difficulty in completing everyday tasks.

Similarly, individuals with washing compulsions may spend excessive amounts of time cleaning their hands to alleviate their anxiety. These behaviours can consume a significant amount of time and energy, making it challenging to engage in normal activities and maintain healthy relationships. OCD's impact on daily functioning underscores the importance of seeking appropriate treatment and support to manage symptoms and improve quality of life.

### Are there any specific coping strategies or techniques that you recommend for managing it?

When managing OCD symptoms, several coping strategies can be effective. Acceptance involves becoming aware of thoughts and feelings without judgment and accepting obsessions without trying to suppress them. Gradual exposure to feared situations while resisting compulsive behaviours can help reduce anxiety over time. Additionally, maintaining a healthy lifestyle, including regular exercise, a balanced diet, sufficient sleep, and stress-reduction techniques, is crucial for symptom management.

Seeking support from friends, family, or a therapist is essential for encouragement and guidance. Distraction techniques, such as engaging in hobbies or exercise, can redirect focus away from obsessions and provide temporary relief from anxiety. By incorporating these coping strategies into daily life, individuals with OCD can better manage their symptoms and improve their overall well-being.

## 'Shame' wins at Moscow International Film Festival

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mexican film has won the top prize Friday at the Moscow International Film Festival, which took place as major Western studios boycott the Russian market and as Russia's war in Ukraine grinds into its third year.

'Shame', a film by director Miguel Salgado and co-produced by Mexico and Qatar, was the most highly awarded film at the festival, which began in 1935 and has been held annually since 1999. This year's edition included more than 240 films from 56 countries.

In his victory speech, Salgado hailed the festival as one of the most important in the world, adding that he was pleased to see his film, a thriller, being shown so widely and that it was a "great gift" to see so many people moved by it.

The head of the jury for the festival's main award, the Golden St George, was Fridrik Thor Fridriksson, from NATO member Iceland.

Mexican director Miguel Salgado poses with his Golden Saint George trophy at the festival in Moscow, Russia on Friday.



AP/RSS  
Mexican director Miguel Salgado poses with his Golden Saint George trophy at the festival in Moscow, Russia on Friday.

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