

April 30th and May 1st news:

International:

Buddhist Conference concludes in Lumbini

In Nepal International Buddhist Conference concluded in Lumbini, the birth place of Gautama Buddha on 29th April

In his concluding remarks Prime Minister of Nepal K. P. Sharma Oli said that Lumbini is a fountain of light that candles Buddha's quest for enlightenment. He said that deliberations on Gautama Buddha's immortal teachings have great relevance in the contemporary world.

Nepal PM Oli also said that messages of Buddha always guide in pursuant to peace, tolerance and harmony. Participants from more than 20 countries including India attended two day conference.

It was organised as part of 2562nd Buddha Jayanti celebrations. The basic objective of the conference was to disseminate teachings of Gautam Buddha and spread the messages of nonviolence, brotherhood, co-existence, love and peace to the international community.

National:

All villages in India connected with electricity: Modi

All villages in India have now been connected with electricity, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced on 30th April. On 29th April Leisang village in Manipur's Senapati district became the last village to be connected to the national power grid.

As per official data, there were 18,452 villages without electricity in the country at the time of Modi's taking office in May 2014. The work of bringing power to India's nearly 6 lakh villages had been undertaken under the government's Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana.

As per government data, 1,236 villages are uninhabited and 35 have been notified as grazing reserves.

The government has set the next target of providing electricity connections to over 4 crore rural and urban households by March 2019 under the Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana (Saubhagya) initiative.

Bilateral:

India and Nepal agree to review bilateral trade treaty by July

India and Nepal have agreed to review their bilateral trade treaty. The decision was taken at a meeting of India-Nepal Inter-Government Committee (IGC) on Trade, Transit and Cooperation to Control Unauthorised Trade, held in Kathmandu last week. Both countries agreed to initiate a comprehensive review of the treaty by July this year. The treaty was last revised in 2009.

The two sides also discussed amendments to the bilateral Treaty of Transit signed in 1999 to further facilitate movement of Nepal's trade with third countries. Since most of the bilateral trade takes place through land customs stations across the border between India and Nepal, the two countries also agreed on synchronising development of border trade infrastructure to ensure timely utilization of investment in border infrastructure.

In order to enhance the volume of trade, both sides also emphasised the need for harmonisation of standards and expediting progress on MoUs between the concerned agencies, including BIS and FSSAI, from the Indian side.

Sports:

Prajnesh wins

Prajnesh Gunneswaran has clinched his first ever singles tennis title on the ATP Challenger circuit. In the final of the Kunming Open at Anning, China, he defeated Egypt's Mohammed Safwat

With this win, Prajnesh pocketed 21,600 US Dollars and earned 125 points which are likely to help him jump more than 80 places when the new ranking chart will be issued on 30th April. At present, the southpaw is ranked 260.

India will now have three players inside top-200 as Prajnesh is expected to be around 175. Yuki Bhambri leads the chart for the country at number 83 and is followed by Ramkumar Ramanathan at the 115 position.

It may be recalled that Prajnesh had won the decisive fifth rubber of the recent Asia/Oceania Group I second round Davis Cup Tie against China at Tianjin.

Bhavani Devi wins silver

India's C A Bhavani Devi won a silver medal in the sabre event of the Tournoi World Cup Satellite Fencing Championship in Reykjavik, Iceland. The Tamil Nadu fencer went down 10-15 to USA's Alexis Browne in the final. Bhavani Devi had won a gold medal at the Reykjavik tournament last year to become the first Indian win to do so in an international fencing event.

Nadal wins Barcelona title

Rafael Nadal won his 11th Barcelona title on 29th April when he breezed past Greek teenager Stefanos Tsitsipas in the final.

It was world number one Nadal's 55th career clay-court title while he also extended his winning streak on the surface to 46 consecutive sets. The 31-year-old Spaniard won his 11th Monte Carlo Masters last weekend also without dropping a set.

This victory reinforced his status as the overwhelming favourite to lift the French Open for an 11th time in June. Nadal now has 77 titles overall while his career clay-court match record stands at 401 wins against just 35 defeats.

Awards:

Sitanshu Yashaschandra: Gujarati poet, playwright and academic Sitanshu Yashaschandra were selected for 2017 Saraswati Samman for his collection of verses (poetry) titled “**Vakhar**” published in 2009. It was 27 edition of the award.

Sitanshu Yashaschandra was born in 1941 in Gujarat’s Bhuj district. He has three poetry collections Odysseusnu Halesu, Jatayu, and Vakhar to his credit. He is also a recipient of the Padma Shri and Sahitya Akademi Award.