

Climate change, pollution pose major challenges for Himalayas: Nepal President

KATHMANDU, MAY 27: Sustainable tourism, responsible mountaineering and conservation of the Himalayan environment are the defining challenges of the day, Nepal's President Ramchandra Paudel said on Wednesday.

Addressing the 'Everest Summiters Summit - 2026' organised in Kathmandu, Paudel said Mount Everest was not only a geographical identity of Nepal but also the pride, prestige and an invaluable natural heritage of the country.

"The country's economy has benefitted from the tourism sector through the conservation, promotion, publicity and balanced use



of these assets," he said.

Paudel stated that global warming, the impacts of climate change and the accumulation of garbage in mountaineering areas have emerged as major challenges of the modern

world.

"Addressing these issues and conserving the environment and biodiversity in the Everest region, while making mountaineering safe, sustainable and technology-friendly, requires

additional efforts and co-operation from all sides," he said.

He pointed out that conservation, promotion and balanced utilisation of Himalayan resources directly support Nepal's tourism industry and broader economic development.

Mukunda Prasad Niraula, secretary of the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, also expressed concerns about climate change and its impact on Mount Everest and other mountains of Nepal.

It was the second such Everest summit. Around 600 people, including 150 summiters from two dozen countries, attended it on Wednesday. (PTI)

Starting new forever war: US Senator slams Trump over Iran conflict

WASHINGTON, MAY 27: US Senator Mark Warner criticised President Donald Trump for "starting a new forever war" and claimed that American military actions continue against Iran.

In a post on X, the Senator, who also serves as Vice Chair of the Senate Intelligence Committee, accused Trump of breaking promises and increasing costs. He wrote: "Donald Trump keeps claiming the war is about to end... but the truth is, America is still striking Iran. He's breaking every promise, starting new forever wars, and raising costs on everything."

His remarks come as negotiations progress at a snail's pace, while the US launched new strikes on southern Iran on Monday, targeting Iranian missile sites and boats attempting to place mines.

The strikes were in "self-defence" and designed "to protect our troops from threats posed by Iranian forces", US Central Command (Centcom) said in a statement.

US State Department spokesperson Tommy Pigott defended the administration's position, saying President Trump is taking "concrete actions" to pre-



vent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon.

"It is President Trump who is taking concrete actions to keep the Iranian regime from obtaining a nuclear weapon," Pigott said.

He added that Trump has strengthened US alliances in the Persian Gulf and advanced regional peace through the Abraham Accords.

"President Trump's results are speaking for themselves, the consistency of his message and mission to make America stronger and restore American leadership," he said.

From day one, Trump has maintained that Iran must not obtain a nuclear weapon, and has taken decisive action toward that goal, Pigott said.

Meanwhile, CNN reported that recent polling

shows limited public support for prolonged military operations. A Fox News poll found that only 39% of registered voters support US military operations continuing "as long as it takes," while 61% prefer a "limited timeframe."

A New York Times-Siena College poll found that 52% of voters believe the US should end military operations even without a nuclear deal, while only 37% support continuing strikes if negotiations fail.

At the same time, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) has warned of retaliation following US strikes on Iranian missile sites and vessels near the Strait of Hormuz. The IRGC also claimed that 25 vessels, including oil tankers, transited the Strait during the "last day and night."

As talks continue toward a

possible memorandum of understanding, disagreements over language on Iran's nuclear programme and sanctions remain key obstacles in reaching a final deal.

Iran and the United States have signalled progress toward an agreement aimed at converting the ceasefire that ended weeks of conflict into a more durable settlement.

Both sides are discussing a framework memorandum outlining a roadmap for resolving outstanding issues, though officials describe the deal as still a "work in progress," as US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said.

"We're either going to have a good agreement, or we're going to have to deal with it another way," Rubio said during a visit to India on Monday.

Meanwhile, Republican hawks have criticised the emerging deal, calling it a "disaster" and questioning the administration's approach. Roger Wicker, chair of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said a proposed 60-day ceasefire would render earlier military efforts "for naught," adding that key objectives of the operation risk being undermined.

Australian police plan to form heavily armed team in response to Bondi Beach massacre

MELBOURNE, MAY 27: An Australian state police force has worked to form a heavily armed rapid response team since gunmen killed 15 people and wounded three police officers armed only with handguns at a Sydney Hanukkah celebration in December, a government inquiry heard Wednesday.

Testifying before the Royal Commission on Antisemitism and Social Cohesion, which is investigating the spread of antisemitism in Australia ahead of the December 14 attack at Bondi Beach, New South Wales Police Deputy Commissioner David Hudson described a firepower imbalance.

The police force has responded with a plan to establish an Armed Response Command, equipped with semiautomatic rifles, and by reviving a priority-resourced operation that focused on antisemitic crimes and retaliations against Muslim targets, Hudson said.

Rifles within the force have been largely restricted to two specialised paramilitary squads, he said.



Father and son Sajid and Naveed Akram allegedly opened fire with two shotguns and a hunting rifle on hundreds of people celebrating Hanukkah in a beachside park. Only four police officers were present. They were armed with Glock pistols, which are only accurate for a short distance. "On December 14, our police officers were placed at significant risk being in a gunfight armed with 9 mm Glockes against long arms," Hudson told the inquiry.

Within five minutes of the Akrams allegedly opening fire, 11 police officers had reached the scene.

Three of those officers were among the dozens wounded in the massacre. Police shot the father dead and apprehended the wounded son less than eight minutes after the first shot was fired, the inquiry heard Monday.

In response to the shooting, police also revived Operation Shelter, which had been established in response to escalating community tensions days after the October 7, 2023, Hamas attack on Israel, Hudson said.

Hudson had established Operation Shelter as a "high visibility" proactive police operation to ensure

there was no escalation of street violence in Sydney. At its peak, 200 officers had been assigned daily to the operation, which had the authority to bring in outside staff from other duties as required.

Operation Shelter existed "in name only" when the Bondi massacre occurred, Hudson said Wednesday, explaining that the program was quickly revived after the shooting and elevated to an "active policing resource" that will remain until the armed response squad is fully operational in the next 18 months to two years. (AP)

China executes man for poisoning gaming tycoon linked to Netflix's '3 Body Problem'

TAIPEI (TAIWAN), MAY 27: Chinese authorities have executed a man convicted of using poison to kill a billionaire gaming tycoon linked to the Netflix adaptation of "The Three-Body Problem" over a professional dispute, local media reported Tuesday.

Xu Yao was found guilty of killing Lin Qi, the founder of the Shanghai-based Yoozoo Games, which holds the film adaptation rights for the blockbuster science-fiction trilogy known by the title of its first book, "The Three-Body Problem."

The sci-fi trilogy, by Chinese author Liu Cixin, has been translated into more than 40 languages and adapted into television and game productions includ-

ing Netflix's popular "3 Body Problem" series released in 2024.

Xu, the former head of a subsidiary of Yoozoo Games, poisoned Lin in 2020 over being sidelined by the founder shortly after Xu helped his superior land the Netflix deal.

Xu was convicted in 2024, and Shanghai business magazine Yicai Global and other outlets reported he was executed May 21.

Lin's company confirmed the execution in a statement Tuesday on the Weibo social media platform.

"Recently, the case concerning Mr. Lin Qi, the founder of Three-Body Universe, has finally reached its conclusion, and justice has ultimately been

served," the statement read.

"All of us at the company are deeply grateful for the upholding of justice," it continued.

Yoozoo Games did not immediately respond Wednesday to a request for additional comment.

The Shanghai High People's Court did not immediately respond to an emailed request for comment.

According to local media reports, Xu spent hundreds of thousands of yuan (tens of thousands of dollars) to buy highly toxic substances online, including alpha-amanitin, a lethal compound found in some poisonous mushrooms.

He disguised the poisons

as probiotic pills, as well as put them inside coffee capsules, water containers and whiskey bottles, which he then shared with Lin and other company employees.

Lin was taken to the hospital in December 2020 and died a few days later. He was 39.

Several others became sick but recovered.

"The Three-Body Problem" series has been hugely popular both in China and abroad. Liu, its author, became the first Chinese writer to win the prestigious Hugo Award, the genre's biggest prize.

Domestically, the works spurred the growth of a sci-fi industry spanning movies, video games, books, magazines and exhibits. (AP)

Philippine bishop, ex-ICC judge lead new inquiry into thousands of Duterte-era killings

MANILA, MAY 27: A group led by a Roman Catholic bishop in the Philippines launched a fact-finding body Wednesday to document accounts of witnesses and other details of ex-President Rodrigo Duterte's bloody anti-drugs crackdown that the government can use to prosecute law enforcers.

Duterte, who ended his stormy six-year presidency in 2022, was arrested last year and taken to the Netherlands, where he is facing trial before the International Criminal Court in The Hague for alleged crimes against humanity over the killings.

Sen. Ronald dela Rosa, Duterte's loyal ally and his former national police chief, who first enforced the bloody crackdown, is wanted by the ICC as a co-perpetrator for some of the thousands of killings, which alarmed Western governments and human rights groups.

Dela Rosa has gone into hiding and is being hunted by Philippine authorities, who have vowed to enforce an ICC warrant for his arrest and turn him over to the global court.

Dela Rosa and the brash-speaking Duterte have denied authorising extrajudicial killings, but the then



president had repeatedly threatened suspects with death.

Many of the thousands of police officers directly involved in the brutal crackdown that left thousands of mostly poor suspects dead have not been thoroughly investigated, and very few have been convicted, according to human rights groups.

"This is long overdue," Cardinal Pablo Virgilio David said in a news conference. The nongovernment "EJK Truth Commission" he helped organise will focus on helping victims, their families and even repentant law enforcers to finally find closure, David said. News Bulletins

"This is an opportunity

for a catharsis, so we can recover our dignity as a country," David said. "Ultimately, what we aspire for is healing not only for the victims but also our institutions."

Raul Pangalangan, a respected Philippine lawyer, who has served for years as an ICC judge, said the commission he will head "was created to ensure that the stories of victims, survivors and families are heard, verified and preserved."

The commission plans to hold public hearings.

"These things happened because everybody looked the other way," Pangalangan said. "It is almost a conspiracy of silence."

Members of the commission said they will allow the government to use their

findings to help authorities investigate, prosecute and seek accountability. Their periodic reports may be submitted to justice and human rights officials, they said.

David called on civil society, academic, religious and other groups to help the commission and said a large charity group in Germany has offered funding support.

Commission member Raquel Fortun, a forensic pathologist with the state-run University of the Philippines, told The Associated Press that the task of establishing facts years after the killings would be difficult. There were efforts by some law enforcers involved in the killings to evade accountability.

JERUSALEM/GAZA, MAY 27: Israel said it has killed the commander of Hamas's military wing, Mohammed Odeh, in a strike in the Gaza Strip on Tuesday days after his predecessor was eliminated in a similar fashion.

Mohammad Odeh was killed in an operation targeting a residential building in one of Gaza City's busiest commercial districts, the Israeli military and domestic intelligence agency Shin Bet said.

A statement from the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and Shin Bet said: "As part of the joint operation by the IDF and Shin Bet to eliminate the terrorist Mohammed Odeh, several buildings in the heart of Gaza City that served as a hideout for him were attacked, after months of intelligence surveillance in order to track his movements and the movements of his assistants in the organisation."

The Prime Minister's office of Israel has released a statement saying at the direction of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Israel Katz, the IDF has just struck at Mohammed Odeh in Gaza, the new leader of the military wing of the Hamas terrorist organization and "one of the architects of the October 7 massacre."



Odeh had headed Hamas's intelligence division during the October 7, 2023 cross-border attack that killed around 1,200 people and was appointed roughly a week ago to replace Ezzedine al-Haddad, who was eliminated in an IDF strike in the Gaza Strip two weeks ago (on May 15), Netanyahu said.

At least three Palestinians were killed and dozens wounded when five missiles struck the upper floors of the al-Kayali building simultaneously, witnesses and local medics said. Streets nearby were crowded with shoppers ahead of the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha.

"As part of the joint operation by the IDF and Shin Bet to eliminate the terrorist Mohammed Odeh, several

buildings in the heart of Gaza City that served as a hideout for him were attacked, after months of intelligence surveillance," the military said in a statement.

Hamas is yet to make an official statement.

Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz said Hamas would no longer exercise civilian or military control over Gaza, and that a plan for what he termed "voluntary migration" from the enclave would be implemented "at the right time and in the right way."

The strikes came despite a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas that took effect on October 10. Gaza's Hamas-run health ministry says some 900 Palestinians have been killed in Israeli strikes since the truce began, figures that do not dis-

tinguish between combatants and civilians. Four Israeli soldiers have been killed by militants over the same period, the military said. Israel maintains it retains the right to target Hamas members and accuses the group of breaching the ceasefire by failing to disarm. Hamas has repeatedly accused Israel of violating the agreement and targeting civilians.

Broader peace negotiations remain deadlocked. A U.S.-led plan announced in January envisaged a transitional administration governing Gaza alongside demilitarisation and reconstruction, but disarmament talks have stalled and Hamas appears to be reasserting authority, having reactivated its police force.