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WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOUR

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Janakpur Jomsom

TODAY

NATIONAL

The shift in the federal coalition has caused ripples in provincial coalitions as well, prompting chief ministers to intensify manoeuvres to secure their positions through Cabinet expansions or reshuffles. **Pg 2**

OPINION

Merely starting pre-budget discussions will not be sufficient. Empowering Parliament in budget formulation and allocation is crucial for effective vertical and horizontal distribution of funds, writes *Khim Lal Devkota*. **Pg 4**



MONEY

Nepal spent an average of Rs50 billion annually on post-disaster response between 2012 and 2020, says a report titled 'Country Diagnostic on Inclusive Insurance and Risk Finance for Nepal'. **Pg 5**

WORLD

American astronaut Thomas P Stafford, who commanded a dress rehearsal flight for the 1969 moon landing as well as the first US-Soviet space linkup, died Monday, at the age of 93. **Pg 6**

SPORTS

Nary Thapa Magar, first captain of Nepal national women's cricket team, has retired. She captained Nepal's inaugural international tournament in Johor in Malaysia in July 2007. **Pg 7**



Work on a flyover continues between two bustling road lanes at the Gwarko intersection of the Ring Road in Lalitpur, as pictured on Tuesday. The tall structure is a tower crane. Officials say 40 percent of the work on the project has been completed in 13 months.

POST PHOTO: HEMANTA SHRESTHA

Ruling five-party alliance unveils an ambitious 'vision statement'

If this coalition fails to deliver, the nation will slip into crisis, warns Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal.

POST REPORT
KATHMANDU, MARCH 19

The five ruling parties on Tuesday unveiled an ambitious set of minimum policy priorities and a joint resolution, which is regarded as the government's vision statement.

At a function at the Prime Minister Office, CPN-UML Vice-chairman Bishnu Poudel read out the government's policy priorities and joint resolution that encompass corruption control, land management, forestry, climate adaptation and disaster management, among other things.

The preamble of the vision paper states that the government pledges to combat activities that undermine the constitution and its spirit; strengthen the federal democratic republic; and will restore trust and hope among the people by addressing the current economic lethargy, impunity and frustration among professionals.

It also vows to change the negative sentiments, frustration and anger among the youth and work to protect all past achievements made through various struggles. It underscores the government's commitment to prioritising sovereignty, territorial integrity, and fostering robust and balanced international relations.

The statement addresses youth and sports, tourism, culture, and social harmony, and emphasises women's participation, empowerment and social inclusion. Further, it commits to address transitional justice, bring sustainable peace, and defend national

interests through an independent foreign policy, among other crucial issues.

The preamble of the document titled 'Minimum Policy Priorities and Common Resolution' states that the coalition government is committed to instilling hope and confidence among the people by tackling pressing issues like economic downturn and impunity.

It emphasises the urgency to complete outstanding tasks related to the peace process. Additionally, it commits to provide medical treatment, jobs, and rehabilitation to individuals who suffered disabilities during the conflict period (1996-2006).

Coalition stresses the urgency to complete remaining tasks of the peace process.

Furthermore, it highlights the necessity of fulfilling the tasks related to compensation, rehabilitation, and reintegration of conflict-hit families.

The common minimum programme includes a commitment to uphold the integrity of financial institutions; improve public infrastructure; promote good governance through efficient service delivery; boost employment, entrepreneurship and domestic production; and coordinate the development of physical infrastructure.

>> Continued on page 2

Congress rejects PM's defence of Lamichhane

CPN-UML chief Oli dismisses the main opposition party's call for a parliamentary probe on the home minister.

BINOD GHIMIRE
KATHMANDU, MARCH 19

The Nepali Congress has demanded that the government and ruling parties form a parliamentary panel to investigate cooperative fraud charges against Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Home Affairs Rabi Lamichhane, or it will obstruct the Parliament.

The main opposition party asked for a parliamentary panel saying it was not satisfied with Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal's clarification on the matter. Starting last week, the largest party had been pressing for his clarification over Lamichhane's alleged involvement in the fraud involving millions of rupees.

Appearing before the Parliament on Tuesday, Dahal said there is no evidence to implicate his home minister in the fraud case. He said after minutely studying police investigation into the fraud at the Pokhara-based Surya Darshan Cooperative, he can confidently assert that Lamichhane is clean.

"So far, no investigation suggests he was ever involved in the cooperative in any role, nor has he been named in the case, which is sub-judice," said Dahal. "As he has already cleared the loan, the police have briefed me that no further investigation is needed against him."

Dahal, however, said there would be no leniency in taking action against Lamichhane if

evidence of his involvement in the fraud emerges. "There will be no compromise in upholding good governance. Nobody, from any party, will be exempt," he said. "If Lamichhane is involved in the fraud, no force can stop the government from taking action against him."

He even questioned the Congress, asking whether there could be an agreement in taking action against everyone against whom cases have been filed with government authorities.

Nepali Congress has threatened to obstruct House if home minister is not investigated.

When the Nepali Congress was still in the government, it had been objecting to the CPN-UML's demands on sacking three ministers including Mohan Bahadur Basnet, then minister for health and population.

Basnet has been under an investigation of the Commission for Investigation of Abuse of Authority for alleged corruption in the procurement of the Telecommunication Traffic Monitoring and Fraud Control System (Teramocs) for the Nepal Telecommunication Authority.

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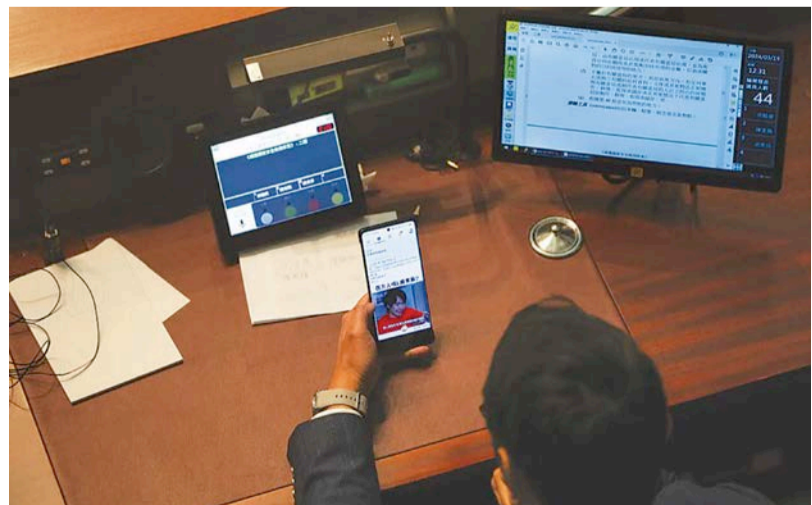
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How will a new national security law affect different walks of life in Hong Kong?

Business people, financial professionals and journalists are concerned.



A lawmaker watches his phone during the second reading of the Basic Law Article 23 legislation at the Legislative Council in Hong Kong, on Tuesday.

KANIS LEUNG/AP
HONG KONG, MARCH 19

As Hong Kong passed a new national security law, the city that evolved from a swampy fishing village to a financial center embarked on another transformation, one that may redefine its role on the world stage

and the liberties of its citizens.

For the government and supporters of Beijing, the legislation is the keystone in fulfilling a constitutional duty, heralding a new era focused squarely on economic prosperity. It will take effect on Saturday.

However, for those who value Hong Kong's once-vibrant political culture

and commitment to openness, the legislation exacerbates fears of dwindling Western-style civil liberties that are fundamental to its allure as a global financial hub.

Here's what you need to know about the new law.

Doesn't the city already have a national security law?

Four years ago, Beijing imposed a sweeping security law triggered by the massive anti-government protests in 2019.

The law was used to prosecute many leading activists, including media tycoon Jimmy Lai and former student leaders like Joshua Wong and Lester Shum. Others were silenced or forced into self-exile. Dozens of civil society groups facing police investigations and other obstacles closed, as well as vocal pro-democracy media outlets Apple Daily and Stand News. The drastic political changes prompted a large number of young professionals and middle-class families to emigrate to Britain, Canada, Taiwan, Australia and the United States, among other places.

Beijing and Hong Kong governments say the law helped bring back stability.

>> Continued on page 2

NATIONAL

DISTRICT DIGEST

Tiger mauls woman to death

PARSA: A 40-year-old woman died after being attacked by a tiger at Malibasti in ward 4 of Thori Rural Municipality in Parsa district on Monday. According to the Area Police Office in Thori, the body of Kalawati Khatri was recovered from the buffer zone of the Parsa National Park. Khatri had gone into the forest alone to collect fodder. The victim sustained injuries around her neck and several parts of her body, said police inspector Santosh Rai. The body was sent to the Narayani Hospital in Birgunj for postmortem. According to Rai, Monday's incident is the first incident of human-tiger conflict as tigers have not been seen in the area before.

Limi children deprived of measles-rubella vaccine

BIRENDRANAGAR: The children of Limi valley in remote Humla district have been deprived of routine vaccination for the past four months. The measles-rubella vaccination drive is underway in Karnali Province. It started from March 8 and will conclude on the 20th. However, 54 children of Til, Jang and Halji settlements in Limi have been deprived of the national campaign. "We are unable to transport the vaccine in the Limi area as the foot trail has been blocked by snow. We have requested the Provincial Health Directorate in Surkhet to transport the vaccine to Limi by helicopter," said Prem Singh, chief of the health service office in Humla.

120 kg marijuana seized

RAJBIRAJ: Police seized 120 kg of marijuana from Mahuwa in ward 3 of Chhinnamasta Rural Municipality in Saptari district on Tuesday. According to the Madhesh Province Police Office in Janakpur, three people who were carrying sacks ran away by leaving the sacks upon seeing the security personnel. The security personnel found marijuana inside the sacks. Detailed investigation is underway into the incident, said police.

21 killed in 870 fire incidents in Koshi province this fiscal year

Carelessness and electric short-circuits caused most of the fire incidents, police say.



The Santhal settlement at Babusaheb tole in Morang that was burned to a cinder in the fire last Saturday.

□ BINOD BHANDARI
BIRATNAGAR, MARCH 19

Koshi Province has recorded a total of 266 incidents of fires in the past two weeks, according to the Biratnagar-based provincial police office. Three people are reported killed in those incidents and more than 160 houses have been destroyed.

A total of 870 incidents of fires occurred in the province in the current fiscal year 2023-24, according to Deputy Superintendent of Police Sunil Dahal, who is also the information officer at Koshi Province Police Office.

As many as 21 people have died and 97 others have sustained injuries in fire incidents in Koshi Province since July 17, Dahal said, adding that properties worth approximately Rs150 million have been destroyed in the incidents.

Police say the majority of fire incidents result from human causes—poachers set fire to forests to disorient

wild animals and farmers start fires to clear land for farming. Discarded cigarette butts are also among the biggest causes of fires.

"Police investigation shows that most of the fire incidents in the current fiscal year were caused by human carelessness and electric short-circuits," Dahal said. "People in hilly areas were fond of causing forest fires in hope of better growth of grasses and Niguro (fiddlehead fern)."

According to the Koshi Province Police Office, eight people died in fire incidents in Morang alone in the current fiscal year while four died in Bhojpur. Three people died in Jhapa, two each in Panchthar and Solukhumbu and one each in Okhaldhunga and Taplejung this year.

On Saturday, three children—aged three, five and seven—were killed in a fire in Hatuwagadhi Rural Municipality-7 of Bhojpur district. The children died after the inferno engulfed local Kedar Karki's cattle

shed, where the children were playing. The victims are the children of Kedar and his brother. There were fire incidents in 34 different places in Solukhumbu, Tehrathum, Okhaldhunga, Panchthar, Ilam, Khotang, Bhojpur, Udayapur and Morang districts on Saturday alone.

On the same day, a massive fire destroyed as many as 22 houses in Rangali Municipality-3 of Morang district. The houses of the Santhal settlement were burned to the ground after an inferno raged through the colony at noon. According to eyewitnesses, the fire started after sparks from electrical wires, which ran over the settlement, fell on the straw-thatched roofs of the houses following a short circuit.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister of Koshi Province Kedar Karki and other high level officials visited the fire incident site of Bhojpur where three children were killed. The provincial government provided Rs100,000 each to the bereaved families.

New Hong Kong law gives government more power to punish treason, insurrection

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Why does the city need a new law? Hong Kong's mini-constitution, the Basic Law, requires the city to enact a home-grown national security law.

In 2003, an attempt to pass a version of the law sparked a street protest that drew half a million people who feared the legislative efforts would erode the city's freedoms. The legislation was shelved.

Then, in late January, a public consultation on the legislation resurfaced. Hong Kong leader John Lee said the legislation is needed to fulfill a long-overdue duty, and often referred to the 2019 protests to justify that need, saying it will keep Hong Kong safe against "potential sabotage" and "undercurrents that try to create troubles" — particularly lurking ideas about Hong Kong independence. Some foreign agents might still be active in Hong Kong, he added.

"This is a law to tell people not to attack us," Lee said.

What is the new law about?

As proposed in the Safeguarding National Security Bill, the new law expands the government's power to stamp out future challenges to its rule, punishing treason and insurrection with up to life imprisonment.

The law also includes stiff prison terms for other offenses, including up to 20 years for espionage and up to 10 years for the unlawful disclosure of state secrets. Some provisions allow criminal prosecutions for certain acts committed anywhere in the world.

Additionally, tougher penalties would be imposed on people convicted of working with foreign governments or organizations to commit certain offenses. For example, residents who damage public infrastructure with the intent to endanger national security could be jailed for 20 years — or life, if they collude with an external force to do so.

The law could curb disruptive protests like the one in 2019 when dissenters occupied the airport and vandalized railway stations.

How will this affect business people, financial professionals and journalists?

Financial professionals who often deal with sensitive corporate information are worried about some provisions related to the protection of state secrets because they echo the broad definition of secrets used in mainland China, which covers economic, social and technological developments beyond traditional security fields.

While the offenses outlined in the new law pertain to acts conducted without lawful authority, there is anxiety that the law may create gray areas.

Some foreign business leaders said the cost of complying with the new law could result in investors directing their capital elsewhere. Investment decisions for Western businesses weigh on the balance between social stability and an open and legally predictable business environment, they said.

Journalists are concerned their reporting might also inadvertently lead to legal issues. A leading media professional group, Hong Kong Journalists Association, pointed to some provisions involving state secrets that do not require proof of intent to harm national security. Although the government added a

public interest defense in the bill, the scope is more limited than what they had recommended, the association said.

The government has tried to assuage the concerns, saying the legislation targets "an extremely small minority of people" who endanger national security, and insisting that normal business people, individuals, organizations, and the media sector "will not unwittingly violate the law."

How about activists?

After the 2019 protests, the city's colonial-era seditious law has been increasingly used to target dissidents.

Under the new bill, activists will face harsher penalties if they break the seditious law. They face seven years in prison if convicted for committing seditious acts or uttering seditious words — up from the current maximum sentence of two years. Colluding with an external force to carry out such activities is now punishable by up to 10 years, and it is not necessary for the prosecution to prove intent to incite public disorder or violence.

Amnesty International's China Director Sarah Brooks worried that the new crime broadly defined as "external interference" could lead to the prosecution of activists who interacted with overseas individuals or organizations and be "framed as 'endangering national security.'"

The law also authorizes stiffer measures against suspects in national security cases: Police can apply to the court to extend detention without charges and prohibit suspects from consulting certain legal representatives. Some legal scholars and rights advocates say this would undermine due process.

Authorities would also be empowered to use financial sanctions to punish people who have fled abroad, potentially preventing them from being hired, leasing property, or starting businesses.

In 2023, police offered bounties of 1 million Hong Kong dollars (\$128,000) on more than a dozen activists living abroad, including former lawmakers Nathan Law and Ted Hui, whom they accuse of colluding with external forces to impose sanctions on Hong Kong and China.

How about residents who are not politically active?

The new law requires Chinese citizens to report to authorities if they know others are committing treason. Failure to report could be penalized by up to 14 years in prison. Ronny Tong, an adviser to the city leader, has said religious professionals are not exempt, even if they heard about the acts during confession.

On Friday, the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong assured believers that the new legislation will not change the confidential nature of confession. Still, the diocese acknowledged citizens have an obligation to ensure national security.

During one legislative discussion, officials were asked whether residents keeping copies of Apple Daily newspaper at home would be considered as possessing a seditious publication — an offense punishable by up to three years in jail. Security minister Chris Tang said it would be a reasonable defense if residents argued they had no recollection the publication was still in the home and it was not used for incitement.

Dahal says there's no evidence of Lamichhane's involvement in cooperative fraud

>> Continued from page 1

Not satisfied with Dahal's clarification, the main opposition said either the prime minister was kept in the dark by the investigating authorities or he was not disclosing the facts before Parliament.

"The prime minister said there was no proof to link Lamichhane in the fraud case. I ask what proof he is looking for when there are complaints from the victims, there is evidence of his transactions with the cooperatives and police investigation in the matter continues," said Ramesh Lekhak, the Congress chief whip. He reiterated his party's position that Lamichhane's appointment as home minister, when Nepal Police is investigating his alleged involvement in embezzling cooperative deposits while serving at the Gorkha Media Network, presents a conflict of interest. He also argued that the police organisation, which falls under the jurisdiction of the home minister, cannot undertake a fair investigation.

Victims of cooperative fraud on February 5 had lodged a complaint to the Kaski district police against three people including Lamichhane, who also is the chairperson of the Rastriya Swatantra Party.

A probe by the Pokhara Metropolitan City found that over Rs1.35 billion in public deposits at the cooperative was misappropriated. The probe found that Lamichhane had obtained a loan of Rs10 million from the cooperative by creating a fake account. He has been rejecting the allegations.

Lamichhane, a former television host and managing director of a television channel co-founded by Gitendra Babu (GB) Rai, has been accused of embezzling hundreds of millions of rupees in collusion with Rai from different cooperatives in Kaski, Chitwan and Butwal.

Rai, who was the chairman of the Gorkha Media Network, the mother company of the channel, is accused of illegally transferring Rs300 million from Kaski-based Surya Darshan

Cooperative, Rs110.71 million from Chitwan-based Sahara Cooperative, and Rs100.74 million from Supreme Cooperative in Butwal, without providing any collateral.

Lamichhane has been accused of colluding to embezzle hundreds of millions of rupees.

"The prime minister claims there is no proof against Lamichhane but we see ample evidence to establish his connection," said Lekhak. "We demand a parliamentary investigation panel to find out the reality. The constitution of such panels has for long been a parliamentary practice."

Over the years parliamentary teams have been formed to investigate several controversial issues. But most of

the time they have been formalities. Most recently, in July 2022, an 11-member committee was formed to investigate charges that the then Finance Minister Janardan Sharma tweaked tax rates with the help of unauthorised persons, a day before he was to present the national budget in Parliament. The panel did not implicate Sharma.

Lekhak said his party doesn't want to obstruct House proceedings if the prime minister and the ruling parties are serious about its demands. "I urge you to take our concerns seriously. If not, the government would be seen as creating an environment for House obstruction," he said.

Ruling party leaders, however, accuse the Congress of raising a non-issue and say there is no need for a parliamentary probe into charges against Lamichhane. Talking to journalists after the House meeting, CPN-UML Chairman Oli said, "There is no possibility of forming such a committee."

Government aims to reclaim occupied Nepali territories, vision document says

>> Continued from page 1

The vision document proposes amending various laws to attract investment, implementing employment-friendly policies, and work towards addressing issues such as slow credit flow, low capital expenditure, and achieving a balance between fiscal and monetary policies.

It also suggests reducing the widening gap between revenue and public expenditure by improving revenue collection, adopting austerity measures, seeking new sources of foreign aid, channelling remittances into productive sectors and making policy changes in the share market.

The statement talks about receiving the green fund, preparing interim and transitional strategies after graduating from the least developed country category in 2026, and emphasises structural transformation in sectors like digitalization, tourism, agriculture, energy, and green industrialisation to generate employment.

It also calls for removing the anomalies in various financial institutions, addressing challenges related to implementing federalism, improvement in service delivery, promotion of good governance, revising laws that are hampering professional environment, enhancing coordination among state organs through technology, and enacting laws to promote inclusiveness, secularism and implementation of federalism in order to ensure effective governance at all levels.

The vision paper proposes a high-level commission to ensure a fair and speedy justice delivery system. Similarly, it suggests forming a task force comprising experts to recommend reforms in public administration, security agencies and public enterprises.

In order to do away with the belief that public office bearers are corrupt and inefficient, the government will work to establish a system of accountability in public administration, judiciary and regulatory bodies, so that those who make mistakes will be punished.

The vision paper also proposes amending the present performance management contract between the political and administrative leadership, promoting the use of the national identity card, and strengthening the Nagarik App to streamline service delivery without the need of multiple documents. It also talks about bringing policy and institutional reforms in public procurement.

The policy paper also vows to strengthen regulatory bodies like the Commission for the Investigation of



Leaders of the five ruling parties meet to release the government's vision paper at the Prime Minister's Office at Singha Durbar on Tuesday.

Abuse of Authority by providing them additional legal support, manpower, resources and equipment to combat corruption. "Corruption and abuse of authority will be investigated and legal proceedings will be initiated to ensure that corrupt people face legal consequences sooner or later."

The paper also stresses boosting domestic production to increase local capital, promoting agriculture as a tool for economic development, job creation, poverty alleviation and industrialisation, and promises to launch a 'Make in Nepal' campaign.

The vision paper of the five ruling parties proposes establishing an

employment bank, startup fund, and business incubation centre, and advocates for campaigns like 'make in Nepal' and 'made in Nepal'.

The vision document proposes amending various laws to attract investment.

It also discusses promoting gig economy among the youth, launching youth-focused skills program in every

local unit, management of land through a land bank, mobilising capital through local banks and financial institutions, ensuring farmers have access to chemical fertilisers and agricultural equipment, prioritising businesses and industries that can reduce imports, and reviving sick businesses through public-private partnerships.

The paper also talks about free and compulsory education for all, safeguarding labour rights, prioritising the welfare of peasants, workers, and marginalised communities, and calls for addressing problems faced by universities.

Furthermore, the paper discusses improving the health sector, expand-

ing insurance coverage, setting up a National Accreditation Centre, ensuring social security and expanding its coverage, expanding the road network and connectivity, setting up a public transport management authority, exploring alternative resources for investment in infrastructure, and launching a national infrastructure development programme.

It also discusses energy security, developing an integrated energy policy, promotion of alternative energy, building infrastructure in information and technology, scientific use of land, digitisation of land records, addressing various land-related issues including landless people, and giving utmost priority to efforts at mitigating climate change.

The document also pledges to adopt a balanced, neutral and non-aligned foreign policy. It pledges to employ effective diplomacy in order to reclaim Nepali territories like Limpiyadhura, Kalapani, Lipulek and Susta.

"If this alliance is unable to work, the country will face a crisis," said the prime minister after unveiling the vision paper. "This alliance was formed to instil hope among the people."

The vision document was drafted by a task force comprising Paudel and Bishnu Rimal from the CPN-UML, Barshaman Pun and Janardan Sharma from the CPN (Maoist Centre), Swarnim Wagle and Mukul Dhakal from the Rastriya Swatantra Party, Rajendra Shrestha and Manish Suman from the Janata Samjwadi Party, and Pramesh Hamal and Ghanashyam Bhusal from the CPN (Unified Socialist).

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Zoonotic disease spillover raises risk of more outbreaks

Climate change poses a major threat to global health and has been amplifying the risk of disease transmission during livestock-wildlife interaction, according to a new report.

POST REPORT
KATHMANDU, MARCH 19

Last year, scores of wild boar at Shuklaphanta National Park died from infection of African Swine fever virus. The same virus spread in several districts, killing tens of thousands of domestic boars and pigs, which not only destroyed the nascent pork industry but also forced many farmers to give up the profession.

African swine fever is a highly contagious viral pig disease. The virus is transmitted through direct contact with infected pigs, wild boars, and ticks. The virus can also survive for several months in processed meat and several years in frozen carcasses.

What worries experts much is that authorities in the country are still clueless whether the virus was transmitted from wild boars to domestic pigs or vice versa, and the actual extent of losses incurred.

African Swine fever virus is among the shared infectious zoonotic diseases at the livestock-wildlife interface, which has

been emerging as a new challenge in the country like Nepal, which is ill prepared to handle.

Several factors including exponential growth in animal and human populations, rapid urbanization, evolving farming systems, closer integration between livestock and wildlife, encroachment into forests, shifts in ecosystems, globalisation of animal and animal

The report states it is crucial to establish an enhanced disease surveillance system.

product trade, and changes in pathogen-host ecology, have contributed to the increased emergence of new infections, according to a new report.

The report titled "Shared infections at the wildlife-livestock interface and their impact on public health, economy and biodiversity"

published in Animal Frontiers, an official journal of the American Society of Animal Science, stated that the disease spillover and transmission dynamics have been changing due to the changing climatic conditions, triggering more outbreaks at all different interfaces, mostly viral diseases within all production groups.

"African swine fever virus is among the zoonotic diseases, which has spilled over from wild to domestic animals, from which thousands of people in our country have been affected by its outbreak," said Dr Dibesh Karmacharya, executive director of Center for Molecular Dynamics Nepal. "Most of the zoonotic diseases have crossed over from the wild and transmitted to domestic animals and humans."

Avian flu of bird flu, tuberculosis, Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) are among the diseases that spilled over from wildlife.

At least one person had died from infection of H5N1 bird flu virus in 2019, in Nepal. Hundreds of thousands of chickens were culled due to outbreaks of the virus in various

poultry farms throughout the country. Hundreds of farmers were affected and gave up the profession. It is estimated that around 20 percent of domesticated elephants in Nepal have been infected with tuberculosis. Experts say that risk of pathogen transmission between domesticated elephants and wild population always exists due to their interaction.

The report stated that it is crucial to establish an enhanced disease surveillance system, implement effective risk mitigation and management strategies and foster coordination and collaboration among national, regional and global and non-governmental agencies and stakeholders.

"Surveillance is a crucial part to reduce the risk of outbreaks and spillover of the deadly diseases," said Dr Chandra Dhakal, information officer at the Department of Livestock Services under the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development. "We have stepped up surveillance measures and alerted agencies concerned to increase vigilance over the risks."

Segregated waste to be dumped separately in landfill

Officials plan to enforce waste segregation rules in all wards of KMC first and then extend to other local units of the Valley.

POST REPORT
KATHMANDU, MARCH 19

The Kathmandu Metropolitan City said that it has been preparing to dispose of biodegradable and non-biodegradable waste separately at the landfill site in Bancharadanda in Nuwakot district.

The move aims to reduce the quantity of waste materials in the landfill site and to produce compost from biodegradable waste, according to officials.

"We will soon start disposing of segregated waste separately at the landfill site," said Rabinman Shrestha, chief of the Environment Department at the metropolis. "We are also planning to make it mandatory for private waste collectors and local units to segregate waste. Waste segregation is the only way to reduce the volume of waste at the landfill site."

The city office has already started segregation of household waste from wards 27, 10 and 5. Officials said disposable waste is being dumped separately at its waste transfer station at Teku.

Officials informed that some of the waste is being converted into compost and some degradable waste is going into a bio-methanation plant, which was provided by the European Union.

When the gas from the plant is filled in biogas balloons, it can later be used to generate electricity or to cook. The KMC facility can generate 15 kilowatts of electricity from biogas.

The metropolis has been also using reagents to expedite the process of making compost.

"We will enforce waste segregation rules in all 32 wards of the Kathmandu Metropolitan City first, and then ask other local units in the Kathmandu Valley and private waste collector companies to comply with the rules," said Shrestha.

Officials say the 32 wards of the metropolis will be divided into eight blocks and the waste materials will be segregated in the respective blocks. The metropolis has also deployed 300 cleaning staff—150 men and 150 women—to collect waste discarded at public places, including roadsides and riverbanks.

The metropolis has arranged five additional garbage trucks to collect segregated waste materials.

Officials hope that the compost will be ready in two months.

Waste segregation at the source was one of the measures Mayor Balendra Shah touted as a solution to Kathmandu's chronic garbage problem. Upon assuming office, Shah asked city residents to segregate waste at the source.

They started doing so, using separate bins in their homes. But the plan did not succeed, largely due to a lack of preparations on the part of the Kathmandu Metropolitan City office.



City planners and environmentalists have called the City's latest move aimed at solving the waste management problem a good initiative.

The Kathmandu Valley generates over 1,200 tonnes of solid waste a day, and nearly 60 percent of this comes from the KMC alone. Experts say 60 percent of organic waste originating in the Valley can be converted into compost and the remaining 30 percent of non-degradable waste can be recycled.

Meanwhile, the Agriculture and Veterinary Department of the metropolis said that it has completed sterilisation of over 5,300 street dogs in the ongoing fiscal year. Along with sterilisation, the metropolis had also launched a campaign to administer anti-rabies vaccine to stray dogs.

"Over 17,000 dogs residing in the streets of the metropolis have been vaccinated under the campaign," said Dr Awadhesh Jha, chief of the department. "The remaining dogs will be also vaccinated and sterilised as the campaign continues."

The metropolis had also planned to microchip all dogs kept as pets in households within the metropolis, but officials said that due to various reasons, they could not start the programme.

Jha said the goal is to discourage owners from abandoning their pets when they get old or sick. Officials estimate that there are around 20,000 pet dogs in the 32 wards of the metropolis.

Pet microchips are tiny devices that are inserted under a pet's skin. The chips can be scanned and owners' information stored in them easily accessed.

Uproar in Malaysia over plans to give Chinese new villages Unesco site status

A proposal to nominate 7 Chinese new villages in Selangor for UNESCO World Heritage sparked racial debates.

AZRIL ANNUAR
KUALA LUMPUR, MARCH 19

At first glance, Sungai Way looks like any other suburb in Malaysia's Klang Valley, with a thriving wet market, a police station, a school and rows of shophouses along its main road.

Zinc-roofed shacks abut low-rise concrete buildings, and a few wooden kampung-style houses have survived the decades that saw most of their ilk replaced by brick homes. Some residences rise up to five storeys high, housing several families or, quite commonly, serving as dormitories for workers at nearby factories.

At a street corner, gleaming green dragons perch in front and on the roof of a bright orange building—the only temple in this kampung baru cina or Chinese new village of around 4,000 residents, mainly Chinese, with a few Malays and Indonesian permanent residents who migrated there to work at the factories.

But this bustling little town on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur has a dark past.

It was one of 631 internment camps for the Chinese set up around Peninsular Malaysia by



terrorists". He said: "It is more appropriate to designate Kampung Baru Kuala Lumpur as a Unesco World Heritage site, because its historical value makes the country more in line with the policy and identity of Malaysia."

The 125-year-old Malay settlement with traditional wooden Malay homes near the Petronas Twin Towers in the capital city has been under threat from urbanisation. On March 13, the federal government confirmed it has no plans to seek Unesco heritage status for Kampung Baru as that would impede development plans for the area.

Umno framed Mr Nga's proposal as a challenge to the rights of the Malays as the country's indig-

Suaram, said in an open letter on Feb 13.

Proposing the inclusion of new villages under the Unesco World Heritage sites "trivialises the trauma of those who suffered within their confines", he added.

From the 1950s, thousands of rural villagers, in particular ethnic Chinese, had been forcibly moved into "new villages" surrounded by barbed wire and sentry towers, to isolate them from the influence of communist guerrillas who were staked out in surrounding jungles.

The British government at the time believed that Chinese communities were giving assistance and supplies to the insurgents, either voluntarily or under coercion at gunpoint.

"(The Chinese villagers) had only around two days to pack everything and move. Some were forced into poverty," Sungai Way New Village head Ding Eow Chai, 59, told The Straits Times.

"Those interred in these camps faced hardship. They lost their freedom. Many rich Chinese in the rural areas also lost their fortunes as they had to leave everything behind in the blink of an eye," he added.

The Sungai Way village was originally founded in 1949 by Chinese who worked as rubber tappers and in tin mines in the surrounding area.

The British transformed it into a camp with 650 homes in 1950. Residents from the surrounding areas, including several Malay families, were uprooted and resettled in the village, where each family was given around 5,000 sq ft of land to build a home.

A police station was built inside the camp itself to monitor and control the local population, while a Chinese school and a market were built to serve the new "villagers", who were placed under curfews and movement controls.

Fifty-year-old Yuri Tan, a third-generation villager, said her late grandfather needed multiple identification papers and permits in order to go in and out of the village while working as a rubber tapper.

"The authorities would check to see if he was taking more food than necessary when he went to work and also when he came home, after purchasing food at the market. The families here also had food stamps. They could not purchase more rice per day than what was needed."

"The British didn't want us to supply the communists," said Ms Tan, who is an artist.

Back then, her family home had a few bedrooms, a small kitchen with a wooden stove, a deep well, an indoor bathroom, an outhouse, a living area and a pig sty. Today, its wooden structure and attap roof are gone, after renovations that also added modern amenities.

Historical society Pusaka's president Eddin Khoo said the Chinese new villages and their history are "not a thing to be flaunted for tourist purposes and profit-making".

The race-based arguments that arose in February over the Unesco nomination plan also trouble him.

"I am concerned about the opposition to it, which is basically saying that the history of Chinese new villages is not part of Malaysian history. There are serious consequences to it. To claim the Chinese new villages are not part of history is an attempt at suppression. "History being written according to communal lines is repulsive, everyone has a history here. This segregation is nonsense. People are speculating and fictionalising their community history, putting certain history in a position of prominence and downplaying others," he said.

Despite the Selangor government's shelved plans, Sungai Way village chief Ding still holds out hope that settlements like his will be recognised as heritage sites.

He also heads the village museum, which displays old photographs of the villagers' daily lives in the internment camp, their personal items such as toys and wheelbarrows, maps, and the permits and identification documents they used then.

Obtaining heritage status, he said, will help promote volunteer-run, community-funded initiatives like these.

"So more people will be aware of what Chinese new villagers went through in the past," he said.

—The Straits Times



A fourth-generation resident of Sungai Way New Village on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur outside his home.

British colonialists during the Malayan Emergency from 1948 to 1960, when the country fought a communist insurgency against British rule.

Recently, a short-lived proposal to nominate seven of Selangor's Chinese new villages as a Unesco World Heritage site opened up old wounds and sparked racially tinged debates about cultural recognition in Malaysia.

Local Government Development Minister Nga Kor Ming announced on Feb 1 that preparations were in the works to seek Unesco recognition for the "cultural and historical significance" of the villages. The Unesco status would help promote Malaysian Chinese history and culture through tourism, he said.

The news drew a swift backlash, which eventually quietened down after the Selangor government said on March 5 that there were no plans to obtain the heritage site status for any villages in the state.

By then, Malay nationalists from Umno and the opposition had slammed the idea. Historians also weighed in for and against it, with views that ran the gamut from how it could help preserve Chinese history and culture, to how the culture in the villages was "nothing special", and how the bid smacked of exploitation of a painful historical period for the sake of attracting tourist dollars.

Opposition party Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia's youth chief Wan Ahmad Fayhsal Wan Ahmad Kamal challenged the "historical and unity value" of Selangor's Chinese new villages on Feb 5, calling them "remnants of the Cold War where we fought the threat of the communist

enous community.

"When an area is recognised as a World Heritage site, it also automatically recognises the residents, their culture, language and education as natives," argued the party's secretary-general Asyraf Wajdi Dusuki on Feb 9.

Mr Nga countered the claims on the same day, saying the proposal for the new villages was "not a zero-sum game" and that others were welcome to nominate Malay villages or other places as Unesco heritage sites.

The minister is from the multiracial but Chinese-led Democratic Action Party, which has often been accused by its critics of undermining Malay-Muslim rights.

On March 11, he revealed in Parliament that the nomination of the Chinese new villages had been mooted by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (Icomos) Malaysia, which advises the Unesco World Heritage Committee.

Icomos set up a new village working group in March 2021 to study and assess the suitability of the Chinese new villages for nomination as a world heritage site, Mr Nga said, adding that the current government was not in office at that time.

Former Petaling Jaya MP Kua Kia Soong had called the proposal an "insult" to those who fought against British colonialism, adding that the new villages were "nothing short of concentration camps, designed and enforced by the British colonial power".

"Families were torn apart, livelihoods destroyed, and cultural heritage disregarded in the name of colonial supremacy," Mr Kua, who is also the director of human rights organisation



NEPAL AIRLINES CORPORATION
CONTINUING AIRWORTHINESS MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT
Tribhuvan International Airport, Kathmandu, Nepal

Re-Invitation for Sealed Quotation
(International Competitive Bidding)

Date of Publication 19th March 2024

Nepal Airlines Corporation (NAC), Continuing Airworthiness Management Department Invites Sealed Quotation from PT6A-27 Engine Repair/Overhaul Organization (MROs) for exchange of its two (02) PT6A-27 core engines. The MROs are encouraged to visit the Notice/Announcement page in NAC Website: www.nepalairlines.com.np for detail information and downloading the Sealed Quotation Document. Completed Sealed Quotation document should reach to the address given below within 07 (Seven) days before 17:00 hours local time from the first date of publication of this notice. For further information, please contact:

Nepal Airlines Corporation
Continuing Airworthiness Management Department,
Tribhuvan International Airport
Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: +977 1 4113085 / 4113209, Fax: +977 1 4470768
Email: dir.camd@nac.com.np, dydir.epd@nac.com.np
Website: <http://www.nepalairlines.com.np> (Notice/Announcement page)

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OPINION



OUR VIEW

Dengue dangers

Nepal needs to better understand the virus and do more to raise awareness year-round.

The dengue season is here again. With the rise in temperature, cases are being reported from various parts of the country, including Kathmandu Valley, according to the Ministry of Health and Population. Presently, officials are reporting nearly two dozen cases a week. (The number of asymptomatic cases could be much higher.) Given this, health experts believe no time should be wasted in tackling the dengue menace head-on.

Recent trends have been ominous. In 2019, there were more than 16,000 reported cases, with six deaths. The year 2022 saw as many as 88 people dying and 54,000 people getting infected. Last year, with 52,000 infections, 20 persons lost their lives to the virus. Worse, hospitals in the capital were short of space to accommodate the patients.

Countries around the world are using technology to deal with the virus. Take Malaysia's case. This Southeast Asian country has an eDengue system that gives real-time case data and mandates people to report cases. (Cases in Nepal are often swept under the rug.) The Malaysian Health Ministry's Dengue Virus Serotype Surveillance System monitors the dominant serotypes, helping officials get ready to tackle future outbreaks caused by more severe strains. Another notable example comes from Kolkata, India, where the authorities have involved entomologists (experts on insects) to contain dengue.

Unless Nepal comes up with similar innovative ways, the virus will continue to cause great pain and hardship, year after year. Tackling dengue has become especially tricky as cases are now being reported even during winter and in mountainous districts. Still, there has been no proper research on the nature of the virus. A report by the United Nations titled "Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability" shows how climate change has disrupted the elevational distribution of Aedes mosquitoes. Yet, Nepal thus far remains clueless about dealing with the impact of a changing climate on various diseases.

In the case of dengue, there has been little effort to try to understand the virus and raise awareness programmes for people year-round, nor is enough budget set aside for such programmes. Typically, our health machinery springs into action only after a major outbreak. Experts say the virus is impossible to control once the temperature rises and rains start.

Similarly, when it comes to mosquito larvae control, ad hoc measures such as spraying Bacillus Thuringiensis Israelensis (BTI) are still the norm. But, as entomologists in Bangladesh have discovered, that is not a long-term solution. With other South Asian countries also tackling the dengue epidemic and trying out innovative ways, it would be wise for our own health authorities to work with them on research and control measures.

This problem also cannot be tackled without a high level of public involvement. People should be aware of the virus and adopt measures to keep themselves away from harm's way. Often, the simplest methods like not allowing pools of water to develop near our homes and using mosquito-repellents are also the most effective. But, as things stand, only concerted efforts from the government, local units and the general public can contain the dengue virus this year. We will underestimate the destructive power of dengue at our own peril.

THEIR VIEW

Rafah invasion

World must end Palestine genocide without further delay.

We are most disturbed by the Israeli prime minister's recent vow to send ground forces into Gaza's southern Rafah city. This comes after more than five months of merciless attacks on Palestinians that have forced most of Gaza's population to seek refuge in Rafah. With more than 31,500 Palestinians already killed, Israel's Benjamin Netanyahu now seems dead set on inflicting more horrors on the more than one million displaced people who have sought shelter there.

For once, Israel's allies have urged it to not attack Rafah, especially without a plan to protect civilians. Given the huge number of civilians Israel has a record of killing even when it supposedly looks to "protect" them during its security operations, one can only imagine the extent of destruction that might be headed towards the defenceless people of Rafah. Despite sustained international pressure, and the urging of its allies, Netanyahu has vowed to ignore it all, insisting on Israel's "right to defend itself". But as we have seen repeatedly, when Israel talks about its right to defend itself, what it basically means is gaining a free reign to attack and destroy the Palestinians.

The World Health Organization chief has urged Israel not to launch a Rafah invasion, warning that "this humanitarian catastrophe must not be allowed to worsen." As many human rights organisations have alleged, Israel is deliberately starving Gazans, having unleashed what can easily be called a genocidal campaign. And because of the unconditional backing extended by the West, it has been able to get away with it so far.

But the world cannot continue to remain silent and watch the complete annihilation of the Palestinian people. Israel has been able to create the narrative that criticising Israel should be considered ipso facto antisemitic and, therefore, frowned upon. Given that the West has always been its main supporter, it's time for the Western countries in particular, and the international community in general, to take meaningful action to end Israel's aggression against Palestine and arrange for a peace agreement.

— The Daily Star (Bangladesh)/ANN

Dissecting pre-budget discussions

GRASSROOTS DEMOCRACY

There is an absence of serious review on why our spending capacity has not improved.

KHIM LAL DEVKOTA



Nepal's formal practice of presenting the principles and priorities of the budget three months before its tabling in Parliament as a mandatory pre-budget practice merits appreciation.

The Financial Procedures & Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2019 stipulates that 15 days before the finance minister submits the budget to the joint session of Parliament, the government must submit the principles of the budget, programmes and details of project priorities included in the appropriation bill to the federal parliament. Unfortunately, the conclusions and suggestions arising from these discussions were not typically integrated into the budget itself. The government's new ordinance requiring this to be done three months prior has been approved by Parliament.

Despite the budget being presented one and a half months before the end of the fiscal year, as mandated by the 2015 constitution, there has been no improvement in the overall expenditure pattern of the government. For example, as stated in the 60th annual report of the Office of the Auditor General, a significant portion, 21 percent, was spent in the last month of the fiscal year. The percentage of expenditure in the last week of the month (Ashad) was 8 percent. This pattern persists in all fiscal years. As per the daily budget statement of the Comptroller General's Office, a total of 46.8 percent of the total budget had been spent by Tuesday morning (March 19). Regarding capital expenditure, only 27.97 percent has been utilised.

It is shameful that our capital expenditures remain so low with four months until the fiscal year-end. Despite the budget being presented well in advance, there has been a lack of serious review regarding why our spending capacity has not improved. When government agencies fail to spend their allocated budgets on time, it raises questions about their accountability.

It is imperative to establish a policy



POST ILLUSTRATION

whereby budgets are allocated to ministries capable of utilising them efficiently. Similarly, legislation should be enacted to ensure that Parliament rather than the government determines the allocation of budgets to relevant ministries and the distribution of fiscal transfers to the provinces and the local level.

Another weakness of the fiscal system is the reduction in budget size every year during the half-yearly review. This shows the government's lack of care to accurately predict spending capacity while presenting the budget. For instance, in the half-yearly review of the current fiscal (2023-24) budget, the total size was slashed from Rs1751 billion to Rs1530 billion.

If we discuss tax revenue for the current fiscal year, an estimated Rs1305 billion has been projected. Yet, only Rs586 billion has been collected as of Tuesday. The revenue does not cover administrative expenses, including mandatory obligations such as social security and loan payments. Furthermore, the revenue is primarily derived from the custom points.

Nepal's economy heavily relies on imports, and any import decrease directly impacts revenue. Consequently, fiscal transfers to subnational governments are also affected when revenue declines. Unfortunately, there hasn't been a significant initiative to address this issue. Moreover, Nepal's budget system prioritises distribution over production, and there has been insufficient effort to improve this aspect.

Despite governments consistently discussing reforms, expenditure patterns and revenue generation have not improved. The Ministry of Finance should focus on revenue generation, including seeking foreign assistance, while the Planning Commission should concentrate on managing expenditures. The Planning Commission's role extends beyond drafting planning documents; it should also provide regular guidance to relevant ministries to

adhere to planning guidelines and to manage expenditures effectively. However, the government has failed in this aspect, and the Commission has not adequately addressed it.

Additionally, all provinces have planning commissions similar to the National Planning Commission at the centre. While the necessity of these commissions is up for debate, it is essential that they work diligently and sincerely toward their objectives.

While different levels of government discuss budget issues, the primary challenge in implementing programmes and projects lies in their duplication. It has been observed that the federal government has encroached on the jurisdictions of provincial and local governments, while the provinces have also executed projects in a manner that leads to duplication at the local level.

In the current fiscal year, the percentage of projects valued at Rs5 million or less within the sectoral ministries are as follows: 66 percent in the Ministry of Physical Infrastructure, 98 percent in the Ministry of Urban Development, 84 percent in the Ministry of Water Supply, and 99 percent in the Ministry of Sports. Upon examining the sectoral ministries' details in the pre-budget document tabled in Parliament, there appears to be no improvement in the principles and priorities. Plans and programmes remain constrained like those of the previous fiscal years, thereby encroaching on the jurisdictions of provincial and local levels.

Another serious issue with the budget is an unfair allocation of programmes and projects. There is a tendency to disproportionately allocate the budget towards the constituencies of the prime minister, ministers and certain influential political leaders. In reality, the fundamental principle of the budget should be to uphold provincial and local balance. However, the pre-budget remains silent on this aspect as well.

Of dictators and development

Benevolent dictators may lead to growth but at the expense of rights and freedom.

SUSHAV NIRLA



Frustrated Nepalis express a common sentiment: 'Nepal needs a benevolent dictator like Lee Kuan Yew'. While the benevolent bit is not vocalised, it remains an underlying assumption

Existing academic research combined with Nepal's own experience with autocracy also helps explore the relationship between the two.

Dictators, miracles and disasters

The existing social science research finds a weak and non-robust relationship between economic growth and both the regime types—dictatorship and democracy, meaning that being a democracy or dictatorship has no influential bearing on the economic growth of a particular country. For autocratic regimes to experience higher economic growth, there is a need for democracy-like strong institutions in the form of legislatures, bureaucracy and independent judiciary.

Interestingly, compared to democratic regimes, there is a high variation in the growth rates of autocratic regimes.

and consultations bring some level of lag and inefficiencies and check in bad policies, the same is not the case with autocracies. As the decision-making rests on an individual, the mobilisation efficiency of these regimes leads to both sound and bad policies having extreme consequences, thereby creating miracles and disasters. But, more often than not, these regimes are limited in their capacity to allocate resources efficiently through sound policies. Often, personnel who end up as autocrats are reckless, extractive and feel no accountability towards the public. In other cases, benevolent autocrats are undermined by their close supporters who are extractive. To safeguard against these extractive tendencies, autocratic regimes require a degree of institutionalisation to limit the discretionary power of autocrats.

tutions and certain hubris-laden decision-making common among dictators. These include cases such as constant side-lining of the Public Service Commission and using discretionary power for administrative reorganisation, creating ad-hoc and overlapping bodies to maintain centralised control, and the decision to maintain Nepali currency as equal to that of India—a decision that nearly led to an economic crisis.

Birendra, meanwhile, though well-natured, was not a natural leader and found himself constantly undermined by Queen Aishwarya and other palace insiders. Bhekh Bahadur Thapa and Surya Bahadur Thapa detail the frustrations of navigating the invisible hand of Narayanhiti Durbar, particularly during Birendra's reign.

The case with Gyanendra is slightly different. Unlike Mahendra and Birendra, Gyanendra ruled over a short contentious period where policy options were constrained. But Gyanendra's questionable private dealings, extractive and bully-like nature, and general unpopularity among ranking bureaucrats and ministers since his princely days suggest that his reign would have been worse than Birendra and Mahendra. Finally, with their recklessness and unpredictability, the other royals in line—Dipendra and Paras—do not offer any hope either.

Finding Lee Kwan

It was Francis Fukuyama who once said that "as a group might do well if they could all be run by Lee Kwan Yew; given that they are as often run by a Mobutu or a Marcos, it is not surprising that (autocratic regimes) show much greater variance than democratic ones in terms of development outcomes".

Nepal's case, while not as extreme as Mobutu's Zaire and Marcos's Philippines, shows how difficult it is to find a perfect benevolent dictator. Sometimes they are purely reckless, others extractive, some well-intentioned but weak, while others are just too authoritative. Luck, rather than planning, explains the occurrence of a dictator with all the right combinations. And even if a miracle happens and a country has a benevolent dictator, growth often comes at the expense of rights and freedom.

Nirala is associated with Policy Entrepreneurs Inc.



SHUTTERSTOCK

that the dictator is well-intentioned and public-spirited. Compared to the other rationale for inviting monarchs and dictators—for example, preserving Nepal's Hindu identity—which is fundamentally exclusive, it is easier to cut some slack to the benevolent dictator call. The call stems from a desire to expedite economic growth and accelerate Nepal's (economic) development, which the commentator believes has been stalled by the compromises of democratic politics.

In the current context of lacklustre performance by political parties, benevolent dictatorship remains an attractive proposition for many. But, seldom, there have been efforts to analyse the merit of the argument linking dictators and economic growth.

One of the flagship studies titled "Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Well-Being in the World, 1950-1990" by Przeworski et al. that examined the economic growth rates of 141 countries between 1950 and 1990 found that autocratic countries dominated the lists of "growth miracles" and "growth disasters". The findings are supported by recent studies that explore how, alongside cases like that of the East Asian tigers that experienced unnaturally high growth rates, there is a long list of autocratic countries that have gone through crises due to years of neglect and corruption.

The centralised decision-making power explains the high variance in the growth rates of autocratic regimes. Unlike democracies where negotiation

| FOREX | |
|-------------------|--------|
| US Dollar | 133.16 |
| Euro | 144.43 |
| Pound Sterling | 168.98 |
| Swiss Franc | 149.95 |
| Australian Dollar | 86.75 |
| Canadian Dollar | 98.14 |
| Singapore Dollar | 99.19 |
| Japanese Yen (10) | 8.85 |
| Chinese Yuan | 18.5 |
| Saudi Arab Riyal | 35.51 |
| Qatari Riyal | 36.51 |
| Thai Bhat | 3.69 |
| UAE Dhiram | 36.26 |
| Malaysian Ringgit | 28.13 |
| Korean Won (100) | 9.95 |

Exchange rates fixed by Nepal Rastra Bank

| SHARES | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Nepse (in percent) | 2,067.29 _{pts} -0.30% |
| HIGHEST LOSERS | |
| SIGS2 | -7.08 |
| PHCL | -6.91 |
| MKJC | -4.51 |
| NHDL | -3.57 |
| KRBL | -3.53 |
| LNHPL | -3.25 |
| MODERATE LOSERS | |
| USHL | -0.12 |
| SAHAS | -0.11 |
| SJCL | -0.11 |
| KSBL | -0.08 |
| ULHC | -0.03 |
| HHL | -0.03 |
| MODERATE GAINERS | |
| SPC | 0.18 |
| HIDCL | 0.17 |
| KBSH | 0.16 |
| CMF1 | 0.11 |
| RBCL | 0.05 |
| KPCL | 0.02 |
| HIGHEST GAINERS | |
| BNHC | 10 |
| SARBTM | 10 |
| DLBS | 9.99 |
| ILBS | 9.45 |
| BGWT | 9.29 |
| UNLB | 9.05 |

| BULLION | | PRICE PER TOLA |
|-----------|--|----------------|
| Fine Gold | | Rs 125,200 |
| Silver | | Rs 1,525 |

SOURCE: FENEGOSIDA

BIZLINE

AI titan Nvidia ramps up collaboration with Chinese auto giants

SAN JOSÉ: Nvidia on Monday announced a major expansion of its collaboration with world-leading BYD and other Chinese electric car makers, including on the development of autonomous AI-powered vehicles. The move deepens Nvidia's connections with the Chinese EV industry even as it is separately prohibited by the United States from exporting its most powerful AI hardware to China. BYD, which beat Elon Musk's Tesla in sales in the last quarter of 2023, is the latest Chinese auto firm to use Nvidia's DRIVE Thor, an all-in-one vehicle control system that is bolstered by powerful generative AI features. "Today we're announcing that BYD, the world's largest EV company, is adopting our next-generation (AV computer)," Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang said at a developers conference. (AFP)

US oil stockpile to be refilled this year: Energy secretary

HOUSTON: The United States plans to refill its strategic oil reserve by the end of 2024 after the stockpiles reached historic lows last year, Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm said Monday. Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, US President Joe Biden announced an unprecedented tapping of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) in a move criticized by Republicans. Between September 2021 and July 2023, the United States released around 274 million barrels, dropping the SPR to its lowest level in 40 years. (AFP)

German investor confidence soars on rate-cut optimism

FRANKFURT: German investor confidence surged in March, a key survey showed Tuesday, on growing expectations that the European Central Bank will start cutting interest rates soon. The ZEW institute's economic expectations index rose for the eighth consecutive time, climbing by 11.8 points month-on-month to reach 31.7 points. The increase was larger than expected, with analysts surveyed by FactSet predicting a reading of 20 points. "Economic expectations for Germany are significantly improving," said ZEW president Achim Wambach. "More than 80 percent of those surveyed anticipate that the ECB will cut interest rates in the next six months," he added. (AFP)

Vietnam luxury property boss on trial in \$355 million bond scam

HANOI: A top Vietnamese property tycoon went on trial Tuesday accused of cheating thousands of investors in a \$355 million bond scam, in the communist nation's latest criminal case targeting high-flying business leaders. Vietnam has embarked on a sweeping graft crackdown in recent years, with corrupt officials and senior business figures among 4,400 people indicted in more than 1,700 cases since 2021. Do Anh Dung, head of the Tan Hoang Minh group, which specialises in luxury offices and apartments, went on trial in Hanoi on Tuesday alongside his son Do Hoang Viet and 13 others on fraud charges. (AFP)

Experts urge earlier insurance planning for long-term care

Historical losses due to earthquakes, floods, and landslides in Nepal are significant.

□ **KRISHANA PRASAIN**
KATHMANDU, MARCH 19

Nepal spent an average of Rs50 billion annually on post-disaster response between 2012 to 2020, a report said, highlighting the critical need for tailoring insurance coverage to address specific risks and potential scenarios.

Experts on Tuesday said that Nepal needs to factor in all possible contingencies to ensure comprehensive coverage is in place to safeguard against unforeseen challenges.

According to the Global Climate Risk Index for 2000-2019, Nepal ranks as the 10th most affected country in the world, considering the impacts of extreme weather events in terms of fatalities and economic losses.

"Among the seven countries in South Asia that are part of the insurance risk financial facility of the UNDP, Nepal is the one that is affected the most. The country is extremely vulnerable to disaster risk, which has witnessed the loss of thousands of lives in the last two decades," said Ayshanie Medagangoda-Labé, resident representative of UNDP Nepal, launching the Country Diagnostic on Inclusive Insurance and Risk Finance for Nepal, on Tuesday.

"Nepal continuously invests in infrastructure but each time disaster happens it engulfs a lot of resources that we invest in the country's development," Medagangoda-Labé said.

Migration, remittances, and resilience to shocks (including from climate risks) are interconnected in the Nepali context and must be considered when thinking about how inclusive insurance and risk finance can enhance the resilience of vulnerable populations, the report said.

Historical losses due to earthquakes, floods, and landslides in Nepal are significant.

According to the Emergency Events Database, between 2012 to 2020, earthquakes alone accounted for over 85 percent (about \$ 5.17 billion) of total disaster damage (driven by the 2015 earthquake), followed by floods, which caused \$915 million worth of damages.

Damage resulting from major landslides amounted to \$15 million. The



POST FILE PHOTO

According to the report, microinsurance supply has largely been driven by life policies.

Nepal Disaster Report 2019 accounts for over 6,000 natural and non-natural disaster incidents, 900 plus deaths, and Rs6.84 billion (\$51.1 million) in estimated property losses for 2017-2018; the latter is mainly attributable to fire incidents.

The report said that limited information is available on the Nepal government's contingent liabilities for disasters, but a recent earthquake model estimates average annual losses of Rs11 billion (\$92 million) and up to Rs144 billion (\$1.2 billion) for a 1-in-100 year event.

Medagangoda-Labé urged the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority, Ministry of Finance, Nepal Insurance Authority and the private sector should join hands to tap into some of the market opportunities so that people who are left behind would be able to protect their livelihood.

Citing that only 5 percent of the global population has insurance,

Medagangoda-Labé said each time any hazard, conflict or disaster happens, whatever the investment UNDP have been doing for years, they are reversed.

"Insurance has a multidimensional impact in the area of social security," said Ram Prasad Ghimire, revenue secretary at the Ministry of Finance.

He said there is still a lack of awareness about insurance.

There are issues of not getting claim amounts when any events happen, he said.

"We are also working on fiscal risk management. We are developing a comprehensive framework and an already developed fiscal risk register, which provides the government's assessment of the likelihood and potential impacts of a range of risks," said Ghimire.

"For sound financial fiscal management, we need to build resilience and protect the lives of people and that should be inclusive," he said.

Insurance is not only important to mitigate risk but also to foster development, Ghimire said.

"If we have a sound insurance system, it can draw foreign investors."

Nepal Insurance Authority, formerly Beema Samiti, reported that a total of 30.56 percent of people are covered by life insurance, which includes endowment, term, and micro-term insurance, as of mid-January 2023.

As per the authority, the coverage ratio was 22.49 percent a year earlier.

"Insurance has not been the priority of the government," said Dip Prasad Pandey, CEO of Shikhar Insurance. "The government has given subsidies in several schemes. But it has not settled almost Rs2.50 billion of the insurance companies for the last one and a half years."

"As a result, insurance companies are forced to stop issuing insurance policies," he said.

It will be difficult for the private insurance companies to sustain in

Bank of Japan hikes rates for first time since 2007

□ **AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE**
TOKYO, MARCH 19

Japan's central bank pulled the plug Tuesday on its ultra-aggressive monetary stimulus programme, hiking rates for the first time since the global financial crisis.

The Bank of Japan's outlier policy of negative rates and massive asset purchases was aimed at jump-starting economic growth and price rises after the "lost decades" of stagnation and deflation.

But on Tuesday, following months of speculation, the BoJ finally changed its policy rate range from -0.1 percent to between zero and 0.1 percent, in its first hike since 2007.

Officials "assessed the virtuous cycle between wages and prices" and concluded that "the price stability target of two percent would be achieved in a sustainable and stable manner", it said.

The move will make loans more expensive for consumers and businesses, but banks will be able to earn more money from lending.

It will also increase Japan's bill for servicing the national debt, which at around 260 percent of national output is one of the world's highest.

The BoJ also called an end to

other unorthodox policies including its yield curve control programme, which allows bonds to move in a tight band, and the purchase of exchange-traded funds because they had "fulfilled their roles".

But it said it would keep buying long-term government bonds.

Taro Saito, senior economist at NLI Research Institute, told AFP that the move was a "great step for the BoJ towards normalisation of its monetary policy it has long craved for".

The US Federal Reserve and other central banks yanked up rates to rein in inflation after Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine. But despite inflation also exceeding four percent at one point, the BoJ kept its main rate below zero, where it has been since 2016.

Because negative interest rates mean banks lose out by parking capital with the BoJ, the policy was aimed at encouraging them to lend to businesses.

The policy has sharply weakened the yen against the dollar, which is good news for exporters but not for consumers as it made imports more expensive.

The yen fell past 150 per dollar and stocks gained as the BoJ's comment that conditions would

remain accommodative poured cold water on expectations of more hikes.

"For the BoJ to take a next step, which will probably be a rate hike, a hurdle is high — it has to have clearer signs that the economy is improving," said Saito.

Inflation has been at or above the BoJ's target of two percent for almost two years.

But the BoJ wanted more evidence of rising wages and that inflation was driven by demand instead of temporary factors.

The final piece of the jigsaw appears to have come on Friday when Japan's largest trade union secured its biggest wage hike since 1991.

BoJ chief Kazuo Ueda told a news conference on Tuesday that the outcome was "an important factor in making our decision".

But Stefan Angrick at Moody's said since there is no certainty there will be broader pay gains or stronger domestic demand, adding that the BoJ "is rushing".

"In the past, when the BoJ has been too eager to tighten policy, a downturn soon followed. Although (Tuesday's) change is not large enough to do Japan's economy in, it wouldn't take much to do further damage," he said. "The BoJ is treading on thin ice."

Australian business leaders to meet Chinese foreign minister

□ **REUTERS**
SYDNEY, MARCH 19

Australian business leaders are set to meet China's foreign minister in Canberra, saying their country lacks knowledge of its biggest trading partner and that they will seek insight on how Beijing views Washington, which is "critical" to trade flow.

The Australia China Business Council (ACBC) will host a private meeting between Wang Yi and 11 business, university and think tank representatives on Wednesday, during the first visit in seven years by a Chinese foreign minister, the council's national president David Olsson said.

The meeting will follow annual talks with Australia's Foreign Minister Penny Wong on Wednesday.

"I look forward to a frank exchange of views on our shared interests, points of difference, and our respective roles in upholding a region that is peaceful, stable and secure," Wong said in a statement on Tuesday.

Olsson said business had been "left on the sidelines" of government dialogue, which has been dominated by national security concerns, and that the ACBC would hold a meeting with Wang because it needed a better understanding of how China viewed its place in the world.

"We want to hear how Wang Yi and China are approaching the US relationship, because that is a critical component of our understanding of our trade flows," Olsson said. The United States' Inflation Reduction

Act, designed to reduce US dependence on China, is having far-reaching consequences for the global supply chain, including in Australia, for clean energy and critical minerals.

China is Australia's largest trading partner, with Australian resources and energy exports dominating trade flow. It has been an investor in Australian mining projects, though some Chinese investment in critical minerals have been blocked by the Foreign Investment Review Board on national security grounds.

"We are trying to find as much information as possible to form our own assessment of how we go forward in a very complex and uncertain world. We are all awaiting the US election outcomes, waiting to see how China responds to that," said Olsson.

Mining giant Rio Tinto's iron ore head and the chief executive of a body representing eight research-intensive universities will attend, along with representatives from the health, legal and finance sectors.

"Over the last few years China has emerged as far more powerful and far more influential in the world. For a whole host of reasons, whether it's the pandemic or just the way domestically politically we have approached China, the fact is our understanding of China and its role in the region and world is not as strong as it used to be," Olsson said in an interview.

China imposed trade restrictions on a raft of Australian agricultural and mineral products during a diplomatic dispute in 2020, which have now been largely eased.

Apple in talks to let Google's Gemini power iPhone AI features

□ **REUTERS**
LONDON, MARCH 19

Apple is in talks to build Google's Gemini artificial intelligence engine into the iPhone, Bloomberg News reported on Monday, citing people familiar with the situation.

The negotiations are about licensing Gemini for some new features coming to the iPhone software this year, the report said, adding that the terms or branding of an AI agreement or how it would be implemented have not been decided.

Alphabet shares jumped more than 6 percent in early US trading, while Apple was up 2.5 percent.

It is unlikely that any deal would be announced until June, when Apple plans to hold its annual conference of developers, and the iPhone maker also recently held talks with ChatGPT-maker OpenAI about using its model, according to the report.

Apple, Alphabet-owned Google and OpenAI did not immediately respond to Reuters requests for comment.

A potential deal between the firms



REUTERS

People look at the new iPhone 15 Pro as Apple's new iPhone 15 officially goes on sale across China at an Apple store in Shanghai, China September 22, 2023.

could help Google expand the use of its AI services to more than 2 billion active Apple devices, boosting the search giant's efforts to catch up with Microsoft-backed OpenAI.

It could also help ally investor fears about the slow roll-out of AI apps by Apple, which has lost the crown of the world's most valuable firm after a 10 percent decline in its shares this year.

The firms have a years-long partnership that makes Google the default search engine on Apple's Safari web browser, and a genAI tie-up may help the Alphabet unit navigate fears that services like ChatGPT could threaten its search dominance.

But the agreement could also invite sharper scrutiny from US regulators, who have sued Google on grounds that it unlawfully stifled competition by paying billions of dollars to Apple to maintain its monopoly in search.

"This strategic partnership is a missing piece in the Apple AI strategy and combines forces with Google for Gemini to power some of the AI features Apple is bringing to market,"

said Daniel Ives, an analyst at Wedbush.

"This is a major win for Google to get onto the Apple ecosystem and have access to the golden installed base of Cupertino with clearly a major licence fee attached to this," he said, referring to Apple's California headquarters.

Google in January partnered with Apple's rival Samsung to deploy its genAI technology in the South Korean firm's Galaxy S24 series of smartphones, as part of its efforts to boost the use of Gemini after some missteps during its roll-out.

Apple CEO Tim Cook said last month that the company was investing "significantly" in generative AI and would reveal more about its plans to put the technology to use later this year.

The Bloomberg report said Apple was planning to use its own home-grown AI models for some new capabilities in its upcoming iOS 18, but was seeking a partner to power genAI features, including functions for creating images and writing essays based on simple prompts.

WORLD



Hindu married women perform a special prayer in the junction of a busy road as a part of religious rituals for the upcoming Hindu festival of Holi in Kolkata on Tuesday.

Russia claims new advances in east as Kyiv awaits Western support

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MOSCOW, MARCH 19

Russia said Tuesday that its troops had made gains in eastern Ukraine, building on recent advances against Ukrainian forces in critical need of Western aid.

Facing a difficult situation on the front lines, Kyiv has responded with an increasing number of incursions and attacks on Russian territory bordering Ukraine.

Some of the incursions have been carried out by Russians volunteering to fight in pro-Ukrainian units, which Putin has called to "punish".

"On the Avdiivka front, units of the 'Centre' grouping of troops liberated the village of Orlivka," the Russian defence ministry said.

It is the latest in a string of gains for Moscow, which has built on the capture of Avdiivka a month ago.

Avdiivka's seizure had forced Ukrainian troops to withdraw to defensive lines along Tonenke, Berdychi and Orlivka.

The Ukrainian army has not addressed the potential seizure of Orlivka.

But Kyiv has acknowledged a difficult situation on the battlefield and urged the West to keep up and deliver on its promises of support.

European deliveries have fallen behind, and its industrial capacities remain limited.

'Deliberations continue'

Kyiv has urged the US Congress to unblock a \$60 billion aid package which has been stalled due to political infighting.

The delays have been a "shock" for Ukrainian officials, Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said in an online briefing for foreign media.

"We are approaching the end of March and deliberations continue, deliberations on the issue of vital interest, strategic interest of the US in Europe," he added.

The day before, President Volodymyr Zelensky told US Senator Lindsey Graham that it was "critically important" for the US to make a swift decision.

Kyiv has intensified its attacks on Russian territory, with shelling and incursions in the regions of Belgorod and Kursk.

UN warns planet 'on the brink' after warmest decade on record

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
GENEVA, MARCH 19

Global temperatures "smashed" heat records last year, as heatwaves stalked oceans and glaciers suffered record ice loss, the United Nations said Tuesday—warning 2024 was likely to be even hotter.

The annual State of the Climate report by the UN's World Meteorological Organization confirmed preliminary data showing 2023 was by far the hottest year ever recorded.

And last year was part of "the warmest 10-year period on record", the WMO weather and climate agency said, with even hotter temperatures expected going forward.

"There is a high probability that 2024 will again break the record of 2023", WMO climate monitoring chief Omar Baddour told reporters.

Reacting to the report, UN chief Antonio Guterres said it showed "a planet on the brink".

"Earth's issuing a distress call," he said in a video address, pointing out that "fossil fuel pollution is sending climate chaos off the charts", and warning that "changes are speeding up".

The WMO said that last year the average near-surface temperature was 1.45 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels—dangerously close to the critical 1.5-degree threshold that countries agreed to avoid passing in the 2015 Paris climate accords.

'Red alert'

"Never have we been so close... to the 1.5C lower limit of the Paris Agreement," WMO chief Celeste Saulo warned. "I am now sounding the red alert about the state of the climate," she told reporters, lamenting that "2023 set new records for every single climate indicator".

The organisation found that many of the records were "smashed" and that the numbers "gave ominous new significance to the phrase 'off the charts'".

Saulo stressed that climate change

was about much more than temperatures.

"What we witnessed in 2023, especially with the unprecedented ocean warmth, glacier retreat and Antarctic sea ice loss, is cause for particular concern," she said.

One especially worrying finding was that marine heatwaves gripped nearly a third of the global ocean on an average day last year.

And by the end of 2023, more than 90 percent of the ocean had experienced heatwave conditions at some point during the year, the WMO said.

More frequent and intense marine heatwaves will have "profound negative repercussions for marine ecosystems and coral reefs", it warned.

At the same time, it warned that key glaciers worldwide suffered the largest loss of ice ever since records began in 1950, "driven by extreme melt in both western North America and Europe".

In Switzerland, where the WMO is headquartered, Alpine glaciers had lost 10 percent of their remaining volume in the past two years alone, it said. The Antarctic sea ice extent was also "by far the lowest on record", WMO said.

Rising sea levels

In fact, it pointed out, its maximum area at the end of the southern winter was around one million square kilometres below the previous record year—equivalent to the size of France and Germany combined.

Ocean warming and the rapidly melting glaciers and ice sheets also drove the sea level last year to its highest point since satellite records began in 1993, WMO said.

The agency stressed that the global mean sea level rise over the past decade (2014-2023) was more than double the rate in the first decade of satellite records.

It highlighted that dramatic climate shifts are taking a heavy toll worldwide, fuelling extreme weather events, flooding and drought, which trigger displacement and drive up biodiversity loss and food insecurity.

Gaza hunger warnings grow as hopes build for ceasefire

Israel is conducting the conflict in a way that 'may amount to the use of starvation as a method of war'.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
GAZA STRIP, PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES, MARCH 19

Efforts to hammer out a temporary truce in Gaza intensified Tuesday after months of war that have devastated the Palestinian territory and pushed hundreds of thousands to the brink of famine.

While a UN-backed assessment said 300,000 people in Gaza's north would face famine by May without a surge of aid, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said everyone in Gaza was now in need of humanitarian aid.

UN human rights chief Volker Turk blamed Israel for the hunger crisis, telling reporters in Geneva they were blocking aid and conducting the conflict in a way that "may amount to the use of starvation as a method of war".

Israeli troops on Tuesday pressed an assault on Gaza's biggest hospital, which they allege is being used for military purposes.

The military said more than 50 fighters had been killed. Hamas said the assault on Gaza City's Al-Shifa Hospital was a war crime.

Israel's spy chief David Barnea was in Qatar on Monday for a new round of talks with Egyptian and Qatari mediators, after they failed to secure a truce for the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, which began last week.

Hamas to receive counter-offer

Qatar's foreign ministry spokesperson Majed al-Ansari said he was "cautiously optimistic" about the latest negotiations but it was "too early to announce any successes".

The new push for a truce follows a Hamas proposal for a six-week ceasefire, an increase in aid and the initial release of about 42 hostages in exchange for Palestinian prisoners held by Israel.

During the proposed truce, Israeli forces would withdraw from "all cities and populated areas" in Gaza, according to a Hamas official.

Ansari said they were expecting a counter-proposal to be presented to Hamas and technical talks would continue.

The bloodiest ever Gaza war broke out after Hamas's unprecedented October 7 attack resulted in about 1,160 deaths in Israel, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally of Israeli official figures.

Militants also seized about 250 hostages, of whom Israel believes 130 remain in Gaza, including 33 who are presumed dead.

Israel has responded with a relentless offensive against Hamas that Gaza's health ministry says has killed at least 31,726 people, most of them women and children.

Meal of 'blood'

Blinken, who will travel to Saudi Arabia and Egypt this week to try to shore up support for the temporary truce and an increase in aid,

highlighted that everyone in Gaza was now suffering "severe levels of acute food insecurity".

"That's the first time an entire population has been so classified," he said during a visit to the Philippines. On a related diplomatic track, US President Joe Biden has been attempting to put pressure on Israel to call off a threatened ground assault on the southern city of Rafah, where hundreds of thousands have sought refuge from fighting elsewhere in the territory.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has insisted troops will be sent into Rafah to root out Hamas in the area.

The city is already under frequent bombardment by the Israeli military, with APFTV footage showing residents picking through debris of

buildings on Tuesday after another night of bombardment.

Gaza resident Ibrahim Jarghun, at a funeral on Tuesday for those killed in the latest Rafah bombardment, told AFP the killings were shattering Ramadan customs like the traditional pre-dawn "suhoor" meal.

"For us, our suhoor is blood," he said.

Senior Hamas official 'dead'

In Washington, White House National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan reported the death of senior Hamas official Marwan Issa. Israel had on March 11 said an air strike on an underground compound in central Gaza targeted Issa, whom it called the deputy head of Hamas's armed wing. At the time it was unclear if he had been killed.



Men and youths gather to inspect a destroyed vehicle following overnight Israeli bombardment at the Rafah refugee camp in the southern Gaza Strip on Tuesday amid the ongoing conflict in the Palestinian territory between Israel and the militant group Hamas.

Astronaut Thomas Stafford, commander of Apollo 10, has died at age 93

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON, MARCH 19

Astronaut Thomas P. Stafford, who commanded a dress rehearsal flight for the 1969 moon landing and the first U.S.-Soviet space linkup, died Monday. He was 93.

Stafford, a retired Air Force three-star general, took part in four space missions. Before Apollo 10, he flew on two Gemini flights, including the first rendezvous of two U.S. capsules in orbit. He died in a hospital near his Space Coast Florida home, said Max Ary, director of the Stafford Air & Space Museum in Weatherford, Oklahoma.

Stafford was one of 24 NASA astronauts who flew to the moon, but he did not land on it. Only seven of them are still alive.

"Today General Tom Stafford went to the eternal heavens which he so courageously explored as a Gemini and Apollo astronaut as well as a peacemaker in Apollo Soyuz," NASA Administrator Bill Nelson said via X, formerly known as Twitter. "Those of us privileged to know him are very sad but grateful we knew a giant."

After he put away his flight suit,

Stafford was the go-to guy for NASA when it sought independent advice on everything from human Mars missions to safety issues to returning to flight after the 2003 space shuttle Columbia accident. He chaired an oversight group that looked into how



In this 2016 photo, astronaut Stafford, who flew the first lunar module to the moon in 1969, stands in front of a portrait made in his honor in the Oklahoma House of Representatives.

to fix the then-flawed Hubble Space Telescope, earning a NASA public service award.

"Tom was involved in so many things that most people were not aware of, such as being known as the 'Father of Stealth'," Ary said in an

email. Stafford was in charge of the famous "Area 51" desert base that was the site of many UFO theories, but the home of testing of Air Force stealth technologies.

The Apollo 10 mission in May 1969 set the stage for Apollo 11's historic mission two months later. Stafford and Gene Cernan took the lunar lander nicknamed Snoopy within 9 miles (14 kilometers) of the moon's surface. Astronaut John Young stayed behind in the main spaceship dubbed Charlie Brown.

"The most impressive sight, I think, that really changed your view of things is when you first see Earth," Stafford recalled in a 1997 oral history, talking about the view from lunar orbit. Then came the moon's far side: "The Earth disappears. There's this big black void."

Apollo 10's return to Earth set the world's record for fastest speed by a crewed vehicle at 24,791 mph (39,897 kph).

After the moon landings ended, NASA and the Soviet Union decided on a joint docking mission and Stafford, a one-star general at the time, was chosen to command the American side. It meant intensive lan-

guage training, being followed by the KGB while in the Soviet Union, and lifelong friendships with cosmonauts. The two teams of space travelers even went to Disney World and rode Space Mountain together before going into orbit and joining ships.

"We have capture," Stafford radioed in Russian as the Apollo and Soyuz spacecraft hooked up. His Russian counterpart, Alexei Leonov, responded in English: "Well done, Tom, it was a good show. I vote for you."

The 1975 mission included two days during which the five men worked together on experiments. Afterwards, the two teams toured the world together, meeting President Gerald Ford and Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev.

"It helped prove to the rest of the world that two completely opposite political systems could work together," Stafford recalled at a 30th anniversary gathering in 2005.

The two crews became so close that years later Leonov arranged for Stafford to be able to adopt two Russian boys when Stafford was in his 70s.

"We are too old to adopt, but they were too old to be adopted," Stafford told The Oklahoman in 2004. "They just added so much meaning to our

life, and just because you're retiring doesn't mean you don't have anything left to give."

Later, Stafford was a central part of discussions in the 1990s that brought Russia into the partnership building and operating the International Space Station.

Growing up in Weatherford, Oklahoma, Stafford said he would look up and see giant DC-3 airplanes fly overhead on early transcontinental routes.

"I wanted to fly since I was 5 or 6 years old seeing those airplanes," he told NASA historians.

Stafford went to the U.S. Naval Academy where he graduated in the top 1% of his class and flew in the backseat of some airplanes and loved it. He volunteered for the Air Force and had hoped to fly combat in the Korean War. But by the time he got his wings, the war ended.

He went to the Air Force's experimental test pilot school, graduated first in his class there and stayed on as an instructor.

In 1962, NASA selected Stafford for its second set of astronauts, which included Neil Armstrong, Frank Borman and Pete Conrad.

Nary Thapa Magar, Nepal's first captain, retires from cricket

She captained Nepal in their first-ever international tournament during the ACC Women's tournament at Johor, Malaysia in July 2007.



Nary Thapa Magar (left) and Neera Rajopadhyay walk out of the ground after defeating Hong Kong during the ACC Women's tournament at Johor in July 2015, 2007.

SPORTS BUREAU
KATHMANDU, MARCH 19

Nary Thapa Magar, the first captain of Nepal national women's cricket team, has called time on her cricket career. "Today I'm announcing my retirement from the national/international women's cricket team. It was a great 17 years of incredible journey with a lot of upside and downside in my

cricket career," Thapa Magar wrote on her Facebook page.

"Retirement from the game but not from the memories...I thank all of them who supported me and motivated me in my journey. I especially thank my family who always supported me through my journey...Thank you all," she added.

Thapa Magar captained Nepal in their first-ever international tourna-

ment in July 2007 during the ACC Women's tournament at Johor, Malaysia, where Nepal reached the final but lost to Bangladesh.

She also captained Nepal to the semi-finals at the 2009 and 2011 ACC Women's Twenty20 Championship.

Thapa Magar also led Nepal to consecutive ACC U-19 Women's Championship titles in 2008 and 2010.

Thapa Magar had a successful career as a bowler. A left-arm fast medium bowler, Thapa Magar represented Nepal in 11 Women's T20I matches after the International Cricket Council granted full Women's T20I status to Nepal in April 2018. She has taken 17 T20I wickets.

She was also a part of the Nepal squad that played their first ever WT20I match, against China, in Bangkok on January 12, 2019. Nepal won the match by 10 wickets.

Thapa Magar, who represented Nepal for 12 years since 2007, had been playing for the Armed Police Force Club in domestic tournaments.

"Happy Retirement, Nary Thapa," Cricket Association of Nepal wrote on its Facebook page.

"Farewell to our first Nepal women's team captain. We extend a heartfelt gratitude for her 17 years of service to Nepal Women's Cricket and for inspiring a young generation of cricketers."



POST PHOTO: COURTESY OF NSC

International Cricket Council (ICC) Chairperson Greg Barclay calls on National Sports Council (NSC) Member Secretary Tanka Lal Ghising Kathmandu on Tuesday. Barclay inspected TU Cricket Ground and Mulpani Cricket Ground on Tuesday. He is also scheduled to hold meetings with Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal, Finance Minister Barsha Man Pun, and Sports Minister Biraj Bhakta Shrestha to discuss support for cricket, funding opportunities and sports policies during his four-day Nepal visit. Nepal and Bangladesh are hosting the 2027 Under-19 Women's T20 World Cup.

Israel, Ukraine, Lewandowski and Luxembourg bring strong histories to Euro 2024 playoffs

The play-offs of the UEFA Euro 2024 qualifying tournament will decide the last three teams that will qualify for the UEFA Euro 2024 final tournament in Germany.

ASSOCIATED PRESS
GENEVA, MARCH 19

Two national football teams whose countries are involved in wars. A two-time FIFA world player of the year aiming for possibly his last tournament. A team that went 31 years failing to win a European Championship qualifying game.

The plotlines are vivid for those hoping to earn one of three places in the 24-team lineup at Euro 2024 that are being decided over the next week in qualifying playoffs.

Twelve nations set out on Thursday in four-team knockout brackets. They must advance through two single-leg games in five days to be in Germany for the June 14-July 14 tournament.

Israel and Ukraine could meet next Tuesday in what would be a decisive game of a bracket where neither can play at home because of military conflicts.

Israel have picked Hungary—their adopted football home for security reasons since the Hamas attacks on October 7—to face Iceland on Thursday. The winner in Budapest will travel to face Ukraine or Bosnia-Herzegovina next Tuesday.

If Ukraine win on Thursday in Zenica—the Bosnian city where their November 2021 win in a World Cup qualifier was the team's last game before the Russian invasion—they will host the bracket final in Wroclaw, Poland.

Poland are in a separate playoffs bracket and captain Robert Lewandowski, voted FIFA player of the year in 2020 and '21, will lead his team on Thursday in Warsaw heavily favoured to beat Estonia. If Poland win, they will be away next Tuesday at Wales or Finland, who meet on Thursday in Cardiff. The third bracket involves low-ranked teams trying to follow North Macedonia's underdog path to Euro 2020.

Luxembourg are closer than ever to a major tournament after being over-matched for much of the European Championship's 66-year history.

If Luxembourg can get past Georgia in Tbilisi on Thursday, they will host Euro 2004 champions Greece or Kazakhstan, who meet in Athens.

Playoffs format

The 21 teams already in the Euro 2024 lineup are Germany plus the winners and runner-ups in each of 10 traditional qualifying groups played last year. UEFA banned Russia from the competition.



At age 35, and with 82 goals in 146 games for Poland, Robert Lewandowski might have just one finals tournament left in a stellar career.

Entry in the playoffs is based not on those group standings, but results in the Nations League groups played in 2022.

Poland and Wales played in the Nations League top tier and their opponents Estonia and Finland, respectively, were upgraded from lower tiers. Estonia was the highest ranked of the Nations League fourth-tier teams.

League A bracket

At age 35, and with 82 goals in 146 games for Poland, Robert Lewandowski might have just one finals tournament left in a stellar career.

The winners of this bracket go into a Euro 2024 group with the Netherlands, Austria and a final game against France in Dortmund—where Lewandowski starred from 2010-14.

Poland are unbeaten at home in 20 Euros qualifying games since 2006, though Estonia won when they last met 12 years ago. That game was decided by a 90th-minute goal by Konstantin Vassiljev. Now 39, Vassiljev can tie the national record of 157 appearances, held by Martin Reim, if he plays in Warsaw.

Wales are proven in playoffs after qualifying for the 2022 World Cup that way, beating Austria and Ukraine. Just like two years ago, the draw has given Wales only home games.

League B bracket

Israel have never played at a European Championship. The national team has tried qualifying since joining UEFA 30 years ago because of security and diplomatic issues in Asian football.

Though some Asian football federations want Israel sanctioned in the sport because of the military conflict in Gaza, a key difference with Russia's exclusion is that no UEFA member has refused to play games against Israeli teams.

Israel first face Iceland, whose debut at Euro 2016 was a feelgood story as they eliminated England to reach the quarter-finals.

Ukraine coach Serhiy Rebrov's team returns to Bosnia, where they won 2-0 in November 2021.

Bosnia-Herzegovina hope to join Croatia, Serbia and Slovenia as the fourth qualifier from the former Yugoslavia at Euro 2024.

The bracket winner will go into a Euro 2024 group with Romania, Slovakia and Belgium.

League C bracket

Georgia will first host Luxembourg in the intimidating national stadium in Tbilisi without talismanic star Khvicha Kvaratskhelia.

The Napoli winger is suspended for getting three yellow cards in the qualifying group, including in the last two games against Scotland and Spain, who were irrelevant to entering the playoffs.

Luxembourg also miss a key attacker, Daniel Sinani, who got a red card in the last qualifying group game. In that group, Luxembourg won more games (five) than in their previous six Euros qualifying programs combined.

A Greece team coached by Uruguayan great Gus Poyet would be rewarded at Euro 2024 with playing neighbour Turkey. Portugal and the Czech Republic also are in the group.

HOROSCOPE

ARIES (March 21-April 19) Use your words to find healing. Maintain a positive message and outlook to make the most of these vibes, and don't be afraid to go out on a limb for your desires. The day also amplifies your confidence.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) You'll have the chance to break cycles and adapt a healthier internal dialogue. Now is also the ideal time to make peace with or finally express secrets you've been harbouring. You'll feel in tune with the feelings of loved ones.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21) Showing kindness within your community will offer healing in ways you weren't expecting. Think about the mark you wish to leave on this world, connecting with your humanitarian side. You don't have to solve every issue you are moved by.

CANCER (June 22-July 22) Tap into self-respect, reminding you of your resilience and credibility. Use this to fully appreciate the journey you've travelled thus far, focusing on the wisdom you've gained over time. Sharing it can help you get respect amongst peers.

LEO (July 23-August 22) Opening the doors toward a spiritually significant and enlightening day. Allow your curiosity and desire to expand your drive, soaking up wisdom and sharing it in return. A richness emerges when you dabble in the mysteries of our universe.

VIRGO (August 23-September 22) Love yourself through transformative moments. This energy opens opportunities to let go and move forward, helping you conquer fears, grief, and worries with positive thinking and grace for yourself.

LIBRA (September 23-October 22) Prioritise mental harmony, dearest Libra, conjuring themes around connection and balance. You'll crave companionship but should be selective of the company kept, leaning toward those who offer unconditional love and support.

SCORPIO (October 23-November 21) Lean toward conversations, company, and actions that support your mental wellness, dearest Scorpio. The choices you make come into focus under these conditions, reminding you that you have the power to create change while living your best life.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22-December 21) Believe in your creative visions and striking intellect, dearest Archer. This celestial union unleashes great artistic potential, helping you overcome self-doubt and gain confidence in the work you produce. Organisation will be key when chasing passions and big dreams.

CAPRICORN (December 22-January 19) Your private affairs may require extra tenderness and attention today, dearest Capricorn. Connect with family and close loved ones, your heart and mind will elevate with each sweet interaction. Consider your needs and whether or not they're being met.

AQUARIUS (January 20-February 18) Push forward toward your goals using the power of words, dear Aquarius. This celestial union invites you to discover new ways of thinking and speaking, considering how fresh approaches can get you closer to where you want to be.

PISCES (February 19-March 20) Turn your thoughts toward the simple yet beautiful elements of our world. If you've been feeling disenchanted by your surroundings, this can help you reclaim a positive mindset and sense of gratitude. Your mind spreads in multiple directions this evening.

CROSSWORD

- ACROSS**
- 1 Baby's bed
- 5 Type of fish
- 9 Swindle
- 13 Went by bus
- 14 Poppy product
- 16 Sharpen
- 17 Like a bump on
- 18 — Dame
- 19 Grammatical gaffe
- 20 Conviction
- 22 George's mother on "Seinfeld"
- 24 Brad
- 26 Actor James — Jones
- 27 Landing field
- 31 Less snug
- 35 JFK's predecessor
- 36 Singer — Torne
- 37 Actor — Carell
- 38 Attention
- 40 Napped leather
- 44 Whirl
- 43 Peaceful place
- 46 Intend
- 47 Frost
- 48 Mentally quick
- 50 Cut short
- 53 Part of the eye
- 55 Nobelist — Wiesel
- 56 Cause distress
- 59 Sudden
- 63 Concern
- 64 Leaning
- 66 Understanding words
- 67 Related by blood
- 68 Embankment
- 69 Actor — Penn
- 70 Unwelcome plant
- 71 Pip
- 72 Goofs
- DOWN**
- 1 Grouch
- 2 Part in a play
- 3 "American —"
- 4 Commences
- 5 Verifies
- 6 Mil. address part
- 7 Ceremony
- 8 Pucker
- 9 Young onions
- 10 Helix
- 11 English queen
- 12 Came upon
- 15 "Full — Jacket"
- 21 Dine
- 23 Love personified
- 25 Stead
- 27 Impromptu (2 wds.)
- 28 Perfect
- 29 Singer Della —
- 30 Skirt feature
- 32 Brown pigment
- 33 Oust
- 34 "Walk Away —"
- 39 Payout to shareholders
- 41 Terrible
- 42 Imitated
- 45 Dried out
- 49 Contender
- 51 Pen point
- 52 Cherry red
- 54 Locations
- 56 Harden with heat
- 57 Cleveland's lake
- 58 "— and learn"
- 60 Addict
- 61 Pome fruit
- 62 Sawbucks
- 63 Corvine cry
- 65 Rock pioneer Jerry — Lewis

PREVIOUS PUZZLE SOLVED

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- 29 Singer Della —
- 30 Skirt feature
- 32 Brown pigment
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- 34 "Walk Away —"
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YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

A cinematic salute to the Gurkha soldiers

Through a good story and stunning visuals, Milan Chams' 'Gurkha Warrior' honours the legacy of these legendary soldiers while offering insights into their struggles on the battlefield and at home.

□ AARATI RAY
KATHMANDU

With their khukuri and the iconic battle cry, "Aayo Gurkhali!", the Gurkhas have placed indelible marks on world history. Familiar to anyone with even a passing knowledge of warfare, the Gurkhas' identity is synonymous with their Khukuri and battle cry. Yet, the rich and unique history of this extraordinary group spanning over 200 years, remains relatively unknown.



Enter 'Gurkha Warrior', which appropriately reflects the formidable reputation of the Gurkhas. Their battle cry, resonating with both fear and awe in the hearts of adversaries, finds a fitting representation in this movie.

From the conclusion of the Indian Rebellion of 1857 to the outbreak of World War I, the British Indian Army, including over 200,000 Gurkhas, participated in conflicts across Burma, Afghanistan, India, Cyprus, and Malaya. Notably, during World War I, Gurkhas displayed exceptional courage, exemplified by one battalion's valiant stand at the Battle of Loos.

In the Gallipoli Campaign, Gurkhas were among the first to arrive and the last to depart. During World War II, over 250,000 Gurkhas, organised into 40 battalions, played vital roles in significant battles across Burma, North Africa, the Middle East, and Italy. Despite suffering 32,000 casualties, they earned over 2,000 bravery awards, highlighting their unwavering courage and dedication.

In a departure from the usual portrayal of Gurkhas, this historical film depicts stories of struggle, sacrifice, failures and triumphs. Director and producer Milan Chams sheds light not only on their wartime contributions but also on their roles as UN peacekeepers around the world.

The film begins with a breathtaking but sombre scene at a mountaintop monument, where an elderly man pays homage to fallen soldiers, setting a reflective tone for the audience. This serves as a fitting introduction, indicating that viewers are



Major Gurkha, played by Vijay Lama, recalling the gallantry of Gurkha soldiers in a scene from the film.

PHOTO: SCREENGRAB VIA YOUTUBE

about to witness the hardships faced by these soldiers. The grandfather's tribute to the soldiers in front of his grandchild symbolises the film's overarching aim: to educate younger generations about the lesser-known history of the Gurkhas.

The story then transports us back to the Malayan emergency of 1948-60, where Gurkhas fought alongside British soldiers against insurgents. Section commander Corporal Birkha Bahadur leads the story, embarking on a rescue mission into the jungles of Malaya with his subordinates. However, their journey takes a tumultuous turn when they are ambushed by the enemy, resulting in the platoon getting scattered. Bahadur takes charge, leading a mission to locate and rescue his comrades, confronting challenges with determination and courage.

The movie places great emphasis on its casting, particularly Ritesh Chams, who portrays Corporal Bahadur. It was a pleasant surprise to learn that Ritesh is a real-life Gurkha, adding authenticity to his performance. His firsthand experience as a retired Gurkha who served in Afghanistan lends credibility to his portrayal of Bahadur.

The film introduces many soldier characters with distinct personalities, blending humour, mischief and heroism. It fol-

lows the familiar pattern seen in war movies, where soldiers share moments of laughter and camaraderie amid heavy sacrifices and the longing to return home. While this formula may seem typical and cliché, it effectively serves its purpose.

The film begins with a breathtaking scene at a mountaintop monument, where an elderly man pays homage to fallen soldiers.

I found the dramatic conflict in the movie intriguing as the characters are prevented from getting something they want. Effective storytelling requires a balance of internal and external conflicts to create depth and drive the plot forward.

For example, Bahadur's mission to locate his comrades is met with numerous enemy attacks, representing external conflict. Meanwhile, internal conflicts arise from the soldiers' desires to succeed, protect their fellow comrades, and yearn for home. The weight of their decisions becomes evi-

dent when they must choose between life and death, loyalty and camaraderie.

The execution of dramatic conflict in the movie is commendable, as both internal and external conflicts actively oppose each other. Despite facing adversity and setbacks, Bahadur and his soldiers persevere with determination, reminiscent of the bravery displayed by characters like Captain America from the Marvel Cinematic Universe.

Similarly, the movie extends beyond depicting war scenes to explore the lives of soldiers' families. It highlights emotional moments as Birkha's wife and mother anxiously await his return. This personal dimension adds depth to the story, allowing us to empathise with the characters and grasp the magnitude of their sacrifices.

Visually, the movie is striking, thanks to Sudip Baral's cinematography, which beautifully captures Nepal's landscapes. The majestic Himalayan mountains and meticulously choreographed battle sequences immerse the audience in the midst of the conflict, capturing every gunshot and evoking a range of emotions.

The film is being produced in multiple languages including Nepali, Hindi, English and Korean.

However, while the movie endeavours to

leave a lasting impression of Gurkha history, its message and impact somewhat falter in its landing to some extent and are not that memorable.

The film heavily relies on sentimentality and patriotism, emphasising the bravery and legacy of the Gurkhas. At times, this emphasis on sacrifice feels exaggerated, potentially alienating younger and non-Nepali audiences. While it may resonate with older Nepali viewers, the film's emotional approach could hinder its ability to connect with a broader audience.

Nonetheless, the movie serves as a tribute to the valiant soldiers. It transcends mere combat, offering a glimpse into the true essence of the Gurkhas. Watching the film evokes a sense of gratitude towards these warriors and imparts lessons about resilience in the face of adversity.

Throughout history, Gurkhas have faced significant challenges in warfare, with some never returning and others bearing physical and emotional scars. This reality persists today, as dangers persist in peacekeeping efforts in war-torn regions. Thus, the movie stands as an excellent tribute to all those who have fought and continue to fight bravely.



Gurkha Warrior
Director: Milan Chams
Cast: Ritesh Chams, Vijay Lama, Rebika Gurung
Year: 2023 in UK and 2024 in Nepal
Language: Nepali
Duration: 1 hour 55 minutes

The 3 'R's of recovery: Refuel, repair and relax

Parag Limbu, a sports nutritionist and strength and conditioning coach, describes the fundamentals of a comprehensive recovery plan that extends beyond the gym. He also offers tips on overall health and well-being.



SHUTTERSTOCK

How does nutrition help repair muscles after a workout?

Proper nutrition is a key factor in facilitating the repair of muscles after a workout. During exercise, muscles undergo stress and micro-tears, and the right nutrients are crucial for their recovery. Proteins, containing essential amino acids, play a central role in rebuilding and repairing muscle tissue. Additionally, carbohydrates are important for replenishing glycogen stores, the primary energy source used during physical activity. Consuming a balanced meal or snack with both protein and carbohydrates within the post-workout window enhances nutrient absorption and utilisation for effective muscle recovery.

Adequate hydration is equally vital as it supports the transport of nutrients and overall recovery processes. In essence, a well-rounded post-workout nutrition plan, emphasising proteins, carbohydrates, and hydration, contributes significantly to muscle repair, promoting overall recovery and preparing the body for subsequent physical exertion.

How does incorporating relaxation techniques contribute to overall post-workout recovery?

Incorporating relaxation techniques into your post-workout routine is beneficial for overall recovery. After intense physical activity, your body and mind need to return to a state of balance and calm. Relaxation techniques contribute to this process in several ways.

Firstly, activities such as deep breathing, meditation, massage or gentle stretching can help reduce muscle tension. This is particularly important after a workout to alleviate any tightness or soreness in the muscles, promoting a faster recovery. Especially, massage, as it increases blood flow and helps in swift recovery.

Secondly, relaxation techniques help regulate the stress hormones in your body, such as cortisol. Intense exercise can temporarily elevate these hormones, and by practising relaxation, you encourage their return to normal levels. This is crucial because chronically elevated stress hormones can hinder recovery and even contribute to muscle breakdown.

What are some common misconceptions about muscle repair and relaxation?

One prevalent misconception is the belief that more intense and frequent workouts always lead to better results. While exercise is crucial, adequate rest and recovery are equally important. Overtraining can hinder muscle repair and increase the risk of injury, emphasising the need for a balanced approach.

Another misconception is that relaxation techniques are solely about mental well-being and don't significantly impact physical recovery. In reality, activities like meditation and deep breathing contribute to reducing muscle tension and promoting a more efficient recovery process.

Additionally, some people think that soreness or discomfort is a sign of a more effective workout. While some muscle soreness is normal, excessive or prolonged pain may indicate overtraining or insufficient recovery.

Understanding and dispelling these misconceptions is essential for promoting a more informed and effective approach to muscle repair and overall well-being.

carbohydrates, opt for sources like brown rice, quinoa, and sweet potatoes to replenish energy stores. Including fruits such as bananas for potassium and berries for antioxidants adds a nutritious touch. Don't forget to stay hydrated with water and consider coconut water for natural electrolytes. This combination of proteins, carbohydrates, and hydration supports effective post-workout recovery.



PHOTO: COURTESY OF PARAG LIMBU

Parag Limbu, sports nutritionist and strength and conditioning coach

□ ANISH GHIMIRE
KATHMANDU

Achieving adequate recovery is equally important to a healthy and sustainable fitness path as maximising training intensity. The three key components of post-exercise recovery, sometimes known as the 3 Rs of recovery: refuel, repair, and relax, are just as vital as a workout. The body needs proper nutrients, adequate time for muscle restoration, and relaxation techniques to promote a thorough healing process.

Parag Limbu, a sports nutritionist and a strength and conditioning coach, will describe the fundamentals of a comprehensive recovery plan that extends beyond the gym and captures the spirit of overall health and well-being.

What are the key nutrients that individuals should consume post-workout for effective recovery?

After a workout, it's crucial to focus on key nutrients for effective recovery. Proteins help rebuild muscles, so include sources like chicken, eggs, white rice or plant-based options. Also, prioritise fast-absorbing carbohydrates to replenish energy, which are found in foods like fruits and whole grains. Hydration is vital, so drink plenty of water. Also, don't forget about electrolytes, which you can get from sports drinks or coconut water. Keep it simple: protein, carbs, water, and electrolytes for a solid post-workout recovery plan.

What foods help with refuelling post-workout?

After a workout, it's essential to refuel your body with the right nutrients. Consider incorporating foods rich in protein, such as chicken breast, Greek yoghurt, and eggs. These help rebuild and repair muscles. For

MY PODCAST PICKS



Suryansh Vaidya

Vaidya is the director of Vaidya's Organization of Industries and the CEO of Vaidya Energy.

>> Huberman Labs

I listen to Huberman Labs because it features thought-provoking discussions among experts. They delve into many fascinating topics, covering everything from the mind and body to culture and society.



>> The Tony Robbins Podcast

Some of the most influential people share their thoughts on different worldly issues in The Tony Robbins Podcast. It offers valuable insights into the diverse perspectives and minds of people from various backgrounds.

>> Empire

Empire is a captivating series that delves into the British reign in India, offering fascinating information about the events that unfolded in the Indian subcontinent during that time.



>> Snacks Daily

Snacks is great for staying informed about the global financial markets. As the name suggests, it provides digestible news on what's happening in some of the biggest companies on the planet.

>> Past Gas

Past Gas is one of my favourite podcasts because of the funny stories the host recites about vehicles and the automotive industry. Also, the show helps me stay updated on the newest developments and trends in the automotive industry.

