India, Nepal set to hold 20th edition of joint military exercise Suryakiran

NEW DELHI, Nov 23 (ANI)

INDIA and Nepal are set to hold the 20th edition of their Joint Military Exercise Suryakiran to strengthen the defence partnership between the two countries.

In a post on X, the Indian Army announced the upcoming edition of the exercise with the Nepali Army, highlighting the "enduring bond" between the neighbouring countries.

"EXERCISE SURYAKIRAN 2026. The #IndianArmy and #NepaliArmy are set to participate in the 20th edition of Joint Military Exercise #SURYAKIRAN, reaffirming the enduring partnership between the two neighbouring nations. COMING SOON... Two Nations. One Mission. An Enduring Bond," the post read. The 19th edition of the Indo-Nepal Joint Exercise SURYAKIRAN culminated in December 2025 with a closing ceremony at Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand, marking the successful conclusion of a key bilateral military engagement.

The Directors General of Military Operations (DGMOs) of the Indian Army and the Nepal Army jointly observed the two-day Battalion-level Validation Exercise in Pithoragarh, conducted as part of Exercise SURYAKIRAN-XIX, marking the culmination of an intensive combined training cycle at the Foreign Training Node, Pithoragarh, according to the Ministry of Defence.

The validation exercise successfully demonstrated joint TTPs for Counter-Terrorism operations mandated under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. The drills integrated a range of niche technologies, including ISR and precision-targeting drones, advanced day/night weapon sights, AI-enabled surveillance feeds, unmanned operational and logistics platforms and secure battlefield communication systems.

India to set up offshore IIT campus in Nepal

NEW DELHI, Nov 23 (PTI)

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi and his Nepalese counterpart Balendra Shah on Monday agreed that India would set up an offshore IIT campus in Nepal, according to a joint statement issued by the two countries.

This would be the third offshore campus of IIT with two campuses being already operational in Tanzania's Zanzibar and UAE's Abu Dhabi.

Shah undertook a two-day State visit to India from November 22. He was accompanied by a high-level official delegation. This was Shah's first visit to India after assuming office.

"In an expansion of India's development and capacity-building support to Nepal, the two leaders agreed that India would set up an offshore IIT campus in Nepal. This will serve as a force multiplier in Nepal's education sector and also promote job creation. "Both leaders welcomed the expanding co-operation between India and Nepal in the area of technology, including start-ups and digital and financial connectivity," the joint statement said.

Democrats secure 258 House seats after 34 yrs

- The result marks an election sweep not witnessed by either party since 1992



WASHINGTON, DC, Nov 23 (ANI)

DEMOCRATS have gained 44 House seats so far, surpassing the 40 seats they won during US President Donald Trump's first midterm elections in 2018.

The 258-seat tally was reached on Sunday after Democrat Chuck Hubbard defeated Republican Representative Virginia Foxx in North Carolina. Hubbard secured the victory by a margin of 330 votes following a recount, according to the North Carolina Board of Elections.

The result marks an election sweep not witnessed by either party since 1992, presenting Democrats with significant opportunities to govern while also placing considerable pressure on them to fulfill their campaign promises and priorities, 'CBS News' reported.

Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries, who is set to become the Speaker of the House, said that House Democrats had secured the largest majority held by any party in the US Congress this century, celebrating the milestone in a post on X.

"House Democrats have just secured the largest majority any party in Congress has held this century. BOOM," Jeffries, who represents New York, wrote on X.

According to 'CBS News', the 258-seat majority in the 435-member House surpassed Democrats' own expectations, with the party still having the possibility of adding a few more seats as four races remained undecided. These included one each in Minnesota and Tennessee and two in Louisiana, where runoffs were scheduled for December.

Republicans were set to hold at least 173 seats in the minority, CBS News reported.

The election results have paved the way for a divided Government, with Democrats controlling the Senate while Republican President Donald Trump remains in the White House.

According to 'CBS News', Democrats are preparing a 100-day agenda focused on addressing the rising cost of living, alongside an extensive oversight programme targeting the Trump administration for the remainder of his second term.

B'desh's garment industry loses over $400 mn amid workers' strike: Report

NEW DELHI, Nov 23 (IANS)

BANGLADESH'S garment industry has lost an estimated $428 million due to large-scale protests by workers demanding higher wages, the country's main manufacturers' association said.

Nationwide protests since October have disrupted production at several of the more than 4,000 factories in the South Asian country, which is also the world's second-biggest garment exporter after China, said the report in Khaleej Times. The intensity of the protests has forced the government-appointed wage board to announce a new minimum wage, which is expected next month, giving some respite to the beleaguered garments sector.



Workers say their wages have failed to keep pace with rising costs of food, housing, transport and healthcare, demanding a minimum monthly wage of 30,000 taka ($240), which is more than twice the 12,500 taka that they currently get, the report states. The Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association, citing a survey of members, said that in the ongoing unrest, "317 garment factories have suffered losses of $428 million, while orders worth $254 mn have been shifted to other countries."

YUNUS CALLS FOR END TO ATTACKS ON GRAMEEN BANK BRANCHES AMID FRESH POLITICAL UNREST IN B'DESH: BANGLADESH'S former interim government chief Muhammad Yunus on Monday called for an end to attacks on branches of Grameen Bank, saying nearly 100 outlets of the microcredit institution had been targeted with petrol bombs since the beginning of this month amid a fresh wave of political violence in the country.

El Nino effect

Hindu Kush Himalaya likely to witness floods, landslides, avalanches: Report

■ By Shirish B Pradhan
KATHMANDU, Nov 23 (PTI)

A STRONG El Nino could bring above-normal precipitation to parts of the Hindu Kush Himalaya region, increasing the risk of floods, landslides and avalanches in Nepal during the winter season, according to a report.

The Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) Winter Outlook 2026, jointly prepared by the Kathmandu-based International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), Beijing Normal University and the Institute of Atmospheric Physics of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, forecasts wetter conditions in countries including Nepal, Afghanistan and Bangladesh.

The report warns that heavy precipitation could trigger localised floods, landslides and avalanches in the western Himalaya, while some parts of the region may experience dry spells and an increased risk of forest fires.

The outlook comes as the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) reports a strong-to-very-strong El Nino, with around a 60 per cent chance of it becoming the strongest since records began in 1950.



ICIMOD scientists said the weather phenomenon could bring more rain to the Himalayan foothills and increased snowfall at higher elevations.

The report follows a particularly destructive monsoon season in Nepal and Bhutan, marked by disasters linked to changes in high-mountain glaciers and permafrost.

The devastating Bhotekoshi floods that struck the Himalayan nation in August, killing at least 1,500 people and leaving over 5,000 missing, are estimated to have cost the country USD 4.7 billion in relief and reconstruction.

The outlook also forecasts deeper-than-normal snow in parts of Afghanistan, Pakistan, northern India and Nepal, while shallower snow levels are expected in parts of Bhutan and eastern Xizang in China.

Snow depth plays a crucial role in sustaining river flows and determining water availability for the coming year. Lower snow levels could affect irrigation, hydropower generation and spring flows, the report said.

'India 3rd most powerful in Asia, Modi 2nd-most effective leader'

NEW DELHI, Nov 23 (PTI)

INDIA has retained its position as the 3rd most powerful country in Asia, emerging as a 'major powerhouse', with Prime Minister Narendra Modi ranked as the 2nd most effective regional leader, according to the Lowy Institute's Asia Power Index 2026.

India's power score improved by 0.5 points to 40.5 in the 2026 Index as the country played a much more influential role in Asia. India's power score gap with China has dropped to the narrowest since 2018.



According to the Index, the US and China are "superpowers in Asia for 2026" with scores of 78.9 and 73.6, respectively, out of 100.

India consolidated its "major power" status this year, growing more influential in Asia. Greater regional defence engagement and BrahMos missile sales to Southeast Asia strengthened its defence networks, while stable trade and investment ties made it one of the few countries whose economic relationships did not weaken.

"Its diplomatic influence held up as experts rated Prime Minister Narendra Modi the second-most effective regional leader after Xi Jinping, though India's low profile during the Gulf conflict weighed on views of his global leadership," the Asia Power Index 2026 said.

In 2026, India had the greatest gains in cultural influence (+2.3). It lost the most points in economic capability (-0.7). Elsewhere, it improved in defence networks (+2.1), future resources (+1.2) and military capability (+0.5). The scores for resilience, economic relationships and diplomatic influence were unchanged this year.

India also ranked first in Lowy's Armed Forces indicator, scoring 100, ahead of China at 85.3 and the US at 64.8. The measure assesses the size of active military and paramilitary forces, their training and readiness, and organisational effectiveness. This is a specific indicator and should not be confused with the overall military capability ranking, in which India stood fourth.

NPR 24K cr package for Nepal's flood rebuilding

NEW DELHI, Nov 23 (ANI)

India and Nepal sign 8 MoUs spanning space technology, security training, civil service capacity building, health, traditional medicine, sustainable urban development, and agriculture



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Nepalese counterpart Balendra Shah press a button to jointly inaugurate and lay the foundation stones of various bilateral development and connectivity projects following their talks at the Hyderabad House, in New Delhi, on Monday. (PTI)

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Monday announced a Development Cooperation Package of 24,000 crore Nepali rupees to support Nepal's post-flood reconstruction and long-term development, welcoming Nepalese Prime Minister Balendra Shah on his first bilateral visit to India after assuming office.

Delivering his press statement alongside Shah following delegation-level talks at Hyderabad House, PM Modi expressed condolences over the loss of lives in the severe floods that struck Nepal in August and reaffirmed New Delhi's commitment to standing by Kathmandu in difficult times.

"We express our deep condolences for the loss of lives caused by the severe floods in Nepal in August. And today, to provide new strength to Nepal's reconstruction and long-term development, we announce a Development Cooperation Package of 24,000 crore Nepali rupees," PM Modi said.

Outlining the objective of the financial package, he added, "Our resolve will be that the lives of the affected families get back on track, new opportunities are created, and Nepal's capacity to deal with future disasters is also further strengthened."

Warmly welcoming the Nepalese Prime Minister, whom he noted had addressed the United Nations a few months ago as the world's youngest Prime Minister, PM Modi praised Shah's leadership and the mandate given to him by Nepalese voters earlier this year.

(Contd on page 5)

Ties firm as Himalayas and vast as ocean: Nepal PM lauds India's disaster response

NEW DELHI, Nov 23 (ANI)

NEPALI Prime Minister Balendra Shah on Monday described Nepal-India ties as "firm as the Himalayas and as vast as the ocean," thanking India for serving as a dependable first responder during natural disasters while calling for collective climate action around Himalayan rivers flowing into the Ganga.

Addressing a joint press briefing after delegation-level talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi, Shah underscored mutual respect, trust, and public goodwill as the foundation of bilateral relations.

"Mutual respect, steadfast trust, and unbroken goodwill are the bedrock of Nepal-India relations. At the heart of this incomparable bond are the peoples of our two countries. The ties between Nepal and India stand as firm as the Himalayas and as vast as the ocean—a closeness so profound that words alone can scarcely capture it," Shah said.



Nepalese Prime Minister Balendra Shah pays floral tributes at the memorial of Mahatma Gandhi at Rajghat, in New Delhi. (PTI)

Commending New Delhi's timely assistance during emergencies, he added, "As a dependable and trusted neighbour, India has consistently stood as a first responder in times of natural disasters and difficult hours. For this, I express my sincere appreciation to the Government and people of India."

(Contd on page 5)