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**Japan supports disaster-affected areas in Nepal  
through sports and disaster prevention education**

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Photo courtesy of the J.LEAGUE

As part of Sport for Tomorrow, a Japanese government-initiated programme to promote international cooperation through sport, the Japan Professional Football League (J.LEAGUE) organised a programme of sporting activities in Nepal to aid efforts aimed at the recovery and reconstruction of the disaster-affected areas of Kathmandu and the surrounding areas in the aftermath of the April 2015 earthquake that devastated the city. The programme was supported by the Japan Sport Council – secretariat of the Sport for Tomorrow Consortium – and was held on 1–7 February 2016.

The aim of the programme was to promote awareness of the power of sport and create opportunities for local people to enjoy physical exercise and participate in sporting activities in an effort to motivate them to be positive about the future. The programme also included disaster prevention education to share information on disaster mitigation and management practices with people living in areas prone to natural disasters. More than 5,000 children enjoyed various sports and learned about disaster prevention at these events which took place at the All Nepal Football Association (ANFA) Chyasal ground in Kathmandu, and at several schools across Kathmandu and surrounding areas.

The programme was organised by the J.LEAGUE with the cooperation of various organisations, such as the Nepal Baseball Club Laligurans, a Japanese professional football club F.C. Tokyo and its Volleyball team, the Japan International Cooperation System, forming an all-Japan cooperative framework based on the platform established by the Sport for Tomorrow Consortium. Various related Nepali organisations also provided support to the programme.

At the sports event held on 4 and 6 February, some 900 children were divided into teams and enjoyed football, volleyball and baseball games. A total of approximately 5,000 children took part in sports classes held at 16 schools on 1-7 February. The children also learnt the importance of being prepared for future disasters through a disaster preparedness exercise, which demonstrated how people should react and think when faced with a natural disaster.

The integration of sports and disaster management were key components of the programme, and were delivered from Japan's own experience of the valuable role sport played in the reconstruction from the earthquake and tsunami that devastated Japan's Tohoku region in 2011. Disaster recovery and reconstruction efforts often take many years, and children living in disaster-affected areas are faced with a range of difficulties. Many children living in disaster-affected areas in Japan have experienced a variety of trauma and stress-related problems, affecting them both physically and emotionally. Children in the disaster-affected areas in Nepal are confronted by similar circumstances, and it is hoped that Japan's experience will serve as a frame of reference to Kathmandu in its own recovery and reconstruction efforts.

A local teacher who joined the event said, "Many schools in the disaster-affected areas have been damaged by the earthquake, and thus spaces for children to play sports safely are limited. Thanks to today's event we were able to see children enjoying sports again, and we were very glad to see beautiful smiles on their faces. It was also interesting to learn new ways to enjoy sports through programmes that included disaster management, and I am pleased to have had this valuable opportunity to join the event."



Photo courtesy of the J.LEAGUE

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**About the Sport for Tomorrow Programme:**

The Sport for Tomorrow programme is one of the Japanese government's commitments to leveraging the power of sport and further promoting the Olympic and Paralympic movements to create a brighter future for people throughout the world. The programme aims to implement a variety of sporting events and activities that will engage over ten million people in over 100 countries spanning a seven-year period, culminating in 2020. This will enable Japan to achieve its objectives of providing assistance to developing countries, training future sports leaders at new international sports academies, and protecting both athletes and the integrity of sport by promoting global anti-doping initiatives. In 2014, the Sport for Tomorrow programme engaged some 520,000 worldwide people through its various activities.

**About the Sport for Tomorrow Consortium:**

The Sport for Tomorrow Consortium was launched in August 2014 in order to align the concerned organisations in both the public and private sectors with a common vision. Chaired by representatives of the Japan Sports Agency, the newly established government agency within the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), the consortium's Steering Committee is made up of key members of the Japanese sporting community with the remit of making the optimal use of existing resources. The Japan Sport Council serves as the consortium's secretariat.

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