

AMBASSADOR'S MESSAGE



It is my privilege to extend warm greetings to my fellow Indian citizens and friends of India in Nepal on the august occasion of 77th Independence Day of India. The Independence Day is an occasion for all of us to rededicate ourselves to the task of nation building, more so in this 'Amrit Kaal' of our developmental journey. India, as Prime Minister Modi has said, is an aspirational society and has an indomitable spirit. This spirit was visible in the last few years as we very ably handled the Covid-19 pandemic. As Prime Minister Modi noted further, there is an awakening of 'consciousness' that provides energy to our nation to move ahead on its journey towards achieving 'Atma Nirbhar' Bharat in these unpredictable global times.

At the same time, we are also acutely aware of the expectations of the world from a resurgent India. India is increasingly shouldering its responsibilities as evident during Covid-19 pandemic, when India supplied vaccines to a large number of our friends in developing countries through 'Vaccine Maitri'. Prime Minister Modi has often said that our guiding mantra is 'Sabka Sath, Sabka Vishwas and Sabka Prayas'. This is evident also in our policies and actions towards our neighbouring countries. Nepal enjoys a special place in our Neighbourhood First Policy. As close friend and neighbour, Nepal and India have enjoyed deep bonds of friendship. Our bonds have been nurtured over the years by strong people-to-people connection and cultural ties. Our effort has been, and will be, to further strengthen these ties in all aspects.

The recent visit by Rt Hon'ble Prime Minister of Nepal Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' to India at the invitation of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has provided further impetus to this endeavour. Prime Minister Modi said during the visit that the new initiatives announced by the two sides will ensure that our borders become connectors and that our relationship with Nepal will be 'superhit' in the future. These initiatives include inauguration of Integrated Check Post (ICP) at Nepalgunj, shilanyas of another ICP at Bhairahwa and an MoU for the establishment of new ICP at Dodhara Chandni.

In addition, to improve our connectivity with Sudurpashchim, since last year we have started construction of a motorable bridge between Dharchula (India) and Darchula (Nepal) and in the recent visit, an announcement about construction of two new bridges across the Mahakali River at Shirsha and Jhulaghat in Nepal connecting to Champawat and Pithoragarh districts in India was also made. Taking our railway connectivity forward the Jayanagar-Kurtha railway line was further extended till Bijalpura, and was handed over to the Government of Nepal. Similarly, a freight train link connecting India and Nepal was flagged off between Bathnaha and Nepal Customs Yard near Biratnagar. These developments, along with the signing of the revised Treaty of Transit that provides for access to India's inland waterways, would facilitate further the movement of people and goods between our two countries, adding value to our trade, economic and people to people partnership.

Energy connectivity between India and Nepal has seen remarkable progress in the last few years. Nepal's export of hydroelectricity to India grew to 452 MW last year from almost negligible amount only two years ago. Recently, access to Real-time Market has also been enabled for Nepal besides the Day Ahead Market for cross-border power trade. The groundbreaking of the Indian portion of the second 400 KV transmission line between our countries i.e. Gorakhpur - New Butwal Transmission line is further likely to boost our power trade. During the recent visit of Prime Minister of Nepal, another important milestone was crossed as both countries agreed on a Long Term Power Trade agreement, under which both sides will strive to increase the quantum of export of power from Nepal to India to 10000 MW within a period of 10 years. The 900 MW Arun III hydropower project being built by an Indian company is progressing well as are other projects such as West Seti and SR-6. New agreements for the development of 480 MW Phukot-Karnali and 669 MW Lower Arun hydroelectric projects would further add to this capacity. In a significant step forward towards enhancing regional energy connectivity, we have also agreed to facilitate the first trilateral power

transaction from Nepal to Bangladesh through the Indian grid. The first cross border petroleum pipeline in South Asia was inaugurated in 2019, and its implementation has resulted in energy cost savings for Nepal. During Prime Minister Prachanda ji's visit progress was achieved in taking forward the phase II of the Motihari-Amlekhgunj pipeline and also for its extension up to Chitwan. The two sides have also agreed to set up another pipeline between Siliguri and Jhapa and associated storage facilities.

The conclusion of an MoU between NPCI International Ltd. And NCHL Nepal which enables linking of our digital payment systems is an important step towards creating seamless financial connectivity between India and Nepal.

Apart from progress on various projects, Ministerial-level meetings and interactions have ensured momentum in our ties. Nepal has been invited to the finance track of G-20 meetings, with the participation of Finance Minister from Nepal. In the last few months, other Ministerial visits from Nepal have taken place including that of Defence Minister, Agriculture Minister and Communication Minister. Nepal became a founding member of the International Big Cat Alliance with Ministerial-level participation. There have also been regular interactions between our Foreign Ministers. Such regular high level interaction has ensured that we move forward on the path set out by our two Prime Ministers to take our relationship as high as the 'Himalayas'.

The Indian community in Nepal has been an enthusiastic supporter of the initiatives taken by us at the Embassy for fostering stronger relations. I wish to convey my sincere appreciation to the support extended by our fellow citizens to our activities. We look forward to continuing to work with our compatriots and also friends of India in Nepal for expanding and deepening our multifaceted partnership with Nepal.

Wish you all a very happy and joyous 77th Independence Day. Jai Hind.

(Naveen Srivastava)

VISIT OF THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEPAL TO INDIA



HIGH LEVEL EXCHANGES



o India's External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar met Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal, Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud on the sidelines of 6th Indian Ocean Conference in Dhaka (12 May 2023) & BIMSTEC Foreign Ministers' Retreat in Bangkok (17 July 2023).



o On the sidelines of Aero India 2023, the then Defence Minister of Nepal, Mr. Hari Prasad Upreti, held a discussion with his Indian counterpart Shri Rajnath Singh in Bengaluru (3 February 2023).



o On sidelines of the Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors meeting of G20 nations, Finance Minister of India Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman met her Nepali counterparts - Mr. Bishnu Paudel in Bengaluru (25 Feb) and Mr. Prakash Sharan Mahat in Gandhinagar (18 July).



o Minister for Communications & Information Technology of Nepal Ms. Rekha Sharma visited India from 22-23 March 2023 for inauguration of ITU Area Office and Innovation Centre in New Delhi.



o Foreign Secretary of India, Shri Vinay Mohan Kwatra visited Kathmandu, Nepal from 13-14 February 2023 at the invitation of his counterpart, Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal.

INDIA-NEPAL DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP

o Development Partnership remains an important facet of India-Nepal relationship directly impacting the lives of the people. A total 76 Development Partnership Projects were successfully inaugurated in the last one year. **Big Projects:** Inauguration of Integrated Check Point, Nepalgunj; Kurtha-Bijalpura section of Jayanagar-Bardibas Rail Link; and freight train between Bathnaha to Nepal Custom Yard provide modern and multi-modal connectivity between two countries.

Reconstruction & HICDP Projects: 48 post-2015 Earthquake Reconstruction Projects and 25 High Impact Community Development Projects have made positive impact.

Strengthening India-Nepal Connectivity



Inauguration of Integrated Check Post, Nepalgunj



Handover of Kurtha-Bijalpura section of Jayanagar-Bardibas Rail Link



Handover of Final Location Survey report for Raxaul-Kathmandu Rail line



MoU signed on Cross-border digital payments Between NPCI (India) and NCHL (Nepal)



Freight Rail operations between Bathnaha (India) and Nepal Custom Yard Biratnagar (Nepal)



Ground Breaking of Phase II of Motihari-Amlekhgunj Oil Pipeline

HIGH IMPACT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS (HICDP) SINCE 2003

544	HICDPs undertaken
480	HICDPs Completed
68	HICDPs Ongoing



234 School Buses Gifted



974 Ambulances Gifted



200 Kidney Dialysis Machines Gifted

EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE



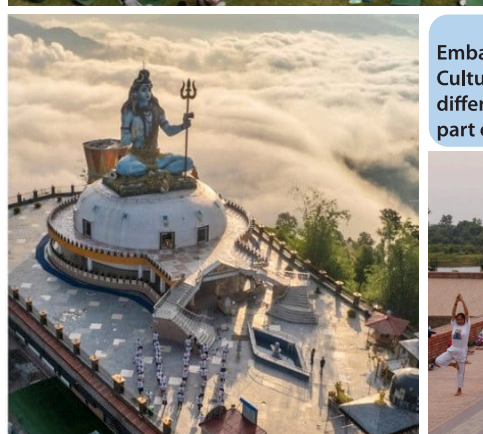
o Around 1500 scholarships are provided every year by India to Nepali nationals for undergoing various courses in India as well in Nepal.

500	For Study In Nepal Under the Mahatma Gandhi Scholarship Scheme (MGSS) for studying in XI & XII.
200	Under Golden Jubilee Scholarship Scheme (GJSS) for various Undergraduate courses.
700	For Study India For various Undergraduate, Postgraduate and PhD courses.
33	For studying in Army Public Schools in India

SECTORAL COOPERATION



YOGA FOR VASUDHAIVA KUTUMBAKAM



International Day of Yoga
Embassy of India in association with Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre, Kathmandu organised Yoga events in different places in Nepal including Lumbini and Pokhara as part of the celebration of International Day of Yoga 2023.



CULTURAL CONNECT



Janakpur Cultural Festival: Embassy organized Janakpurdham Cultural Festival at Mithila Yatri Niwas, Janakpur. The event celebrated Folk Cultural Performances and Maithili Food Festival. (28 April)

DEFENCE COOPERATION



Surya Kiran: 16th iteration of the India-Nepal Joint Military Exercise 'Surya Kiran', was conducted in Nepal in Dec 2022 where an Infantry Battalion from each country trained together.



Sangeet Sukoon: The Embassy organised a music concert 'Sangeet Sukoon' on 20 Jan 2023 as part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav Week celebration. The event was attended by Rt. Hon'ble PM of Nepal and other leaders. In addition, Development Partnership Conclave and Startup Connect were also organized.



General Manoj Pande, Chief of Army Staff, presented equipment along with light vehicles to the Nepali Army for augmenting their technical capabilities in September 2022.