Most countries have neighbours. But few share a relationship as close, interdependent and comprehensive as Nepal and India do. Geography and history, culture and customs have shaped from time immemorial the profound interaction between the peoples of the two countries. The resultant all-encompassing and axiomatic interconnectedness spanning across an open border has brought about a partnership that addresses shared developmental challenges. An important cornerstone of this relationship is the India-Nepal Economic Cooperation Programme, supplementing Nepal’s own efforts to fulfill the developmental aspirations of the people of Nepal.
When Nepal began its journey towards development and prosperity in the 1950s, India was the first country to respond to its quest. The newly independent India, itself freshly unshackled from the colonial rule that left it facing staggering developmental challenges, came forward happily to help the people of Nepal in their efforts to build a new nation. India’s first assistance were channelled through the Indian Aid Mission, which was set up in 1954 to support hundreds of development projects across Nepal.

One of the earliest fruits of this partnership were projects that provided connectivity within Nepal and brought it closer to the rest of the world with a network of roads, airports and communication infrastructure. The first highway linking the Kathmandu Valley with the plains was constructed with Indian assistance in 1953. Nepal’s first six airports – at Gauchar (1951), Simra (1964), Janakpur (1964), Bhairahawa (1964), Pokhara (1964) and Biratnagar (1968) – were major landmarks in the initial years. Large projects, such as Koshi Barrage (1963), Devighat Hydropower and Irrigation project (1983), Bir Hospital in Kathmandu (1984), Institute of Forestry (1950s).
the railways at Janakpur (1996), most parts of the East-West Highway (1966) and key sections of the Tribhuvan University, one of the first centres for higher education in the country (1960) led the programme of Indian assistance. As a result roads, bridges, hydropower and irrigation, education and healthcare reached some of the remotest villages and towns of Nepal, touching the lives of hundreds of thousands of people and creating the infrastructures so vital to development. Scholarships and training programmes in India for Nepali students and experts helped them bring home the fruits of knowledge to contribute to Nepal’s development in their own ways. By many accounts, India was possibly the only major partner in development during Nepal’s first two Five Year Plans.

The Indian Aid Mission was renamed the Indian Cooperation Mission in 1966 to reflect the spirit of cooperation, as opposed to one of aid, which underlines the shared aspirations of India and Nepal for progress and prosperity and the common desire in India to work with Nepal to this end. Large infrastructure essential for Nepal’s growth continued to be the focus of the Indian cooperation effort. The Indian Cooperation Mission was later recast into the Economic Cooperation Wing of the Embassy of India in the 1980s. It has continued to respond to Nepal’s developmental needs in keeping with the demands of the changing times, by diversifying and expanding India-Nepal economic cooperation into new vistas.

With the advent of multiparty democracy in Nepal in 1990, India-Nepal development cooperation embodied greater synthesis of large infrastructure projects and people-centred grassroots development initiatives. Programmes, such as for goitre control through the distribution and popularisation of iodised salt that has helped the eradication of iodine deficiency disorders in Nepal to a great extent, have gone hand in hand with the creation of most modern infrastructure such as the B.P. Koirala Institute of Health Sciences in Dharan (1999). The Optical Fibre Cable Project (2004) brought benefits of the revolutionary optical fibre technology to Nepal, symbolising India’s efforts to usher in cutting-edge 21st century technology in Nepal. Several projects and programmes epitomising the close bonds between the peoples and institutions of the two countries were also undertaken, which include the Institute of Forestry Museum and Library-cum-Documentation Centre at Hetauda (1994) and the Lumbini Museum (2004).
"Small is beautiful, and useful too..."

With the launch of the Small Development Projects in 2003 began a new chapter in the six-decade long journey of the India-Nepal Economic Cooperation Programme. Conceived as low-investment and short-gestation projects, the Small Development Projects programme has supplemented the local developmental efforts of the Government of Nepal through a well-devised, community-oriented, transparent and participative programme for social and physical infrastructure in the sectors of education, health and community development by building schools, hostels, hospitals etc. With their simple and straightforward methodology, these grassroots projects reach out to the beneficiaries directly, efficiently and promptly without the complexities of the big projects. There are little or no overhead costs and 100% of project outlay benefits the people. In its brief existence, the Small Development Projects programme has unleashed a new energy and drive for local development over almost the entire Nepal, reflecting the programme’s popularity and utility. The fact that these projects are recipient-driven, and in the ultimate analysis, locally-owned, sets them apart from other development programmes in Nepal.

India’s development engagement maintained its momentum even during the difficult times of conflict in Nepal. With the consolidation of multiparty democracy after the Janandolan-II of April 2006 and the ensuing peace process in Nepal, India redoubled its commitment to assist Nepal’s transformation to a peaceful, stable, democratic and prosperous country. India has responded consistently with a sense of urgency to the needs of the people and the Government of Nepal by rendering all possible material, moral and diplomatic support so that the peace process could reach its logical culmination, enabling the people of Nepal to have a future and a system of governance of their own choosing through a Constituent Assembly.

"What is good for Nepal is good for India"

India-Nepal economic cooperation is guided by the conviction that the welfare of the peoples of India and Nepal is interlinked and that peace and prosperity of Nepal are important for peace and prosperity of India, and indeed the entire South Asian region. It is this organic nature of India-Nepal relationship which underpins their economic cooperation for shared benefits and that have been existing and growing together for millennia.

“Governments come and go, but relations between Nepal and India remain unchanged. The reason is that they are based on the people, rather than on the government.”

- G.P. Koirala
Prime Minister of Nepal
developing human resources

Rupa Thapa woke at dawn and rushed through her morning chores before getting on her father's bicycle, which she would ride for the next two hours to reach the Bhairahawa Multiple Campus in Rupandehi district, where she was a first-year student. It was raining by the time an exhausted Rupa stepped into the classroom. The teacher was reading aloud – as water dripped on the umbrella held over his head, and onto the pages of the book in his hand. The students sat huddled within the cramped confines of the room, taking notes and hanging onto umbrellas or torn plastic sheets. Rupa opened her rain-drenched notebook and began to write...

This was in 2006, before the new building constructed with India's assistance made it possible for young Rupa and her classmates to attend classes without having to contend with nature's elements. What is more, Rupa will soon be staying in the girls' hostel on the campus. Like her, there are thousands of students all over Nepal, who had to brave huge distances and severe obstacles to attend classes, but can now benefit from the infrastructure created under the India-Nepal Economic Cooperation Programme.

Education is the sine qua non for development and prosperity of a nation and the well being of its people and has been the focus of India-Nepal cooperation from as early as the 1960s. Cooperation efforts have addressed people's needs with a two-pronged approach – by providing infrastructural and technical support to educational institutions and by bringing education and training to the individual through scholarships, training and exchange programmes.

FACT FILE

✓ In 2006, the number of scholarships was doubled to 2000.

✓ More than 50% of Small Development Projects programme funds are currently being spent on supporting education in Nepal.

Looking to the future
- students of Pashupati Shiksha Sadan, Nepalgunj.

1, 2 & 3. Bhairahawa Multiple Campus;
4. Buses gifted every year to schools in different parts of Nepal have played their own role in promoting education in Nepal.
some of the large educational projects...

- Tribhuvan University (Kathmandu)
- Trichandra College (Kathmandu)
- Manmohan Memorial Polytechnic (Morang)
- Nepal Bharat Maitri Vidyalaya (Kaski)
- Institute of Engineering (Kathmandu)

and a few of the small ones...

- Gauriganj Campus (Jhapa)
- Tansen Multiple Campus (Palpa)
- Nuwakot Adarsha Multiple Campus (Nuwakot)
- Shree Mahendra Higher Secondary School (Dadeldhura)
- Neelkantha Campus (Dhading)
- Rajeshwar Nidhi High School (Dhanusha)
- Madan Bhandari Memorial College (Kathmandu)
- Shree Adarsha Madhyamik Vidyalaya (Mahottari)
- Shree Durga Janata Madhyamik Vidyalaya (Sarlahi)
- Panchthar Multiple Campus (Panchthar)

- Shree Saraswati Higher Secondary School (Rautahat)
- Makwanpur Multiple Campus (Makwanpur)
- Birendra Multiple Campus (Chitwan)
- C.V. Raman Auditorium at Kathmandu University (Kavre)
- Shree Mahalaxmi Secondary School (Gorkha)
- Tribhuvan Campus, Belatari (Nawalparasi)
- Trijuga Janata Campus (Udayapur)
- Bhairahawa Multiple Campus (Rupandehi)
- Shree Chandannath Higher Secondary School (Jumla)
- Shree Bal Janata Higher Secondary School (Dang)
- Mahakaruna Shakyapa Vidyalaya (Upper Mustang)
- Shree Kalinchowk Secondary School (Dolakha)
- Shree Sharda Secondary School ( Parsa)
- Pashupati Shiksha Sadan (Banke)
- Surkhet Campus (Surkhet)
- Shree Saraswati Higher Secondary School (Kailali)
- Shree Ghatal Secondary School (Kanchanpur)
One of the country’s first centres of higher learning, Tribhuvan University, was founded in 1959. The very next year saw the setting up of the science block, the laboratory, the library, the students’ hostels, staff quarters, stadium and the Gandhi Bhavan complex – with India’s cooperation. The majority of faculty members were from India at the time, as were the equipment and books. Soon, India was involved in the construction and maintenance of other colleges, schools and training institutes across the country.

The scholarships, self-financing schemes and training programmes offered by India have also been playing a key role in developing Nepal’s human resources and bringing education to the people. An extensive cross section – from students of tenth standard and +2 (within Nepal) to those pursuing undergraduate, post-graduate or doctoral studies (in India or Nepal) – can avail these in areas as diverse as performing arts and engineering, with focus being on science, medicine, technology, agriculture, business management and the humanities. The fact that degrees and certificates earned through these courses and programmes enjoy recognition in India – both in educational and professional circles – further enhances the usefulness of these scholarships.

The Small Development Projects programme has been focussing on bringing education to the people at the grassroots level. It supports the renovation and construction of hundreds of schools, libraries and hostels in remote districts and in the Terai region. Books and school buses worth millions also reach people every year. These projects have made higher attendance possible in schools, in terms of teachers, students, girl students and children from disadvantaged backgrounds and communities – and also enhanced social awareness.

“The classrooms were cramped and the school building was far too small to accommodate all the students. Now that the Government of India has built us a new school building – we can impart quality education...”

Lal Prasad Shrestha, Principal, Shree Mahalaxmi Secondary School, Gorkha

4. Adarsha Madhyamik Vidyalaya in Nawalparasi; 5. Central Library at Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu.
the scholarship schemes...

- Indian Council for Cultural Relations Scholarship Scheme for studies in visual and performing arts.
- Scholarships for undergraduate studies in agriculture.
- UGC Fellowship/Scholarship for research.
- Silver Jubilee Scholarship Scheme for post-graduate studies.
- Golden Jubilee Scholarship Scheme for undergraduate studies in medicine, engineering, technology and science.
- Mahatma Gandhi Scholarship Scheme for +2 studies within Nepal.

other projects...

- Self-financing schemes for students of undergraduate and post-graduate courses in medicine, science, technology, engineering, commerce and the arts.
- Faculty support for institutions.
- Faculty exchange programmes with Indian institutes.
- Distance Education.
- Diploma course in journalism.
- Training course for defence personnel.
- Training programme for Government of Nepal officials.

“The school is in fact a heaven for us,” says a student of the Mahendra Janata Madhyamik Vidyalaya in Karmiya of Sarlahi – one of the many schools to have benefited from the Small Development Projects programme. For teachers at the Saraswati Madhyamik Vidyalaya, of distant Hajariya, taking classes were a nightmare. “There used to be as many as 150 to 175 students in a single classroom due to lack of space – this completely spoiled the teaching environment. But the problem is solved now – the modern school building and other infrastructural facilities provided by the Government of India has positively changed things in our area,” says a member of the school's faculty, echoing the sentiments of thousands of students, teachers and guardians all over the country.

India-Nepal cooperation is constantly striving to provide the necessary prerequisites for bringing the light of education to all because that will lay the foundation for a prosperous Nepal.
agents of development

Local Development Officers (LDOs) of the Government of Nepal are an important group of officials responsible for grassroots development and play a pivotal role in the success of India-Nepal Economic Cooperation Programme.

It was this realisation of their central role in driving local development that the Government of India launched a training programme in 2007-08 that covered the LDOs of all 75 districts of Nepal. Designed as a two-week "Management Development Programme" under the aegis of the Indian Institute of Public Administration in New Delhi – the premiere centre for training of civil servants in India – the programme provided the participants a first hand knowledge of India's experience in development planning, local self-government and public-private partnership in development, through a combination of field visits in various parts of India, interaction with relevant ministries and agencies of Central and State Governments, and visits to institutes specialising in development and public administration.

Says Dilip Kumar Chapagain, LDO of Saptari, “I feel lucky to have been a part of that team. It was an opportunity for us to observe and get acquainted with the process of rural developmental activities in India, which will help us administer rural development projects here in Nepal since the majority of rural development models used in India can be applied in Nepal too.”

The programme was also a learning experience for development administrators in India who learned about some of the success stories of local development in Nepal, particularly during the difficult times of conflict. The Government of India will continue to provide such opportunities for study and exposure visits to Nepal’s civil servants, strengthening their capacities to carry out their development and administrative responsibilities.
healthcare

Benefits of developmental efforts can neither be enjoyed nor be complete in the absence of healthcare facilities. India-Nepal cooperation has, therefore, concentrated on providing effective, affordable and immediate access to healthcare in Nepal. Beginning with the supply of medicines and equipment, the cooperation has gone on to build and develop major hospitals and numerous health-posts in even the farthest corners of the country, and initiated path-breaking healthcare programmes.

The Paropkar Maternity and Child Welfare Centre was constructed in 1959 and continues to receive assistance from India to this day. Hospitals in Saptari, Dhangadhi, Kapilvastu, Gulmi and Ilam and a cluster of health-posts in the Narayani zone were established next. In response to the country’s growing need for high-end medical equipment, India-Nepal cooperation has been bringing these to the hospitals and healthcare centres such as the Teaching Hospital in Kathmandu and the zonal hospitals.

FACT FILE

India’s assistance helped eradicate cattle-infecting rinderpest from Nepal in the 1960s.
Ambulances are gifted every year – more than 20,000 patients have been served by the ambulances in 60 districts between March 2005 and March 2008. Numerous health-posts and healthcare organisations have also been receiving support in the form of equipment, facilities and vehicles all over the country.

An outpatient (OPD) complex with the capacity for treating 2500 outpatients and a Nuclear Imaging Medicine Centre were added to the Bir Hospital in the 1980s. Soon, cooperation was extended to the development, expansion and upkeep of the B. P. Koirala Institute of Health Sciences (BPKIHS) in Dharan, with total assistance of over NRs. 1.92 billion, making it the country’s premier centre for healthcare and medical studies. BPKIHS still receives extensive faculty support from India. The 200-bed Emergency and Trauma Centre at Bir Hospital in Kathmandu, only the second such centre in South Asia, is being built with an outlay of NRs. 1.28 billion. A standalone Gynaecological Hospital has come up as part of the Mechi Zonal Hospital at Bhadrapur in Jhapa and the 100-bed Nepal Bharat Maitri Bakhtawari Hari Eye Hospital is being set up at Krishnanagar in Kapilvastu.

Nepal is susceptible to iodine-deficiency diseases like goitre. India-Nepal cooperation programme had launched a campaign against this public health hazard in the 1970s. Assistance amounting to NRs. 630 million has been extended over the years and an independent study shows that the programme has nearly eradicated visible goitre, and significantly reduced the number of people suffering from iodine deficiency in Nepal.
The Small Development Projects programme has been supporting the Nepal Netra Jyoti Sangh (the National Society for Comprehensive Eye Care in Nepal) in its countrywide eye camps aimed at diagnosing, treating and operating cataract and trachoma cases. Thousands of people are cured of cataract and trachoma-induced blindness every year. The Small Development Projects programme also supports mobile medical vans to schools for eye-care camps: 9000 pairs of spectacles are being distributed every year to visually impaired children since 2007.

Support is also being extended to Rural Women’s Development and Unity Centre (RUWDUC) in the form of anaesthetic machines and surgical equipment for uterine prolapse surgeries, a serious health issue in the country. “The equipment and machines will be sent to rural health-posts and hospitals all over the country and help us carry out surgeries on women suffering from uterine prolapse – allowing them to lead normal lives again,” says Pinky Singh Rana of RUWDUC.

The Medicine Pack Scheme is another very popular and effective healthcare programme – it has been running since the 1960s and consists of basic first aid kits, which are provided to Nepali ex-servicemen of the Indian Army and their families every year. More than 1,22,000 kits were distributed in 2007 alone. Many of them have helped save lives in the interiors where any other medical help is several days of trek away.
the story of DHARAN

In the Sunsari district of the Koshi zone lies Dharan, once a sleepy township, and now an example of multifarious development.

The city owes its transformation to the establishment of the B.P. Koirala Institute of Health Sciences (in short, BPKIHS), the country’s largest healthcare institution and a centre of medical research and training. It is also the flagship of India-Nepal Economic Cooperation Programme. Apart from constructing the entire modern facility, India has been providing extensive faculty support.

BPKIHS imparts international standard hands-on medical education and training, besides taking to the community medical services, some of which are cost free. It attracts patients from all over Nepal, even from India, and conducts research useful to both countries.

BPKIHS and the institutes such as Delhi Public School, which followed in its wake, have brought about a sea change in education level and development in Dharan. "This is where development starts and where BPKIHS play a very important role," says the Assistant Dean of the academic section, Dr. Bhatta.

With people’s perceptions, Dharan has also changed, evolving into a thriving city with a radically different socio-economic profile. "Development projects reach our villages because of BPKIHS", says Deb Prakash Tamang from a village in Sunsari, "it is difficult to believe today that Dharan was once an impoverished city". The success of BPKIHS lies in its socio-economic impact which matches its renown for medical education and healthcare.

FACT FILE

- B.P. Koirala Institute of Health Sciences, Dharan, was built in 1999 as a 50-seat medical college and a 350-bed hospital.
- Total assistance of NRs. 1.92 billion including the building, medical equipment and Indian faculty support.
tube-well projects

The Small Development Projects programme has been constructing tube-wells at places where agriculture is being adversely affected by water-scarcity in Nepal. 22 farmer-managed deep tube-well systems benefit Siraha, Saptari, Jhapa and Sunsari. Says Khem Subedi, a farmer from Jhapa, “The region is known for its fertile soil and very high production of supari (betel-nut) but our livelihood was threatened by diminishing water levels and lack of irrigation facilities. Now that the Government of India has constructed deep tube-wells here, things are getting better – moreover, we have access to safe drinking water.” Jaypur alone has 400 families benefiting from the project. In another project, 1,000 shallow tube-wells are going to benefit farmlands of over 3000 hectares in the districts of Mahottari and Dhanusha. Projects like these in some other parts of Nepal are lifelines for agriculture and have even helped avert suicides by farmers, saving their lives and livelihood.
for the farmers

Accounting for nearly 40% of Nepal’s GDP, agriculture is the mainstay of Nepal’s economy and has received priority under India-Nepal Economic Cooperation in the form of direct assistance as well as infrastructure development, irrigation projects, technical support, educational scholarships and exchange programmes. Development centres and horticultural stations were set up as early as the 1960s, along with development programmes. Assistance towards purchase of fertilisers, seeds, tools, plants, implements and insecticides has also been an important element of supporting agriculture in Nepal.

Water is the absolute essential for agriculture. Irrigation facilities are being introduced and renovated all over Nepal with this in mind, including the mega barrages, canal systems, deep and shallow tube-wells and small canals. The traditional Rajkulo canal in Lalitpur, a fusion of cultural heritage and development, renovated with India’s assistance, brings drinking water to six villages and irrigates 100 hectares of land – benefiting at least 40,000 people.

Cold storages and market sheds are being constructed in a number of districts, alongside small and large roadways – facilitating the transfer of agricultural products to the marketplace as well as their preservation and display.

The Tulsi Lal Memorial Agriculture and Cooperative Training and Information Centre in Lalitpur is being constructed with assistance of more than NRs. 20 million under the Small Development Projects programme.

Bhim Bhatta’s family has been living in Rangeli, a district of Morang in Eastern Terai, for generations, subsisting on the earnings from a small strip of land in which they grow potatoes. After months of nurturing and protecting the plants against disease and adverse weather conditions, he harvests a small crop – only to shell out large sums for transporting the potatoes to the cold store in Biratnagar. What comes back at the end of the season is dwindling every year, hardly sufficient for supporting his family’s basic needs. Now that the Government of India is building a Cold Store in Rangeli itself, Bhim cannot stop smiling. “We had to take our products to a cold storage at Biratnagar – but now that we are going to have a cold storage right here, we are feeling very excited – all our efforts will bring us more income.”
agricultural projects...

- Horticulture stations.
- Potato Development Centre.
- Distribution of agricultural seeds and fertilisers.

irrigation projects...

- Construction of mega barrages, canal systems, small canals, deep tube-wells, shallow tube-wells.
- Rehabilitation of Rajkulo canal in Lalitpur.

educational and technical support...

- Scholarships for post-graduate studies in agriculture.
- India-Nepal exchange programme for agriculture scientists/experts.
- Forestry Institute at Hetauda and more recently, the Forestry Museum and the Library-cum-Documentation Centre.

infrastructure...

- Cold Storage buildings in Morang, Jhapa, Ilam, Mahottari, Dhanusha and Sarlahi.
- Market sheds.
- Rural roads and major highways.
- Tulsi Lal Memorial Agriculture and Cooperative Training and Information Centre in Lalitpur.

The project will provide better access to technology, skills and market for hundreds of needy farmers – giving them better lives and strengthening the cooperative initiative in Nepal. It will also support the development of entrepreneurship capacity in the field of agriculture and help with the marketing of agricultural products.

Forests cover nearly a third of the country’s total land area and comprise a major resource for Nepal. India-Nepal Economic Cooperation assisted the setting up of the Institute of Forestry at Hetauda, and also provided the faculty support. The organisation of forest resources was carried out in the 1950s, followed by multiple grants and projects. A Museum and Library-cum-Documentation Centre was constructed at the Institute of Forestry in 1994. Nepali experts have also benefited from training programmes conducted in India.
lighting up lives

The Small Development Projects programme has been supporting electrification in remote villages and rural areas of Nepal. Several solar electrification and rural electrification projects to connect remote villages to the power grid have been undertaken.

The programme for solar electrification of remote villages in Nepal was started in 2002 under India-Nepal Economic Cooperation Programme. Till date villages in nine districts have been electrified using solar photovoltaic technology including Gulmi, Baglung, Dhading, Nawalparasi, Sarlahi, Dhanusha, Tehrathum, Panchthar and Tapplejung.

“It feels as if we don’t have nights anymore – there is light in our homes all the time,” says Ramesh, a resident of the village of Bhadgaon Arkhale in Gulmi, pointing to lit up houses and streets. The village has received home lighting systems benefiting 3500 people in this one village alone. Similarly, 2500 more are benefiting in Sarang Dhanda of Panchthar. The two projects cost nearly twenty million rupees. But the smile on thousands of faces basking in the light produced using solar energy across Nepal is priceless.

The Small Development Projects programme is involved in bringing electricity to remote villages by connecting them to the country’s national electricity grid. Assistance worth millions of rupees is being extended towards setting up electricity poles and electric cables in many districts. The new infrastructure provides electricity not only to homes and schools but also for agricultural and industrial development. As a result, irrigation and industry have also progressed and people can enjoy better standards of living, with opportunity to save more, and also access communication networks like telephone, radio and television. The villages can look ahead with confidence to comprehensive socio-economic development.
harnessing water

Water sustains life, directly and through agriculture and industries. Moreover, in the case of Nepal it is the main source of energy. India-Nepal cooperation has been focussing on harnessing and distributing this vital natural resource for Nepal’s development since the 1950s. Hydroelectricity projects, irrigation projects and drinking water programmes have brought electricity and water to the domestic, agricultural and industrial sectors.

The first Indian assistance to Nepal in this sphere was meant for small irrigation and drinking water projects. Hundreds of deep and shallow tube-wells, waterworks and canals have been built since, allowing better access to water. More than 400 handpumps and seven waterworks were erected and 1,12,000 acres of land irrigated between 1960 and 1966 alone. Between 1960 and 1968, at least eight hundred thousand people benefited from drinking water projects supported by India. The Chitra Canal project irrigates 30,000 hectares of land and with the renovation of the Chandra Canal system, at least 34,000 hectares more have received irrigation.
The Koshi Barrage was originally meant for averting and controlling floods in its catchment area. But 269 km of flood protection embankments, a massive barrage, vital roadways, canal systems and power generators were built and hundreds of thousands of hectares of land were irrigated when it was completed in 1964 at a cost of more than one billion rupees.

Nepal is almost exclusively dependent on hydroelectricity and India-Nepal cooperation on the Koshi, Trishuli, Gandaki and Mahakali rivers account for the major portion of the country’s electricity output. A 20 MW powerhouse was constructed as a part of Trishuli Hydropower Project in the 1970s and the Devighat Hydropower Project was completed in 1983. The Surajpur Power Project, Katya Power Project and Pushrekhola Project have received assistance as well. The 1990s saw the signing of the Mahakali Treaty, which involves the integrated development of the river Mahakali, the Sarada Barrage, Tanakpur Barrage and Pancheswar Project. Cooperation is also focusing on projects on the Budhi Gandaki.

The Small Development Projects programme has also been supporting micro-hydroelectric projects — bringing electricity to remote areas with a grassroots approach.

By prioritising ‘water’ as a focal area for development, India-Nepal cooperation has brought to the people the gift of life and livelihood, and contributed to the country’s economic progress.

**FACT FILE**

- The irrigation programme developed in Nepal with Indian assistance is of the order of 2,32,000 hectares, which is about 24% of total irrigation potential developed in Nepal till 1990.

- Nearly 1000 Drinking Water Projects are spread over 40 districts, mostly in remote areas.
**major hydroelectricity projects...**

- Koshi Hydroelectricity Project.
- Trishuli Hydroelectricity Project.
- Devighat Project.
- Gandak Hydel Scheme.
- Pokhara Hydroelectricity Project.

**major irrigation and flood-control projects...**

- Koshi Barrage.
- Gandaki Barrage.
- Chatra Canals Project.
- Chandra Canals Modernisation Scheme.
- Tanakpur Barrage.
- Extension of Embankments along Lalbakeya, Bagmati, Kamala and Khando rivers.

**multipurpose/hydroelectric projects in pipeline...**

- Pancheswar Project.
- Saptakoshi High Dam & Sun Koshi Diversion Scheme.
- Naumore Storage Hydroelectric Project.
- Rahughat Hydroelectric Project.
- Rehabilitation of Devighat Hydroelectric Project.

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**The Drinking Water Projects**

India assisted Drinking Water Projects (DWPs) have been bringing potable, piped water to those who lack access to safe drinking water in many areas of Nepal, especially in remote, hilly villages. The Government of India and the locals work in close cooperation for this programme — starting from the project’s inception down to its completion. Pipes and fittings, cement, taps, heating plates, corrugated galvanised iron sheets, water tanks and pumps are provided to the villagers, which they put together through community participation. Till date, nearly 1000 DWPs have been executed in Nepal’s villages at a cost of NRs. 100 million, bringing people one of the most basic essentials of life.

"The Manakamana Drinking Water Project was completed with Indian assistance and has benefited everyone — not only the pilgrims and people living on the temple premises but at least ten thousand more people in the town."

Dr. Jay Raj Acharya
President, Manakamana Development Committee
Science and Technology are the passwords to development and prosperity. Apart from assisting the spread of education of science and technology by establishing schools, colleges, libraries, medical colleges and polytechnics, India-Nepal cooperation has also supported and sought to bring the direct benefits of frontline technologies to Nepal. Under the programme, Manmohan Memorial Polytechnic is being set up at Hatimuda near Biratnagar.

“Education and employment opportunities were serious problems in our area – but now the Polytechnic will be training us for jobs in the industries functioning right here,” says Mahesh Gachchadar, a local resident of Hatimuda. According to Khusar Mahato, an on-site engineer, “more than NRs. 460 million has already been invested in the project with the aim of producing skilled and semi-skilled manpower so that Nepal won’t have to import these in the future.” Another Polytechnic is coming up near Hetauda in Makwanpur and more are being envisaged for the western, mid-western and far-western regions.

A Super Computing Centre and an INSAT Ground Receiving Centre are also being installed in Kathmandu. The Nepal Academy of Science and Technology and National Council of Science Museums of India are also collaborating on a number of science promotional activities, including for the establishment of a full-fledged Science Learning Centre in Kathmandu.
connectivity

Throughout the second half of the last century, India-Nepal cooperation remained at the forefront of Nepal’s effort to get connected within itself and to the world outside.

First came the airfield at Gauchar in Kathmandu in 1951. Then work began on the first highway (Tribhuvan Rajpath) linking Kathmandu with the southern plains in 1953. The 116 km road was a masterpiece of engineering, rising to a height of 8200 ft near Daman and passing through the most difficult of terrains. It was built at a cost of NRs. 90 million, and many Indian lives.

The Sunauli-Pokhara Highway (Siddhartha Rajmarg) was next, touching the lives of millions along its route, and even as far away as Gorkha, Baglung and Mustang – where prices of essential items like salt, sugar, steel and machinery actually went down! The path-breaking East-West Highway (Mahendra Rajmarg), which will ultimately be a part of the Asian Highway network, owes its existence mostly to Indian assistance. The 1400 km long road joins Mechi in the east to Mahakali in the west and is the nation’s one, true lifeline. Whether for reasons of trade or daily commuting – the Highway has become an integral part of the life of the Nepali people, and not merely along it.

Numerous major roadways and bridges have also been constructed – starting with the Kakrawa-Lumbini Road, Janakpur Town Road, Kathmandu-Devighat Road and the roads connecting Kathmandu to its surroundings. Roads like those between Hanuman Nagar and Fatehpur or Rajbiraj are vital to the eastern region. Motorable feeder, postal and village roads have also been built over the past 60 years all over the country.

Rogi Harijan lives in Banjariya VDC of Nawalparasi. While the world sleeps every night, he takes his bullock-cart out around 2 a.m. in the morning and loads it with hay, before starting on a five-hour long journey to the market of Khaireni in Devdaha. He sells the hay in the market, often for a pittance, and makes a weary way home – only to start out again that very night. Every single day, he travels along the East-West Highway for ten hours. The work is strenuous and demands long hours – but it is his only opportunity for earning a living. “I can’t think of a life without the Highway. It means my life – I have eight mouths to feed and they would all have starved otherwise.” He then turns to the bullocks and pats their heads gently, “and thanks to the Highway, it is much easier on them too.”
Bridges like the Bagmati Bridge (Kathmandu), Sirsiya Bridge (Birgunj), Mohana Bridge (Kailali) and the set of 22 bridges in the Mahakali-Kohalpur sector that were completed in 2002 with India’s assistance, are used by millions everyday.

Airports were among the first projects in India-Nepal cooperation. The Kathmandu (Tribhuvan) Airport was upgraded and modernised between 1952 and 1963, and airfields with modern runways were constructed at Bhairahawa, Janakpur and Biratnagar. Airfields came up in Simra and Pokhara too. Later, facilities at Biratnagar and Pokhara were developed further. Incidentally, airports were not a luxury in Nepal – there were hardly any roads in many districts and the airports were the only means for basic essentials and lifesaving facilities to reach people there.
Biratnagar Airport - one of the six airports built with Indian assistance.

“It takes me more than two days to reach my hometown by road. I wouldn’t have been able to come home twice a year as I do now, had the Biratnagar airport not been there,” says Ram Naresh Shrestha of Morang.

India-Nepal cooperation has helped another dream materialise – the railways. The Janakpur Railway was constructed in 1937 and renovated and upgraded in 1996, and four diesel locomotives were put into operation. The line gained immense popularity as an alternative to the long bus route, prompting India to upgrade the Birgunj-Raxaul railway line, which now connects the Inland Clearance Depot and maximises the dry port’s trade potential, providing efficient multimodal logistic support to Nepal’s export-imports and internal trade and commerce. More tracks are being laid across the India-Nepal border to improve services and the Janakpur railway is being upgraded further.

Above all, the Small Development Projects programme responds to proposals for small roads, bridges, causeways and culverts at the grassroots level. “We dreaded the rainy season for we couldn’t cross the river at that time of the year – some of my neighbours have lost their children to it. Now that India has built a bridge across the river Maria Bakraha, we can breathe freely again,” says Ramkumar of Amardaha in Morang.

Every one of these roads, bridges, airports and railway lines has brought benefits to the people of Nepal and opened up new vistas in communication, trade, industry and investment – spearheading Nepal’s development and enabling an ever increasing number of Nepalis to participate and benefit from it.

the roads

- Kathamndu-Pathlaiya Highway (Tribhuvan Rajpath).
- East-West Highway (Mahendra Rajmarg).
- Sunauli-Pokhara Highway (Siddhartha Rajmarg).
- Kakrawa-Lumbini Road.
- Janakpur Town Road.
- Kathmandu-Dakhshinkali Road.
- Kathmandu-Balaju Road.
- Kathmandu-Trishuli Road.
- Tripureshwor-Thankot Road.

airfields and airports in...

- Kathmandu
- Biratnagar
- Bhairahawa
- Janakpur
- Pokhara
- Simra

the main bridges...

- Bagmati Bridge in Kathmandu.
- Sirsiya Bridge in Birgunj.
- Mohana Bridge in Kailali.
- 22 bridges in Mahakali-Kohalpur sector (on East-West Highway).

and railway lines...

- Janakpur Railway.
- Birgunj-Raxaul Railway.
connecting the people

Ganga Devi woke up with a smile. She got out of bed and went to the window – the sky was a clear blue despite it being the month of Shrawan (rains). “A good sign!” she whispered, and hurried out to the veranda where her son, Furti, was waiting. The others came out slowly. Soon the entire family was there.

So was Namraj, the local ‘letter-writer’. He brought out a pen and a sheet of paper. Turning to Ganga Devi, he asked, “You want me to write this letter asking for Bel Deo Ram’s daughter’s hand – for your son Furti?” Everyone nodded a quick “yes”. The two families had been planning this especially after Furti’s father, and Bel Deo’s dear friend, had passed away. “Do you have the address?” An aunt delved into a box and brought out a crumpled slip – bearing details of a house somewhere in Barabazar in faraway Calcutta.

That afternoon, a tremulous Furti placed a sealed letter on the desk of the only post office in Kathmandu – the Indian Embassy Post Office. The letter was duly stamped and sent off. It reached Calcutta in early September, and passed into Bel Deo’s hands soon after. By winter, Furti and Leela were married. And Ganga Devi was already preparing cots for her grandchildren. The year was 1950...

Ganga Devi’s story does not end there, nor does the story of the constant development of Nepal’s communication with India’s continued and crucial assistance.

The Post Office at the Indian Embassy was the only centre for international mail in the 1950s – a window through which the people of Nepal could connect to the world outside. The country’s internal and external postal service was also being improved and redesigned and a Mail Centre was set up in the premises of what is now the General Post Office in Kathmandu. Later, the General Post Office itself was constructed in 1967 with India’s assistance. The Foreign Post Office was next – in 1968.

The Optical Fibre Project built with Indian assistance has transformed Nepal’s telecommunications sector.
postal service...
- Mail Centre at Kathmandu.
- General Post Office at Kathmandu.
- Foreign Post Office at Kathmandu.

telecommunication links...
- Radiotelephone link to New Delhi.
- Nepal-India telegraph and telephone service.
- Nepal-India trunk telephone line.
- Telephone exchanges in Biratnagar, Jhapa, Janakpur and Rangeli.
- Link to International Communication Satellite via Mumbai.

... and the Optical Fibre Cable Project.
- Optical Fibre Cable was laid along 904 km of the East-West Highway.
- At a cost of NRs.1.18 billion.
- Serves 70% of Nepal's population.
- Has brought down STD rates by 55% and ISD rates by 53%.
- Links 80 Synchronous Digital Hierarchy stations.
- Project was completed and handed over to Nepal Telecom in 2004.

Radiotelephone and radiotelegraph links had been running between Kathmandu and New Delhi since 1950, with the first Kathmandu-Calcutta telephone link coming soon after. Staff and technicians from Nepal received training in India and telecommunication infrastructure, including cross-border trunk lines, was installed all over Nepal. India also maintained Nepal's accounts for international calls for a period of time. By 1970, telephone lines were connecting many of the districts of Nepal and exchanges were being set up in places like Birgunj, Janakpur; Biratnagar and Jhapa. In 1972, a radio link connected Kathmandu to Bombay, and to the International Communication Satellite – revolutionising Nepal's communication with the rest of world.

Communication infrastructure remained a core focus of India-Nepal cooperation in the decades to follow, bringing Nepal its first information superhighway with the Optical Fibre Cable project in 2004. The Optical Fibre Cable runs along the East-West Highway (Mahendra Rajmarg), connecting Bhadrapur to Nepalgunj. It covers nearly 80 cities and towns and has 80 Synchronous Digital Hierarchy stations. The transmission network has brought down STD and ISD rates across the country and acts as the base for GSM and CDMA services in Nepal. All of this has immensely enhanced the quality of life of the people – in remote villages as well as urban areas. It serves to connect people and contributes to the country's progress.
preserving the heritage

The peoples of India and Nepal share many cultural traditions – be it festivals, religions or arts. The thread of culture has woven them together from time immemorial. It is only natural, therefore, that India-Nepal Economic Cooperation Programme focuses on supporting arts and assisting the preservation of the cultural heritage of Nepal.

The first significant collaboration was in the field of archaeology – when the Department of Archaeology was reorganised with suggestions of the Director-General of the Archaeological Survey of India in 1960. Surveys and excavations were carried out over the years, besides preservation and training projects, and the providing of much-needed reference books and equipment.

The building for National Archives of Nepal was constructed in 1967, which houses more than 30,000 ancient manuscripts and administrative documents and also cataloguing stations and laboratories for lamination, photography, microfilming and other modes of preservation. Indian scholars shared their expertise in initial cataloguing of manuscripts and their subsequent editing for publication.
major museums and archives...

- National Archives Building, Kathmandu.
- Lumbini Museum.
- Cultural Museum at Janaki Mandir Complex in Janakpur.

support for the arts...

- Scholarships supporting the study of visual and performing arts.
- Exhibition hall at Nepal Art Council in Kathmandu.
- Auditoriums coming up in Lalitpur and Birgunj.
- India-Nepal cultural exchange programmes.

renovation projects...

- Restoration of Sri Krishna Mandir at Patan.
- Preservation of murals in Bhaktapur.
- Renovation of Nepal Bhasa Parishad.
- Renovation of vihara-s, chaitya-s and other historical sites in Lalitpur.

projects supporting culture and tourism...

- Dharmashala at Muktinath in Mustang.
- Dharmashala at Pashupati Temple in Kathmandu.
- Manakamana Water Supply Project in Gorkha.
- Yatri Niwas at Janakpur.

Exhibits at Lumbini Museum

The Lumbini Museum was inaugurated in 2004, housing rare books and an exhibition depicting the life and work of Lord Buddha culled from artefacts and manuscripts from all over India. A cultural museum is being established in the famous Janaki Temple Complex in Janakpur, which will tell the story of Sita, Janak and Maithili culture through displays of antique art and handicraft and a library. The Mahakavi Kalidas Bhawan, a library building at the Pindeshwar Campus of Nepal Sanskrit University in Dharan, has been constructed to help store invaluable manuscripts and books on Sanskrit language and literature.

Of the many restoration projects to have received assistance from India over the years, Sri Krishna Mandir at Patan Durbar Square (a UNESCO heritage site) is of special significance. A project involving extensive restoration of heritage locations, including the renovation of mahavihara-s, is going on in Lalitpur. The building that houses the Nepal Bhasa Parishad, which preserves and supports the development of ‘Nepal bhasha’ (or, Newari language), is being renovated and the legacy of legendary Newari poet Kavi Kesari Chitta ‘Hridaya’ is being preserved. The Parishad will now have space for a library and a study-room.
“We are indebted to the Government of India for its assistance to the preservation and promotion of art, culture and tourism in the area through renovation and maintenance of many historic sites – including mahavihara-s and chaitya-s,” says Buddhiraj Bajracharya, the renowned preservation-activist and President of the Society for Development of Lalitpur. Ongoing projects include the restoration of the Napi Chandra Mahavihara, Padmavati Mahavihara, a chapat (a traditional resthouse) at Yalamo Tole and the Masan (or, crematorium) at Sankhamul. A gate in front of the Ashok Chaitya and a wall around the chaitya will be constructed as well. Plans are on for a garden in Macchindranath Bahal and a shed for visitors in Indrayeni Park. “The new constructions, especially the artistically designed gate in front of the Ashok Chaitya, will certainly add to the beauty of Lalitpur and attract more tourists,” adds Bajracharya, “the Government of India is helping establish Nepal as one of the richest countries in art, culture and tourism in the world.”

Nepali students also benefit from the scholarships and exchange programmes that support the learning of the arts. An exhibition hall has been built for the Nepal Art Council, facilitating large-scale exhibitions and performances of Nepali artists.

People are the vehicles of culture in its presentation, enrichment and continuity. Therefore, tourism, which also brings people together, has received continued economic cooperation over the years. Accommodation facilities like guesthouses and dharmashala-s have been constructed at a number of pilgrimage sites. The Dharmashala at Muktinath Temple aims to make the temple accessible to thousands of pilgrims in an inhospitable terrain. Similarly, the Dharmashala at Tilganga in the Pashupati Temple area of Kathmandu and the Yatri Niwas in Janakpur are aimed at bringing relief to outstation pilgrims and visitors to the temple sites. Drinking water facilities have been developed in places of tourist interest, including one on the holy Manakamana Temple premises.

women's empowerment

Sarita lives in a village in Siraha and is active in the local community. Her husband is an agricultural labourer and stays away from home most of the year. What he brings back can hardly support their family of seven – making ends meet was becoming a nightmare. When she heard that the Chandra Narayan Yadav Memorial Trust was giving training in sewing and tailoring skills, she instantly enrolled for the programme. Putting to use the skills she acquired from her training, she now has a sizeable monthly income. They can now have rice everyday and can even afford to send the daughters to school. When her husband was taken ill, Sarita asked him to take a week off from the gruelling work and get himself checked at the nearby health-post. He is fine, and so is the family – thanks to Sarita’s newfound status as an earning member.

Nepal’s first silk twisting machine was a gift from India to Nepal Srijanatmak Kala Guthi.
Sarita is just one among many thousands of women who are benefiting from India’s involvement in projects aimed at bringing the women of Nepal basic facilities and economic empowerment. For example, the Small Development Projects programme responded to Chandra Narayan Yadav Memorial Trust’s request for equipment for vocational training of women with 100 sewing machines in 2007. The equipment and training programme will benefit hundreds of women in the district of Siraha.

India-Nepal cooperation will continue to accord a very high priority to women’s development in Nepal. Healthcare facilities concentrating on women’s health issues (treatment support to uterine prolapse patients, for example) and educational opportunities aimed at improving the condition of women are always fast-tracked. “We didn't have a well-equipped maternity ward in this area and patients were referred to hospitals in faraway cities. Now that a new maternity block is coming up at the Sagarmatha Zonal Hospital with Indian assistance, women will be feeling a lot safer – and have access to proper healthcare during and after childbirth,” says Rama Rimal, a student of Nursing from Rajbiraj. The existing building of the hospital was built by India in the 1960s. Recently, a 25-bed Gynaecological Hospital at Mechi Zonal Hospital has come up in Bhadrapur.

“More than 1500 women of 20 VDCs will be benefiting from the training programme with sewing machines gifted by the Government of India – it will bring them the skills and equipment necessary for becoming self-reliant and help them play a more active role in the family and society.”

Sita Devi Yadav
President, Chandra Narayan Yadav Memorial Trust, Siraha

FACT FILE

Studies show that enrollment rates for girls have gone up in schools supported by the Small Development Projects programme - and dropout rates have plummeted.
Women’s Education and Training Infrastructure...

- Hostel for women for Nepal Charkha Pracharak Gandhi-Tulasi Smarak Mahaguthi at Gothatar, Kathmandu.
- Janakpur Nursing Campus.
- Shree Krishna Prasad Koirala Sewa Guthi Nursing Campus, Morang.
- Sushma Koirala Memorial Nursing Campus at Sankhu, Kathmandu.
- Adarsha Balika Secondary School, Biratnagar.
- Girls’ Hostel in Panchthar Multiple Campus, Mechi.
- Post-graduate Building and Girls’ Hostel at Bhairahawa Multiple Campus, Rupandehi.
- Girls’ Hostel, Tribhuvan University.

Efforts are also on to make women more active in the economy — through vocational training programmes and infrastructural and technical assistance projects. Organisations involved in making women financially self-sufficient receive assistance in various forms. “India’s continuing support for technical assistance and training has greatly helped us realise the organisation’s vision of making our women skilled and self-reliant,” says Urmila Garg, Director of Nepal Srijanatmak Kala Guthi, which is doing pioneering work in making women self-reliant through handicrafts.

4. Sewing machine programme at Chandra Narayan Yadav Memorial Trust, Siraha.
Four decades ago, cooperation from India had helped set up the infrastructure for women’s training at the Nepal Charkha Pracharak Gandhi-Tulasi Smarak Mahaguthi in Kathmandu for imparting education and vocational training to destitute women from marginalised sections of society. Inspired by the Gandhian principles of self-reliance, the organisation has played a significant role in bringing economic empowerment to women, especially in Nepal’s villages. India’s assistance is now responsible for the construction of a well-equipped hostel meant to house at least 100 trainees at the organisation’s women’s hostel at Gothatar. “The women’s hostel building at Gothatar is a precious gift from the Government of India for women from all across Nepal, who aren’t self-reliant but are trying to learn to support themselves,” says a member of the Mahaguthi.

By stressing the need for the girl-child’s education and extending support to schools and training centres exclusively catering to women, Indian assistance is steadily building up awareness and improving women’s literacy rates in the districts. Assistance has been extended towards the construction of the Krishna Prasad Koirala Sewa Guthi Nursing Campus in Siswani of Morang. With a capacity of 50 students per batch, the institute will not only impart training in nursing science, but will also contribute to upgrading the socio-economic profile of the region as a whole. The Sushma Koirala Memorial Nursing Campus at Sankhu in Kathmandu is being constructed at a cost of more than NRs. 20 million. Since a large proportion of Nepali women are currently employed in agriculture, cooperation assistance to this sector contributes to women’s welfare too.
the peace process

Nepal turned a new leaf in its history with *Janandolan-II* in April 2006. As the people of Nepal took their destiny in their own hands and prepared to lay down the contours of their future system of governance through an elected Constituent Assembly, India responded to Nepal’s needs with utmost urgency. The visit of Prime Minister G.P. Koirala to India one month after the restoration of multi-party democracy in Nepal saw India extend a comprehensive package of assistance to help Nepal tide over immediate financial needs and support peace, democracy and stability. Assistance under ‘Aid to Nepal’ was trebled to NRs. 1.5 billion annually. The direct budgetary support (NRs. 1.6 billion) was the first by India to any country. A soft credit line of USD 100 million for infrastructure development projects was extended, and outstanding dues on defence purchases worth NRs. 1.6 billion waived.

With the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in November 2006, India redoubled its commitment to assist Nepal’s transition to peace, democracy and prosperity. By augmenting the capability of the agencies of the Government of Nepal and the capability of the United Nations Mission in Nepal through 1200 vehicles and more than 14,000 communication equipment sets, meeting the sudden needs such as for containers to store weapons under the terms of CPA, and food and tents for the internally displaced, and providing electronic voting machines, ballot printing machine and technical support to Nepal’s Election Commission, India has strived, through more than NRs. 1.5 billion worth of material assistance and its unstinted moral and diplomatic support, to keep on track Nepal’s peace process, with free and fair elections to the Constituent Assembly being of central importance in it.

With the dawn of a new era in Nepal’s history, India remains steadfast in its commitment to assist Nepal’s economic rehabilitation and political stabilisation. India proceeds from the conviction that even as the people of Nepal progress along the political roadmap chosen by them, it is equally critical to ensure that economic deliverables, particularly in the areas of education, health and infrastructure, reach people without any pre-conditions efficiently, effectively, quickly and smoothly. As at other times, India’s support continues to be in accordance with the wishes and priorities of the people and the Government of Nepal.
the future

As the people of Nepal write a new chapter of peace, hope and prosperity, India’s development engagement with Nepal, synthesising large infrastructure projects with grassroots development programmes, stands to be further strengthened.

vision for future...

The importance and intensity India accords to its development cooperation with Nepal will further grow as Nepal engages in historic nation-building based on inclusive democracy and peace. India-Nepal economic cooperation will continue to remain aligned with Nepal’s own national plans and priorities. It will continue to be guided by the vision that for the optimum benefit to the people of Nepal, political stabilisation and economic development should progress in parallel and that economic deliverables, particularly in the areas of education, health and infrastructure, reach the people without any pre-conditions and in a smooth, quick and unencumbered manner.

connectivity...

Nepal is linked to India through an 1800 km open border. As economic and physical interconnectedness increase in the rest of the world too, it will be only natural for India and Nepal to reinforce and expand the bridges that connect their people in all realms – physical, economic, cultural and intellectual. Better cross-border connectivity holds the key to future prosperity of the peoples in the two countries, and will be a central focus of India-Nepal economic cooperation.
A number of large infrastructure projects under different stages of inception in the border areas will soon be redefining ‘connectivity’ for the people on both sides and will enable them to engage more closely in pursuit of progress, share with each other more intensely the fruits of development and strengthen the traditional bonds of family and friendship that span the border. Creation of Integrated Check Posts at four border check points at Birgunj, Biratnagar, Bhairahawa and Nepalganj is one of the most important endeavours for achieving this objective. Modern infrastructure at these points will allow smooth flow of people and goods. In addition, development of over 1500 km of road network in Nepal’s Terai region would provide easy access between the India-Nepal border regions and Nepal’s East-West Highway. A link road connecting Mahendranagar in Nepal’s far-west with Tanakpur in India will extend the connectivity beyond the East-West Highway into India. Similarly, a project presently on anvil to provide rail links between Nepalgunj and Nepalgunj Road, Bhairahawa and Nautanwa, Biratnagar and Jobhani, Kakarbhitta and New Jalpaiguri, and Bardibas and Jaynagar will significantly facilitate cross-border movement, promoting trade and commerce.

With the implementation of these projects, the open India-Nepal border, which has always been a bridge between the two countries and their peoples, will truly underline Nepal’s strengths as a country land-linked to India, one of the world’s fastest growing economies.

**science and technology...**

India’s development cooperation with Nepal incorporates an intense focus on the need to benefit Nepal’s economic and social development with the learning of science and the achievements of advanced technology. Large polytechnics are, therefore, being set up at Biratnagar and Hetauda. A Science Learning Centre and a Super Computing Centre are being proposed in Kathmandu. An INSAT Ground Receiving centre will also be installed at the Department of Hydrology and Meteorology of the Government of Nepal.

**reaching out to ever more...**

Large and medium infrastructure projects will continue to be taken up on the request of the Government of Nepal. At the same time, small, grassroots level, community-based projects will remain the focus of cooperation and will indeed be further intensified for bringing benefits to the people at the grassroots level, directly and without any conditionalities, by creating social and physical infrastructure at local levels and supporting education and literacy in all districts. Scholarships and exchange programmes will also be expanded to afford enhanced opportunities for the youth, and enhance the connectivity of the minds.
sharing experience...

Exchanges involving civil servants of Nepal will be important for raising awareness of each other’s systems and sharing each other’s experience. They will reinforce the friendly ties and close relations that characterise the interaction between professionals and civil servants of the two countries.

epilogue...

Peace and prosperity of nations are indivisible and interlinked in today’s increasingly globalised world. The whole gamut of India-Nepal relations, including development cooperation, emanates from this reality of our times, as also on the logic of geography and the force of people-to-people bonds. The development cooperation of India and Nepal facilitates social and economic progress in both the countries, which are blessed to have a common open border – a bridge for working together and not an international frontier to defend.

As the partnership between India and Nepal becomes ever more multifarious and gainful, India will remain committed to supporting the people of Nepal in their pursuit of economic development and growth, guided by Nepal’s interests and priorities. The existing complementarities and close ties between India and Nepal imply that the importance of their economic cooperation as a vehicle bringing their peoples together for mutual benefit will grow. The growing economic cooperation between India and Nepal will reinforce the cultural and civilisational affinities and the indivisible and enduring friendship between the two countries. By reaching an ever larger number of people, it will promote peace, prosperity and mutual understanding between the two friendly neighbours. What is more, this partnership will be a model of development cooperation.
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Disclaimer:

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