



# MOFA BULLETIN

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**A. BILATERAL AFFAIRS**

**1. MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
VISITS UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali visited United States of America on 17-20 December leading a Nepali delegation.



*Foreign Minister Mr. Gyawali with Secretary of State Mr. Pompeo*

Mr. Gyawali had an official bilateral meeting with the Secretary of State Mr. Michael Richard Pompeo at the Department of State on 18 December. The Minister was accompanied by Foreign Secretary Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi, Ambassador of Nepal to U.S.A. Dr. Arjun Kumar Karki and Joint Secretary at Ministry of Finance Mr. Shreekrishna Nepal, among others. Mr. Pompeo was accompanied by Acting Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs at the Department of State Ambassador Ms.

Alice G. Wells and Ambassador of USA to Nepal Randy Berry, among others.

Expressing happiness at the state of excellent bilateral relations existing between the two countries for more than seven decades, the two leaders discussed the ways and means of further deepening and widening relations to a new height during the meeting.

On the occasion, Mr. Gyawali highlighted Nepal's peace process, recent political progress in the country as well as the development priorities of the current government. He thanked the U.S. for the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Compact and expressed confidence that the projects under the Compact would not only contribute to Nepal's initiatives towards sustainable economic progress but also promote further investment into the country.

Secretary of State Mr. Pompeo commended the political progress and stability achieved by Nepal in recent times. He also expressed readiness of the U.S. Government to support Nepal's development endeavors.

The two leaders also discussed matters of regional and multilateral interests. They reviewed Nepal's active contributions to the UN peacekeeping operations.

Minister Gyawali also highlighted the importance and need of high level visits to give new momentum to existing relations.

Assistant Secretary for Defense for Asian and

Pacific Security Affairs Mr. Randall Schriver called on Minister Mr. Gyawali in Washington D.C. on 19 December.

During the meeting, discussions were held on overall cooperation between the two countries. They also discussed the ways to enhance the capacity of the Birendra Peace Operations Training Centre (BPOTC) at Panchkhal.

Similarly, Minister Mr. Gyawali had a meeting with the Chief Operating Officer of Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Mr. Jonathan Nash at the MCC headquarters in Washington D.C. on 19 December.

The two dwelt upon the current progress of MCC Compact in Nepal and the future steps required to complete the MCC projects within the stipulated timeframe of five years.

Minister Mr. Gyawali also had a meeting with Ms. Lisa Curtis, Deputy Assistant to the US President and Senior Director for South and Central Asia at the National Security Council in Washington D.C. on 19 December.

Minister Gyawali addressed a round table seminar organized by Asia Society Policy Institute in Washington D.C. on 20 December.



*Minister Mr. Gyawali addressing the Round Table Discussion*

Addressing the round table, Mr. Gyawali stated that the objective of his visit to Washington D.C. was to focus on further promoting existing bilateral relations. He briefly shared the outcome of the meeting he had during the meetings with the Secretary of State as well as other high officials of various US agencies.

Minister Gyawali took the occasion to elaborate on recent political developments in Nepal, foreign policy priorities of the Government of Nepal as well as the major aspects of Nepal-U.S. relations.

## 2. FOREIGN MINISTER OF JAPAN VISITS NEPAL

At the invitation of Foreign Minister of Nepal Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Foreign Minister of Japan Mr. Taro Kono paid an official visit to Nepal on 9-10 January.



*Foreign Ministers of Japan with the Foreign Minister of Nepal*

During the visit, Foreign Minister of Nepal and Japan held delegation level talks on 9 January. Various aspects of Nepal-Japan bilateral relations, regional and global issues of common concerns were discussed in the meeting. Following the talks, both the Ministers signed the Exchange of Notes on revising the attachment of Air Service Agreement between Nepal and Japan. Ministers also witnessed the signing of the Memorandum of Cooperation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nepal on Conducting Bilateral Consultations by Foreign Secretary of Nepal Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi, and Ambassador of Japan to Nepal Mr. Masamichi Saigo. Following the signing ceremony, two Ministers held Joint Press Briefing.

Foreign Minister Gyawali and Mrs. Saraswati Gyawali Aryal hosted a dinner in honour of visiting Foreign Minister Mr. Kono, Mrs. Kaori Kono and the delegation in the same evening.

On 10 January, Foreign Minister Mr. Kono called on the President Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari at Sheetal Niwas. During the courtesy call, matters related to Nepal-Japan relations were discussed. The same day, Foreign Minister called on the Prime Minister Mr. K P Sharma Oli. Various issues pertinent to Nepal-Japan relations and regional & global issues of mutual concerns were discussed during the courtesy call.

### 3. MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS PARTICIPATES IN THE FOURTH EDITION OF THE RAISINA DIALOGUE

Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister for Foreign Affairs, participated in the fourth edition of the Raisina Dialogue on 10 January held in New Delhi. The Foreign Minister addressed the forum on the theme of ‘A World Re-order: New Geometrics, Fluid Partnerships, Uncertain Outcomes’. The event was organized by the Observer Research Foundation in association with the Ministry of External Affairs of India.



*Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali addressing the forum*

During his visit to New Delhi for Raisina Dialogue, Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister for Foreign Affairs, held a meeting with the Minister of External Affairs of India, Smt. Sushma Swaraj at the latter's office in New Delhi on 10 January.

The two leaders exchanged views on various aspects of Nepal-India relations and reviewed progress on the ongoing bilateral cooperation projects. They noted with satisfaction the progress made in several areas and underscored the need to continue the momentum. While recalling the exchange of high level visits in recent times, they appreciated that these have contributed to enhancing the age-old bilateral relations on the basis of equality, mutual trust, respect and mutual benefits.

The Minister of External Affairs of India hosted a luncheon in honour of the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

### 4. CONGRATULATORY/THANKS MESSAGES SENT

Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari, President; Mr. Nanda Bahadur Pun ‘Pasang’, Vice President; and Mr. K P Sharma Oli, Prime Minister of Nepal sent separate

messages of felicitations to Shri Ram Nath Kovind, President; Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu, Vice President; and Shri Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India respectively, on the occasion of the 70th Republic Day of India.

Mr. K P Sharma Oli, Prime Minister, sent a message of felicitations to Mrs. Sheikh Hasina on her re-assumption of office of the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh on 7 January. In the message, he wished her a successful tenure of office and expressed his willingness to working closely with the Prime Minister of Bangladesh in the days ahead for further strengthening relations between the two countries and peoples.

Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister for Foreign Affairs, also sent a message of congratulations to Prof. Dr. A K Abdul Momen on his appointment as the Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh on the same day.

### 5. DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND POPULATION PARTICIPATES IN THE PARTNERS' FORUM 2018

Mr. Upendra Yadav, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Health and Population, participated in the Partners' Forum 2018 convened by The Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH) in New Delhi on 12-13 December. This forum is dedicated to the Every Woman Every Child (EWEC) movement and the achievement of the UN Secretary General's Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health (Global Strategy).



*Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Health and Population addressing the Partners' Forum, 2018*

Addressing the Forum, he highlighted the steps taken by the Government of Nepal for improving the health of women, children and adolescents. He also shared that under the framework of Sustainable Development Goals, Nepal has initiated efforts to achieving maternal and newborn related SDGs targets.



*Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Health and Population of Nepal with the Prime Minister of India*

## **6. MINISTER FOR INDUSTRY, COMMERCE AND SUPPLIES PARTICIPATES IN THE PARTNERSHIP SUMMIT 2019**

Mr. Matrika Prasad Yadav, Minister for Industry, Commerce and Supplies participated in the Partnership Summit 2019 held in Mumbai, India on 12-13 January. It was the annual flagship international event organized by the Confederation of Indian Industry in collaboration with Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, Government of India and State Government of Maharashtra with an aim to build new partnership and explore investment opportunities.

## **7. GLOBAL AVIATION SUMMIT**

Mr. Rabindra Prasad Adhikari, Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation participated in the Global Aviation Summit held in Mumbai, India on 15-16 January. The programme was organized by the Ministry of Civil Aviation, Government of India, in collaboration with FICCI. The event deliberated upon the latest trends, and cutting-edge technologies in the aviation sector.

## **8. MEETING BETWEEN THE EXPERTS OF THE AYUSH MINISTRY OF INDIA AND THEIR NEPALI COUNTERPARTS**

A delegation comprising experts from the Ayush Ministry of India, Central Drug Standards Control Organization and Association of Ayurvedic drug manufacturers visited Nepal and held discussions with their Nepali counterparts at the Ministry of Health and Population on 31 January-1 February on the issues of smooth export of ayurvedic medicine from India to Nepal.



*Meeting between the experts of the Ayush Ministry of India and their Nepali counterparts*

The meeting was fruitful in understanding each other's concerns and procedures for import/export of Ayurveda medicine. Both sides expressed their views that Ayurveda is a shared heritage between Nepal and India and exchange of visits to the manufacturing and quality testing facilities and capacity building programmes would further enhance cooperation in this sector.

## **9. CHIEF MINISTER OF UTTAR PRADESH OF INDIA VISITS JANAKPUR**

Mr. Yogi Adityanath, Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh State of India visited Janakpur, Nepal on the auspicious occasion of annual festival of Bibaha Panchami on 12 December. Bibaha Panchami reflects the age-old ties between Nepal and India in the cultural context as thousands of pilgrims from Nepal and India celebrate together the wedding procession of Sita, the Princess of Janakpur, Nepal and Ram, the Prince of Ayodhya, India on that day.



*Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh of India*

### **10. VISIT OF THE QUEEN MOTHER OF BHUTAN TO NEPAL**

Queen Mother of Bhutan, Mrs. Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck, visited Nepal from 21 January-1 February. The Royal entourage comprised of the family members, Maj. Gen. V. Namgyel Ambassador of Bhutan to Nepal and other senior officials. She visited various Buddhist pilgrimage sites in Nepal.

### **11. VISIT OF THE CHIEF OF ARMY STAFF**

General Purna Chandra Thapa, Chief of the Army Staff of Nepal visited India on 12-16 January at the invitation of General Bipin Rawat, Chief of Army Staff of India. He was conferred Honorary Generalship of the Indian Army.

### **12. FOURTH MEETING BETWEEN FOREIGN SECRETARIES OF NEPAL AND INDIA THROUGH VIDEO CONFERENCING**

A meeting through video conference was held between the Foreign Secretaries of Nepal and India on 31 December. The meeting followed up on the action taken on the matters agreed during the exchange of visits by the Prime Ministers of Nepal

and India in April and May 2018 respectively. Both sides expressed satisfaction on the status of bilateral relations and progress made on economic cooperation projects during 2018.

### **13. 12TH MEETING OF NEPAL-CHINA BILATERAL CONSULTATION MECHANISM**

The 12th Meeting of Nepal-China Bilateral Consultation Mechanism was held in Beijing on 13 December. Prior to the Meeting of the Mechanism, Foreign Secretary Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi called on State Councilor and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, Mr. Wang Yi at the Diaoyutai Guest House in Beijing where various matters pertaining to bilateral relations and issues of mutual interest were discussed.

During the Meeting of Consultation Mechanism, the two sides held substantive and fruitful discussions on the entire gamut of Nepal-China relations, and reviewed the status of bilateral co-operation. Both sides underlined the need to further enhance bilateral relations through close and productive engagements in areas of mutual interest, including connectivity, infrastructure development, trade, investment, and energy. Both sides agreed to expedite the implementation of agreements and understandings done in the past and prioritize projects under bilateral co-operation. They also highlighted the importance of exchanging high-level visits for leveraging the momentum in bilateral relations for mutual benefit.



*Foreign Secretary Meets with the State Councilor and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China*

The Nepali side shared with the Chinese side the priorities of the Government of Nepal regarding Nepal-China co-operation. The Chinese side

expressed its willingness to lend support to Nepal's development efforts.

#### *12th Nepal-China Diplomatic Consultation Meeting*

Foreign Secretary of Nepal Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi and Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of China Mr. Kong Xuanyou led their respective delegations.

The Nepali delegation comprised of Ambassador Mr. Leelamani Paudyal, Joint Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Ganesh Prasad Dhakal, Mr. Sushil K Lamsal, Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy of Nepal, Beijing, among others.

The next meeting of the Bilateral Consultation Mechanism will be held in Kathmandu.

#### **14. FIRST MEETING OF THE MECHANISM FOR FACILITATION ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CHINA-NEPAL COOPERATION PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS IN NEPAL**

The first meeting of Mechanism for Facilitation on the Implementation of China-Nepal Cooperation Programmes and Projects in Nepal was held in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 3 December. Both sides comprehensively reviewed the progress made in and hurdles arisen during the implementation of the programmes and projects in various fields. The two sides agreed to take appropriate measures to ensure smooth and timely implementation of the programmes and projects through joint efforts. The Meeting was co-chaired by the Foreign Secretary of Nepal Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi and Ms. Yu Hong, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Nepal.



*The First Meeting of the Mechanism for Facilitation on the Implementation of China-Nepal Cooperation Programmes and Projects in Nepal*

#### **15. NEPAL AND USA HOLD BILATERAL CONSULTATIONS IN WASHINGTON D.C.**

Nepal and the USA held political consultations at the Department of State in Washington D.C. on 18 December. The Nepali delegation was led by Foreign Secretary Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi. Ambassador Ms. Alice G. Wells, Acting Assistant Secretary for the South and Central Asian Affairs led the delegation of USA. The Nepali delegation in the consultations consisted of Ambassador of Nepal to USA Mr. Arjun Kumar Karki, Joint Secretaries from Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Home Affairs, and other officials from Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Embassy of Nepal in Washington D.C.

The two delegations reviewed overall state of bilateral relations between the two countries and exchanged views on further strengthening bilateral cooperation. They particularly discussed on development priorities of Nepal, implementation of bilateral agreements, updates on MCC Compact in Nepal, development cooperation, trade and investment, defense cooperation as well as issues of regional and international interest.



*Nepali and US delegations holding political consultations at the Department of State*

Foreign Secretary Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi had a meeting with the Acting Deputy Administrator of USAID Mr. David H. Moore at the USAID headquarters in Washington D.C. on 19 December.

Mr. Bairagi briefly shared the historic political progress in the country. He thanked the government of USA for its support in uplifting socio-economic condition of the country. He shared Nepal's goal of graduating from the status of LDCs at an early date and becoming a middle income country by 2030. He also requested the USAID to channel their support through national budgetary system.

## 16. SECRETARY GENERAL OF FRENCH MOFA VISITS NEPAL

The Secretary General of French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs Mr. Maurice Gourdault-Montagne visited Nepal on 9-10 January at the invitation of Foreign Secretary of Nepal Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi.

Foreign Secretary Mr. Bairagi and Secretary General Mr. Gourdault-Montagne led their respective delegations to Nepal-France Political Consultations held the same day at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Kathmandu. The Nepali delegation consisted of senior officials from Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, Ministry of Physical Planning, Infrastructure and Transport, Ministry of Forest and Environment and Ministry of Communication and Information and Technology.

In the consultations the two sides reviewed the whole range of bilateral relations and discussed ways and means for further enhancing the relations. Discussions were held on the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of diplomatic relations, exchange of high-level visits, trade and investment matters, tourism and cultural cooperation, people-to-people relations, among others. They also exchanged views on regional and multilateral issues of common interest.



*Nepali and French delegations in Nepal-France Political Consultations*

Following the consultations, both dignitaries addressed a press meet hosted in the Ministry. During the press meet, a logo commemorating the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of establishment of Nepal-France Diplomatic relations was unveiled. Similarly, Ms. Shrinkhala Khatiwada, Miss Nepal 2018 and one of the Top 12 Contestants of Miss World

2018, was appointed the Goodwill Ambassador for the commemorative events marking the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

After the press meet, the SG paid a courtesy call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs at his office. Mr. Montagne expressed gratefulness to Nepal for sending Foreign Secretary to participate in the Paris Peace Forum in November 2018. Exchange of high-level visits and 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the bilateral relations as well as ways of further strengthening existing relations featured mainly in the meeting.

## 17. SIXTH MEETING OF INDIA-NEPAL JOINT STEERING COMMITTEE (JSC)/ JOINT WORKING GROUP (JWG) ON POWER TRADE AND COOPERATION

The Sixth meeting of Nepal-India Joint Steering Committee (JSC)/Joint Working Group (JWG) on Power Trade and Cooperation was held in Pokhara, Nepal on 23-24 January.

The meeting held discussion on power trade through existing links; Muzaffarpur-Dhalkebar 400 KV line (operated at 220) and other 132 KV and below transmission lines. It also reviewed the under construction interconnections, future transmission interconnections, progress of generation and transmission system of Arun-III and other Hydropower Projects in Nepal, exchange of Power through Energy banking, and the progress regarding Guidelines/Regulations for import/export of Electricity.

## 18. EIGHTH MEETING OF JOINT COMMITTEE ON WATER RESOURCES AND SIXTH MEETING OF JOINT STANDING TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

The sixth meeting of Nepal-India Joint Standing Technical Committee (JSTC) was held in New Delhi on 9-10 January. The Nepali delegation was led by Mr. Sushil Chandra Tiwari, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation, Government of Nepal. The Indian delegation was led by Mr. Arun Kumar Sinha, chairman, Ganga Flood Control Commission, Government of India. The meeting discussed, among others, issues related to irrigation services, inundation and river training works.





*Sixth Meeting of Nepal-India Joint Standing Technical Committee*

The Eighth Meeting of Nepal-India Joint Committee on Water Resources (JCWR) was held in New Delhi on 11 January. The Nepali delegation was led by Dr. Sanjay Sharma, Secretary, Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation, Government of Nepal. The Indian delegation was led by Mr. U. P. Singh, Secretary (WR, RD, GR), Government of India. During the meeting, both sides expressed satisfaction over the outcomes on Tanakpur-Mahendranagar Link Canal, flooding and inundation issues. They also expressed commitment for full cooperation in resolving issues like finalization of the DPR of Pancheshwor Multipurpose project, preparation of DPR of Sapta Koshi High Dam Multipurpose Project and Sun-Koshi Storage-cum-diversion scheme in the spirit of friendship, trust and goodwill.



*Eighth Meeting of Nepal-India Joint Committee on Water Resources*

## 19. IMPORT OF CHEMICAL FERTILIZER FROM INDIA ON G TO G BASIS

A Joint Secretary Level Meeting was held in Kathmandu on 14-15 January to finalize the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Nepal and India on supply of chemical fertilizer on Government-to-Government basis. The Nepali delegation was led by Dr. Yogendra Kumar Karki, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development, Government of Nepal. The Indian delegation was led by Ms. Gurveen Sidhu, Joint Secretary, Department of Fertilizers, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers, Government of India.

Both sides exchanged views on the draft MoU. The revised draft of the MoU would be shared with the Indian side soon.

## 20. BILATERAL CONSULTATIVE GROUP ON SECURITY ISSUES (BCGSI)

Thirteenth meeting of the Nepal-India Bilateral Consultative Group on Security Issues (BCGSI) was held on 14 December in Kathmandu. The Nepali delegation was led by Mr. Bhrigu Dhungana, Joint Secretary (South Asia Division), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nepal and the Indian delegation was led by Shri Sudhakar Dalela, Joint Secretary (North), Ministry of External Affairs of India.



*Joint Secretaries, Mr. Dhungana and Mr. Dalela signing the minutes of the meeting*

Matters related to capacity building, conducting joint military exercises and joint expeditions/adventure/sports activities were discussed during the meeting.

## 21. FIRST MEETING OF JOINT STEERING COMMITTEE/JOINT WORKING GROUP ON NEPAL-BANGLADESH COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF POWER SECTOR

The first meeting of the Joint Working Group (JWG) on Nepal-Bangladesh Cooperation in the Field of Power Sector was held on 3 December in Kathmandu. The Nepali delegation was led by Mr. Dinesh Kumar Ghimire, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation and the Bangladesh delegation was led by Mr. Sheikh Faezul Amin, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources.

Likewise, the first meeting of the Joint Steering Committee (JSC) on Nepal-Bangladesh Cooperation in the Field of Power Sector was held in Kathmandu on 4 December. The Nepali delegation was led by Mr. Anup Kumar Upadhyay, Secretary, Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation and the Bangladesh delegation was led by Dr. Ahmand Kaikaus, Secretary, Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources. During the meeting, both sides discussed about the possibilities of power trade, investment in hydropower development in Nepal, and cross border interconnection between Nepal and Bangladesh. The meeting also took note of the progress of import of 500 MW of hydropower by Bangladesh from the Upper Karnali Hydropower project. Discussions were also held about the cooperation between the two countries in the field of renewable energy especially in the field of Solar Home System.



Secretaries Mr. Upadhyay and Mr. Kaikaus

## 22. FIRST MEETING OF NEPAL-BANGLADESH JOINT GROUP OF CUSTOMS OFFICIALS

The First Meeting of Nepal-Bangladesh Joint Group of Customs Officials was held in Kathmandu on 12-13 December. The Nepali delegation was led by Mr. Toyam Raya, Director-General, Department of Customs of Nepal and the Bangladesh delegation was led by Mr. Khondaker Muhammad Aminur Rahman, Member of National Board of Revenue of Bangladesh.



Joint Secretaries during the First Meeting of Nepal-Bangladesh Joint Group of Customs Officials

During the meeting, various issues including priority on clearance of Nepal bound export/import cargo, modalities of exchange of information of documents between the customs administration of the two countries, easy access of Nepali agricultural products and fruits to Bangladesh, export of acrylic yarn from Nepal to Bangladesh through Banglabandha LCS, online verification of certificate of origin/SAFTA certificate, on-arrival visa for Nepali nationals at both land and air entry ports, establishment of a hotline between Banglabandha LCS and Mechi customs, among others were discussed.

## B. MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS

### 1. NEPAL PARTICIPATES IN THE 24TH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

The President, Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari led the Nepali delegation to the 24th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 24) held in Katowice, Poland from 2-14 December. The

President was accompanied by Mr. Shakti Bahadur Basnet, Minister for Forest and Environment. The delegation also comprised of Members of the Federal Parliament, senior officials at the Office of the President, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Forest and Environment.



*The President Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari addressing the COP 24*

Addressing the High-Level Segment of the COP 24 on 3 December, the President highlighted the disproportionate impacts of climate change to a low carbon-emitting country like Nepal and also reiterated the fact that Nepal has to spend significant amount of our national income in addressing disasters-induced problems. The President said, "We feel as if we have been penalized for the mistakes we never made."

While reinforcing the commitment to maintain the threshold of 1.5 degree Celsius as outlined in the recent IPCC Special Report, the President recalled the use of electric vehicles at the President's Office, the Government of Nepal's initiative *President Chure Conservation Program* with a view to implementing the environment conservation and livelihood programs in the Chure area.

In her address, the President underscored the importance of climate finance for developing e-mobility, reducing vulnerability of women and the poor, improving public health, and promotion

of forests and natural system in the form of carbon sink. The President further underlined the need to effectively implement the Paris Agreement and to review the Policy and update Nationally Determined Contributions to make them more relevant in the present context.

On the sidelines, the President Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari had a bilateral meeting with the President of the Republic of Poland, Mr. Andrzej Duda in Katowice on 4 December.



*The President, Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari meeting with the President of Republic of Poland*

The two leaders discussed the ways of further strengthening bilateral relations between the two countries. The need of support from the countries that have the knowledge, technology and resources to the developing countries for mitigation and adaptation in light of the adverse impact of climate change on poor and vulnerable countries also featured in the meeting.

The President of the UN General Assembly, Ms. María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés, called on the President on the sidelines of the conference on 3 December.



*President of the UN General Assembly meeting with the President, Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari*

The impacts of climate change, the significance of development for peace, lack of resources and capability to meet Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were discussed during the call on.

The President also had meetings with the President of Albania, Ilir Metaj; Head of State of San Marino, Mr. Mirco Tomassont; and the Prime Minister of Estonia, Mr. Juri Ratas.

The President attended a felicitation and welcome ceremony hosted by the Embassy of Nepal in Berlin and Non-Resident Nepali Association, Poland in Warsaw. Addressing the NRN community residing in Poland and those coming from different parts of Europe, the President called the Nepali diaspora as 'Honorary Ambassadors' of Nepal.

## 2. PRIME MINISTER PARTICIPATES IN WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM ANNUAL MEETING

Prime Minister Mr. K P Sharma Oli visited Davos, Switzerland, on 21-25 January to participate in the 49<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of World Economic Forum (WEF). The delegation of the Prime Minister included Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister for Finance Dr. Yubaraj Khatiwada, Chief Advisor to the Prime Minister Mr. Bishnu Prasad Rimal, Foreign Affairs Advisor to the Prime Minister Dr. Rajan Bhattarai, Vice Chairperson of the National Planning Commission Dr. Puspa Raj Kadel and other high-ranking officials.



*The Prime Minister addressing the session on 'Strategic Outlook on Asia'*

Addressing a session on 'Strategic Outlook on South Asia' on 22 January, the Prime Minister highlighted major political achievements Nepal has made in recent times. He shared with the global community the Government's commitment to create

an investment-friendly regime in Nepal that would spur much economic growth. He also touched upon the potentials of the South Asia region for rapid economic development.

Similarly, the Prime Minister addressed a session on 'Shaping the Future of Democracy' on 23 January. He shared his vision of comprehensive democracy that focuses on ensuring the welfare and dignity of the people. He participated in the Informal Gathering of World Economic Leaders (IGWEL) and shared views on the theme of 'The End of Global Trade as We know it?'. He stressed the need for reviving multilateralism and rules-based international trading system to protect and promote the interest of the least developed and land-locked developing countries like Nepal.



*Prime Minister Oli addressing the session on 'Shaping the Future of Democracy'*

On the sidelines of the WEF Annual Meeting, the Prime Minister had meetings with the Prime Minister of Vietnam Mr. Nguyen Xuan Phuc. The two leaders discussed the ways to enhance bilateral relations in the areas of mutual interests.

The Prime Minister also gave interviews to DW TV of Germany and CCTN of China. He visited Innovation and Entrepreneurship Centre at Swiss Federal Institute of Technology and other modern infrastructure and touristic sites in Zurich during the visit.

Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali attended an interactive dialogue organized by the Center for Security Studies of Zurich on 24 January. On the occasion, he interacted with faculty members, academicians and friends of Nepal and presented Nepal's unique and nationally-led peace process as a successful example of peace-building. He also shed light on Nepal's transformation to

federal governance as well as the prospects of economic development in the country.

Finance Minister Dr. Yubaraj Khatiwada attended a session on 'Investment Trends Monitor' on 22 January and highlighted that more focused foreign direct investment on building infrastructure in LDCs and LLDCs was instrumental in triggering economic growth. He also attended a session on 'More than GDP' on 23 January. He had a meeting with the Director of the Netherlands-based company 'Arcadis' Ms. Carolien Gehrels.

Similarly, Foreign Secretary Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi had a meeting with the State Secretary of the Swiss Federal Council Ms. Pascale Baeriswyl on the sidelines of the WEF Annual Meeting at Davos. Various issues of bilateral relations and cooperation were discussed in the meeting. Mr. Bairagi and Ms. Baeriswyl also signed an MoU on Employment Opportunities for Dependent Persons of Diplomats.

### **3. NEPAL'S SELECTION IN THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE ORGANIZATION COMMITTEE OF THE PEACE BUILDING COMMISSION (PBC)**

Nepal has been elected as a member of the Organizational Committee of the Peace Building Commission (PBC) on 21 December, 2018 for the tenure of two years starting from 1 January 2019.

Nepal was unanimously elected by the UN General Assembly from the Asia Pacific region. Currently, Nepal is the fifth major troops and police contributing country for the UN peacekeeping operations. Nepal has already served in the PBC twice in 2008-10 and 2011-15. Nepal was also entrusted to chair the Working Group on lessons learned of the Commission in 2018.

### **4. NEPAL CONVENES "A BIOLOGICAL WEAPON CONVENTION (BWC): AWARENESS RAISING AND LEGISLATIVE DRAFTING WORKSHOP"**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in collaboration with United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) and European Union, organized "A Biological Weapon Convention (BWC): Awareness Raising and Legislative Drafting Workshop" in Kathmandu from 8-11 January. Fifty-three participants from various agencies had participated in the Awareness Raising Session of the workshop from 8-9 January.

Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs addressed the opening session of the workshop in Kathmandu. Representatives from the government agencies and university of Nepal presented papers on the BWC and its various aspects in Nepal.

A core group of 20 officials participated in the Legislative Drafting Session of workshop from 9-11 January. Ms. Yasemin Balci, Senior Legal Officer and Mr. Cedric Christian Michel Aperce, Legal Officer VERTIC and Mr. Daniel Feakes, UNODA facilitated the session.

The workshop remained fruitful in raising awareness among the officials from different agencies. The workshop also helped integrate the view of Nepali officials on national legislation drafting of BWC.

The Ministry had organized a pre-consultation meeting in the participation of the various concern agencies of Nepal on 17 December 2018. Addressing the Meeting, Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal, Joint Secretary, highlighted the significance of national legislation for the implementation of BWC and Nepal's status in BWC legislative drafting process.

## **C. REGIONAL AFFAIRS**

### **1. FIRST MEETING OF THE BIMSTEC PERMANENT WORKING COMMITTEE**

The First Meeting of the BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee (BPWC) was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 17-18 January. Two-Members Nepali delegation led by Head of Regional Organization Division, Joint Secretary Mr. Krishna Prasad Dhakal participated in the meeting. As a chair of the meeting, Ambassador Ravinatha Aryasinha, Foreign Secretary of the Government of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka welcomed all the delegates to the Meeting and delivered the Inaugural Remarks. Ambassador Aryasinha urged for deepening and broadening the existing economic linkages and forming partnerships to tap the potentials.

Meeting extensively discussed on various issues in line with the Fourth BIMSTEC Summit, which are deemed necessary for the institutionalization of BIMSTEC. The items of the agenda of the meeting included Discussion on the BIMSTEC Charter, Discussion on the finalization of the administrative

and financing mechanisms for the establishment of the BIMSTEC Centers and finalization of the Model Memorandum of Association (MoA) on the Establishment of the BIMSTEC Centers/Entities, Discussion on the Procurement Procedure of the Secretariat, Review and rationalization of sectors and sub-sectors of BIMSTEC, Discussion on joining of the Directors from the remaining Member States, Discussion on the Administrative and Disciplinary Rules of the Secretariat, Discussion on the modalities for the establishment of the BIMSTEC Development Fund (BDF), Discussion on the Rules of Procedure for BIMSTEC Mechanisms, Discussion on the Secretariat's revised budget for FY 2018 and estimated budget for FY 2019, Finalization of the Terms of References (ToR) for the BIMSTEC Network of Policy Think Tanks (BNPTT), Finalization of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Mutual Cooperation between Diplomatic Academies/Training Institutions of BIMSTEC Member States, Discussion on the finalization of Terms of Reference (ToR) of BIMSTEC Eminent Persons' Group (EPG) along with others.

The BPWC Meeting was concluded with the adoption of the report. The Meeting was significant in garnering the views and comments from all the Member States on the substantial matters for the initialization of the BIMSTEC.

## **2. 56TH SESSION OF THE SAARC PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE**

The 56th Session of the Programming Committee of SAARC was held in Kathmandu on 11-12 December. A three-member delegation led by Mr. Krishna Prasad Dhakal, Joint Secretary of the Regional Organizations Division and current chair of the programming committee participated in the committee. The session reviewed the status of implementation of the decisions taken at the 54th and 55th Sessions of the Programming Committee and made recommendations to the SAARC specialized bodies and SAARC regional centers. The committee also presented the details of the expenditure of the year 2018 and set the list of programs and activities to be held in the year 2019.

## **3. 30TH MEETING OF THE SAARC DEVELOPMENT FUND (SDF) BOARD**

The 30th Meeting of the SAARC Development Fund (SDF) Board was held in New Delhi, India from 19-20 December. Mr. Tek Bahadur Khatri, Under Secretary, Ministry of Finance took part

in the program as the representative from Nepal. The meeting discussed on the matters relating to financing and co-financing of various projects through SDF.

## **4. SECOND MEETING OF THE SAARC SEED BANK BOARD**

India hosted the Second meeting of the SAARC Seed Bank Board in New Delhi on 17 January. Highlighting the establishment of the SAARC Seed Bank as an important milestone in ensuring agricultural and food security in the region, the meeting reviewed the progress made in implementation of the decisions taken at its first meeting. The meeting decided to prepare Standard of Procedure (SOP) and Strategic Action Plan (SAP) in two months and circulate among the member states. The Board also decided to constitute a Sub-Committee to develop common minimum Seed Quality Standard, Seed Testing Procedures and a draft Protocol for the SAARC Seed Bank Agreement within next six months.

## **5. TENTH MEETING OF THE SAARC FOOD BANK BOARD**

The Tenth meeting of the SAARC Food Bank Board was convened in Islamabad, Pakistan on 21-22 January. The meeting reviewed the progress made in the implementation of the decisions made in the ninth meeting. The board meeting discussed on various issues such as involving the development partner organizations in SAARC Food Bank Information System (SFBIS) with whom SAARC has MoUs, maintaining confidentiality of the data if needed, requesting the representatives of international organizations to share with the SAARC Secretariat respective trainings on the relevant issues for capacity development of the personnel of the Member States, capacity development in storage management; emergency shortage management; food habit or less/over consumption management; and internal price and supply management etc.

## **6. 19TH MEETING OF THE BIMSTEC WORKING GROUP ON RULES OF ORIGIN**

Nineteenth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Working Group on Rules of Origin was held on New Delhi on 21-22 January. A three-member Nepali delegation led by Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies, Mr. Madhu Kumar Marasini took part in the meeting.

The meeting deliberated on draft agreements under Rules of Origin namely: Draft text of the Rules for

Determination of Origin of Goods for Agreement on BIMSTEC Free Trade Area and the updated draft text of the Operational Certification Procedures (OCP) for the Rules of Origin for the BIMSTEC Free Trade Area; and also, The Product Specific Rules of Origin under BIMSTEC FTA in HS2017, voluntarily transposed by Bangladesh. The Member States agreed for further negotiation and discussion on some of the technical matters of the texts.

Nepali delegation actively participated in the meeting and strongly reflected concerns and comments on the draft text. As a result, our concerns have been incorporated in the updated draft text of the agreements recently circulated by the BIMSTEC Secretariat.

Member States have also agreed to forward their comments and observations including new formulations wherever necessary to the BIMSTEC Secretariat within one month. The next round of Meeting of this Sub-Group will be held within 2-3 months.

## 7. SECOND MEETING OF BIMSTEC TASK FORCE ON TRADITIONAL MEDICINE

The Second Meeting of the BIMSTEC Task Force on Traditional Medicine was held on 24-25 January in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar. The Nepali Delegation to the meeting was led by Dr. Shyam Babu Yadav, Director, Central Ayurveda Hospital, Ministry of Health & Population. The Keynote Address was delivered by Dr. Myint Htwe, Union Minister for Health and Sports of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. Welcoming Delegates to the Meeting, Htwe highlighted the importance of the BTFTM as a platform to share good experiences among the BIMSTEC Member States in the field of Traditional Medicine (TM).

Head of Delegations from each Member States made a 15 Minutes Country Presentation on the Development of Traditional Medicine in their respective countries. The Meeting also reviewed the Report of the various meetings held so far in this sector.

The Meeting mainly deliberated on Base Paper on Protection of Genetic Resources (GR) associated with Traditional Medicine Knowledge (TMK), Intellectual Property Rights for Traditional Medicine (IPR-TM) and Cooperative Work Plan on Development of Traditional Medicine submitted by India. Besides this, the Meeting also discussed

on recent developments in the sector of Ayurveda like introduction of the WHO International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11) coding system for the Traditional Medicine.

The Meeting recommended the establishment of a BIMSTEC Ayurveda and Traditional Medicine University (BATMU) in the near future to act as a model institution in the region.

## D. NON RESIDENT NEPALIS, PASSPORT AND CONSULAR MATTERS

### 1. NON RESIDENT NEPALIS (NRN) RELATED SERVICES

During the period of two months, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs delivered the following numbers of services to Non Resident Nepali (NRN):

| S. N. | Services(Only from the Ministry)            | Number |
|-------|---|--------|
| 1     | Issuance of NRN Cards                       | 14     |
| 2     | Processing of Land Purchase Approval to NRN | 6      |

### 2. PASSPORT SERVICES

The status of service delivery of the department of Passport during the period is presented below:

| S. N. | Activities  | Number | Remarks                                     |
|-------|---|--------|---|
| 1     | Applications received   | 102512 | Excluding Live Enrollment Counters          |
| 2     | Passports Issued  | 102029 | From Districts, Missions and the Department |
| 3     | Total Number of passports issued (According to Document Type) | 102029 | Ordinary                                    |
|       |   | 72     | Diplomatic                                  |
|       |   | 173    | Official                                    |
|       |   | 892    | Gratis                                      |
|       |   | 19     | Travel Document (TD)                        |
|       |   | 103195 | Total                                       |
| 4     | Emails responded including Social Networks                    | 1406   |   |
| 5     | Grievance handled   | 1812   |   |

|    |  |                |  |
|----|--|----------------|--|
| 6  | Lost PP registered in the Interpol           | 3743           |  |
| 7  | Official Error                               | 150            |  |
| 8  | Null and Void Passports                      | 4              |  |
| 9  | Feedback Forms Collected                     | 2233           |  |
| 10 | Revenue Collected (From the Department only) | 32,28,01,000/- |  |

### 3. CONSULAR SERVICES

The numerical details of the service delivery of the Department of Consular Services during the period are as follows:

| S. N.    | Details of Services  | Number |
|----------|--|--------|
| <b>A</b> | <b>Consular and Legal Counseling Section</b>   |        |
| 1        | Recommendation for Medical treatment, Religious tour, World cycling tour and other   | 6      |
| 2        | Recommendation for Indian education certificate, nationality verification and those who are visiting India for study purpose         | 219    |
| 3        | Recommendation for Indian pension  | 6      |
| 4        | Recommendation for issuing Nepalese driving license on the basis of foreign driving license held by the Nepalese citizen.            | 343    |
| 5        | Recommendation letter to Indian Embassy for character verification report to Nepalese citizens during their period of stay in India. | 70     |
| 6        | Recommendation for procurement of chemicals & explosives   | 27     |
| 7        | Recommendation letter to Indian Embassy for issuing vehicle permit for vehicles to enter India.                                      | 4      |

|          |   |        |
|----------|---|--------|
| 8        | Correspondence to the concerned authorities of Nepal regarding the citizenship renouncement of Nepalese citizens as per their application submitted to the Nepalese missions abroad | 24     |
| 9        | Correspondence letter regarding authenticity of Power of Attorney issued by Nepalese missions abroad  | 88     |
| 10       | Correspondence to the concerned authorities of Nepal regarding authenticity of documents issued by the Government of Nepal  | 16     |
| 11       | POA, VOR, H-Form Request (Malaysia), and correspondence to the District Administration Office for compensation to Nepalese citizens died abroad.                                    | 122    |
| 12       | Correspondence concerning search and rescue of Nepalese nationals to the Nepalese Missions abroad   | 195    |
| 13       | Correspondence with regards to repatriation of dead body of Nepalese nationals abroad   | 57     |
| 14       | Correspondence to the government agencies in Nepal  | 213    |
| 15       | Number of draft received for the compensation from Malaysia   | 16     |
| 16       | Handover of compensation amount from Malaysia to the concerned family   | 12     |
| <b>B</b> | <b>Visa and Exemption Section</b>   |        |
| 1        | Issuance of diplomatic/official/gratis visa   | 559    |
| 2        | Issuance of diplomatic/official ID Card   | 80     |
| 3        | Issuance of SAARC visa stickers   | 3      |
| 4        | Number of recommendation for exemption  | 591    |
| 5        | Number of visa recommendation to the foreign missions on GON's nominations  | 217    |
| <b>C</b> | <b>Attestation section</b>  |        |
| 1        | Number of attested documents  | 33,245 |
| Total    |   | 36,113 |