



# MOFA BULLETIN

## *Current Affairs*

April - May 2018 | Vol 2, Issue 6



Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
**Policy, Planning, Development Diplomacy  
and Nepali Diaspora Division**  
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**Patron:**

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**Inside this Issue**

- A. Bilateral Affairs
- B. Multilateral Affairs
- C. Regional Affairs
- D. Non Resident Nepalis,  
Passport and Consular  
Matters

**A. BILATERAL AFFAIRS**

**1. State Visit of the Prime Minister of Nepal to India**

The Prime Minister of Nepal Mr. K.P. Sharma Oli paid a state visit to India on 6-8 April at the invitation of Shri Narendra Modi, the Prime Minister of India. The entourage of the Prime Minister included Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Matrika Prasad Yadav, Minister for Industry, Commerce and Supplies, Mr. Raghubir Mahaseth, Minister for Physical Infrastructure and Transport, Mr. Bishnu Prasad Rimal, Chief Advisor to the Prime Minister, Members of Parliament, Chief Secretary, Secretaries and other high-ranking officials of the Government of Nepal.



*The Prime Minister of Nepal with the Prime Minister of India at the Rashtrapati Bhawan of India*

On 6 April, the Prime Minister held an interactive meeting with the business community of Nepal and India about the business and investment opportunities in Nepal. This was followed by an interaction with the Nepali community. He also attended the diplomatic reception hosted in his honour by the Embassy of Nepal.

On 7 April, the Prime Minister attended the ceremonial reception and inspected the Guard of Honour at the Rashtrapati Bhawan. He paid homage to Mahatma Gandhi at Rajghat. He paid separate calls on Shri Ram Nath Kovind, President of India and Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu, Vice President of India.

On the Same day, the Prime Minister of Nepal held delegation level talks with Shri Narendra Modi, the Prime Minister of India. Both the Prime Ministers jointly inaugurated the Integrated Check Post at Birgunj. Afterwards, both the Prime Ministers addressed the media. The Prime Minister of India hosted a banquet luncheon in honour of the Prime Minister of Nepal and his delegation.

Minister of Home Affairs of the Government of India Mr. Rajnath Singh called on the Prime Minister of Nepal. Senior political leaders of India also called on the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister of Nepal interacted with the intellectual community at a civic reception hosted by the India Foundation.



*Prime Minister of Nepal with Prime Minister of India*

On 8 April, the Prime Minister Oli visited Govind Ballabh Pant University of Agriculture and Technology in Pantnagar, Uttarakhand. There he planted a tree and visited select research stations. The Prime Minister Oli was conferred on an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Science by the University.

The state visit of the Prime Minister of Nepal to India has contributed in taking the bilateral relations to newer heights on the basis of equality, mutual trust, respect and benefit. Apart from expediting implementations of bilateral projects in Nepal, the need for reinvigorating the existing bilateral mechanisms to promote cooperative agenda across diverse spheres has been understood. Both sides have agreed to advance new partnership in agriculture, expand rail linkages connecting Kathmandu to Raxaul with India's financial support, and develop inland waterways for the movement of cargo providing additional access to sea for Nepal.

## 2. State Visit of the Prime Minister of India to Nepal

At the invitation of the Prime Minister of Nepal, Mr. K.P. Sharma Oli, Shri Narendra Modi, the Prime Minister of India paid a state visit to Nepal on 11-12 May.



*The Prime Minister Oli with the Prime Minister Modi*

On 11 May, Prime Minister Modi attended a ceremonial reception at Tundikhel where he was presented with a 19 Gun Salute and the Guard of Honour. He was received and accorded a warm welcome by the Prime Minister of Nepal. High-ranking dignitaries from the Government of Nepal were present in the ceremony.

The Prime Minister Modi, paid separate calls on Bidya Devi Bhandari, President of Nepal at Sheetal Niwas, and Mr. Nanda Bahadur Pun, Vice President of Nepal at Bahadur Bhawan.

Delegation level talks led by the two Prime Ministers were held on the same day. Matters relating to mutual

interest were discussed. Both Prime Ministers also addressed the media. The Prime Minister of Nepal hosted a Banquet in honour of the Prime Minister of India. Earlier, Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister for Foreign Affairs, paid a call on the Prime Minister of India.

Prime Minister Modi also visited Janakpur, Muktinath and Pashupatinath. He attended civic receptions in Kathmandu and Janakpur.



*Prime Minister Modi in Civic Reception at Janakpur*

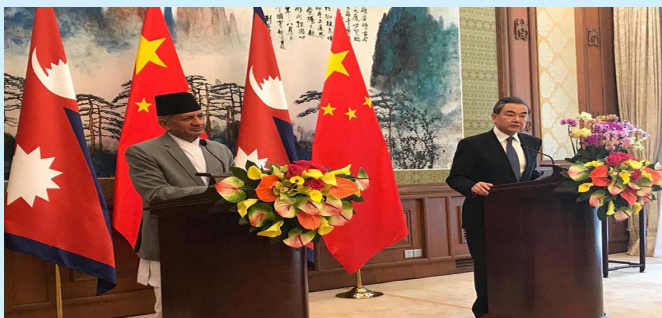
During the visit, the two Prime Ministers jointly laid the foundation stone of 900 MW Arun-III hydro project in Nepal, launched Nepal-India Ramayana Circuit connecting Janakpur, the birthplace of Sita, with Ayodhya and other sites associated with the epic Ramayana and also flagged off the inaugural direct bus service between Janakpur and Ayodhya.

The state visit of the Prime Minister of India to Nepal has further strengthened the age-old friendly relations between the two countries and has provided a fresh impetus to the growing partnership. Building on the outcome of the state visit of the Prime Minister of Nepal to India in April 2018, both sides have agreed to maintain the momentum by taking effective measures for the implementation of all the agreements and understandings reached in the past. While emphasizing the need for regular convening of bilateral mechanisms, including Nepal-India Joint Commission at Foreign/External Affairs Ministers level, to review the overall state of bilateral relations, and for the expeditious implementation of the economic and development cooperation projects, it has been agreed to address outstanding matters by September 2018, with the objective of advancing cooperation in all areas.

## 3. Minister for Foreign Affairs Visits China

At the invitation of Mr. Wang Yi, State Councilor and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Pradeep Kumar

Gyawali paid an official visit to China on 16 - 21 April.

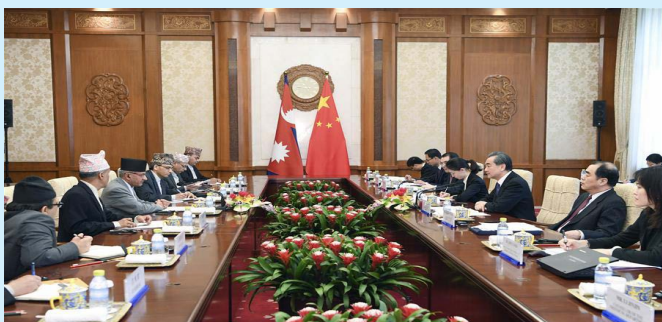


*Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal and Minister for Foreign Affairs of China*

During the visit, Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Gyawali called on Vice-President of the People's Republic of China Mr. Wang Qishan on 18 April. He conveyed the greetings and best wishes of Mr. K.P. Sharma Oli, the Prime Minister of Nepal and said that Nepal appreciates President Xi Jinping's vision of 'building a community of shared future for humanity,' and supports China's thrust on enhancing cooperation among nations under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

Highlighting the fact that Nepal and China have been enjoying excellent relations based on friendship and good neighborliness since ancient times, Vice-President Mr. Qishan stressed on fully tapping the potentials of bilateral relations between the two countries.

The same day, Minister for Foreign Affairs held official bilateral talks with State Councilor and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Wang Yi.



*Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal and Minister for Foreign Affairs of China in a Bilateral Discussion*

The two sides held discussions on achieving an enhanced level of bilateral co-operation in the development of infrastructure, transportation networks, trade, tourism and people-to-people relations under the Belt and Road Initiative, and agreed to identify projects for cooperation under the initiative. The two sides expressed satisfaction over the excellent state of bilateral relations, and agreed to elevate these relations to new heights. Both sides agreed to expedite the implementation of all agreements and understandings reached in the past. Foreign

Ministers shared common views on developing cross-border multi-dimensional transport networks for better connectivity and shared prosperity. A joint press meeting was held following the delegation level talks. Mr. Wang Yi hosted a luncheon in honor of Minister Gyawali on 18 April.

Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Gyawali attended a reception hosted in his honor by the Embassy of Nepal in Beijing on 17 April. Representatives of Beijing-based think tanks and the academia, members of the Nepali community, friends of Nepal as well as several members of the diplomatic community in Beijing attended the function. On the occasion, Foreign Minister Gyawali unveiled 'The Selected Speeches of Prime Minister KP Oli,' translated into Chinese language.

Minister for Foreign Affairs met with Dr. Yin Li, Governor of the People's Government of Sichuan Province in Chengdu on 20 April. Matters pertaining to bilateral interest, including further accelerating people-to-people exchanges between Nepal and the Sichuan Province of China, were discussed during the meeting. The two sides also discussed the historical connections, geographical proximity and cultural similarities between Nepal and the Sichuan Province of China.

Foreign Minister delivered a lecture on 'Nepal-China Relations and Development Prospects in the Trans-Himalayan Region' at Sichuan University in Chengdu. In his speech, he highlighted five areas of mutual interest – transport connectivity; agriculture, industry and technology transfer; human resources development; tourism and culture; and people-to-people contacts between Nepal and China. The President of the University Li Yanrong and other senior officials, faculty members, Chinese and international students, including Nepali students, were present in the program.

During the visit, Minister Gyawali met with representatives of different Investment Groups. Minister Gyawali assured that the Government of Nepal is committed to creating a conducive environment for Chinese businessmen and investors in Nepal, and would take necessary measures for facilitating investments in sectors such as energy and hydropower, agriculture and manufacturing, among others.

#### **4. Governing Body (GB) Meeting of Pancheshwar Development Authority (PDA)**

The Sixth Meeting of the Governing Body of the Pancheshwar Development Authority (PDA) was held in Kathmandu on 26 April. The Nepali delegation was led by Dr. Sanjay Sharma, Secretary, Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation, Government of Nepal and the Indian delegation was led by Mr. U.P. Singh, Secretary, Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and

Ganga Rejuvenation of the Government of India. The meeting considered the administrative and financial matters of the PDA and agreed to extend the term of the team of exports/officials till 30 September 2018 in order to finalize the Detailed Project Report (DPR) of the Pancheshwar Project.

### **5. Meeting of Nepal-India Inter-Governmental Committee (IGC) on Trade, Transit and Cooperation to Control Unauthorized Trade**

The Meeting of Nepal-India Inter-Governmental Committee (IGC) on Trade, Transit and Cooperation to Control Unauthorized Trade was held on 26-27 April in Kathmandu. The Nepali delegation was headed by Mr. Chandra Kumar Ghimire, Secretary (Commerce and Supplies), Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies, Government of Nepal and the Indian delegation was headed by Ms. Rita Teotia, Commerce Secretary, Government of India. The meeting agreed to jointly initiate a comprehensive review of the bilateral treaty of trade, and to consider amendments to the treaty of transit and related agreements with a view to further facilitating Nepal's access to the Indian market, enhancing overall bilateral trade, and facilitating Nepal's transit trade.

### **6. Meeting of Nepal-India Joint Committee on Inundation and Flood Management (JCIFM)**

Twelfth meeting of Nepal-India Joint Committee on Inundation and Flood Management was held on 16-20 April in Kathmandu. The Nepali delegation was led by Mr. Madhukar Prasad Rajbhandari, Director General of the Department of Water Induced Disaster Management, Government of Nepal and the Indian delegation was led by Mr. Lalit Kumar Taneja, Member (Coordination), Ganga Flood Control Commission, Government of India. It was agreed to expedite ongoing river training projects on Bagmati, Lalbakeya and Kamala rivers and to address issues related to Flood Management and Inundation.

### **7. Vice Governor of Sichuan Province of China visits Nepal**

Vice Governor of Sichuan Provincial People's Republic of China Mr. Peng Yuxing visited Nepal from 16-19 May. Mr. Yuxing paid a courtesy call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali at the latter's office on 18 May. During the meeting, matters of mutual interests on Nepal-China relations in general and Nepal-Sichuan province in particular were discussed.

During the visit, delegation also met with the Vice President and the Speaker of the Federal Parliament of Nepal.

### **8. Ministry Bids Farewell to Japanese Ambassador**

The Foreign Secretary, Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi hosted a luncheon on 18 May to bid a farewell to Mr. Masashi Ogawa, Ambassador of Japan to Nepal. In his farewell speech, the Foreign Secretary Bairagi emphasized the importance of the contribution Ambassador Ogawa made during his tenure of 4 and half a year. Secretary mentioned that Nepal-Japan relationship saw progress with numerous exchanges of high-level visits during his tenure. He mentioned about some significant projects which were recently completed or stated under Nepal-Japan Economic and Technical cooperation commended the role played by the Ambassador to widen such cooperation. Secretary Bairagi applauded the support and goodwill extended by the Ambassador and the Government of Japan while unprecedented political transformation has taken place in Nepal. He also appreciated the contribution of JICA to the social, economic and human resources development of Nepal through various programs and projects, on the occasion.

During the occasion, Ambassador Ogawa thanked the Foreign Secretary Bairagi for organizing the luncheon. He extended his gratitude to the leaders and government officials including security personnel for their cooperation enabling him perform his duties efficiently. Ambassador congratulated Nepal for heading towards political stability starting from Constitution promulgation to successful conclusion of all tiers of election to the unification of Communist Parties of Nepal. He said that he witnessed the visible changes in the development of Nepal during his tenure. Head of North East Asia Division of the Ministry, Ambassador's from Asian countries, representative of JICA Nepal Office, former Nepali Ambassadors to Japan and relevant officials were present in the luncheon.

Ambassador Ogawa had farewell calls on the President, the Vice President, the Prime Minister, and various high level dignitaries before his departure.

Ambassador Ogawa returned to Tokyo on 22 May completing his tenure in Kathmandu.

### **9. Serbian Deputy Prime Minister Visits Nepal**

The first Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Serbia Mr. Ivica Dacic visited Nepal on 4-6 May. Mr Dacic paid courtesy calls on the President Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari and the Prime Minister Mr. K.P. Sharma Oli. He also held bilateral meeting with the Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali.



*Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia*

During meeting with Minister Gyawali, all aspects of Nepal- Serbia relations were reviewed. The Ministers discussed the ways and means of further promoting bilateral cooperation in areas of trade, investment, tourism, educational, cultural and technical cooperation, among others. Mr. Dacic highlighted the need to have more political contacts and extended invitations to the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Nepal to visit Serbia.

The prospects and potentials of enhancing economic relations between two countries also featured in the meeting. Facilitation of people-to-people exchanges including through relaxing visa procedures was also discussed.

During his maiden visit to Nepal, Mr Dacic also addressed a Talk Programme on ‘Serbia in the Region, Europe and the World’ jointly organized by Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Nepal Council of World Affairs.

## **10. UK Minister of State visits Nepal**

UK Minister of State for Asia and the Pacific at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Mr. Mark Field visited Nepal on 6-7 May. During his visit, he paid courtesy call on Prime Minister Mr K.P. Sharma Oli and had a meeting with Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali.

During the meetings, various aspects of 202 years old relationship between Nepal and the UK were discussed. The Prime Minister thanked the British government for all the support and cooperation extended to Nepal’s development efforts. He further highlighted the need to enhance such bilateral cooperation at economic front.

Mr. Field expressed happiness on being able to support Nepal’s socio-economic development through the activities of British Aid Agencies and INGOs. He assured of continuation of such support.

Mr Field also stressed the need for more works on

further improving economic relations between the two countries, especially for deepening trade and investment partnership.

## **11. Delegation of British Group of Inter Parliamentary Union (BGIPU) Visits Nepal**

A delegation of the British Group Inter-Parliamentary Union (BGIPU) comprising seven members of the House of Commons and the House of Lords visited Nepal on 6-12 May at the invitation of the Federal Parliament of Nepal.

The delegation led by Mr. Nigel Evans paid courtesy calls on the President Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari, the Prime minister Mr KP Sharma Oli and Acting Chief Justice Mr. Deepak Raj Joshi. They called on the Speaker of Federal Parliament Mr. Krishna Bahadur Mahara, Chairman of National Assembly Mr. Ganesh Prasad Timilsina, and Minister for Energy, Water Resource and Irrigation Mr. Barsaman Pun, Minister for Women, Children and Senior Citizen Mrs Tham Maya Thapa, State Minister for Health and Population Ms Padma Kumari Aryal as well as the Vice-Chairman of National Planning Commission Dr. Puspa Raj Kadel.

During these meetings, the delegation discussed various issues including parliamentary exchanges, management of natural resources, women empowerment, reforms in Nepali legal system as well as the ways to attain Sustainable Development Goals.

## **12. Nepal-Bangladesh Commerce Secretary Level Meeting**

The fourth Nepal-Bangladesh Commerce Secretary Level Meeting on Trade, Transit and Economic Cooperation was held in Kathmandu on 30 May-1 June. The Nepali delegation was led by Mr. Chandra Kumar Ghimire, Secretary for Commerce and Supplies, Government of Nepal. The Bangladeshi delegation was led by Mr. Shubhashish Bose, Commerce Secretary, Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh.



*Nepal Bangladesh Commerce Secretary Level Meeting*

During the meeting, matters related to promoting bilateral trade, transit and investment between the two countries were discussed. Both sides agreed to rationalize tariff and remove non-tariff barriers to ease and enhance bilateral trade for mutual benefits. While emphasizing on enhancement of trade, both sides underscored the need for extending cooperation on trade on goods and services, investment, energy, and intellectual property, among others.

### 13. Visit of Her Royal Highness Princess of Thailand

Professor Dr. Chulabhorn Mahidol, Her Royal Highness Princess of Thailand visited Nepal from 30 April-30 May to attend the meeting on 'Driving Progress Towards Rabies Elimination: Result of Gavi's Learning Agenda on Rabies and new WHO Recommendations on Human Rabies Immunization' organized by World Health Organization in Kathmandu.

## B. MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS

### 1. UN Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu's Visit to Nepal



*UN Under Secretary Meets Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal*

UN Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, visited Nepal from 1-3 April. During the visit, Ms. Nakamitsu called on Mr. K.P. Sharma Oli, the Prime Minister of Nepal, Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi, Foreign Secretary. She highlighted the new initiatives of the United Nations Secretary-General for the maintenance of peace and security at present.

### 2. Nepal's Participation at NAM Ministerial Conference, Baku

Nepal participated at NAM Ministerial Conference,

Baku. Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal, led the Nepali delegation to the 18<sup>th</sup> Mid-Term Ministerial Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) on 5 April in Baku, Azerbaijan.

Nepal was elected as Vice-Chair of the Ministerial Conference representing the Asia-Pacific region. The Foreign Minister highlighted the continued relevance of NAM's principles and also underlined the necessity of solidarity among NAM countries on the current global issues.



*Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal addressing NAM Ministerial Conference in Baku*

### 3. Nepal's Election as Chair of the Committee on Conferences

Nepal has been elected by acclamation as Chair of the Committee on Conferences, a permanent subsidiary organ of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) for the year 2018.

### 4. Interim Director of International Think Tank for Landlocked Developing Countries (ITT-LLDCs) Ambassador Odbayar Erdenetsogt Visits Nepal

Interim Director of International Think Tank for Landlocked Developing Countries Ambassador Odbayar Erdenetsogt called on Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali in April at his office in Singha Durbar. The first Ministerial inter-governmental meeting of International Think Tank for Landlocked Developing Countries is going to be held in Ulaanbaatar on 11-12 June.

### 5. Nepal's Election as a Member of UN-Women and Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD)

Nepal has been elected as a member of the Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) for the term 2019-2021. Nepal will serve in this capacity for the first time since its creation in 2010.



Similarly, Nepal has also been elected as a member of the commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) for the term 2019-2022.

## 6. Training Course on Emergency Response to Chemical Incidents for State Parties in Asia



*Participants of the Training Programme on 'Emergency Response to Chemical Incidents'*

MoFA, in collaboration with Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), hosted the 7th Regional Training Course on Emergency Response to Chemical Incidents for State Parties in Asia from 9-13 April. More than 30 participants from different countries participated in the programme.

## C. REGIONAL AFFAIRS

### 1. Eleventh SAARC Conference on Cooperation in Police Matters preceded by the Sixth Meeting of Focal Points of STOMD and SDOMD

The Eleventh SAARC Conference on Cooperation in Police Matters preceded by the Sixth Meetings of the Focal Points of the SAARC Terrorist Offences Monitoring Desk (STOMD) and the SAARC Drug Offences Monitoring Desk (SDOMD) was held in Kathmandu on 10-11 April.

The Conference was inaugurated by Mr. Prem Kumar Rai, Secretary of the Ministry of Home Affairs of the Government of Nepal. In his inaugural address he emphasized the significance of holding regular SAARC meetings in security matters to share views of the member states for fashioning common understanding for working together in the region. ‘

Inspector General of Nepal Police and leader of the delegation of Nepal delivered the welcome speech. While welcoming all the delegations, he stated that South Asia being the fastest growing economy in the world has opened up both the opportunities and challenges. He further stated that minimizing security risk and containing criminal activities have remained a priority in the realm of police cooperation among the member states.

The Conference reviewed the progress in the implementation of the decision/recommendations of the Tenth SAARC Conference on Cooperation in Police Matters held in 31 May 2012 in New Delhi.

Mr. Ram Krishna Subedi, Joint Secretary of Ministry of Home Affairs of the Government of Nepal and the Chairperson of the Sixth Meeting of the Focal Points of SAARC Drug Offences Monitoring Desk (SDOMD) and SAARC Terrorist Offences Monitoring Desk (STOMD), has introduced salient features of the Report of the Sixth Meeting. The Conference appreciated the excellent work done by the focal points of SDOMD and STOMD and adopted the reports. The Conference also considered the revised Concept Paper on SAARCPOL presented by the delegation of Nepal.

### 2. Ninth Meeting of SAARC Heads of Statistical Organizations (SAARCSTAT)

Ninth Meeting of SAARC Heads of Statistical Organizations (SAARCSTAT) was held in Dhaka on 11-13 April. Mr. Rajan Silwal, Director, Central Bureau of Statistics of Nepal participated in the Meeting. While delivering welcome remarks, Mr. Bikash Kishore Das, Additional Secretary, Statistics and Information Division, Government of Bangladesh, stated that active cooperation is required for generating and exchanging of statistical data among member states in respective fields.

The Meeting proceeded with Working Session following opening of the Meeting, adoption of Agenda, election of Chairperson, discussion on Cooperation with International Organizations/ Agencies such as PARIS-21 and FAO. The Meeting further discussed on progress on eight areas like SAARC Statistical Yearbook, Capacity Building, Catalogue of Statistical Publications, Directory of Statistical Experts, System of National Accounts, Leaflet “SAARC in Figures” and Manual of Statistical Systems of Member States, SAARC Industrial Classifications, definition and standards of health statistics for the SAARC region, collection of data on trade in services, SAARC forum for disability statics, sample surveys and related issues, core indicators on economic statics, quarterly status report to be circulated by the coordinating countries for monitoring implementation of decisions of SAARCSTAT and statistical monitoring of relevant SDGs.

### 3. Twelfth Informal Meeting of SAARC Finance Ministers

The Twelfth Meeting of the SAARC Finance Ministers was held at the ADB Headquarters, Manila, Philippines, on 4 May on the sidelines of the 51st Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors of ADB. The meeting was opened and chaired by Dr. Yuba Raj Khatriwada, Finance Minister of the Government of Nepal. In his opening

statement, he thanked ADB for its consistent support and engagements in the promotion of regional cooperation and integration in SAARC region. He stated that ADB's project-based initiatives at sub-regional level in trade facilitation, transportation and energy sector have tangible benefits in each of the SAARC member countries. He further mentioned that regional cooperation in trade, finance, investment & technology transfer as the key for regional development and improvement of living standards of people of the entire region.

Likewise, Hon. Finance Minister briefly presented the current economic situation of Nepal. He shared with the meeting that Nepal has recorded more than 6 percent GDP growth rate and 5 percent inflation rate this year. He further said that prevailing trade deficit will be minimized by structural reforms.

In order to accelerate progress in the transition towards South Asian Economic Union, the Meeting underlined the importance of making progress on some major issues viz. early finalization of the text of the Draft SAARC Agreement on Promotion and Protection of Investment, Draft SAARC Agreement on Motor Vehicles, Draft SAARC Railways Agreement and Draft SAARC Air Service Agreement.

The Meeting further emphasized early operationalization of the SAARC Agreement on Trade in Services (SATIS), early convening of the Meeting of SAFTA Ministerial Council (SMC) and SAFTA Committee of Experts (SCOE), speedy implementation of the identified recommendations of the SAARC-ADB Regional Economic Integration Study (Phase-II) in a time-bound manner, enhancing trade under SAFTA, improving transit and transport facilities, simplifying and harmonizing customs procedures and reducing technical and non-technical barriers to augment intra-regional trade and early convening of the Nineteenth SAARC Summit.

#### **4. Special Meeting of the BIMSTEC Joint Working Group (JWG) on the Establishment of the BIMSTEC Permanent Secretariat**



*Members of BIMSTEC Joint Working Group*

The Special Meeting of the BIMSTEC Joint Working Group (JWG) on the Establishment of the BIMSTEC Permanent Secretariat was held in Dhaka, Bangladesh on 5 April. All the member states participated in the meeting. Mr. Md. Shamsul Haque, Director of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh chaired the meeting. The Secretary General of BIMSTEC, Mr. M. Shahidul Islam delivered special remarks and expressed his gratitude to the Government of Bangladesh for hosting the Special Meeting of the BIMSTEC JWG. He highlighted the need to strengthen BIMSTEC Secretariat in order to make it efficient and capable to support the BIMSTEC activities.

The meeting deliberated on various issues pertaining to the strengthening of the BIMSTEC permanent Secretariat. The meeting also discussed and recommended the budget for FY 2018.

Mr. Mani Prasad Bhattarai, Joint Secretary, Regional Organization Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs led the Nepali delegation in the meeting.

#### **5. First Meeting of the BIMSTEC Working Group to Negotiate Draft Text of the Motor Vehicles Agreement for the Regulation of Passenger and Cargo Vehicular Traffic between and among BIMSTEC Member States**

The meeting was held on 9-10 April in New Delhi India. Mrs. Dakshita Das, Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, Government of India chaired the Meeting.

The Working Group decided that the member states will examine the amended draft text finalized in the meeting of the working group through their internal consultations. Various forms that have been provided for in the draft agreement will be examined by the appropriate authorities of the member states. Comments on the draft agreement, if any, will be provided to the BIMSTEC secretariat by the member states.

The Nepalese delegation was led by Mr. Keshav Kumar Sharma, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport. Mr. Govinda Prasad Kharel, Senior Division Engineer of the same Ministry also participated in the meeting.

## 6. Meeting of the BIMSTEC Working Group on Customs Cooperation



*Participants of BIMSTEC Working Group on Custom Cooperation*

The First Meeting of the BIMSTEC Working Group on Customs Cooperation was held in New Delhi, India on 10-11 May. Delegations from all the BIMSTEC Member States attended the meeting.

The meeting discussed on progress achieved in matters of customs cooperation and finalized the draft text of the agreement on cooperation and mutual assistance in customs matter for BIMSTEC free trade area for the submission to the 21<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Trade Negotiating Committee (TNC).

The Nepali delegation was led by Mr. Manoj Kumar Acharya, Under Secretary of Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies. Nepali delegation stated that Nepal, as the current chair of BIMSTEC, has accorded great importance to the intra-regional trade in Bay of Bengal region. Furthermore, Nepal expressed staunch commitment towards trade, connectivity, investment and technology transfer between and among the states of this region.

## 7. Visit of the ADB Consultant

Mr. Bruce Winston, consultant of Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Mr. SC Sharma, ADB official, visited Nepal on 17-18 May to study about BIMSTEC master plan on transport connectivity. To this effect, the secretariat circulated a set of questionnaire pertaining to the master plan study which the member states needed to duly fill in and forward to the secretariat on an urgent basis. During two days visit to Nepal, the consultant had meetings with Divisional Heads (JS) of various ministries including the Regional Organization Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

## 8. BIMSTEC Conference on Protection of Traditional Knowledge and Genetic Resources

The BIMSTEC conference on protection of traditional

knowledge and genetic resources was held in Bangkok, Thailand on 21-22 May. This conference brought together government officials of the BIMSTEC member states and other relevant agencies to exchange their knowledge and experience and to postulate the regional action plan and strategy in the area of traditional medicine knowledge.

The meeting also agreed to update the current situation on the protection of Genetic Resources (GR) and associated Traditional Knowledge (TK). The Conference agreed the proposal of Thailand to prepare a concept paper on the protection of genetic resources associated with traditional medicine knowledge and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) for the BIMSTEC to be submitted to the secretariat and circulated by the latter for the concurrence of the member States.



*Participants of BIMSTEC Conference on Protection of Traditional Knowledge and Genetic Resources*

## 9. Fifth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Sub-Group on Prevention of Illicit Trafficking in narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and Precursor Chemicals

The fifth meeting of the BIMSTEC sub-group on prevention of illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals was held in Kathmandu, Nepal on 23 May. The meeting reviewed the progress made since the fourth meeting of the sub-group held on Yangon in 2016. All the member states made the country presentation through which they shared their country's legal and constitutional provisions, trends of drug use, national strategies and possible modalities of the cooperation between and among the member states. The meeting also discussed the possible association of BIMSTEC with SARICC (South Asian Regional Intelligence and Coordination Centre on Transnational Organized Crime).

The delegation of Nepal was led by Mr. Narayan Prasad

Sharma Duwadee, Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Home Affairs. Nepalese side focused upon the need of proper law enforcement, capacity building, border control, monitoring of the controlled medicines and apt licensing programs in order to fight against the malaises of illicit trafficking of drugs and other substances. The head of Nepali delegation emphasized that poverty, illiteracy and lack of awareness are major challenges to Nepal in this regard.



Participants of the BIMSTEC Sub-Group on Prevention of Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and Precursor Chemicals

## 10. Visit of the Secretary General of BIMSTEC



BIMSTEC Secretary General meets Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari, the President of Nepal

Mr. M. Sahidul Islam, Secretary General (SG) of BIMSTEC visited Nepal from 29 May - 1 June 2018.

The Secretary General paid courtesy calls on President and the Prime Minister of Nepal.

During his stay, he also called on Minister for Foreign Affairs. The Foreign Minister congratulated him on assuming the office of the Secretary General and reiterated Nepal's unflinching commitment towards the BIMSTEC process and willingness of Nepal to convene the Fourth BIMSTEC Summit in Kathmandu in near future.

The Secretary General also called on the Foreign Secretary, H.E. Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi. During the meeting, the whole gamut of cooperation under the BIMSTEC Framework was discussed. The Foreign Secretary highlighted the need to strengthen the regional collaboration under the BIMSTEC by deepening the cooperation on core areas such as connectivity, trade, energy, investment and tourism.

## 11. BBIN Bus Trial Run

With a view to increase sub-regional connectivity, the Bangladesh-India-Nepal Bus Trial Run under the BBIN Motor Vehicles Agreement was conducted from 23 - 26 May. Forty five representatives from Nepal, India and Bangladesh travelled from Dhaka to Kathmandu via India. The bus service would facilitate tourism, trade and people to people contact in this sub-region.

## D. NONRESIDENT NEPALI, PASSPORT AND CONSULAR MATTERS

### 1. Non Resident Nepali (NRN) Related Services

The status of services delivery to Non Resident Nepali (NRN) during April-May is presented below.

S. N.	Services	Number
1	Issuance of NRN Cards	14
2	Processing of Land Purchase Approval to NRN.	2

### 2. Passport Services

#### 2.1 Statistics Exhibiting Service Delivery Status at the Department

The status of service delivery of the department during the period is presented in the following table.

S. N.	Activities	Number	Remarks
1	Applications received	54375	Excluding Live Enrollment Counters
2	Passports Issued	52633	From districts
		2058	From Missions
		32026	From the Department
		86717	Total
3	Total Number of passports issued (According to Document Type)	160	Diplomatic
		290	Official
		86237	Ordinary
		30	Travel Document
		86717	Total

4	Passports dispatched	84707	
5	Emails responded including Social Networks	2518	
6	Grievance handled	2263	
7	Lost PP registered in the Interpol	4661	
8	Official Error	129	
9	Null and Void Passports	10	
10	Gratis Passports	856	
11	Feedback Forms Collected	1400	
12	Revenue Collected	35,43,23,500/-	

### 3. Consular Services

The issue wise details of the service delivery of the Department of Consular Services during the period under review are as follows:

S. N.	Details of Services	Number
<b>A</b>	<b>Consular and Legal Counselling Section</b>	
1	Recommendation for Medical treatment, Religious tour, World cycling tour and other	3
2	Recommendation for Indian education certificate, nationality verification and those who are visiting India for study purpose	101
3	Recommendation for Indian pension	1
4	Recommendation for issuing Nepalese driving license on the basis of foreign driving license held by the Nepalese citizen.	407
5	Recommendation letter to Indian Embassy for character verification report to Nepalese citizens during their period of stay in India.	37
6	Recommendation for procurement of chemicals & explosives	6

7	Recommendation letter to Indian Embassy for issuing vehicle permit for vehicles to enter India.	3
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	1
9	Correspondence letter regarding authenticity of Power of Attorney issued by Nepalese missions abroad	62
10	Correspondence to the concerned authorities of Nepal regarding authenticity of documents issued by the Government of Nepal	6
11	POA, VOR, H-Form Request (Malaysia), and correspondence to the District Administration Office for compensation to Nepalese citizens died abroad.	20
12	Correspondence concerning search and rescue of Nepalese nationals to the Nepalese Missions abroad	60
13	Correspondence with regards to repatriation of dead body of Nepalese nationals abroad	27
14	Correspondence to the government agencies in Nepal	36
15	Number of draft received for the compensation from Malaysia	40
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	210
2	Issuance of diplomatic/official ID Card	33
3	Issuance of SAARC visa stickers	12
4	Number of recommendation for exemption	270
5	Number of visa recommendation to the foreign missions on GON's nominations	78
<b>C</b>	<b>Attestation section</b>	
1	Number of attested documents	34793