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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. The President Visits the United Arab Emirates (UAE)**

The President Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari paid an official visit to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on 13-16 November at the invitation of Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces to mark the 40th year of the establishment of diplomatic relations.



Mr. Nasser Bin Thani Juma Al Hamli, Minister for Human Resources and Emiratization receiving the President at the Abu Dhabi Airport

The President was received by Mr. Nasser Thani Al Hameli, Minister for Human Resources and Emiratization of the UAE, Mr. Saeed Hamdan Mohamed Al Naqbi, Ambassador of the UAE to Nepal, Mr. Netra Bahadur Tandan, Charge d'Affaires and other officials from the Embassy of Nepal.

The President Bidya Devi Bhandari had an official meeting with His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nayhan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces at the Crown Prince Court on 14 November.



The President with His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nayhan

Both sides expressed happiness over the excellent state of relations subsisting between the two countries in the last four decades. They exchanged views on the matters of mutual interest.

The Crown Prince also conveyed his country's willingness to assist Nepal in its development efforts in different sectors including health and education.

The two sides also underlined the importance of promoting cooperation between the two countries in areas such as trade, investment, tourism, renewable energy, agriculture and infrastructure development.

The President invited investment from the UAE in productive sectors assuring Nepal's commitment to investment protection.

The two sides agreed to reactivating existing bilateral mechanisms to take up the cooperation in agreed areas.

Similarly, the Speaker of the Federal National Council of the UAE Dr. Amal Al Quibaisi paid a courtesy call on the President on 14 November. They discussed the matters of mutual interests and shared views on their experience on women empowerment in their respective countries.



The President with the Speaker of the Federal National Council of the UAE Dr. Amal Al Quibaisi

The President paid homage to the martyrs by laying a wreath at the Karama Oasis Martyr Memorial, Abu Dhabi. On the occasion, the UAE Armed Forces presented a guard of honour. She also visited Masdar City, Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque and the Louvre Museum Abu Dhabi.

The President Bhandari held an official meeting with His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Dubai at Jabeel Palace, Dubai on 15 November.

The President appreciated the visionary leadership and policies by which the UAE has achieved phenomenal progress in trade, tourism and technological advancement.

The two sides also discussed about the investment prospects in Nepal. The President invited investment

in infrastructure development, hydropower as well as modernization and commercialization of agricultural sectors in Nepal. The President also discussed about the safety and welfare of Nepali migrant worker in UAE. She further requested the Ruler of Dubai to consider granting amnesty to Mr. Amar Bahadur Bam, a Nepali national, who is serving jail sentence in Dubai since 2003.



The President with His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Dubai

Later in the evening, the President attended a reception hosted by the Charge d' Affaires of the Embassy of Nepal in Abu Dhabi and addressed Nepali community members.



The President with Embassy officials and their families

During the visit, the President was accompanied by her daughter Ms. Nisha Kusum Bhandari. Rest of the entourage included Mr. Jayant Chand, Minister for Supplies; Dr. Madan Kumar Bhattarai, Foreign Affairs Expert to the President; Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi, Foreign Secretary; Mr. Bhupendra Prasad Paudel, Secretary of the Office of the President; senior government officials and the representatives of the media.

2. Meeting of the Nepal-India Oversight Mechanism Convenes in Kathmandu

The Fifth Meeting of the Nepal-India Oversight Mechanism, jointly led by Foreign Secretary Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi and Ambassador of India to Nepal Mr. Manjeev Singh Puri, was held in Kathmandu on 8 November.



The Fifth Meeting of the Nepal-India Oversight Mechanism

The meeting made a comprehensive review of the progress achieved in economic and development cooperation projects between Nepal and India since the fourth meeting of the Mechanism that was held in Kathmandu on 6 July 2017. The meeting discussed the issues related to Cross Border Rail Projects, Integrated Check Posts, Cross-Border Transmission Lines, Arun III and Upper Karnali Hydropower projects, Pancheshwar Multipurpose Project, Postal Roads, Line of Credit Projects, Reconstruction Projects and other pertinent matters.

3. Second Round of Nepal-Bangladesh Foreign Office Consultations Concludes in Dhaka

The second round of Foreign Office Consultations between Nepal and Bangladesh was held on 8 October in Dhaka. The meeting was co-chaired by Foreign Secretary of Nepal Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi and Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh Md. Shahidul Haque.



Foreign Secretaries of Nepal and Bangladesh

The meeting reviewed the overall state of bilateral relations and discussed matters pertaining to trade, transit and connectivity, investment, higher education, energy, tourism and people-to-people contact, among others. Cooperation on matters of common interest in sub-regional, regional and international forums also featured during the discussion. Both sides agreed that development of operational modalities for transit cargo movement, conclusion of preferential trading arrangements, setting up a permanent mechanism to promote cooperation in the power sector would be taken up with priority. They also shared views on promoting sub-regional cooperation on agreed areas within the BBIN framework.

4. Eighteenth DG Level Talks on Customs Cooperation between Nepal and India Concludes in New Delhi

The Eighteenth Director General (DG) Level Talks on Customs Cooperation between Nepal and India was held in New Delhi, India on 9-10 October.

Director General, Department of Customs, Nepal and Director General, Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, India led their respective delegations. Issues pertaining to strengthening co-operation in preventing smuggling of drugs, fake Indian currency notes, gold, wildlife, other contraband across India-Nepal border and sharing of information featured during the talks. They also discussed various issues relating to trade facilitation and automation.

5. Nepali Delegation Participates in the International Meeting on Constitutional Amendments in Mongolia

A five-member team led by Mr. Ganesh Prasad Dhakal, Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs participated in the International Meeting on "Constitutional Amendments: the Case of Mongolia" held in Ulaanbaatar on 18-19 October. Ms. Lila Devi Gadtaula and Mr. Toya Nath Adhikari, Joint Secretaries from the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs and Mr. Arjun Kumar Khadka, Joint Secretary and Mr. Bishnu Kaji Thapa, Under Secretary from the Legislature-Parliament Secretariat were also part of the team.

The International meeting was organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Government of Mongolia to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the promulgation of Mongolia's current Constitution. The meeting was organized with the objectives to share the experiences and best practices of the friendly

participating countries in constitution making and challenges in its implementation.

The Nepali delegation shared Nepal's experiences in constitution making process, highlighted the salient features of the Constitution of Nepal and foreign policy guidelines adhered in the Constitution of Nepal.

6. Nepal China Meeting about Railway Cooperation

A twenty-three member delegation, comprising government officials and representatives of private sectors, led by Mr. Zhen Jian, Deputy Administrator of National Railway Administration of the People's Republic of China visited Nepal on 6-10 November and held a meeting with Nepali officials to discuss about railway cooperation between Nepal and China. The Chinese team also conducted a preliminary study on the development of railway networks in Nepal.

The Chinese delegation leader Mr. Zhen Jian held meetings with Mr. Devendra Karki, Secretary of the Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport (MoPIT) and Mr. Bishnu Om Bade, Director General of the Department of Railways.

The delegation visited Rasuwa border to survey site along the railway alignment.

They visited Pokhara and Lumbini to study transport infrastructure in the region.

7. Nepal-China Hold the First Consultation on the Establishment of Nepal-China Cross Border Economic Zones

The delegates of Nepal and China held the First Consultation on the Establishment of Nepal-China Cross-border Economic Cooperation Zones on 21 November in Kathmandu. Mr. Chandika P. Bhatta, Executive Director of Special Economic Zone Development Committee, Ministry of Industry of Nepal led the Nepali delegation whereas Mr. Cao Dahua, Director General of Department of Foreign Investment Administration of the Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China led the Chinese delegation. The two sides agreed to establish respective working teams to hold meetings. They also agreed to carry out joint field research visits to the designated regions in 2018.

8. Official Exchange Program between Nepal and China

As part of *Official Exchange Program* between the officials of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Nepal and the People's Republic of China, a team of six officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs led by Mr. Durga Prasad Bhandari, Joint Secretary of South East Asia and the Pacific Division visited China on 5-13 November. During the visit, the team met with officials of Chinese Foreign Ministry and discussed the issues of mutual interest.

9. Chief Justice of Vietnam Visits Nepal



Chief Justice of Vietnam Mr. Nguyen Hoa Binh Calls on the President of Nepal

Mr Nguyen Hoa Binh, Chief Justice of Vietnam leading 11 member delegation from the Supreme People's Court of Vietnam paid a working visit to Nepal on 23-26 November. The delegation held a meeting with Nepali Chief Justice, Gopal Parajuli. Two sides exchanged their experiences on law making and judicial reforms. Both sides agreed to explore opportunities to boost court-to-court cooperation.

Mr Binh paid courtesy call on President of Nepal, Mrs. Bidhya Devi Bhandari.

The delegation visited Lumbini during their tour to Nepal.

10. Ambassadors of Germany, Norway and the EU Present Their Credentials

Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Nepal, Mr. Roland Schafer, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Norway to Nepal, Mr. Lasse Bjorn Johannessen and Ambassador of the Delegation of European Union to Nepal, Ms. Veronica Cody presented their Letters of Credence to the President

Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari amidst a special ceremony held at Shital Niwas on 23 October.

11. Nepal Establishes Diplomatic Relations

Nepal and Eritrea established diplomatic relations on 31 October. Ambassador Durga Prasad Bhattarai, Permanent Representative of Nepal to the United Nations, and Mr. Amanuel Giorgio, Charge d'Affaires a.i. of the State of Eritrea to the United Nations signed a Joint Communiqué to this effect in New York.

Nepal and Liechtenstein established diplomatic relations on 24 November. Ambassador Mr. Durga Prasad Bhattarai, Permanent Representative of Nepal to the United Nations and Ambassador Mr. Christian Wenaweser, Permanent Representative of the Principality of Liechtenstein to the United Nations exchanged diplomatic notes, in New York, on the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Nepal and the Bahamas established diplomatic relations on November 7. Ambassador Durga Prasad Bhattarai, Permanent Representative of Nepal to the United Nations, and Ambassador Ms. Sheila Carey, Permanent Representative of the Bahamas to the United Nations signed an instrument to this effect at a brief ceremony in New York.

The number of countries with which Nepal has established diplomatic relations has reached 154.

12. Nepal Expresses Heartfelt Condolences

The Government of Nepal expressed grief and extended heartfelt condolences and sympathies over the heavy loss of lives in the mass shooting in Las Vegas of the United States of America on 1 October.

B. Multilateral Affairs

1. Nepal's Election to the United Nations Human Rights Council

Nepal has been elected member of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) for the term 2018-2020 securing 166 votes, the highest votes in the Asia-Pacific Group in the election held in New York on 16 October. Qatar, Pakistan, and Afghanistan were also elected from the Asia-Pacific region. Total 15 states are elected from different geographical regions. Nepal had served as a member of the erstwhile Commission on Human Rights during 1995-2000 and 2004-2006, Vice-chair in 1999 and Chair in 2000. The term of

office of Nepal in UNHRC begins on 1 January 2018 and ends on 31 December 2020.

This election reflects the international community's acknowledgement of Nepal's passionate efforts and accomplishments in the field of promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

2. High Level Stakeholder Meeting Held

A High Level Stakeholder Meeting was hosted by the Foreign Secretary Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 19 November, to chart the course for Nepal's effective role as a member of UN Human Rights Council. The meeting saw high level participation from various Ministries, Office of the Attorney General, Nepal Army, Nepal Police and the Armed Police Force Nepal. The meeting was also attended by the Permanent Representatives of Nepal to the United Nations in New York and Geneva, who briefed the stakeholders about Nepal's successful election campaign and the responsibilities to be executed in three ensuing years.

The meeting agreed to strengthen the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, reinforce the Permanent Mission of Nepal at Geneva and coordinate among the government stakeholders on human rights issues to ensure Nepal's active and effective contribution during its terms of office.

3. Foreign Secretary Participates in Various UN Meetings in New York

Foreign Secretary Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi visited New York on 27-30 October to participate in various UN meetings. Foreign Secretary Mr. Bairagi participated and delivered Nepal's statement in Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security on 27 October. In his statement, the Foreign Secretary shared Nepal's achievements towards promoting and protecting rights and interests of women since the adoption of the UNSC Resolution 1325 in 2006 and updated the Security Council on Nepal's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, pursuant to UNSC Resolutions 1325 and 1820. He further underlined the importance of engaging women in the management of conflict and post conflict peace building.

Foreign Secretary Mr. Bairagi delivered Nepal's statement on 'Comprehensive Review of the Whole Question of Peacekeeping Operations in all its Aspects' on 30 October, at the Fourth Committee of UNGA. The Foreign Secretary highlighted Nepal's contributions to global peace and security, while

stressing the need for clarity of mandates, adequate resources, and safety and security of peacekeepers.

During the visit, the Foreign Secretary met with the President of General Assembly (PGA) Mr. Miroslav Lajcak and discussed matters of common interests and appreciated the role of the PGA in convening various high level meeting on different agenda of global importance and requested him to prioritise agenda in favour of the neediest countries including Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs).

The Foreign Secretary also discussed matters of common interest during his meetings with Under Secretary-General for Political Affairs Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, and Under Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs Mr. Liu Zhenmin.

4. 331st Governing Board Meeting of the ILO

The 331st Governing Board Meeting of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) took place in Geneva on October 26 - November 9. Mr. Laxman Prasad Mainali, Secretary for Labour and Employment, represented Nepal in the meeting. Secretary Mainali also met Mr. Guy Ryder, Director General of ILO and held discussions on various facets of Nepal-ILO relations.

5. 39th Session of the General Conference of UNESCO

Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of Nepal to UNESCO, Mrs. Ambika Devi Luintel led the delegation of Nepal to the 39th Session of the General Conference of UNESCO held at Paris from October 30 to November 14. The Nepali delegation articulated that global warming and climate change have been adversely affecting the mountain regions in Nepal and that could potentially cause extensive damage to biodiversity to the entire South Asian Region. She mentioned that the establishment of International Center for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) in Kathmandu was a milestone in the conservation of ecosystem of Hindu Kush Himalayas.

The General Conference endorsed the recommendation of UNESCO's Executive Board to appoint Ms. Audrey Azoulay of France as the 11th Director-General of UNESCO to succeed Ms. Irina Bokova of Bulgaria.

6. Seventh Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention Against Corruption

The Seventh Conference of the States Parties (CoSP) to the United Nations Convention Against Corruption

(UNCAC) took place in Vienna on 6-10 November. Nepali delegation to the Conference was led by Mr. Rajib Gautam, Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers, and included Prakash Kumar Suvedi, Permanent Representative of Nepal to the United Nations in Vienna as well as senior government officials.

In a statement delivered at the Conference, the Nepali delegation highlighting corruption as a major challenge for stability and security; and a key element hindering the attainment of sustainable development of our societies, stated that Nepal pursues a policy of zero tolerance to corruption. Nepali statement underlined various legislative and policy measures adopted by the Government of Nepal for its prevention.

7. UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial Conference

The UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial Conference was held in Vancouver, Canada on 14-15 November. The Nepali delegation was led by Defence Minister Mr. Bhimsen Das Pradhan and included senior officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defence and Nepal Army.

The Conference was attended by 79 UN Members States and five international organizations committed to doing peacekeeping better and differently. The conference reaffirmed the commitment to UN peacekeeping through innovations in training and capacity-building, concerted and integrated strategies in order to protect those at risk and through improved approaches to partnering and planning in early warning and rapid deployment.

8. Twenty- Second Session of the Conference of the State Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention

The Twenty- Second Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) was held in The Hague on November 27-December 1. The Nepali delegation was led by Mr. Lok Bahadur Thapa, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Nepal to the Organization for Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). The Conference elected by consensus Ambassador Mr. Fernando Aries, Permanent Representative of Spain to the OPCW as the next Director General.

9. Ministerial Conference on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration

The Second Ministerial Conference on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific (RECI), co-hosted by UNESCAP and the Asian Development Bank was held in the UNESCAP Secretariat in Bangkok on 23-24 November. The Ministerial Conference was preceded by the Senior Officials' Segment which was held on 21 and 22 November.

Dr. Swarnim Wagle, Vice Chairman, National Planning Commission of Nepal, and the leader of the Nepali delegation was elected Chairman of the Conference.

The Conference discussed on the ways and means to further promote economic cooperation and integration in Asia and the Pacific and provided means to discuss how RECI can most effectively support and contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

10. Engagements with the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation

The Seventh LDC Ministerial Conference under the aegis of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) was held in Vienna on 23-24 November. Nepali delegation was led by Ms. Yam Kumari Khatiwada, Secretary, Ministry of Industry. The Permanent Representative of Nepal to UNIDO Mr. Prakash Kumar Suvedi and senior officials from the Ministry of Industry have also participated in the program.

The Conference was followed by the Seventeenth General Conference of UNIDO on November 27-1 December.

11. Courtesy Call by Ms. Mary Soliman, Chief of the Regional Disarmament Branch of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs

Ms. Mary Soliman, Chief of the Regional Disarmament Branch of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) paid separate courtesy calls on Foreign Secretary, Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi and Joint Secretary Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal, Head of the United Nations, International Organisations and International Law Division on 10 November.

The meeting focused on Nepal's unwavering commitment to disarmament and international security

flowing from "the norms of world peace" enshrined in Nepal's Constitution as a basis of the country's foreign policy and the need for international cooperation to enhance the capacity of the neediest countries for the full and effective implementation of the non-proliferation regimes, including Security Council Resolution 1540 and other international disarmament instrument.

The importance of the Kathmandu Process to encourage regional and sub-regional dialogue to enhance openness, transparency and confidence-building and promote disarmament and security was discussed during the meeting. The Foreign Secretary called upon the UNRCPD to revitalize the Kathmandu Process and organize its activities increasingly in Kathmandu for the promotion of peace and disarmament in Asia-Pacific region.

Ms. Soliman expressed her gratitude for the support of the Government of Nepal for its continued support in the functioning of the UNRCPD at Kathmandu and shed light on the contribution of the Centre towards achieving SDG 16 as well as in encouraging the participation of women in its disarmament and non-proliferation activities.

12. Foreign Secretary Addresses 30th Anniversary Celebrations of UNRCPD

Foreign Secretary Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi addressed the function organised to celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the establishment of United Nations Regional Center for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and Pacific (UNRCPD) as the Chief Guest on 11 November. In his address, the Foreign Secretary reiterated Nepal's unwavering commitment to the general and complete disarmament and highlighted that hosting of UNRCPD in Kathmandu was a modest contribution on the part of Nepal to the cause of world peace.

C. Regional Affairs

1. Twenty-seventh Meeting of the Governing Board of STAC

The Twenty-seventh Meeting of the Governing Board (GB) of SAARC Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC) was held in Kathmandu on 29-30 November. The delegation of Nepal was led by Dr. Kedar Narsingh K.C. Director at National Tuberculosis Center, Kathmandu. The GB meeting took stock of the overall performance of the Centre focusing on the status of activities of 2017.

They discussed on the ways to enhance the effectiveness of the Center in order to address problems created by Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS in the region and also promote effective regional cooperation through the Center. The Board approved the budget and programs of the Center of 2018 and recommended to the Programming Committee for consideration. The Board also held discussions on ensuring timely nomination of SAARC Goodwill Ambassadors and conferring of SAARC Prize on TB and HIV/AIDS.

2. Ninth Governing Board Meeting of SCC

The Ninth Meeting of the Governing Board of SAARC Cultural Centre (SCC) was held in Colombo on 3-4 October. The meeting reviewed the progress made by the center in various programs and activities approved for 2017 and endorsed the joint audit report of the Center of the year 2016. Further, the Governing Board discussed, reviewed the proposed programs and budget of the SCC for the year 2018 and recommended to the Programming Committee for consideration.

3. Twelfth Meeting of the Governing Board of SEC

The Twelfth Meeting of the Governing Board (GB) of the SAARC Energy Centre (SEC) was held in Islamabad on 30-31 October. Mr. Dinesh Kumar Ghimire, SEC Board Member of Nepal and Joint Secretary at Ministry of Energy participated in the meeting. The meeting reviewed the progress made by the center in various programs and activities approved for 2017 and endorsed the joint audit report of the Center of the year 2016. The Board held in-depth discussions on proposed program and budget of the SEC for the year 2018 and recommended to the Programming Committee for consideration. It also approved the regional workshop, studies and sharing of best practices activities in 2018's programs so as to make such events directly relevant in pursuance of the SEC mandate.

4. First BIMSTEC Annual Disaster Management Exercise

The First BIMSTEC Annual Disaster Management Exercise was held in New Delhi, India from 10-13 October. The four day long exercise was inaugurated by the Union Home Minister of India Shri Rajnath Singh on 10 October. Nepali delegation for the exercise composed of representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Home Affairs including Nepal Police and Armed Police Force and the Ministry of Defense including Nepal

Army. The delegation was led by Mr. Krishna Bahadur Raut, Joint Secretary of Ministry of Home Affairs.

Nepali team shared its recent experience in earthquake and flood. While making comments and recommendations on the overall disaster management exercise, Mr. Raut, head of Nepali delegation appreciated the efforts of National Disaster Response Force of India. He mentioned that the exercise has been very fruitful for Nepal considering the proneness of the region to both earthquake and flood. The program had two parts, namely Table Talk Exercise (TTX) and Field Training Exercise (FTX).

5. First BIMSTEC Experts Group Meeting on Poverty Alleviation

The First BIMSTEC Experts Group Meeting on Poverty Alleviation was held in Kathmandu, Nepal on 1 November. Mr. Gopi Nath Mainali, Secretary of the Ministry of Cooperatives and Poverty Alleviation (MoCPA) delivered his special remarks and stated that poverty being a cross-cutting and multi-dimensional issue, BIMSTEC Member States need to make concerted efforts to fight these common problems and take forward the BIMSTEC Poverty Plan of Action (PPA) towards resolving poverty issues in the BIMSTEC region. Mr. Mainali also stressed the importance of infrastructure development for road and air connectivity for implementing strategies to alleviate poverty in the region.

The meeting reviewed the Poverty Plan of Action (PPA) adopted in the Second Ministerial Meeting held in Kathmandu, Nepal and prepared the groundwork for the Third Ministerial Meeting on Poverty Alleviation to be held in Sri Lanka. The BIMSTEC member countries agreed to update the socio-economic status in PPA. The meeting laid stress on incorporating and mainstreaming PPA in national plan, yearly budget and sectoral plans of the member states in order to eradicate extreme poverty in all forms by 2030.

Nepali delegation was composed of representatives from MoCPA and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA). The delegation was led by Mr. Suresh Pradhan, Joint Secretary of MoCPA.

6. *Second Meeting of the BIMSTEC Transport Connectivity Working Group (BTCWG)*

The Second Meeting of the BIMSTEC Transport Connectivity Working Group (BTCWG) was held in Bangkok on 13-14 November.

The meeting reviewed the status and progress of actions since the inception meeting of BTCWG. Nepali delegation presented the status of different cross border connectivity projects including roadways, railways and airways in the region. The meeting discussed the concept paper and Terms of Reference (ToR) of "Master Plan on Connectivity". The meeting agreed to entrust ADB to draft the BIMSTEC Master Plan on Transport Connectivity.

The Nepali delegation was led by Mr. Mani Prasad Bhattarai, Joint Secretary of Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

7. *First Working Group Meeting to Discuss and Finalise the Draft Text of the Coastal Shipping Agreement among BIMSTEC Member States*

The First Meeting of the Working Group to discuss and finalise the text of the coastal shipping agreement among BIMSTEC member states was held in New Delhi on 27-28 November. The meeting intensively discussed the draft text of the agreement.

The Nepali delegation was led by Mr. Rabi Shankar Sainju, Joint Secretary of Ministry of Commerce.

D. Non-Resident Nepalis, Passport and Consular Matters

1. *Eighth Global Conference and International General Assembly of Non-Resident Nepali Association*

The Eighth global conference and international general assembly of Non-Resident Nepali Association (NRNA) was held in Kathmandu on 14-17 October. With the aim of partnering and utilizing NRN's expertise and investment in Nepal's journey to prosperity, the government of Nepal facilitates NRN's conference which is held in every two years. The conference was jointly organized by the Government of Nepal, NRNA and the Federation of Nepal Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI). To convene the conference, a high level organizing

committee, at the chairmanship of DPM/FM Krishna Bahadur Mahara was formed comprising member of National Planning Commission, secretaries of various Ministries, president of NRNA and presidents of different private sector organizations.

The event was inaugurated by the President Mrs. Bidhya Devi Bhandari on 14 October at Hyatt Regency Hotel in Kathmandu. In her remarks, the President Bhandari appreciated NRN's significant investment in sectors like healthcare, education, tourism, hydropower and infrastructure. The President added that the nation is entering a phase of economic development following the promulgation of the constitution and the time has now come for NRNs to utilize their expertise and mobilize financial resources more to become one of the key players to support the nation building process. The President also lauded the role played by the NRNs in rescue and relief operations during the devastating earthquake of 2015; landslide relief and rescue in recent year and the post-earthquake reconstruction work in the country. Stating that Nepalis abroad can take pride in Nepal's prosperity, the president further urged NRNs to convey the entire world that Nepal is safe for investment.

Speaking in inaugural session, DPM/FM Krishna Bahadur Mahara said a distinct role of NRNA is expected for the economic transformation of the country. He exhorted NRNs to synergize the knowledge, expertise and capital gained abroad to the development of Nepal.

President of FNCCI Ms. Bhawani Rana, NRNA President Shesh Ghale, former NRNA presidents Upendra Mahato, Devman Hirachan and Jiba Lamichhane also spoke on the occasion. They expressed commitment to contribute from their respective part in the development of the nation.

The four-day event had several panel discussions on cross-cutting issues. Government officials and experts in related subjects were present in the different plenary sessions. A separate interaction program with the government officials was organized on 17 October. The interaction session was moderated by the Foreign Secretary Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi and various Secretaries from different Ministries were in the panel. Following a brief presentation by joint secretary of the Foreign Ministry Mr. Krishna Prasad Dhakal, NRNA delegates interacted with the government officials in various issues of their concern like NRN citizenship, investment protection, safety and rescue of migrant workers, British Gurkha etc.

The general convention elected Mr. Bhaban Bhatta, a Japan based entrepreneur as the president of NRNA for a two-year period. It also elected different posts of NRNA-ICC's (International Coordination Council) Committee and regional coordinators for next two years. More than 2000 delegates participated in the conference.

A welcome luncheon was hosted by DPM/FM Mr. Mahara at conference venue - Hyatt Regency on 14 October.

The conference was formally closed by the Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba on 17 October. Addressing the closing session, the Prime Minister said that NRNs have important roles in Nepal's development by bringing in investment, attracting tourists and exploring and expanding markets for trade abroad. NRN's investment, skills and technology would be vital to eliminate poverty and to materialize the aspiration of Nepal's economic prosperity, he added. He complimented the support of NRNA during earthquake rescue and relief and post earthquake reconstruction works carried out by NRNA.

NRNs have been working in an organized way in Nepal and other countries since October 2003 following the establishment of the NRNA. Since then, the NRNA has expanded its networks to 77 countries around the globe.

2. NRN Related Services

The status of services delivery to Non Resident Nepalis (NRNs) during October and November presented in a table below:

S.N.	Services	Number
1	Issuance of NRN Cards	11
2	Processing of Land Purchase Approval to NRNS	1

3. Passport Services

3.1. Participation in ICAO-TRIP Symposium

Mr. Ram Kaji Khadka, Director General, Department of Passports, participated in the 13th ICAO-TRIP Symposium held in ICAO headquarters in Montreal on 24-26 October. During the symposium, the Nepalese delegation had the opportunity to learn about various developments in areas of safer traveller identification, Machine Readable Travel Documents (MRTDs), specification and standards and measures to control borders effectively.

3.2. Service Delivery

The status of service delivery of the Department during the months of October and November is presented in the following table.

S. N.	Activities	Number	Remarks
1	E-mails responded	1967	
2	Grievance handled	2178	
3	Applications received (including from District and Mission)	76802	Excluding the forms collected from live-enrollment counter
4	Passports dispatched (including to District and Mission)	74995	
5	Total number of passports issued	47802	
6	Lost passports registered in the Interpol	5878	
7	Official Error	301	
8	Null and Void passports	16	
9	Travel document issued	16	
10	Diplomatic Passports issued	126	
11	Official Passports issued	213	
12	Gratis Passports Issued	517	
13	Feedback Forms Collected	960	
14	Revenue Collected	Rs. 43,80,30,000	

4. Consular Services

The issue wise details of the services delivery of the Department of Consular Services during October - November are as follows:

S.N.	Details of Services	Number
A	Consular and Legal Counseling Section	
1	Recommendation for Medical treatment, Religious tour, World cycling tour and other	11
2	Recommendation for Indian education certificate, nationality verification and those who are visiting India for study purpose	505
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.	1008
5	Recommendation letter to Indian Embassy for character verification report to Nepalese citizens during their period of stay in India.	80
6	Recommendation for procurement of chemicals & explosives	10
7	Recommendation letter to Indian Embassy for issuing vehicle permit for vehicles to enter India.	5
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	37
9	Correspondence letter regarding authenticity of Power of Attorney issued by Nepalese missions abroad	171
10	Correspondence to the concerned authorities of Nepal regarding authenticity of documents issued by the Government of Nepal	47

11	POA, VOR, H-Form Request (Malaysia), and correspondence to the District Administration Office for compensation to Nepalese citizens died abroad.	87
12	Correspondence concerning search and rescue of Nepalese nationals to the Nepalese Missions abroad	151
13	Correspondence with regards to repatriation of dead body of Nepalese nationals abroad	72
14	Correspondence to the government agencies in Nepal	82
15	Number of draft received for the compensation from Malasiya.	58
16	Handover of compensation amount from Malaysia to the concerned family	42
B	Visa and Exemption Section	
1	Issuance of diplomatic/official/gratis visa	650
2	Issuance of diplomatic/official ID Card	96
3	Issuance of SAARCvisa stickers	43
4	Number of recommendation for exemption	854
5	Number of visa recommendation to the foreign missions on GON's nominations	405
C	Attestation section	
1	Number of attested documents	55867
		60287