



MOFA BULLETIN

Current Affairs



December 2017- January 2018
Vol 2, Issue 4



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A. Bilateral Affairs**1. Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal Motor Vehicles Agreement Meeting**

The meeting to implement Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN) Motor Vehicles Agreement was held in Bengaluru, India on 10-11 January 2018. The meeting agreed on the final text of the passenger protocol on the movement of passenger vehicles, discussed the key elements of the draft protocol on the movement of cargo vehicles, agreed on a schedule of trial runs, and discussed on an institutional mechanism to implement the BBIN MVA.

Nepali delegation was led by the Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport (MOPIT) Mr. Keshab Kumar Sharma.

2. Repatriation of Three Nepali Nationals stranded in Afghanistan

With the cooperation of the Government of Afghanistan, three Nepali nationals, namely Mr. Gobinda Paudel, Mr. Min Bahadur Chhetri and Mr. Hem Prasad Gurung, who were stranded in Kabul for more than 24 months, were safely repatriated back to Nepal.

3. Vice-Governor of Guangdong Province of China Visits Nepal

At the invitation of the Commerce Secretary Mr. Chandra Kumar Ghimire, Mr. Chen Yunxian, Vice-Governor of the People's Government of Guangdong Province of the People's Republic of China, leading a thirteen-member delegation visited Nepal on 16-19 December. The delegates comprised of

representatives of Department of Commerce, Financial Affairs Office, Bureau of Government Affairs of Guangdong Province and representatives of business and private enterprises.

Mr. Yunxian held separate meetings with Foreign Secretary Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi, Commerce Secretary Mr. Chandra Kumar Ghimire, and Finance Secretary Mr. Shankar Prasad Adhikari on 18 December. During the meetings, delegates held discussions on Trade links and Investment; Transportation Infrastructure and Connectivity; and Education and Establishing sister city relationships with bilateral prospects.

4. 30th Nepal China Border Customs Meeting

Nepal and China Customs Officials held 30th Nepal-China Border Customs Meeting in Kathmandu on 14-18 December 2017 which adopted and agreed on different agenda related to cross border customs.

Mr. Shreekrishna Nepal, Deputy Director-General, Department of Customs, Ministry of Finance of the Government of Nepal and Mr. Li Jianwen, Political Commissar, Bureau of Anti-Smuggling of Lhasa Customs, Tibet Autonomous Region, People's Republic of China had led their respective delegation to the meeting.

5. Nepal and Brazil Hold Bilateral Consultations

Bilateral consultations under the Bilateral Consultation Mechanism (BCM) between the Foreign Ministries of Nepal and Brazil were

held at Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil in Brasilia on 25 January 2018.

Foreign Secretary of the Government of Nepal Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi and Under Secretary General at Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil Ambassador Mr. Henrique da Silveira Sardinha Pinto led their respective delegations to the consultations. Nepali delegation also included the Ambassador of Nepal to Brazil Mr. Tara Prasad Pokharel and other senior officials from the Ministry. The consultations were held in a spirit of flexibility, mutual understanding and cooperation.

During the consultations, the overall state of bilateral relations between Nepal and Brazil was discussed. The two sides exchanged views on promoting cooperation in the areas including infrastructure development, agriculture, technical cooperation, education, sports and tourism, among others, within bilateral framework as well as south-south and triangular cooperation.

Following the Consultations, Ambassador Marcos Bezerra Abbott Galvao, Secretary General of the Brazilian Foreign Ministry hosted a luncheon meeting in honour of his counterpart Mr. Bairagi and his delegation.

The Bilateral Consultative Mechanism between the Foreign Ministries of Nepal and Brazil was established in 2011 with the aim of reviewing all aspects of the bilateral relationship and exchanging views on international affairs of mutual interest.

While in Brasilia, Mr. Bairagi and his delegation also had separate meetings with Acting Vice Minister at Ministry of Mines and Energy Mr. Edivaldo Risso, International Relations Secretary at Brazilian Agriculture Research Corporation Mr. Alexandre Morais de Amaral and Industrial Development Director at Confederation of National Industries Mr. Carlos Eduardo Abijaodi.

The discussions in those meetings were focused on promoting collaboration in hydropower development in Nepal; enhancing cooperation for agricultural sector productivity; and forging collaborative partnerships between private sectors in trade, investment and tourism. The Brazilian side expressed readiness to explore

opportunities for partnership with their Nepali counterparts.

6. *Swiss State Secretary Visits Nepal*

State Secretary at the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) of Switzerland Ms. Pascale Baeriswyl visited Nepal on 6-7 December 2017.

Ms. Baeriswyl had a bilateral meeting with Foreign Secretary Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi at Ministry on 6 December.

Diverse issues of bilateral relations covering political, economic and development cooperation were discussed in the meeting. Matters such as trade, investment, sustainable development and the issues of mutual interest at the multilateral fora including at the UN also featured during the meeting.

The Swiss delegation included, among others, Mr. Jorg Frieden, Swiss Ambassador to Nepal and Ms. Barbara Gonzenbach, Regional Coordinator for South Asia at the FDFA.

After the meeting, Foreign Secretary Mr. Bairagi hosted a luncheon in honour of Ms. Baeriswyl and her delegation.

7. *Foreign Secretary Participates in the Raisina Dialogue*

Foreign Secretary Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi participated in the Raisina Dialogue, 2018 held in New Delhi on 19 January as a panelist in the session entitled **“Towards a Bay of Bengal Community: Development, Growth and Security”**. Mr. Bairagi emphasized the need to redefine a vision for BIMSTEC in terms of where the region as a whole would be heading.

He shed light on enormous potentials of the region in terms of geography, population, natural resources, markets, politics as well as the socio-cultural homogeneity to grow as an economically prosperous bloc. Acknowledging the progress made in the areas of security, trade, energy and connectivity, he conceded that the scale, scope and speed of cooperation did not match the full potentials.

A clear and long-term vision, preparation of a connectivity blueprint, early conclusion of FTA, promotion of the regional value chains driven by a strong leadership were imperatives for the

success of BIMSTEC as a regional organization, he said.

8. Ambassadors of Peru Presents Credentials

Non-resident Ambassador of the Republic of Peru to Nepal Mr. Jorge Castaneda Mondez presented his credentials to the President Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari amidst a special ceremony held at *Shital Niwas* on 5 December 2017.

B. Regional Affairs

1. Celebration of SAARC Charter Day

The 33rd SAARC Charter Day and 32nd Anniversary of the establishment of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was celebrated on 8 December 2017. On the occasion, the Rt. Hon'ble Prime Minister Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba felicitated people and Member States of SAARC. In the message, the Prime Minister stated that Nepal as current Chair and founding member of the Association remains committed to the SAARC Charter. He also expressed the readiness of Nepal to play constructive role in, provide full support to and work together with fellow Members to make SAARC a relevant and vibrant organization for the people of South Asia.

2. 54th Session of the SAARC Programming Committee

The 54th Session of the SAARC Programming Committee was held in Kathmandu on 12-13 December 2017. The Committee approved programs/Calendar of Activities of the SAARC Secretariat for 2018 and made recommendations on budget for the SAARC Secretariat for 2018. The programs and annual budget of the Regional Centers and Specialized Bodies were also approved during the session. The Committee recommended to the Standing Committee for the review of its decision on Sustainability of the Regional Support Unit (RSU) and welcomed the offer of the Government of Nepal to run the Unit from Nepal pending the review of the decision by the Standing Committee.

Preceding the Programming Committee, Expert Group Meeting to review the salaries and allowances of General Services Staff Category

II-VII of the Secretariat was held in Kathmandu on 11 December 2017. Matters relating to the revision of the salaries and allowances of the stated categories and mandatory pension contribution for the officials of the SAARC Secretariat were discussed during the meeting.

Mr. Mani Prasad Bhattarai, Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs chaired both the meetings.



Opening Session of the 54th Session of the SAARC Programming Committee

3. 10th Meeting of the Governing Board of the South Asian University (SAU)

The Tenth Meeting of the SAU was held in New Delhi on 18 December. Prof. Dr. Parasar Prasad Koirala, Chairman of the University Grant Commission and Mr. Mani Prasad Bhattarai, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs attended the meeting as the Governing Board members from Nepal. Prof. Koirala chaired the meeting and noted some important achievements made by the University. During the meeting, the President of the University shared recent academic achievements, outreach initiatives taken by the University and ongoing construction of University infrastructures. The meeting reviewed the progress made on the decisions taken at the 9th GB Meeting and considered its report. The Meeting amended regulations relating to Master's, MPhil and PhD Programs. It deliberated on Detailed Academic Planning of Phase-II (2019-23) and Tentative Budget Estimates for the Phase-II and directed to convene the meeting of the Expert Committees to consider the matters in detail. Nepal is the current Chair of SAU Governing Board.

4. Debriefing Meeting to the Sectoral Focal Points

A debriefing meeting to the SAARC focal points of the line ministries was organized at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 27 December.

The purpose of the meeting was to share the decisions and major issues discussed during the 54th Session of SAARC Programming Committee which was held in Kathmandu on 12-13 December. Representatives of the different ministries and agencies attended the meeting. Major decisions and issues discussed during the Programming Committee were shared with sectoral focal points for implementing those decisions with due priority in coordination with national focal point-Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

5. Third BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting on Poverty Alleviation



Delegates from BIMSTEC Member States at the Third BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting

The Third BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting on Poverty Alleviation was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 20 December 2017. Dr. Bishwambher Pyakuryal, Ambassador of Nepal to Sri Lanka led the Nepali delegation and also co-chaired the meeting. In his statement, Dr. Pyakuryal reaffirmed the strong commitment of the Government of Nepal to work together to achieve the common goal of poverty alleviation in the region. The meeting adopted the report of the third BIMSTEC senior officials meeting and Colombo Statement on poverty alleviation. The statement includes broad common strategies to be undertaken by the BIMSTEC member states in the area of poverty alleviation in the region.

The meeting was preceded by the third Senior Officials Meeting on Poverty Alleviation on 19 December. As the head of Nepali delegation Mr. Keshab Prasad Regmi, Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Cooperatives and Poverty Alleviation co-chaired the meeting. Nepal as a lead country also made a presentation on the progress made since the Second BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting held in Kathmandu, Nepal in 2012. The meeting reviewed progress made in the implementation of the BIMSTEC Poverty Plan of Action (PPA) of each member state.

6. Bodhi Parva: BIMSTEC Festival of Buddhist Heritage



Delegates from Different Countries participating in Bodhi Parva

Bodhi Parva: BIMSTEC Festival of Buddhist Heritage was organized by India on 9-10 December to mark the 20th anniversary of BIMSTEC. Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, Shree Jitendra Narayan Dev led the Nepali delegation to the Festival and participated in the inaugural ceremony as the Chief Guest. In his special remarks in the inaugural ceremony, Minister expressed his views on the importance of preserving Buddhist culture and religion in the BIMSTEC region. He shared the conservation activities carried out in Lumbini and also laid emphasis on the need to establish Buddhist circuit. He further highlighted the importance of Lumbini as the Fountain of World Peace and a hub for Buddhist culture and tradition.

Minister also participated in the Buddhist Art Workshop organized by the Mithila Art Tradition and shed light on Mithila Arts in Nepal. Mr. Bharat Kumar Regmi, Charge d'Affairs of Nepali Embassy in New Delhi and officials from Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation were also part of the Nepali delegation.

7. Celebration of 20th Anniversary of BIMSTEC



Foreign Secretary Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi Delivering His Remarks

To mark the 20th anniversary of BIMSTEC, a Talk Programme on "BIMSTEC: Perceived Projection" was organized in Kathmandu on 18 December. Foreign Secretary Mr. Shankar Das Bairagi was invited as the Chief Guest in the event. In his remarks, Mr. Bairagi highlighted the recent progress in BIMSTEC and shared his optimism for Nepal being in the region. Further, he expressed the confidence that the discussion programs of this kind would provide valuable inputs for the Fourth BIMSTEC Summit proposed to be held in Nepal and support in steering BIMSTEC in the right direction. The program was chaired by Prof. Dr. Panna Kaji Amatya, Executive Director of the Institute of Foreign Affairs of Nepal.

Prof. Madhukar SJB Rana, Former Finance Minister presented a paper on "BIMSTEC: The Way Forward" and Mr. Madhu Raman Acharya, Former Permanent Representative of Nepal to the United Nations presented a paper on "BIMSTEC beyond two decades stock-taking and moving forward". The experts presented a comprehensive and analytical picture on the political and economic opportunities behind the establishment of BIMSTEC and further highlighted the pros and cons of Nepal's association with this regional organization. The paper presentation was followed by comments from Mr. Pradhumna Bikram Shah, Former Ambassador of Nepal to Brazil, Prof. Dr. Madan Kumar Dahal, Eminent Economist and Dr. Shanker Sharma, Former Ambassador of Nepal to the United States. Views were also exchanged by the participants with diverse professional backgrounds.

8. *Sixth BIMSTEC Expert Group Meeting on Agriculture*

Sixth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Expert Group on Agricultural Cooperation was held in Chiang Rai, Thailand from 12-16 December. The Meeting deliberated on the implementation status of the identified common projects of BIMSTEC Member Countries. The meeting proposed the creation of Corpus Fund by the Member States for the implementation of identified common projects and also the introduction of BIMSTEC scholarships to pursue Masters and Ph.D. Programmes in Agriculture and related disciplines in Agricultural Universities of the BIMSTEC Member States. Nepal reaffirmed its

commitment to host a workshop on "Strengthening the Regional Value Chain on Marketing of pork meat". Nepal has already prepared a concept paper on the said subject in view of the growing demand of pork meat in Nepal, India, Thailand, Bhutan, Myanmar and Sri Lanka. The concept paper is under the consideration of the member states. An official from Ministry of Agriculture and Development of Nepal and a representative from Nepali Embassy in Thailand attended the meeting.

9. *BIMSTEC Focal Points Meeting*

The Meeting of BIMSTEC Focal Points was held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kathmandu on 29 January 2018. Focal Points from the line ministries participated in the meeting. The meeting reviewed the progress of the implementation of decisions/commitments of BIMSTEC mechanisms under various areas of cooperation. The Meeting also discussed the substantive preparation of the upcoming Fourth BIMSTEC Summit to be held in Nepal in 2018. A brief presentation was made highlighting the BIMSTEC activities to be carried out by the line ministries. Mr. Mani Prasad Bhattarai, Joint Secretary of Regional Organisation Division, MoFA chaired the meeting.

C. Passport and Consular Matters

1. *Passport Services*

1.1 A Talk Programme on "The Art of Negotiation: Approaches and Practices"

The department organized a talk programme on "The Art of Negotiation: Approaches and Practices" on 12 January at the presence of Foreign Secretary Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi as a chief guest.

Mr. Bhuwan Ojha, Section Officer, presented a paper highlighting the essence of negotiation skills in individual, societal, state and global level. He shed a light on school of thought, approaches, levels of analysis, theories, and steps and recent research agenda of negotiation. Mr. Kunjan Shah, Section Officer, dealt with the role of good faith in international negotiation. Mr. Madhu Raman Acharya, Former Foreign Secretary and the special guest of the programme, presented negotiation as an

important tool for country like Nepal. Quoting John F. Kennedy, he opined that diplomats from weak states should negotiate "out of fear" and never "fear to negotiate". Mr. Bairagi directed the attendants to be creative, knowledgeable, persuasive and hard working. He stressed on the need for practical session on the same topic. Mr. Ram Kaji Khadka, Director General at the Department, extended 'a vote of thanks' to the guests and put forward the notion that negotiation is an integral part of diplomacy and communication skills.

1.2 Completion of Internal Audit of the Department as per the Requirement of ISO 9001:2015

Internal audit of the Department was performed on 20 to 22 December. As per the mandatory requirement of the certifying body for ISO 9001:2015 certification, internally trained auditors of the Department carried out internal audit of each section to verify the functional alignment with the International Standards. Consistent delivery of products and services, customers' satisfaction, evaluation of statutory and regulatory requirements and risk assessment in service delivery were few of many objectives of internal audit which is carried out twice a year.

Internal Auditor's report helps to analyze the discrepancies between performance and the standards; and enables the department to improvise its action to meet the requirement of ISO 9001:2015.

1.3 Establishment of Breast-Feeding Room

The Department established breast-feeding room for the convenience to the needy ones.

1.4 Interaction and Orientation Programme

The Department, at the leadership of Director General Mr. Ramkaji Khadka, organized interaction programs at District Administration Office (DAO), Morang on 22 January and Rupandehi on 31 January.

Various personnel from DAOs Saptari, Sunsari, Sankhuwasabha, Kapilvastu, Nawalparasi, Palpa, Gulmi, Arghakhanchi and Area

Administration Offices thereof participated in the interactions.

During those programs, Director General Mr. Khadka presented about the procedures and rules related to passports. Challenges related to the effective service delivery were also discussed. Following the interaction programme, monitoring of the Districts and Area Administration Offices related to Passport services were also carried out.

1.5 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
1	E-mails responded	2012
2	Grievance handled	1785
3	Applications received (including from District and Mission)	90000
4	Passports dispatched (including to District and Mission)	89558
5	Total number of passports issued	90000
6	Lost passports registered in the Interpol	3862
7	Null and Void passports	14
8	Travel document (from the total)	17
10	Diplomatic Passports (from the total)	82
11	Official Passports (from the total)	208
12	Gratis Passports (from the total)	502
13	Feedback Forms Collected	1020
14	Revenue Collected	RS 32,58,76,500

2. 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
A	Consular and Legal Counseling Section	
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	263
3	Recommendation for Indian pension	5
4	Recommendation for issuing Nepalese driving license on the basis of foreign driving license held by the Nepalese citizen.	748
5	Recommendation letter to Indian Embassy for character verification report to Nepalese citizens during their period of stay in India.	48
6	Recommendation for procurement of chemicals & explosives	7
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	25
9	Correspondence letter regarding authenticity of Power of Attorney issued by Nepalese missions abroad	155
10	Correspondence to the concerned authorities of Nepal regarding authenticity of documents issued by the Government of Nepal	3
11	POA, VOR, H-Form Request (Malaysia), and correspondence to the District Administration Office for compensation to Nepalese citizens died abroad.	60
12	Correspondence concerning search and rescue of Nepalese nationals to the Nepalese Missions abroad	121
13	Correspondence with regards to repatriation of dead body of Nepalese nationals abroad	42
14	Correspondence to the government agencies in Nepal	101
15	Number of draft received for the compensation from Malaysia.	13
16	Handover of compensation amount from Malaysia to the concerned family	23
B	Visa and Exemption Section	
1	Issuance of diplomatic/official/gratis visa	494
2	Issuance of diplomatic/official ID Card	64
3	Issuance of SAARC visa stickers	15
4	Number of recommendation for exemption	549
5	Number of visa recommendation to the foreign missions on GON's nominations	330
C	Attestation section	
1	Number of attested documents	41617
Total		44693