

**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA, SHRI PRANAB
MUKHERJEE AT THE CIVIC RECEPTION, RASHTRIYA SABHA
GRIHA (CITY HALL), KATHMANDU**

Kathmandu, Nepal: November 03, 2016

***Rt. Hon'ble Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda',
Prime Minister of Nepal
CEO, Kathmandu Metropolitan City Office
Distinguished citizens of Kathmandu,
Ladies and Gentlemen,***

I am delighted to be here, once again, in this historic and holy city of Kathmandu. Since my arrival, I have been overwhelmed by the warmth and affection of the people of this city. I convey my sincere thanks to Rt. Hon'ble Prime Minister of Nepal for according me the honour of this civic reception.

The city of Kathmandu has certainly expanded and grown since the days of my previous visits. It is a city famed as much for its majestic Himalayan setting, as for the hospitality of its people. Its monuments speak of its grand history, the pride and self confidence of its people and their resilience in the face of adversity - values which we appreciate immensely in India.

Excellency, Distinguished guests

India deeply values its historical and traditionally close relations with Nepal. India and Nepal are linked by enduring bonds of history, geography, tradition, and, most importantly, strong people to people connections.

Kathmandu is not only the political capital of Nepal, but also a spiritual centre for the people in our region.

Thousands of our citizens visit Nepal in search of spiritual solace at the holy temple of Pashupatinath and Muktinath. Similarly, people from Nepal visit Varanasi in the North and Rameshwaram in the South in search of spiritual inspiration.

My visit to Nepal is also a kind of pilgrimage – it is a mission of friendship to foster ever greater understanding and cooperation between our two countries. There are no two sovereign nations in the world like India and Nepal, sharing a common culture and having an open border between them. The Government and people of India are committed to further strengthening and deepening this relationship.

Excellency, Distinguished guests,

India fondly remembers the support that her freedom fighters received from the leaders and people of Nepal during our struggle against foreign rule. Today, as Nepal is engaged in consolidating the gains of democracy, empowering its citizens and pursuing the goals of peace and development, India is happy to support Nepal's efforts. We wish the people and the Government of Nepal every success in the important task of implementing its constitution, taking on board all the sections of its society.

Excellency, Distinguished guests,

As two developing economies, we have a shared vision of economic prosperity and sustained development for our respective nations and also our region. As a neighbor and close friend, India has an abiding interest in seeing sustained economic development in Nepal. Our development partnership with Nepal, which started in

1951, covers a broad canvas of projects in the priority sectors of Nepal's economy.

It is matter of satisfaction that our fruitful collaboration in small development projects is benefiting local communities in Nepal. I am pleased to learn that several India-assisted projects – for building roads and bridges and providing irrigation and energy are currently under implementation. Government of India is also committed to assisting Nepal, as per its priorities, in post-earthquake reconstruction in the framework of the US \$ 1 billion assistance announced by it. This reconstruction will be taken up in the housing, infrastructure, health, education and cultural heritage sectors.

Excellency, Distinguished guests,

India believes that to keep pace with the growing aspirations of our people and in order to give them the quality of life that they seek, our focus should remain on creating an enabling environment for their economic progress and promoting peace and political stability.

India welcomes Nepal to be a part of its growth story and take advantage of the opportunities inherent in the rapid transformation of our economy.

During the visit of Prime Minister of India to Nepal in 2014, twinning of the cities of Kathmandu and Varanasi had been agreed upon. I am pleased to learn that under this agreement, several activities have been carried out to forge stronger bonds of friendship and enhance people to people contacts.

As two developing economies and immediate neighbours, let us commit to work together to achieve these goals.

Excellency, Distinguished guests,

India attaches the highest priority to its relations with Nepal. That is my main message as I greet the people of Kathmandu today.

I take this opportunity to convey to you all and through you, to the people of Nepal, my best wishes for your continued progress and prosperity.

I thank you once again.
