

'Nepal-China relations extraordinary and unprecedented'-PM Oli

Government of both neighbours—China and India have called Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli's slogan of 'prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepalis' as 'significant', while recognizing it at the government level. In this light, Prime Minister Oli has described Nepal's relation with China as extraordinary and unprecedented during an interview with RSS at the fag end of his six-day China visit in Lhasa of the Tibet Autonomous Region today. The excerpts of the interview are given below:

Right Honourable Prime Minister, You have been serving tirelessly for Nepal and Nepalis since a very long time, where do you get this energy from?

It has now become my habit to work for many hours a day. I don't find it difficult to work for seventeen to eighteen hours in a day.

The Government of China welcomed you with high respect, while a 14-point joint statement has already been released. Overall, how enthusiastic can we become over it?

Naturally, China is not only our immediate friendly nation but also a very reliable and everlasting cooperative friendly neighbour. A friendly nation, with whom we have never had any problems, and one who has always been supporting us. The agreements that had been reached during my previous visit here in March 2016 and the subsequent joint press statement were historical. The agreements in the joint statement are on matters that would guide Nepal to a new era and take Nepal-China relations to newer height. Taking those agreements forward and making them timely are the needs of the day. And we discussed accordingly, and hence there is no reason for us to not be optimistic in practice.

We are hopeful. The many agreements reached between us have been reflected in the joint statement. We have moved ahead in the area of increasing investment of the government as well as the private sector, and the support from the government side. There too, one would not find any reason not to be content.

Mr Prime Minister, railways was the subject of highest public concern during this visit. How strong has the possibility of Keyrung-Kathmandu railway become with the agreement reached in Beijing?

Definitely, this is a matter that is yet to undergo a survey. So far it is a matter based on our aspirations. Chinese President Xi Jinping did clarify his vision of reaching railway service up to Kathmandu. This railways has already reached Shigatse and would ultimately be reaching to Kathmandu, Pokhara and then to Lumbini via Keyrung. For now, Kathmandu is the minimum destination.

What people feel strange about this is that we are talking about inland waterways and operating riverboats even though the world has made drastic changes in this sector. But we are

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working and we will mark the beginning of this soon. People find it weird when we talked about owning ports and operating ships and they considered it a strange too while proposing alternative routes and provision for transportation. Also many others considered it something different as we talked about the country's graduation to a modern age.

This is not something to be considered strange. I have floated the slogan of Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepalis to move ahead based on the systems of political and diplomatic affairs, social order, good governance and economic development. It has a valid reason. Under this very aspect, we are not talking just to touch our border land by the railway from any other country.

The east-west railway, railway linking the capital city, Kathmandu-Pokhara railway, railway inside Kathmandu Valley, Thankot-Dhulikhel railway and Kathmandu-Birgunj railway are means for ensuring better connectivity to enter Nepal into a modern age. All areas of relations, transportation and information should be used for development in a modern way. So, again questions have been raised over the railways but we have agreed on finalizing the feasibility study and proceed ahead for other related works.

Agreement was made in Beijing on Nepal's cargo transport and the Prime Minister also met with the Chief of Government of Tibet. Looking at these two developments, agreement and meeting together, how Nepalis can take benefits now?

The agreement has been signed. We had a lot of difficulties to supply goods from one belt of the northern area of our own country to the rest part in the country. We had difficulties in case of supply of medicines or relief and rescue materials and supply essential goods in case of epidemic. In those circumstances, we used to use Tibetan highway temporarily.

Now, that situation has been put to an end. Now, we can use the Tibetan highway in such times and we can supply goods in any belt of our northern region. It has been quite favourable for us. During my talks with the Chief of Government of Tibet twice, he was found to be very positive in this regard. Their aspiration is positive. Their support will be continued with supportive aspirations in a positive way.

You have been repeatedly saying that friendship is greater than the projects. While looking through the lens of friendship, what height this visit has offered to the bilateral relations? This is extraordinary, this is unprecedented. The agreement and joint statement of 2016 were extraordinary. The present one has further advanced the same. This is incredible.

The nation is opening multi doors for development and prosperity under your leadership. During the

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visit, you and Chinese President Xi held one-on-one meeting for about half an hour. Are new perspectives developing in new era?

Definitely, I talked to President Xi for about 35 to 40 minutes on an individual basis and then 35 to 40 minutes in a group. Then talks were held with Chinese Premier for around an hour in the dialogue venue while around an hour on an individual basis. These talks have played an important role to strengthen bilateral relations in a multifaceted way.

In this hour, I want to share that Nepal is not involved in it lightly and does not want to develop diplomacy for temporary purpose. Some people say, north and south cards are used but we do not use any cards, we want to extend the hands of friendship with both neighbours. We don't believe in using cards, we only believe in friendship. We want to extend our friendship to extend others' friendships with their friends as well.

Finally, you are now on a China visit, few days ago you visited India, and people are eagerly waiting for a clear message of this visit, what is the purpose of this visit?

In practice, I made a trip to India, which was followed by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Nepal. Then bilateral projects are showing good results. Similarly, achievements of this visit will be seen gradually. Developing railways is not like using a magic stick. The process has begun for it.

Various hydro projects, industrial parks, industries and cooperation sectors have extended. Works have begun and would gain speed. Results will prove it. People used to think that silence is diplomacy, some other believe in diplomacy to tolerate whatever happens.

But we move ahead keeping national interest, international laws and obligations in the centre. And we keep friendly relations in the highest place so our policies and priorities are right. We are moving ahead with success of these policies, which are already reflected in practice. RSS

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