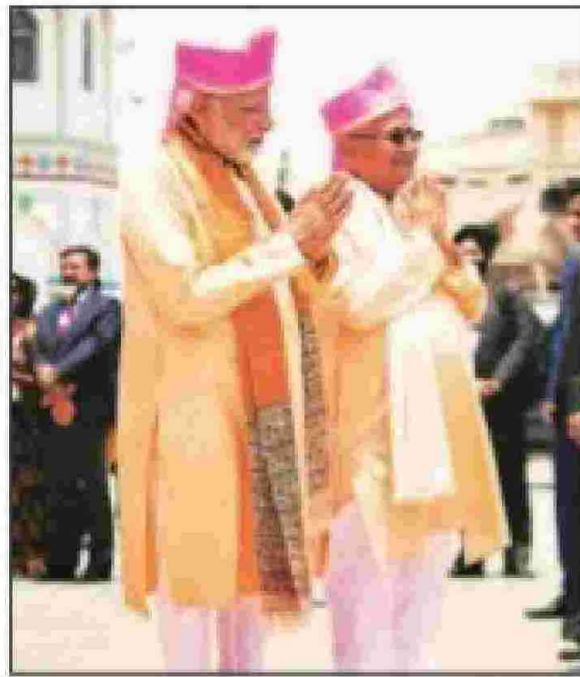


# PM offers Rs 100-cr aid, bus service to Nepal



Narendra Modi with K P Oli  
in Janakpur Friday. *Reuters*

---

## YUBARAJ GHIMIRE

KATHMANDU, MAY 11

---

SAYING THAT Nepal is at the top of India's 'Neighbourhood First' policy, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday announced a Rs 100 crore package to develop Janakpur, while invoking mythological links between the two countries.

Later in the day, addressing a joint press conference after his meeting with Nepal's Prime Minister K P Oli in Kathmandu, Modi said that "India supports a united, prosperous and strong Nepal".

"Prime Minister Modi and I have just concluded bilateral talks on the entire gamut of our relationship in an atmosphere of

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**



## PM in Nepal

warmth and cordiality that characterises the deep friendship and understanding between our two countries,” Oli said, adding that the two sides agreed to address “all matters” by September 19 – Nepal’s Constitution Day.

“We reiterated our firm commitment to take our relations forward on the basis of equality, mutual trust, respect and benefit. Relations between neighbours are different from that of others. Neighbourhood constitutes top priority in our foreign policy,” said Oli.

Modi responded by saying that this was his third visit to Nepal since assuming office in 2014, and it showed his government’s “deep commitment” to further strengthen ties with Nepal. “We are committed to support Prime Minister Oli’s vision that Nepal should not be a land-locked country but a land- and water-linked nation,” he said.

“In our talks, we discussed the initiatives between the two countries in agriculture, inland waterways and railways. These will enhance the mutual connectivity between the people and trade of the two countries. In inland waterways, our cooperation is very important,” Modi said.

Oli said India would soon send its survey team as the first step towards developing railway connectivity between Raxaul and Kathmandu. He said Nepal’s desire is to create a strong relationship underpinned by mutual trust so that it is not affected by any “occasional or intermittent differences that are natural between neighbours”.

“I am visiting Nepal at a very special time, when elections have been success-



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Nepal Prime Minister KP Oli inaugurate Janakpur-Ayodhya bus service Friday. AP

fully conducted here at federal, provincial and local levels. India stands shoulder-to-shoulder with the people of Nepal,” Modi said.

Modi, who jointly with Oli laid the foundation stone of the 900-MW Arun III Hydroelectric Power Plant in Tumlingtar area in eastern Nepal through a remote system here, said it was one of the biggest projects in Nepal and would generate jobs.

Modi began his two-day visit with a stopover at Janakpur, where he said he had come as the ‘chief pilgrim’, and not as the prime minister. He and Oli jointly inaugurated a direct bus service between Janakpur and Ayodhya, the birthplaces of Sita and Ram, as part of the ‘Ramayana Circuit’ to promote religious tourism in Nepal and India.

Modi, who offered prayers at the Janaki temple, invoked mythological King Janak of Mithila and King Dashratha of Ayodhya and said they not only united Janakpur and

Ayodhya but also united India and Nepal.

“Nepal and India relations were started during the rule of King Janak... and the bond built by Sita during the period is still strong. It is this bond which attracts people from Rameswaram to Pashupatinath, people from Lumbini to Bodhgaya,” he said.

He said Nepal and India not only share borders, aspirations, dreams and destination, but their happiness and challenge are also same. “Whenever there has been a problem, India and Nepal have stood together. We have been there for each other in the most difficult of times,” said Modi.

After spending a couple of hours in Janakpur, Modi then flew to Kathmandu, where he paid a courtesy call on President Bidhya Devi Bhandari and Vice President Nanda Bahadur Pun.

Before he returns to Delhi on Saturday, Modi is scheduled to visit the Muktinath shrine in Mustang.

— WITH PTI