

In boost to ties, India & Nepal ink 6 pacts during PM Narendra Modi's trip

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NEW DELHI: PM Narendra Modi held a bilateral meeting with his Nepalese counterpart Sher Bahadur Deuba in Lumbini to discuss specific initiatives to further strengthen cooperation in various sectors, including culture, economy, trade, connectivity, energy and development partnership, said the government in a statement. The two countries also signed six agreements in areas like education, culture and energy including one for development of a 695 MW hydroelectric power plant called Arun 4. Nepal will get 152MW of free electricity from the plant for its consumption and the rest will be split between the two on a 51%-49% basis. "Cost of the project is being worked out and whatever it comes will be shared as per the above ratio," a senior Nepal official was quoted as saying on the pact signed for the plant.

The two PMs expressed satisfaction at the progress made in power sector cooperation in recent months, including in power transmission infrastructure and power trade. According to a statement issued by India, Deuba invited Indian companies to undertake the development of West Seti hydropower project in Nepal.

"PM Modi assured India's support in the development of Nepal's hydropower sector and in encouraging interested Indian developers to expeditiously explore new projects in this regard. Both PMs agreed to further expand educational and cultural exchanges to bring the people of the two countries closer," said the statement.

PM Modi was welcomed in Lumbini by Deuba who was accompanied by many other ministers including home minister Bal Krishna Khand and foreign minister Narayan Khadka. The two sides agreed in principle to establish sister city relations between Lumbini and Kushinagar, that are among the holiest sites of Buddhism and reflect the shared Buddhist heritage between the two countries.

Both PMs visited the Mayadevi temple, within which lies the birth place of Lord Buddha. "At the temple, the PMs attended prayers conducted as per Buddhist rituals and made offerings. The PMs lit lamps and visited the historical Ashoka Pillar," said the government.