


PM TO LAUNCH BUDDHIST CENTRE WORK

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: India - Nepal

Timely visit:Narendra Modi's visit to Lumbini comes two days after Nepal began the local election process.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch the construction of the India International Centre for Buddhist Culture and Heritage on Monday during a day-long visit to Lumbini in Nepal.

The visit will coincide with the celebrations to mark the Buddha Jayanti.

Lumbini is the place where Prince Siddhartha Gautama was born around 623 BC.

He later attained enlightenment at Bodhgaya in Bihar district and came to be known as the Buddha.

Buddha Jayanti

Mr. Modi will participate in the *shilanyas* [foundation stone laying] ceremony for the India International Centre and offer prayers at the Mayadevi temple that is dedicated to the mother of the Buddha.

He will also deliver an address at a Buddha Jayanti event organised by the Lumbini Development Trust (LDT) of the Nepal government.

An official press release has said that the work on the centre will be undertaken by the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC), which is a “grantee body” under the Ministry of Culture.

The International Buddhist Confederation was registered on November 2, 2012, and is aimed at propagating and preserving the teachings and heritage of the Buddha across the world, and especially in India’s immediate neighbourhood.

The official statement from India said that the Buddhist centre would be the first “net zero emission” building in Nepal.

Mahabodhi sapling

Nepal Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba is scheduled to participate in the event in Lumbini. Foreign Secretary Vinay Mohan Kwatra had said earlier that Mr. Modi gifted a sapling of the Mahabodhi tree of Bodhgaya to the Mayadevi temple.

Both sides will hold a delegation-level talk after the ceremonies.

The two Prime Ministers will “build on their productive conversations in Delhi, with a view to further expanding our shared understanding and cooperation in multiple areas, including in hydropower development, partnership and connectivity”, the Foreign Secretary said during a briefing last Friday.

Celebration in Delhi

Buddha Jayanti will also be celebrated by the IBC in Delhi on Monday where the event will be led by Union Minister of Law and Justice Kiren Rijju.

“International Buddhist Confederation has been actively involved in engaging Buddhist organisations in Nepal and has a strong relationship with several senior Buddhist monks,” the official press release said.

Mr. Modi's visit to Lumbini comes two days after Nepal began the local election process across the country that will ultimately lead to the general election towards the end of the year.

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