



SOUTH ASIA FOUNDATION-NEPAL



Embassy of Nepal, New Delhi



Siddharth University



NMCCPR, Jamia Millia Islamia



Lumbini Buddhist University

International Conference on "Global Diplomacy and Regional Cooperation: India-Nepal Partnership in Buddhist Heritage" January 30-31, 2026

Day 1: Foundations of Shared Heritage and Diplomacy

Date: January 30, 2026, Time: 9:00 AM – 5:30 PM

Theme: From Historical Roots to Cultural Connectivity

9:00 AM- Registration

9:30 – 10:15 AM | Inaugural Session

Format: Welcome Addresses, Ceremonial Opening, Commemoration

Welcome remarks (03 minutes each)

Speakers:

- Prof. Anjoo Sharan Upadhyaya, Global Fellow, Peace Research Institute Oslo
- Prof. Subarna Lal Bajracharya, Vice-Chancellor, Lumbini Buddhist University
- Prof. Mazhar Asif, Vice-Chancellor, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi
- Prof. Dr. Dhruva Kumar Gautam, Vice Chancellor, Mid-West University
- Prof. Achyut Prasad Wagle, Vice Chancellor, Kathmandu University
- Prof. Kavita Shah, Vice-Chancellor, Siddharth University
- Amb. Manjeev Singh Puri, former Indian Ambassador to Nepal
- Prof. M. Mahtab Alam Rizvi, Registrar, Jamia Millia Islamia
- H.E. Dr. Shankar Prasad Sharma, Ambassador of Nepal to India

10:15 – 11:10 AM | Context Setting & Keynote Insights

(Integrated within the inaugural segment for thematic continuity)

Theme: Buddhism as a Diplomatic Pillar for Regional Harmony

Format: Two Keynotes (20 minutes each) followed by moderated interaction



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Keynote I: Prof. Priyanka Upadhyaya (UNESCO Chair for Peace, BHU; Senior Advisor, MIT World Peace University)

Keynote II: Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi, Vice-Chancellor, Nalanda University

Special Insights:

Amb. Jayant Prasad, Former Indian Ambassador to Afghanistan and Nepal and Former DG, MP-IDSA

Prof. Achyut Prasad Wagle, Vice Chancellor, Kathmandu University

Special Commemoration (11:00–11:02 AM): Two Minutes’ Silence in observance of Martyrs’ Day, commemorating Mahatma Gandhi’s martyrdom—honouring his legacy of nonviolence and its resonance with Buddhist ethical traditions.

Signing of Memorandum of Agreement among South Asia Foundation-Nepal, Lumbini Buddhist University and Jamia Millia Islamia

11:10 – 11:30 AM | Tea Break

11:30 AM – 1:00 PM | Session I: Buddhism: Civilizational and Regional Linkages

Format: Panel Discussion

Chair’s introduction (10 min)

Panel interventions (15 min each)

Interactive Q&A (15 min)

Sub-Themes:

- Trans-regional spread of Buddha’s teachings,
- Monastic and scholastic networks
- Sacred Buddhist Geography: Lumbini, Bodh Gaya, Sarnath, Kushinagar

Chair: Prof. Achyut Wagle, Vice Chancellor, Kathmandu University and Prof. Kavita Shah, Vice Chancellor Siddharth University

Co-Chair: Prof. M. Mahtab Alam Rizvi, Registrar, Jamia Millia Islamia and Shri Avadhesh Mathur, Former Member, National Security Advisory Board



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Panelists:

- Prof. Basanta Bidari, Lumbini Buddhist University and Archaeologist, Nepal
- Dr. Mrigendra Bahadur Karki, Executive Director, CNAS, Tribhuvan University
- Prof. Saurabh, Dean, and Director, IQAC, Siddharth University

1:00 – 1:45 PM | Lunch Break

1:45 – 3:00 PM | Session II: Cultural Diplomacy through Intercultural Understanding

Format: Panel Discussion

Sub-Themes:

- Cultural diplomacy and people-to-people connectivity
- Festivals, exchanges, and soft power
- Role of multilateral platforms (UN, UNESCO)

Chair: Prof. M. Mahtab Alam Rizvi, Registrar, Jamia Millia Islamia

Co-Chair: Amb. Ashok K. Kantha, Former Indian Ambassador to China and Amb. Ranjit Rae, Former Indian Ambassador to Hungary, Vietnam and Nepal

Panelists:

- Mr. Kazunori Sasaki, The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology, Soka University, Japan
- Dr. Kul Prasad Khanal, Director, LBU
- Dr. Daya Ram Gautam, LBU, Nepal

3:00 – 3:15 PM | Tea Break

3:15 – 4:30 PM | Session III: Leveraging Regional Cooperation for Educational Ties: India and Nepal Collaboration

- Sub-Themes:
- Universities and Institutions
- Academic exchanges and fellowships
- Heritage-based peace education

Chair: Prof. Anjoo Sharan Upadhyaya, Global Fellow, Peace Research Institute Oslo

Co-Chair: Amb. Manjeev Singh Puri, Former Indian Ambassador to Brussels and Nepal



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Panelists:

- Prof. M. Mahtab Alam Rizvi, Registrar, Jamia Millia Islamia
- Prof. Abuzar Khairi, Director, NMCP, Jamia Millia Islamia
- Shri Rajendra Ghimire, Coordinator, CIR, LBU

4:30 – 5:30 PM | Session IV: Religious Tourism and Sustainable Development

Sub-Themes:

- Buddhist pilgrimage circuits
- Infrastructure and community livelihoods
- SDG-aligned tourism models

Chair: Amb. Pankaj Saran, Former Indian Ambassador to Russia and former Dy. NSA and Shri Padma Jyoti, Chairman, Board of Trustees, Madan Bhandari University

Co-Chair: Amb. Ranjit Rae and Sh. Avadhesh Mathur

Panelists:

- Sh. Anil Chitrakar, Conservationist, Nepal
- Sh. Pradeep Gupta, Former Special Secretary to the Government of India
- Dr Shree Prasad Bhattarai, HoD Department of Management, Lumbini Buddhist University

Day 2

Theme: From Ethics to Empowerment

Date: January 31, 2026, Time: 9:00 AM – 5:30 PM (Nepal Time)

9:30 – 11:00 AM | Session V: Ancient Buddhist Wisdom for Contemporary Regional Harmony and Action

Format: Keynote Address and Panel Discussion

Sub-Themes:

- Non-violence and dialogue
- Conflict resolution
- Global challenges: geoeconomics, climate change, inequality

Chair: Prof. Priyanka Upadhyaya, UNESCO Chair

Co-Chair: Dr. Gautam Chikermane, Senior Vice President, ORF



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Keynote: Prof. Basant Bidari, Lumbini Buddhist University

Panelists:

- Dr. Uttam Kumar Sinha, Senior Fellow, MP-IDS
- Amb. Amarendra Khatua, Former Ambassador and Former DG, ICCR
- Prof. Manoj Mishra, Banaras Hindu University
- Dr. Ajay Yadav, Banaras Hindu University

11:00 – 11:15 AM | Tea Break

11:15 AM – 1:00 PM | Session VI: Nurturing Shared Heritage:

Amb. Harsh Vardhan Shringla, Member of Parliament and Former Foreign Secretary, Govt. of India, **Keynote Insights** by the **Guest of Honour Format:**

Panel Discussion and Digital Demonstration

Sub-Themes:

- Conservation of Buddhist heritage sites
- Joint research and documentation
- Community-led heritage management

Chair: Prof. Priyanka Upadhyaya (UNESCO Chair for Peace, BHU; Senior Advisor, MIT World Peace University)

Co-Chair: Amb. Jayant Prasad and Amb. Manjeev Singh Puri, Former Indian Ambassador to Brussels and Nepal

Panelists:

- Sh. Gyanin Rai, Lumbini Development Trust
- Shri Anil Chitrakar, Conservationist

1:00 – 2:00 PM | Lunch Break

2:00 – 4:00 PM | Session VII: Global Peace Perspective: Youth, Governance, and Peace through Buddha’s teachings

Chair: Amb. Ranjit Rae, Former Indian Ambassador to Hungary, Vietnam and Nepal

Co-Chair: Prof. Dhruva Kumar Gautam, Vice Chancellor, Mid-West University and Prof. Abhay Kumar Singh, Former Vice Chancellor, Dean of Buddhist Studies, Nalanda University

Format: Roundtable & Youth Dialogue



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Sub-Themes:

- Peace governance frameworks
- Youth leadership and innovation
- Policy recommendations for India–Nepal cooperation

Participants:

- Ms. Shivam Shekhawat, Research Fellow, Observer Research Foundation
- Dr. Ashwin Parijat Anshu, Delhi University
- Sh. Pradeep Gupta, Former Joint Secretary to the Government of India
- Prof. Saurabh, Dean, Faculty of Commerce and Director, IQAC, Siddharth University

4:00 – 4:15 PM | Tea Break

4:15 – 5:30 PM | Declaration and Valedictory Session

Conference summary (10 min)

Adoption of the **"New Delhi-Lumbini Declaration"** (15 min)

Valedictory remarks (10 min each)

Speakers:

- Amb. Jayant Prasad
- Amb. Ranjit Rae
- Amb. Manjeev Singh Puri
- Prof. Subarna Lal Bajracharya
- Prof Anjoo Sharan Upadhyaya

Vote of Thanks: Prof. M. Mahtab Alam Rizvi



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