

Annexure-III

NEW INITIATIVES LAUNCHED UNDER INDIA'S "NEIGHBOURHOOD FIRST" POLICY

SRI LANKA

**Special Economic Package (SEP) of around US\$ 450 milion for post
Cyclone Ditwah rehabilitation and reconstruction in Sri Lanka**

MALDIVES

Expanding financial connectivity through Network to Network Agreement between NPCI and Maldives Monetary Authority on UPI in Maldives and establishing Joint Working Group (JWG) on Fishermen, Health and Counter – terrorism in Maldives

AFGHANISTAN

Several initiatives, including the Air Freight Corridor, Joint Working Groups, and Joint Chambers of Commerce, have been launched between the two countries.

MYANMAR

Under the Neighbourhood First policy, India has acted as a trusted partner for Myanmar through extensive developmental aid. Most recently, under the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation, the ICCR scholarship slots for Myanmar nationals were increased from 36 to 100 annually. Further, as a responsible neighbor and a committed regional partner, India has been the first responder for Myanmar in times of crisis. In the aftermath of the 7.7 magnitude earthquake that struck Myanmar

in Marh 2025, India launched Operation Brahma to provide humanitarian aid and relief.

BANGLADESH

- (i) Enhancing trade and connectivity with Bangladesh through the inauguration of second cargo trade gate at ICP Petrapole in October 2024.**
- (ii) Sub-regional connectivity in energy sector has also been initiated with a tripartite agreement between Nepal, Bangladesh and India to export 40 MW of electricity from Nepal to Bangladesh using the Indian grid. The first export under this arrangement was undertaken in November 2024.**

NEPAL

- (i) Long Term Power Trade: The Agreement for Long Term Power Trade signed in 2024 envisages the export of up to 10,000 MW power from Nepal to India over the next decade.**
- (ii) Cross-Border Digital Payments: Peer-to-Peer (P2P) linkage between Unified Payments Interface (UPI) of India and National Payments Interface (NPI) of Nepal was launched on 6 June 2026. This will facilitate cross-border personal remittances between India and Nepal.**
- (iii) Agreement on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters (MLAA): The Agreement was signed in February 2026. This Agreement will benefit the people of India and Nepal by providing an institutional legal framework to enhance the effectiveness of investigation, prosecution and judicial proceedings relating to cross-border crimes.**

- (iv) India-Nepal Startup Partnership Network (IN-SPAN) programme:**
- IN-SPAN aims to catalyse cross-border innovation, foster investment linkages, and build enduring entrepreneurial partnerships between India and Nepal. Under this programme, 24 startups from Nepal attended an eight-week training cum incubation programme at IIT Madras Pravartak Technologies Foundation during December 2025 and January 2026. The 2nd Cohort of IN-SPAN saw participation of 25 startups from Nepal is currently undergoing training at IIT Madras Pravartak Technologies Foundation till 31 July 2026.**
- (v) LoE amending the Protocol to the Treaty of Transit between India and Nepal: The first commercial shipment arrived at the Nepal Customs Yard, Biratnagar, from Kolkata Port via the Indian Customs Yard in Jogbani, on 20 July 2026, following the signing of the Letter of Exchange amending the Protocol to the India–Nepal Treaty of Transit in November 2025. The cross-border cargo train services will help reduce logistics costs and further boost India–Nepal trade.**
- (vi) An MoU between Digital India Bhashini and Kathmandu University for co-creating National Digital Infrastructure for “Voice First” Language Translation platform was signed on 6 June 2026. The MoU is envisioned as an initiative to strengthen people-to-people connections and preserve linguistic heritage.**

BHUTAN

- (i) Establishment of railway links between India and Bhutan – Two Cross-border rail links namely Banahrhat-Samtse and Kokrajhar-Gelephu are being undertaken between India and Bhutan.**

The rail links will strengthen cross border connectivity and boost trade and people to people ties.

(ii) Strengthening spiritual Buddhist connections between India and

Bhutan – The Royal Bhutan Temple at Rajgir, Bihar was consecrated in September 2025. GoI has accorded approval for construction of a third Bhutanese temple and Monastery at Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh. The initiative would strengthen the cultural and civilisational ties between India and Bhutan and also likely lead to increase in tourism and economic activity.

(iii) Enhancing digital payment connectivity through launch of India's

Bharat Interface for Money (BHIM) application in Bhutan – The initiative would expand economic cooperation with Bhutan and facilitate tourists/students/traders etc. through ease of cross-border payments.

(iv) Establishment of Integrated Check Post in Darranga, Assam – The

ICP was inaugurated in November 2024. It will facilitate entry/exit of third country nationals on the India-Bhutan border and boost bilateral trade and tourism.

(v) Support to Bhutan's 13th Five Year Plan (FYP) – GoI has committed a

grant assistance of INR 10,000/- Crore for Bhutan's 13th Five Year Plan (2024-2029). The GoI assistance will contribute to Bhutan's development efforts, and deepen India-Bhutan development partnership, which is an important facet of the bilateral relation with Bhutan.
