

Nepal President cancels India visit, reason unknown

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Kathmandu: Nepal President Bidhya Devi Bhandari's upcoming visit to India has been cancelled, officials said today but they did not disclose the reason for the abrupt cancellation.

However, diplomatic sources told IANS that a recent political fiasco and Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli's approach towards India were responsible for the cancellation of the presidential visit which was scheduled to begin on May 9.

Bhesh Raj Adhikari, chief personal assistant to President Bhandari told IANS that the Cabinet, even after two meetings on Thursday and Friday, held back approval for the visit, delegation and agenda.

The foreign affairs ministry has informed Nepali Ambassador in India, Deep Kumar Uphadhay, about the cancellation.

On the invitation of her Indian counterpart Pranab Mukharjee, President Bhandari was to embark on her first official visit to India next week.

During an interaction with some reporters at her office on Wednesday, Bhandari had said her trip to the southern neighbour was a goodwill visit.

"I will invite Indian President Pranab Mukherjee to visit Nepal," she said, adding that "The purpose of my visit is to strengthen the good ties between Nepal and India".

As per the earlier plan, President Bhandari was scheduled to attend a function in New Delhi on May 9 and the following day she was to hold meetings with Mukherjee and the other Indian political leadership.

On May 11, she was to leave for Simhastha Kumbh Mela in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh.

She was also scheduled to deliver in Ujjain a lecture on women's empowerment.

- IANS