

## **Nepal lauds PM Modi's role in helping quake-hit people**

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**Kathmandu:** Nepal today thanked India for its "tremendous assistance" and lauded Prime Minister Narendra Modi for playing an important role in ensuring that the quake-hit country gets back on its feet as soon as possible.

Nepal's appreciation for Prime Minister Modi was conveyed by President Ram Baran Yadav to External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj when she called on him here.

"The President was very appreciative of the tremendous assistance that India has rendered to Nepal in its hour of crisis. He specifically mentioned about the important role Prime Minister Narendra Modi has personally played in ensuring that Nepal gets back on its feet as soon as possible," External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Vikas Swarup said.

India had responded promptly after the quake struck Nepal, dispatching a large number of rescue teams, doctors and disaster relief experts. The Indian Air Force and the army had also deployed helicopters and transport aircraft for rescue effort and to reach relief.

Rescue workers from over 30 countries had come to Nepal to help the people affected by the quake, the country's worst in more than 80 years, in which about 9,000 people were killed.

Earlier, Swaraj announced India's pledge of USD one billion to Nepal for its massive reconstruction programme and asserted that it will strongly stand behind the Nepalese government in its hour of crisis.

Swaraj made the announcement during an international donors conference organised by the Nepalese government to raise funds for reconstruction programmes. In the meeting with Yadav, the External Affairs Minister conveyed to him that there was no need to thank India as it had offered its assistance as a neighbour.

"She said in times of distress, it is the neighbour who comes first. Relatives and friends come later," Swarup said. Swaraj had yesterday met Prime Minister Sushil Koirala during which she conveyed to him that India will provide "all possible assistance" to Nepal.

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