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ENVIRONMENT
Batu Uprety



VIEWPOINT
Kikuta Yutaka

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ADB'S REFP **Women (Em)Power**

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RASUWAGADHI AND SANJEN
Begin Generation



AMBASSADOR CHANDRA KUMAR GHIMIRE
Economic Diplomacy

हिमाचल स्टील
DUCTYL 500D

जन्मिलो जन्मि, बन्मियो ल्यामि

बढी
हिमाचलले सुरक्षित घर बनाउँछ ।



१००% गुणस्तर परीक्षण । लोडस्टेडिङमा पनि निरन्तर उत्पादन । ७६ डिग्री माफत याडिपको स्थानमा नेपालबाटै डेलिभरी हुने । निभाणकताको पहिलो रोजाई । पारदर्शी वजन र कूल्य



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Notes From The Editor



Following an intense discussion among the members of the ruling coalition, Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli is set to embark on his inaugural visit to China starting December 2. In a departure from the customary practice of first visiting India, PM Oli will become the second Prime Minister, after Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda, to travel to China. Due to geo-strategic limitations, it is improbable that PM Oli will make any significant decisions during this visit; however, he is also expected to address certain matters. The Nepali Congress, having consistently opposed the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and long relied on loans, has positioned itself as anti-BRI. Consequently, amid ongoing discussions regarding the acceptance of loans versus grants, Nepal finds itself in a challenging predicament.

As Nepal's economy continues to deteriorate and struggles to generate sufficient revenue, the nation requires assistance from international communities and multilateral organizations to develop its infrastructure. The method by which Nepal will secure funding for upcoming projects remains uncertain. Currently, Prime Minister Oli is preparing for his visit to China. This week, New Spotlight has chosen to feature the Rural Enterprises Financing Project (REFP) as its cover story. Supported by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), this initiative has demonstrated how concessional loans and capacity-building efforts for small farmers' cooperatives can significantly enhance livelihoods and boost income levels. Over the past four years, the financial support provided by Sana Kisan Bikas Laghubitta Bittiyasanstha Ltd. (SKBBL) through Small Farmer Agriculture Cooperatives Ltd. has positively impacted the lives of numerous impoverished and marginalized farmers in remote regions of Nepal.

Keshab Poudel

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I like Nepali People's Smile And Hospitality



BY: KIKUTA YUTAKA

I suppose that today becomes one of the brightest day in life for Kamimura Sensei. Congratulations again.

On the other hand, today is the darkest day for me because I have to confess that I am leaving this country. I have to say good-bye to my friends but must fulfill my duty as ambassador.

I understand that Au revoir in French, Auf wiedersehen in Germany and see you again in English; all those phrases are the expression of a wish to meet again. In Japanese, however, we say "Sayonara." It originally means "If you say so." "It things are so." Therefore my feeling now is "I don't want to leave, but if the circumstances oblige me to leave, I have to obey my destiny."

Or if all my guests in front of me have today say," Ambassador Kikuta, you get of here no!" Then I have to accept your request to do so.

In any case, let me take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude.

First of all, I would like to express my thanks to "Nepal." I fully enjoyed and appreciated its astonishing beauty of nature, traditional culture, food, music, dance, festival, so many world heritages, and lifestyle keeping the respect for Gods. I felt Nepal had many things in common with Japan.

In addition to popular destinations, as the Ambassador of Japan, the country which is conducting a number of grassroots grant type assistance through local Nepali or Japanese NGOs, I had many opportunity to visit remote village from the east to the west and directly communicate with the people there. It gave me special fond memories. Second, I want to say thank to them.

I like Nepali people's smile and hospitality. I have a great respect for the fact and the efforts of the Nepali people to live in peace in such diversity.

I want to say thanks to my colleagues, too. All diplomatic here not only professional but also lovely human beings with profound personal charm. I happen to meet my New Delhi Deputies and US College Alumni. I happened to meet my old pals in the different positions after many years. These encounters will remain in me as precious treasures in the rest of my life.

I would also like to thank my embassy colleagues, Japanese diplomatic and Nepali national staff including secretaries, drivers, staff in each section, residence staff and chief couple; it was so comfortable to work with them.

In addition, my special thank go to the Nepali Kendo kid I met at the Multipurpose Marshal Art Center. I was so impress by

their efforts to try to understand the sprit and sense of value contained in "Bushido, the way of Samurai." They gave me a special light and joy in my day here.

Last but not least, I would like to thank "the Nepal-Japan relationship." In more than 120 years' history of people-to-people ex-

change, there are so many beautiful stories between us. I learn new heart-moving anecdotes almost every day from Nepai friends. I am so grateful for our long-time friendship.

You know, it is an ambassador's official job to serve in any type of countries in the world, but if I may calculate the degree of personal satisfaction of any ambassador by the degree of pro-Japan sentiment in a posted country, I might by one of the happiest Japanese ambassador in the world.

To be honest with you, my day here have not been entirely trouble free. It is only natural that ambassador must face challenges of any kind. As Japan is assisting Nepal's development with so many initiatives and projects, I have to overcome many challenges in the implementation phase on the ground.

But here I will not mention to them in detail, because I want to have nice time with you today. I just want to add that I worked hard because I wanted to help Nepal for

its development. I wanted to see Nepali people smile. If Japan's cooperation has been of any help to you, I am pleased and pleased and proud of myself.

It is my regret that I could invite only a limited number of guests to this reception. So, I will post my words of farewell on the Embassy's Face book page later so that all my friends whom I could not invite today can take a look at it anytime, anywhere. Please disseminate my intention to your friends and members of your organizations after returning home today. In the post I will introduce two items. Usually, I try my best to make my message as clear as possible, but this time I will not explain why I chose these two. You will think about you.

Ladies and gentlemen, Diplomats come and go. That is our job. I am sure that my successor will try his best to make further contribution to Nepal-Japan relationship and be a good friend with you. I humbly ask you all to extend the same support you have bestowed on me to my successor.

KIKUTA Yutaka is the ambassador of Japan to Nepal and returning home after completing his tenure in Nepal. Excerpt of the farewell statement delivered by him in a reception.



NEWSNOTES

Israeli Ambassador Pays Tribute to B.P. Koirala Following Credential Presentation

Ambassador of Israel to Nepal Shmulik Arie Bass paid a heartfelt tribute to Nepal's first elected Prime Minister, B.P. Koirala, during a visit to the B.P. Museum in Sundarijal.



After presenting his credentials to President of Nepal Ramchandra Paudel, on 22 November, 2024, Ambassador Bass made his first public visit to honour the enduring friendship between Nepal and Israel, established 64 years ago on June 1, 1960.

During the visit, Ambassador Bass reflected on the visionary leadership of B.P. Koirala and instrumental role in establishing diplomatic relations between Nepal and Israel during Israel's foundation period. "My team and I will work to ensure this friendship last forever" said Ambassador Bass.

Welcoming Ambassador Bass, the Chairperson of B.P. Museum Mr. Parasuram Pokharel remarked: "Nepal's first elected Prime Minister, Bishweshwar Prasad Koirala, established diplomatic relations with Israel in 1960. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Ambassador Shmulik Arie Bass and the Government of Israel for visiting the Museum, named in honor of B.P. Koirala." "We are confident that this visit will further strengthen the long-standing ties between Nepal and Israel. It is worth noting that this museum was once a jail where B.P. Koirala was imprisoned for nine years."

Since the establishment of diplomatic ties, Nepal and Israel have been enjoying deep friendship, which is being demonstrated by many high-level visits and undertaking of numerous mutually benefitting cooperation in various sectors including agriculture, education, health among many others, especially through MASHAV (Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation). Both countries

continue to strengthen this bond at multiple levels, from government-to-government cooperation to people-to-people level.

Nepal was the first country in South Asia to recognize Israel as a State. Two men with extraordinary visions and respect for their countries and their peoples, late BP Koirala and late David Ben-Gurion, both the then Prime Ministers of their respective countries, were able to see this friendship standing strong to this present time.

UN Nepal Kicks Off 16 Days Of Activism Focusing On Gender Equality, Disability, And Social Inclusion In Humanitarian Action

The United Nations in Nepal today inaugurated the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) campaign with a resounding call to action: to mainstream Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion in Humanitarian Action.

Nepal's recurring disasters expose deeply entrenched gender inequities, leaving women and girls disproportionately vulnerable. The risks of violence escalate in overcrowded shelters, while essential services remain out of reach for many, particularly those with disabilities. Women, already bearing the weight of unpaid care work, are often excluded from decision-making processes that shape recovery efforts, further marginalizing their voices in times of crisis.



Speaking at the event, the UN Resident Coordinator Ms. Hanaa Singer Hamdy, said "Nepal's geography and socioeconomic challenges make it uniquely vulnerable to recurring disasters. The impacts, however, are not gender neutral. To prevent Violence against women in humanitarian crisis we need to empower women and girls in humanitarian responses, design inclusive, gender-responsive humanitarian interventions, and end impunity and hold perpetrators accountable."

The 16 Days launch featured an interactive dialogue titled “UNiTe to End Violence Against Women: Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion in Humanitarian Action.” Leaders from the Government of Nepal, humanitarian clusters, development partners, and women-led organizations discussed the disproportionate impacts of disasters on women and girls and highlighted the crucial role of women-led organizations to overcome these challenges and drive inclusive, community-centered solutions.

The chief executive of NDRRMA, Anil Pokhrel said, “We need to localize the GEDSI Strategy Action Plan, which allows us to translate the concepts of GEDSI into disaster risk reduction and management. By localizing the strategy at the provincial-local level, we will be able to bring a tangible change in the lives of people but more for women, girls, and persons with disabilities among others.”

As the campaign unfolds, the United Nations in Nepal calls on all stakeholders to prioritize gender, disability, and social inclusion in every aspect of disaster preparedness and response and ensure humanitarian efforts uphold the dignity and rights of all individuals, regardless of gender, ability, or status.

KOICA Provides Grant For The Construction of 150 Bed In Nepal Korea Friendship Hospital In Thimi

DPM Prakash Man Singh Laid Foundation Stone Of 150 bed hospital at Madhyapur Thimi constructed under KOICA’s Grant

The groundbreaking ceremony of new building of Nepal Korea Friendship Municipality Hospital was held in Thimi, Bhaktapur.

Deputy Prime Minister, Prakash Man Singh alongside key dignitaries including Park, Tae-Young, Ambassador of Republic of Korea in Nepal, Kong Mooheon, Country Director of KOICA, Surendra Shrestha, Mayor of Madhyapur Thimi, and local community leaders.

The new building will be of 150 bed capacity that will have 6 Operation Theaters with specialized service of neuro, gyne, obstetric, orthopedics, etc.

The new building will expand the hospital’s capacity, offering additional space for critical medical services and specialized healthcare. It is a testament to the ongoing commitment to improving health infrastructure and meeting the growing needs of the local population, ensuring that all residents have access to quality and comprehensive health care.

The hospital, which is set to provide world-class healthcare services, is a significant milestone in improving med-

ical infrastructure in the region. It will serve as a comprehensive healthcare facility, offering essential services including emergency care, maternal and child health, outpatient and inpatient services, and specialized treatment options, addressing the growing healthcare needs of Madhyapur Thimi and surrounding areas.

During the ceremony, Deputy Prime Minister Singh, emphasized the government’s commitment to enhancing public health services, ensuring equitable access to healthcare for all citizens, and addressing regional healthcare dispar-



ities.

Deputy Prime Minister expressed pride in the progress made at Thimi Hospital and emphasized that the addition of the second building would significantly improve medical facilities and patient care in the region.

In the Program, Park, Tae-Young, Ambassador of Republic of Korea in Nepal, highlighted the importance of international partnerships in fostering sustainable healthcare development. The ambassador noted the positive impact of Nepal Korea Friendship Municipality Hospital’s expansion on both local health outcomes and broader regional development, reaffirming support for the project.

Kong, Country Director, KOICA, spoke about the ongoing support from KOICA to strengthen healthcare infrastructure in Nepal, expressing excitement about the expansion of Nepal Korea Friendship Municipality Hospital and its role in improving access to quality medical care. He further expressed optimism that the expanded facilities will help address critical healthcare gaps in the region, ensuring better access to modern medical care.

In the program, Surendra Shrestha, Mayor of Madhyapur Thimi Municipality emphasized the importance of community-centered development, highlighting that the new building will significantly improve medical services and health outcomes for the residents of Madhyapur Thimi and beyond. “This new facility is not just a building, but a symbol of our commitment to the health and well-being of

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our people,” said the Mayor.

Japan Hands Over The Girls’ Hostel To Shree Kali Devi Secondary School in Lalitpur District

KIKUTA Yutaka, Ambassador of Japan to Nepal, attended the hostel handing ceremony. The handover cer-



emony of the girls’ hostel, supported by the Government of Japan to Shree Kali Devi Secondary School (SKDSS) in Bagmati Rural Municipality, Lalitpur District, was held.

Under the Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP) of the Government of Japan, the project to construct a furnished girls’ hostel at SKDSS was supported with USD 156,881 (approximately NPR 20.5 million).

Addressing the program, ambassador Kikuta congratulated and expressed his appreciation for the efforts of all those involved in the project. Previously, students, especially female students, who lived far from the school were forced to walk long distances and hours to get to school or rent rooms in the communities near the school.

This situation made it difficult for them to concentrate on their school life. However, the newly constructed girls’ hostel provides more suitable and secure environment for them.

Ambassador mentioned that the school’s classroom buildings were rebuilt with the support of Japan under the Emergency School Reconstruction Project after the 2015 earthquake, and that the learning and living environment for students will be further enhanced with the establishment of the hostel. He also expressed his hope that everyone involved - the local community, the school, and

the families - will be committed to continuing the good maintenance of the hostel, and that the project will be an opportunity for a better future for the children and for the further development of the community.

He also encouraged the students to grow up as people who can work for the development of the society in Nepal and to play an active role as a bridge between Japan and Nepal in the future. SKDSS was established in 1962 and is the core educational institution for around 350 students in the southwestern part of Lalitpur and nearby Makwanpur district.

This project was implemented by Love Green Nepal, a non-governmental organization which has been working in the fields of education, environment, agriculture, women’s empowerment, community development, and more since 1991. The Embassy believes that this project will contribute to the improvement of the educational environment in Nepal and further strengthen the friendship between the people of Japan and Nepal.

GGP was established to implement projects that directly benefit people at the grassroots level for the socio-economic development of communities. Since 1991, over 200 GGP projects have been implemented in Nepal.

CoAS General Of India General Upendra Dwivedi Returned Home

General Upendra Dwivedi, , Chief of the Army Staff, Indian Army and Sunita Dwivedi returned home af-



ter a successful five-day official visit to Nepal.

Major General Prem Dhoj Adhikari, Head of Department, Department of Military Operations and his wife bade farewell to General Dwivedi and Mrs Dwivedi at Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA).

General Dwivedi had arrived in Kathmandu on 20 November 2024 on the official invitation extended by COAS

General Ashok Raj Sigdel.

During the visit, General Dwivedi was conferred the rank of Honorary General of the Nepali Army by President Ram Chandra Poudel. Similarly, General Dwivedi paid a courtesy call to President, Prime Minister, Defense Minister and Chief of Army Staff, Nepali Army.

He visited Army Command & Staff College, Shivapuri and Western Division Headquarters, Pokhara. Likewise, he offered prayers at the Muktinath temple, Mustang and experienced the mountain flight.

Nepali Army firmly believes that such high level visits will help to further cement the friendship between two militaries and two countries.

Ambassador Paudyal Paid A Courtesy Call On Canadian Speaker Greg Fergus

Ambassador Bharat Raj Paudyal paid courtesy call on Speaker of the House of Commons of Canada Greg Fergus at his office in Ottawa today. The meeting covered the areas such as further promoting economic partnership and exchanges between the parliaments of Nepal and Canada.

Ambassador of Nepal to Canada Paudyal, had a courtesy meeting with Greg Fergus, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, at his office in Ottawa.

The Nepali Embassy in Ottawa informed that during the afternoon meeting, Nepal-Canada relations as well as mutual interests and common interests were discussed.

Ambassador Paudyal emphasized the expansion of economic partnership between the two countries and cooperation between the parliaments of Nepal and Canada as well as parliamentary exchanges.



Ahead of the meeting with the Canadian Speaker, the Nepali Embassy also made headlines by providing mobile consular services. A mobile consular camp was held in Toronto on November 16 and 17.

It has been informed in the press release of the embassy that around 400 people have taken passport and consular services in the camp.

Indian Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi Visited Muktinath Temple And The Western Division Headquarters, Pokhara

General Upendra Dwivedi, Chief of Army Staff, Indian Army, paid a visit to Muktinath Temple at Mustang District on November 23, 2024. During his visit, he offered prayers at the temple.



Then after, General Dwivedi visited the Western Division Headquarters in Pokhara, where he was received by Division Commander Major General Shantosh Ballave Poudyal

Nepali Embassy In Canada Organized Mobile Consular Camp In Toronto

With a view to render services closer to the service seekers, the Embassy of Nepal in Ottawa conducted mobile consular/passport camp in Toronto on 16-17 November 2024. Close to 400 people received passports and other consular related services from the camp.

This is a continuation of the effort of the Embassy to bring services to different cities of Canada where is there significant number of Nepali diasporas. The effort has been well received by the service seekers in the Nepali diaspora community as it creates great convenience to them living different parts of this geographically vast country.

This is the third such mobile consular camp in Greater Toronto Area (GTA) alone organized by the Embassy in past one year. GTA hosts largest concentration of Nepali

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diaspora in Canada hence the number of service seekers.

Besides, the Embassy had conducted similar mobile consular/passport camps in Edmonton, Vancouver, Halifax, and Calgary in past six months. The Embassy plans to



conduct more such mobile camps in the future in different cities of Canada where there is significant number of service seekers.

The mobile camp in Toronto this time was conducted in collaboration with the Department of Passports, Honorary Consulate of Nepal in Toronto, NRNA NCC Canada, and other community organizations in GTA. The Embassy appreciates the continued collaboration and support of Nepali diaspora community in such efforts.

Kamimura Yoshiharu Received 2024 Foreign Minister's Commendation

KIKUTA Yutaka, Ambassador of Japan to Nepal, handed 2024 Foreign Minister's Commendation to KAMIMURA Yoshiharu of the Campus of International Languages, TU

KIKUTA Yutaka, Ambassador of Japan to Nepal handed the Foreign Minister's Commendation for FY2024 to Mr. KAMIMURA Yoshiharu, Head of the Japanese Language Department at the Campus of International Languages (Bishwo Bhasa Campus), Tribhuvan University, amid a ceremony organized at his official residence today.

The Foreign Minister's Commendations are awarded to individuals and groups with outstanding achievements in international fields to acknowledge their contributions to the promotion of friendship with Japan. The Commendations also aim to promote understanding and support from the Japanese public regarding the activities of the recipi-

ents.

Kamimura was awarded the Commendation on August 8, 2024, in recognition of his significant contributions to the promotion of Japanese language, culture, and the development of mutual understanding and friendship between Japan and Nepal. He has also served as a member of the management committee of Japanese Supplementary School in Kathmandu to improve the educational environment for Japanese children in Nepal.

As the Department Head, Kamimura has been teaching Japanese language to students from basic to advanced levels since 2004. He has also lectured on Japanese culture, history, and literature at the campus. At the same time, as an advisor to the Japanese Language Teachers' Association, Nepal (JALTAN), he has supervised Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) and cultural activities such as Japanese speech contest and Japanese karaoke contests.

Thus, he has been dedicated to broadening the base of Japanese language and culture in Nepal as well as fostering advanced Japanese language speakers. On the occasion, Ambassador Kikuta congratulated Kamimura on receiving the Foreign Minister's Commendation as a testament



to the friendship between Japan and Nepal and stated that his efforts and contributions were truly worthy of the Commendation. Ambassador also expressed his confidence that Kamimura would continue to take lead in promoting Japanese language in Nepal.

The Embassy of Japan hopes that all the students and teachers he has taught or worked with, as well as he himself, will be the bridge between Japan and Nepal, further strengthen the friendly relations between the two countries in the days ahead.

More Laws Should Be Amended To Create An Investment Environment: President Dhakal

Chandra Prasad Dhakal, President of Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said that it is necessary to amend some laws for investment.

Addressing the inauguration program of 'Plastic Nepal 2024' held in Kathmandu on Thursday, he complained that although the law was amended through an ordinance at the time of the investment conference last May, it could not be implemented as its regulations and procedures were not ready.

He opined that there are currently problems such as excise duty, wastage of produced materials and prices in the private sector, so practical decisions should be taken and addressed in time. He said, 'Investment conference was completed in the activation of government and private sector.

Laws were amended. But their rules and procedures are not ready. That thing needs to be addressed. Whether it is



domestic or foreign investment, some laws still need to be changed.

He said that the current government has given priority to the private sector and is discussing with businessmen as well, and the private sector has welcomed it.

Thank you for proposing that a high-level economic reform commission should be formed as per the suggestion of the federation and for trying to include the private sector by forming the commission and involving the private sector as well.

Masato Kanda Elected As ADB President

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) Board of Governors has unanimously elected Masato Kanda as ADB's 11th President.



Kanda, 59, currently serves as Special Advisor to Japan's Prime Minister and Minister of Finance. He will assume office on 24 February 2025, succeeding Masatsugu Asakawa, who will leave office on 23 February 2025. Kanda will complete the unexpired term of President Asakawa, which ends on 23 November 2026.

"Kanda's extensive experience in international finance and proven leadership in multilateral settings will serve ADB well in navigating complex global economic challenges and fostering international cooperation," said Chair of the ADB Board of Governors and Governor of the Bank of Italy Fabio Panetta. "The ADB Board of Governors looks forward to working with Kanda."

With nearly 4 decades of experience, Kanda has held key leadership roles at the Ministry of Finance of Japan, including Vice-Minister of Finance for International Affairs. He has extensive experience in financial sector policy and macro-fiscal policy, having served as Deputy Commissioner at the Financial Services Agency, Deputy Director-General of the Budget Bureau, and Deputy Vice-Minister for Policy Planning and Coordination. He is also a leading expert in education and science policy as well as university reform.

Kanda has been actively engaged in the G7, G20, and other international forums, addressing key policy challenges such as multilateral development bank (MDB) evolution, pandemic prevention, preparedness and response, and debt sustainability and transparency. During his tenure as Vice-Minister of Finance for International Affairs, Japan made a record contribution of more than \$1 billion to the Asian Development Fund 13th replenishment (ADF 14).

Since 2016, Kanda has served as Chair of the OECD Corporate Governance Committee, overseeing the review of the G20/OECD Principles of Corporate Governance in 2023. He also has substantial experience in strategic discussions and decision-making at MDBs, having served as Alternate Executive Director for Japan at the World Bank.

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Kanda obtained his Bachelor of Laws from the University of Tokyo in 1987, and M.Phil in Economics from Oxford University in 1991.

MCA-Nepal Relaunches 297 km Transmission Line Bid

Millennium Challenge Account Nepal (MCA-Nepal) has



relaunched the call for bids to construct a 297 km power transmission line. The transmission line to be built under the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Nepal Compact will strengthen Nepal's power transmission network. The bid submission deadline is set for 30 January 2025, with construction divided into three lots: Lapsipedi-Ratmate-New Hetauda, Ratmate-New Damauli, and New Damauli-New Butwal.

The relaunch follows a comprehensive review of the previous bidding process and includes design optimizations, improved access to tower locations, and updates to commercial terms based on bidders' feedback. These adjustments address the main cost drivers identified in the initial bids, ensuring more feasible and cost-effective proposals.

On August 30, 2024, MCA-Nepal successfully awarded a USD 12.36 million contract to Transrail Lighting Ltd. to construct the 18 km Nepal portion of the Butwal-Gorakhpur transmission line, which will be completed within 21 months. "After securing the contract for the 18 km segment, we are confident the redesigned requirements for the remaining 297 km will attract strong market interest and competitive bids," said Khadga Bahadur Bisht, Executive Director of MCA-Nepal.

The relaunch marks another milestone in the progress of the MCC Nepal Compact, which achieved significant progress over the past year. With contractors already working on the three 400 kV substations and the 18 km transmission line, MCA-Nepal is on track to implement the remaining segments, further strengthening Nepal's energy infrastructure.

MCA-Nepal is committed to the successful execution of this procurement and the transmission line construction works while meeting the environmental and social standards of both the Government of Nepal and MCC.

Global IME Bank Provides 20 Lakh Rupees Support For Construction Of Electric Crematorium In Kohalpur

Global IME Bank Limited has supported Rs 20 lakh for the construction of electric cremation house in Kohalpur municipality.

Shanta Sivakoti, Head of Global IME Bank's Lumbini Region, handed over the aid to Kohalpur Municipality's Acting Mayor Sangita Subedi during a ceremony.

Kohalpur municipality ward no. Acting City Chief Subedi said that the construction of electric cremation house has started at the confluence of Duduwa River and Rohini River located at 11.

In addition, Shanta Sivakoti, head of the Lumbini region of the bank, informed that the bank believes that the environmental impact will be reduced with the support of the bank.



The bank is working on various projects as part of its corporate social responsibility.

Global IME Bank is recognized as the best bank of Nepal in two categories under Global Finance's Best Bank Award 2024 and Euro Money Award for Excellence 2024.

In addition, Global IME Bank has been honored by various national and international organizations in different categories.

Birendraraj Pandey Became The Waiting President Of The Federation

Birendraraj Pandey has been elected as the Senior Vice President of Nepal Industry Confederation. The govern-

ing council committee of the Confederation of Nepal Industry, held on Sunday, elected Pandey as the senior vice-president in accordance with the constitution of the Confederation.

According to the constitution of the confederation, Pandey will automatically become the president of the confederation after the next annual general meeting.

Since 2072, Pandey, who has worked as a member of



the national council of the confederation in various committees, has been the vice president of the confederation since 2075.

Born in Kathmandu, Pandey has been in the construction industry continuously for three decades. Pandey is the executive director of Nepal Adarsh Construction Company, who is involved in civil engineering, housing and urban development, roads and bridges, water resources management, and structural reinforcement.

He is also active in the field of green materials manufacturing, agriculture and education. Pandey's long experience and expertise make the confederation more dynamic and he will play an important role in policy for the improvement of the country's economy, it is mentioned in the statement of the confederation.

Global IME Bank Ltd And Samaj Dental Hospital Lnked Agreement

Global IME Bank Ltd and Samaj Dental Hospital have



Inked an Agreement to provide discounts at Samaj Dental Hospital.

Global IME Bank customers will also receive facility of payment in installments. The agreement was signed by the head of Transaction, Banking and Sales Prakash Paudel and Sanku Ghimire, managing director of Samaj Dental Hospital.

WePOWER Launches National Chapter In Nepal To Strengthen Women's Roles In The Energy Sector

The South Asia Women in Power Sector Professional Network (WePOWER) Nepal National Chapter (NNC) was officially launched at the World Bank Country Office in Kathmandu on November 12, 2024.

WePOWER is a coalition of almost 50 energy sector stakeholders—including utilities, universities and professional associations—and has national chapters in Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The launch of the Nepal chapter is a crucial step in promoting new



national and regional partnerships to foster skills for advanced jobs and leadership roles for women in Nepal's energy sector.

“The World Bank is proud to serve as the interim secretariat for WePOWER and we are committed to creating more jobs for women in Nepal. We want to see more women in the workforce and more women engaged in the critical policy dialogues that are shaping Nepal's future,” said David Sisen, World Bank Regional Country Director for Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.

The WePOWER NNC has five Nepali partners: Alternative Energy Promotion Center, Institute of Engineering-Tribhuvan University, National Association of Community Electricity Users-Nepal, Nepal Electricity Authority, and Nepal Engineers' Association Women's Committee.

“WePOWER is not just a network, it is also a commit-

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ment to empower women in energy. Through WePOWER, we are helping to promote equal representation and create a brighter, more sustainable, and resilient future for all,” said Dr. Sangeeta Singh, Chair of the NNC.

Since 2019, when the first WePOWER Regional Conference was held in Kathmandu, WePOWER partners in Nepal have been instrumental in launching a range of gender-related activities benefitting 3,215 female professionals and students. These include hiring 214 women professionals, providing internships for 225 female students, organizing professional workshops/training for 1,584 women professionals, and supporting 32 women-friendly policies that benefitted 1,124 women professionals. Moving forward, the NNC will continue to support the participation of more women professionals in Nepal’s energy sector through its work plan.

“This milestone brings vital opportunities for women in the energy sector to build networks, develop leadership skills, and advance their careers. The Asian Development Bank is proud to support efforts that close gender gaps and promote women’s participation in key sectors,” said Arnaud Cauchois, Country Director of the Asian Development Bank Nepal.

Representatives from key energy sector utilities, development partners, private sector organizations, and academia attended the launch event. The event also included a roundtable discussion on how the NNC can foster skills for advanced jobs and leadership roles for women in Nepal’s energy sector. The speakers highlighted that the NNC has the potential to be a collective voice to advocate for change and push for more affirmative policies on caregiving, behavior change, and other aspects that affect women’s abilities to take up leadership roles.

Fitch Assigns Nepal ‘BB-’ Rating With Stable Outlook

Fitch Ratings has assigned Nepal a Long-Term Foreign-Currency Issuer Default Rating (IDR) of ‘BB-’ with a Stable Outlook as of November 21, 2024. Fitch, an American credit rating agency and one of the world’s “big three” alongside Moody’s and Standard & Poor’s, visited Nepal in September to begin an on-site assessment. According to Fitch, the key drivers of this rating assigned to Nepal are the Low Debt; Weak Structural Factors, stable debt levels, strong debt affordability, fiscal consolidation, temporary external surplus, net external creditor position, growth recovery, Banking sector stability, and political instability.

Key Rating Drivers:

Nepal benefits from low, highly concessional debt, strong external liquidity, and hydropower-driven

growth but faces challenges from underdeveloped governance, low GDP per capita, and vulnerability to external shocks.

Federal debt was 44% of GDP in FY24, below the ‘BB’ median, with no provincial debt. Debt remains manageable due to concessional terms and limited contingent liabilities.

Interest payments peaked at 8% of revenue in FY24, with low rates on concessional external and domestic debt supported by remittance-driven liquidity.

The federal deficit is projected to narrow to 4% of GDP by FY26, supported by a revenue mobilization strategy and better spending execution at the local level.

Nepal recorded a current account surplus of 4% of GDP in FY24 due to import compression and remittance growth, boosting reserves to \$13 billion, covering 12 months of payments.

Nepal remains a net external creditor, with a limited integration into global financial systems, minimal external private debt, and modest FDI inflows.



Growth is expected to rebound to 5% over the medium term, supported by hydropower exports to India, despite GDP per capita remaining low at \$1,400.

Credit to the private sector reached 86% of GDP in FY24, backed by remittance-fueled deposits. Regulatory enhancements are underway to address risks from non-bank financial institutions.

Frequent leadership changes undermine long-term policy planning, though broad consensus on economic management persists.

The rating also factors in Nepal’s environmental, social, and governance (ESG) challenges, with high relevance scores for political stability, rule of law, and control of corruption. ESG scores for Nepal:

‘5’ for Political Stability and Rights

‘5’ for Rule of Law, Institutional & Regulatory Quality and Control of Corruption

‘4’ for Human Rights and Political Freedoms

‘4’ for Creditor Rights

According to Fitch, the highest level of ESG credit relevance is a score of ‘3’. A score of ‘3’ means ESG issues are credit-neutral or have only a minimal credit impact on the entity, either due to their nature or the way in which they are being managed by the entity. Fitch further notes that sustained governance improvements, prudent debt management, and economic reforms could lead to positive rating actions. Conversely, an increase in government debt or weakening external finances could pressure the rating negatively. Sovereign Rating Model (SRM) and Qualitative Overlay (QO) Fitch’s proprietary Sovereign Rating Model assigns Nepal a score equivalent to ‘B+’ on the Long-Term Foreign-Currency IDR scale. Adjustments based on qualitative factors resulted in the final rating of ‘BB-’. Country Ceiling The Country Ceiling for Nepal is established at ‘BB-’, consistent with the Long-Term Foreign-Currency IDR, indicating no significant challenges to external financing.

Government And World Bank Launch \$128 Million Project To Improve Nepal’s Provincial And Local Road Network

The Government of Nepal and the World Bank jointly launched the \$128 million (equivalent to NRs. 17.15 billion) Provincial and Local Roads Improvement Program-Phase 1 today.

The project aims to enhance the connectivity, efficiency, resilience, and safety of Nepal’s provincial and local road network while also strengthening the government’s ability to manage the road network. The program will be implemented by the Ministry of Urban Development in coordination with the provincial and local levels.

The project was launched by Honorable Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Urban Development, Prakash Man Singh in the presence of provincial ministers of physical infrastructure and development from Sudurpashchim, Karnali, and Madhesh provinces.

“This project promotes the spirit of federalism embodied in the constitution bringing together the three tiers of government to work for the benefit of Nepalis. The focus of the project on environment-friendly and climate-resilient construction techniques and five-year maintenance component is key to supporting sustain-

able infrastructure development,” said Honorable Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Urban Development, Prakash Man Singh.

The first phase of the project will upgrade and improve 180km of selected provincial roads and bridges, undertake maintenance of 400km and 700km of existing provincial roads and bridges respectively, and construct 100km of all-weather roads and bridges to provide connectivity to prioritized municipalities and local levels.

“This project will help improve Nepal’s road infrastructure with a focus on resilience, and safety,” said David Sislen, World Bank Regional Country Director for Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. “By working closely with the Government of Nepal, we are committed to ensuring better access to essential services and economic opportunities for millions of Nepalis.”

The first of the three-phase project will be implemented in Sudurpashchim, Karnali, and Madhesh provinces and 13 municipalities which will be scaled up in future phases. About one million people are expected to benefit from improved access to all-weather, resilient, and safe provincial and local roads and bridges.

At the launch event, a tri-partite memorandum of understanding was signed between the federal, provincial, and local governments of Sudurpashchim, Karnali, and Madhesh provinces for the implementation of the project.



The project will incorporate several best practices, such as five-year performance-based maintenance combined with construction contracts, routine maintenance conducted by self-help groups, complementary community-led infrastructure projects, pilot testing alternative connectivity methods and rural transport services, development of approach roads, and implementation of an online program monitoring and management system.

Baku CoP29 Outcomes And Nepal's Initiatives



BY: BATU UPRETY

Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement made several decisions at Baku, Azerbaijan to advance implementation of their provisions. The 29th session of the Conference of the Parties (CoP29) to the Convention, CMP19 and CMA6 were held at Baku from 11 to 22 November 2024 along with 61st sessions of SBs. Baku CoP29 was told a 'finance CoP' and was expected, inter alia, to make meaningful decisions on scaling up of finance, advancing carbon trading, accelerating adaptation actions, and agree on ambitious GHGs emission reduction targets. Parties took additional 30 hours (from Friday mid-night) to compromise, particularly on finance, and the President closed all sessions at about 5:30 am on 24 November 2024.

In this CoP, developing countries urged to mobilise US\$ 1.3 trillion under the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) and further urged to allocate at least US\$ 600 billion as grants and equivalent resources. Climate vulnerable countries emphasised their top priority to have a minimum allocation floor at least US\$ 220 billion a year for Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and US\$ 39 billion a year for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) both in grant. Of several decisions, the following can be considered the important milestones at Baku, and would be of interest for Nepal as well:

- a. Operationalisation of market-based cooperative approaches (carbon trading) under the Articles 6.2 and 6.4 of the Paris Agreement;
- b. Triple public finance to developing countries, from the previous goal of US\$ 100 billion annually, to US\$ 300 billion annually by 2035;
- c. Make efforts to scale-up finance, from public and private sources, to US\$ 1.3 trillion per year by 2035;
- d. Establishment of a support programme for National Ad-

aptation Plans (NAPs) implementation in LDCs, and translate adaptation plans into tangible outcomes;

e. Launch of the Baku Adaptation Road Map and Baku high-level dialogue on adaptation to enhance implementation of the UAE Framework and setup a clear path for the indicators work programme on the global goal on adaptation at CoP30;

f. Extension of Lima work programme on gender and climate change for another 10 years; and

g. Reemphasis on the critical importance of all stakeholders to engage in climate actions and ensure the meaningful participation of children within the Youth-led Climate Forum.

Lack of progress on outcomes of the Global Stocktake, energy transition (phasing out of fossil-fuel), and allocation floors for adaptation and loss and damage made Parties of the LDCs and SIDS disappointed and even walked out temporarily as they did not see their priorities reflected on the working text. These are pledge-based supports. As previous commitment of US\$ 100 billion is yet to comply with, let us hope that tripling public finance by 2035 will happen.

Before CoP29, UNEP released two reports on emission and adaptation. The Emissions Gap Report (2024), titled "No more hot air ... please!" informs GHG emissions increase of 1.3 percent from 2022 levels. As per this report, China and India have 5.2% and 6.1% increase in total GHG emissions in 2023 as compared to 2022 while GHG emissions in USA and European Union have declined by 1.4 percent and 7.5 percent respectively in 2023 to 2022 levels. It calls for accelerating mitigation actions with ambitious Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) to be submitted by February 2025 and implementation of, inter alia, proven, and cost-effective options such as solar and wind energy. This report estimated the need for at least six-fold increase in mitigation investment, and estimated global incremental

investment for a net-zero transition @ of US\$ 0.9 trillion to US\$ 2.1 trillion per year between 2021 and 2050.

The Adaptation Gap Report (2024) informs slow progress in adaptation implementation and calls for additional efforts to address the increasing climate risks. Adaptation financing needs for NDC and NAPs estimated at US\$ 387 billion/year up to 2030 whereas international public finance flows were only US\$ 27.5 billion in 2022. The report urges for scaling-up of adaptation finance to trillion US\$, enhancing capacity-building and technology transfer to improve the effectiveness of adaptation actions.

Nepal attended Baku climate conference under the leadership of the Rt. Hon’ble President Mr. Ram Chandra Poudel. Reviewing news and twitter updates, Nepal’s participation at the Head of the State level in the World Leaders Climate Action Summit drew attention of the international community particularly on the need for preserving the Himalayas for the planet security, need for additional financial and technology support to address loss and damage and climate change impacts, urged to better understand the functional linkages between the Himalayas and seas, called for an integrated approach and broader collaboration among mountainous and coastal countries, reiterated the urgency of protecting the Himalayas to protect the Earth, highlighted the terrible consequences of global warming and climate change to the climate vulnerable communities and natural resources, and underlined the importance of climate justice.

Rt. Hon. President reiterated, inter alia, the urgency of addressing climate change impacts in the mountains and urged for mainstreaming mountain issues in climate negotiation at the ‘High-Level Dialogue: Advancing the Mountain Agenda and Mainstreaming Mountains and Climate Change within UNFCCC’ organised by the Kyrgyz Republic at the sidelines of CoP29. Chairing the high-level event on ‘Mountains in Peril: Loss and Damage in the Himalaya’, organised by Nepal, Rt. Hon. President emphasised, inter alia, the need for raising unified voice of the mountainous countries at global forums to address climate change impacts in the mountains.

During the side-lines of the Summit, Rt. Hon’ble President

held a meeting with the Maldivian counterpart to strengthen bilateral relations and cooperation on regional and multi-lateral issues; urged to intensify efforts for availing finance and technology support to the LDCs in the meetings of the Heads of Delegation of the LDCs with the UN Secretary-General; and thanked the President of Azerbaijan in a bilateral meeting for organising the CoP29 successfully.

Hon’ble Ain Bahadur Shahi Thakuri, Minister for Forests and Environment who led the Nepalese delegation after the departure of the Rt. Hon. President from Baku drew attention on the importance of mountains and the Himalayas, called for a dedicated space to discuss mountains and climate change in the UNFCCC process to identify gaps, barriers and possible areas of interventions, and underscored the urgent need for 1.50C-aligned climate actions and scaling-up of finance. On the sideline meetings at Baku, Hon’ble Minister: (i) shared the needs for additional supports for climate actions with the Hon’ble Minister for Climate Change of the United Kingdom; (ii) emphasised on collaborative approaches for climate actions with the Hon’ble Minister for Forests, Environment and Climate Change of Bangladesh; (iii) shared national priorities for ambitious climate actions with UK Special Representative on climate; (iv) informed Nepal’s priorities on green economy to the Global Environment Director of the World Bank; (v) expressed Nepal’s interests for technical and financial support and capacity enhancement in areas of renewable energy, sustainable

agriculture and climate finance with the chair of the World Green Economy Organisation; (vi) discussed the impacts of climate change on water resources and urgent need for support on water security, nature conservation and environmental protection with the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General on water; (vii) discussed with Special Advisor and Assistant Secretary-General at UN to prioritising climate actions in mountain regions and appreciated the UN’s role in supporting the LDCs; and (viii) emphasised on the shared commitment to child-responsive climate finance with the CEO of the Save the Children and her global and Asia regional team.

Hon’ble Minister highlighted the adverse effects of climate



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change and called for regional partnership to address climate change crisis in a high-level Party event of the environment ministers of the Hindu-Kush Himalayan (HKH) region in presence of Rt. Hon'ble Prime Minister of Bhutan. He emphasised the need for promoting climate-resilient economic and infrastructure development with the Director-General of the Asian Development Bank.

Published news also inform that Hon'ble Minister instructed the Nepalese delegation team for a meaningful participation and noted active participation of the team in different agenda items with focus on finance, loss and damage, transparency, carbon trade, capacity building and technology, and mitigation under the coordination of the Joint-Secretaries, and gender and social inclusion at Under-Secretary level.

In several meetings, Nepal called for collective actions to address melting Himalayas and rising sea levels. The Mountain Partnership called for advancing the mountain agenda, noting the vulnerability of mountain ecosystems to climate change.

Before attending CoP29, CMP19 and CMA6, the Ministry of Forests and Environment (MoFE) organised a national conference on climate change. Delivering an inaugural statement, Rt. Hon'ble Prime Minister, Mr. K.P. Sharma Oli instructed the Nepalese delegation to actively participate in negotiations at Baku taking note of national priorities. Conference participants discussed on several issues and offered messages to focus on 'no loan to loss and damage', seek support for capacity building and non-economic loss and damage, focus on easy and direct access modality to access Fund for Responding the Loss and Damage, and advocate for inclusion of loss and damage in the NCQG.

As a former participant of CoPs from 2006 to 2016, I consider the following as Baku achievements for future climate actions in Nepal:

a. The Adaptation Fund (AF) has accredited the National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC) for 5 years to function as its National Implementing Entity (NIE) on 19 November 2024. Now, NTNC will have direct access to AF and can develop and implement adaptation and resilience projects up to of US\$ 10 million per project. NTNC is also the direct access accredited entity for the Green Climate Fund.

b. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between MoFE and Swedish Energy Agency on emissions trading under article 6.2 of the Paris Agreement will open avenues to benefit from carbon trading. Nepal will benefit from GHGs emissions reduction projects to be implemented with Sweden's support, and Sweden to comply with its GHGs emissions reduction commitment. However, it depends upon the nature of projects developed, fund accessed and implemented under this MoU.

c. A multilateral meeting of the representatives of MoFE, Nepali NGO named Local Initiatives for Biodiversity, Research and Development (LI-BIRD) and the AF is expected to speed up accrediting the LI-BIRD as the NIE of the Fund in near future. This will open avenues to access funds for adaptation and resilience actions.

d. MoFE and WWF Nepal launched two GEF-funded projects titled "Managing Watersheds for Enhanced Resilience of Communities to Climate Change in Nepal (MaWRIN)" of US\$ 9 million; and "Building National Capacities of Nepal to Meet Requirements of the Enhanced Transparency Framework of the Paris Agreement (CBIT) of US\$ 1.65 million on 12 November 2024. Effective implementation of these projects may enhance adaptive capacity of the local communities, and make watersheds climate resilient, and build country capacity.

e. The LDC Group has nominated Mr. Naresh Sharma to represent 45 LDCs in the Adaptation Fund Board for two years (2025-'26). He will also function as the Chair of its Accreditation Panel for 2025. Mr. Sharma represented the LDC Group for 2015 and 2016 and served as the chair of the Fund Board in 2016. The Asia-Pacific Group nominated Mr. Manjeet Dhakal for the Consultative Group of Experts (CGE). Participation in constituted bodies provide additional opportunities to flag country priorities, access resources and contribute to the global processes.

A sizeable number of Nepali representing the government and non-governmental organisations, including the UN organisations and Bank attended CoP29 as the Party Delegate. The provisional list of registered on-site participants published on 11 November 2024 included Mr. Sunil Bahadur Thapa, Advisor to the Rt. Hon'ble President under Party Overflow category (as noticed to the former UNFCCC focal point last year). Party Overflow badge holders 'are not part of the official delegation or authorised to speak on behalf of the government'.

Baku could not produce 'preferred outcomes on finance' for LDCs. Nepal flagged mountain issues at various levels as called for Mountain Initiatives in 2009. Above achievements and concerns of the sideline meetings might scale up climate actions in near future if dedicated country-level efforts made timely. As published news did not cover experiences and learnings from climate actions in Nepal shared through side-events at Baku, MoFE may wish to document shared lessons and learnings through side-events by the member(s) of the Nepali delegation.

Taking note of decisions at Baku, Parties may wish to attend next SBs with renewed commitments to support LDCs, make SBs (62 & 63) and CoP30 meaningful to protect the lives and property of the climate vulnerable, and transform Baku 'disappointment' into 'determination' for climate actions in Brazil.

Nepal's Dilemma

With Foreign Minister Dr. Arjoo Rana Deuba's last-minute preparatory visit to China, Nepal is yet to prepare the final agenda for the high-level visit.

By A CORRESPONDENT

Within an hour of the cabinet approval for Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli's visit to China from December 2 to 5, Foreign Minister Dr. Arjoo Rana Deuba flew to China to make final preparations for the high-level visit. This quiet and hurried visit of Foreign Minister Dr. Rana indicates Nepal's dilemma in dealing with China, a close neighbor.

The visit comes ahead of Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli's planned visit to China next week as part of preparations for his trip. Minister Rana is expected to return to Nepal on November 30.

According to sources, Foreign Minister Dr. Rana will convey the message of the Oli-led coalition government and present Nepal's proposal for implementing projects under China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) during her meeting with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang in Chengdu.

With the Prime Minister scheduled to visit the northern neighbor on December 2, the BRI is now in the spotlight. Various quarters are keen to see how Nepal will navigate and negotiate the BRI deal with China.

The two ruling coalition partners—the Nepali Congress and the CPN-UML—have been in continuous negotiations to forge a common position of the two ruling parties and finalize Nepal's positions on the assistance to be received from the northern neighbor.

However, there are still dilemmas and differences in both the parties regarding the BRI. The Nepali Congress is completely against any loan agreement under the BRI and the CPN-UML's position is that Nepal should accept the loan as part of other mul-

tilateral and bilateral loans from other countries.

Communications and Information Technology Minister Prithvi Subba Gurung said that 39 government offi-

“Nepali politicians and policymakers at the strategic level should realize Beijing has moved ahead from the traditional way of looking at Nepal. Nepal should assess whether China has shifted the goalpost and its com-



cial and 48 representatives from the private sector will be in the delegation led by the Prime Minister.

Among other meetings, Prime Minister Oli is scheduled to hold bilateral talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang on December 3.

During the visit, discussions are planned on the implementation of previous agreements, cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), and a proposal for grant assistance for Pokhara International Airport, among others. However, the formal agendas of the bilateral discussions have not been made public. Prime Minister Oli will fly to his northern neighbor on Himalaya Airlines.

mitments by introducing a non-essential implementation plan as one of its priorities—from a geopolitical perspective—and what it means for the country. Moreover, Kathmandu's position should be to seek the implementation of past announcements and promises. Lastly, Sino-Nepal relations are of historical importance, and therefore, they cannot be reduced to dividing political forces in Nepal. Nepali politicians need to improvise their foreign policy positioning by understanding that state-to-state relations are becoming more transactional and that each nation will aim to expand its leverage over the other. It is time an aspiring Nepali woke up to the reality of cutthroat competition for influence in international relations,” writes Sidhartha Thapa in the Kathmandu Post.

VISIT OF THE KOSOVO DELEGATION

Local Governance

Kosovo officials provide perspectives on local governance in Nepal

By A CORRESPONDENT

A distinguished delegation, headed by Elbert Krasniqi, the Minister of Local Government and Administration of Kosovo, has successfully completed its visit to Nepal. During this visit, the delegation engaged with local elected officials, including municipal leaders, representatives from civil society, and various government officials.

Despite Kosovo's declaration of independence in 2008 and the establishment of diplomatic relations with over 100 nations, formal diplomatic ties between Nepal and Kosovo have yet to be established.

The high-level meeting, facilitated by Helvetas-Nepal in collaboration with Helvetas-Kosovo, marked the inaugural visit of such a delegation to Nepal, allowing for meaningful interactions with government representatives. This visit is anticipated to facilitate the future establishment of diplomatic relations between the two nations.



Each year, numerous tourists from Kosovo, particularly mountaineers, travel to Nepal. The successful ascent of Mount Everest by Kosovar mountaineer Arineta Mula has contributed to Nepal's prominence in Kosovo.

Currently, Minister Elbert Krasniqi is in Nepal, where he has engaged in discussions with the Minister, local elected officials, and other representatives.

Kosovo, a landlocked nation recog-

nized by over 116 of the 195 countries worldwide, is often regarded as the newest country in Europe.

Kosovo proclaimed its independence from Serbia on February 17, 2008, following years of ethnic strife in the Balkans that ensued after the dissolution of the USSR in 1991. Minister Krasniqi convened a meeting with Chiribabu Maharjan, the Mayor of Lalitpur Metropolis. Leading a delegation, Minister Krasniqi engaged with Mayor Maharjan, the Deputy Mayor, and other local officials at the Metropolitan Office in Pulchowk.

This meeting allowed the delegation to gain valuable insights into the practices, accomplishments, opportunities, and challenges faced by local governance in Nepal. The Kosovo delegation arrived in Nepal on Monday with the aim of studying and observing the initiatives and programs executed by Helvetas Nepal. During the discussions, Minister Krasniqi provided an overview of Kosovo's geographical and political landscape.





He expressed his dedication to leveraging technology, knowledge, skills, and best practices from Kosovo's communities while sharing his insights with Lalitpur Metropolis. Mayor Maharjan emphasized the three tiers of government in Nepal, noting the support provided by both federal and state governments to local authorities on a regional level. He also underscored ongoing efforts to preserve the metropolis's heritage and highlighted the prioritization of electric vehicles to mitigate pollution from gasoline and diesel vehicles. Dr. Prabin Manandhar, the

Country Director of Helvetas Nepal, was also in attendance at the meeting.

Metropolitan Chief Maharjan expressed that a single visit to Nepal is insufficient and extended an invitation for a return visit.

In partnership with Helvetas Nepal, Minister Krasniqi's delegation arrived on Monday to engage in the sharing and exchange of experiences regarding local governance in Nepal. Upon their arrival, Dr. Prabin Manandhar extended a warm wel-

come to the delegation and hosted a reception in their honor.

The delegation is set to visit Karnali Province to facilitate discussions on local governance practices within Nepal. Following their arrival, Helvetas Nepal arranged a meeting to present an overview of the country's constitutional framework and legal systems.

Dr. Manandhar elaborated on local government practices in Nepal, emphasizing their role in empowerment, inclusion, and development. He underscored the evolution of local governance in Nepal and its significance within the current federal framework, as well as the distribution of powers among the three tiers of government.

The event was attended by senior officials from Helvetas Nepal and governance experts.



The Relationship Between Kosovo And Nepal Is Robust: ELBERT KRASNIQUI

ELBERT KRASNIQUI, the Minister of Local Government and Administration for the Republic of Kosovo, is presently in Kathmandu at the helm of a delegation aimed at exchanging insights and gaining knowledge about local governance while engaging with community leaders. Despite being a small Balkan nation with a population of 1.7 million, Kosovo has made significant advancements in local governance since achieving independence in 2008. During his visit, Minister Krasniqui took a moment from his demanding schedule to express his views on Nepal and Kosovo in a podcast hosted by Helvetas Nepal, featuring **Dr. Prabin Manandhar**, the Country Director of Helvetas Nepal. The following are excerpts from their discussion, compiled by **Keshab Poudel**:

What aspects of Nepal do you find most inspiring?

It is challenging to pinpoint specific elements that stand out as more significant or inspiring than others. The way people utilize their resources for their livelihoods is noteworthy. I have also noticed the challenges associated with traffic management in the city. The urban landscape and the communal sharing of resources are particularly inspiring to me. Ultimately, the most crucial aspect is the capacity of individuals to make the most of what they possess.

Your dedication to enhancing local governance in Kosovo serves as an inspiration for many in Nepal. How do you perceive this exchange of knowledge?

There exist two tiers of government: the central government and the local government. Kosovo comprises 38 municipalities, which range from the capital city, home to over 250,000 residents, to smaller municipalities with populations as low as 3,500. Each municipality enjoys significant autonomy as stipulated by the Constitution of Kosovo. These local entities are pivotal institutions dedicated to serving the populace. The central government aids local administrations by allocating various grants contingent upon their performance. Additionally, we offer supplementary grants to municipalities that demonstrate exceptional performance. At the local level, mayors and council members play crucial roles, acting as vital conduits for the effective provision of services to the community. Our government is the first to successfully complete a full four-year term since gaining independence in 2008, and we are scheduled to conduct elections early next year for another four-year term, during which we will reaffirm our commitments.

In light of Nepal's transition from a unitary to a federal system, and considering the diverse nature of its population in terms of ethnicity, class, caste, and gen-

der, what measures will you implement to ensure that the poor and marginalized groups have equitable access to resources, opportunities, and the fulfillment of their rights?

This experience provided me with valuable insights into the political evolution of Nepal and the process of federalization. Currently, we are engaged in a decentralization effort following our liberation and the establishment of new municipalities, which aims to honor, safeguard, and enhance community interests. Our nation, a small entity in the Western Balkans, has a population of 1.7 million and is situated in a vibrant region where diverse cultures converge. Despite our modest population, we are home to nine distinct communities. The Constitution of Kosovo guarantees the rights of all individuals and communities, ensuring that their needs and rights are addressed, particularly in terms of political representation. Of the 120 parliamentary seats, 20 are specifically reserved for minority groups, with allocations based on population size. Furthermore, the constitution also ensures their representation within the central government.

To begin with, I would like to emphasize the necessity for increased exchanges between our countries. There are numerous opportunities to foster future collaboration by sharing and learning from each other's experiences in governance.

Nepal is a well-recognized country in Kosovo, and similarly, Kosovo is familiar to the people of Nepal, particularly due to the achievements of mountaineers from Nepal. Notably, mountaineer Arineta Mula has transcended boundaries by successfully summiting Mount Everest and several other peaks exceeding 8,000 meters in height.

While our country also boasts numerous mountaineers, their numbers are relatively modest compared to those from



Nepal. This disparity has motivated mountaineers like Arineta Mula to visit Nepal and conquer various peaks. We take great pride in acknowledging that Arineta Mula is the first mountaineer to reach the summit of the world's highest peak, in addition to climbing eight other peaks over 8,000 meters in Nepal. Her remarkable achievements in mountaineering serve to strengthen the ties between our two nations.

In terms of integrating impoverished and marginalized individuals into the mainstream, we have implemented various quotas and reservations at different levels to support these groups. Additionally, we have established positive measures to ensure their safety and security. What is the current situation regarding this issue in Kosovo?

Progress cannot be achieved in a single attempt. In our nation, 20 percent of seats in all political institutions are allocated for women and marginalized communities. In the most recent elections, all female candidates successfully gained the support of the electorate. There has been a longstanding practice of reserving seats for women and ethnic minorities. Public offices reflect a balanced representation, with a 50/50 distribution. In the government, among 15 ministers, five are women, and out of three deputy prime ministers, two are women, demonstrating our strong commitment to women's rights and the rights of communities. We have established numerous protections for women, a reflection of Kosovo's historical context, emerging from the

Balkan war and the atrocities committed by Serbian leader Slobodan Milošević. Achieving freedom in 1999 and independence in 2008 has underscored our belief that equality is an imperative we must uphold.

Since gaining independence in 2008, efforts to bridge gender disparities and initiatives to enhance local governance have contributed to this progress. However, I cannot assert that the gap has been entirely closed. We are continuously striving for further advancements, as democracy is integral to our existence. This commitment is evident in every election, where we consistently aim to make progress.

The central government often exhibits hesitance in delegating authority to sub-national entities. In Kosovo, governance is structured into two tiers: the central government and 38 local municipalities. Frequently, local governments face challenges due to insufficient human and financial resources, as well as a lack of institutional and technical capabilities. In various regions worldwide, including Nepal and several South Asian nations, how has your ministry enhanced the capacity of local governments?

This responsibility falls under my ministry. As the Minister of Local Government and Administration, you are tasked with overseeing the municipalities. We are accountable for assessing the development and effectiveness of local governments. Following our evaluations and inspections, we compile and publish reports. Additionally, we have a dedicated department that offers training to local

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government officials. We have revised certain regulations to introduce new initiatives, such as digitalization, smart city projects, and other pertinent matters. The ministry is empowered to undertake these actions. Furthermore, we conduct regular meetings with local governments to address issues based on their specific needs.

You have initiated efforts in digitalization and e-governance within local governments. Are there any partnerships with other countries, including Nepal, to facilitate knowledge sharing?

There are two key elements to consider. First, municipalities are actively pursuing relationships with other municipalities across Europe and beyond, facilitated through our minister and direct interactions among citizens. Second, since last year, we have been a member of the global Open Government Partnership, which has prompted local authorities to initiate their own membership efforts. They can leverage this platform for training focused on transparency and accountability.

While Kosovo and Nepal differ in geography, history, and socio-economic contexts, they also share numerous similarities. Do you perceive any potential for collaboration between the municipalities of Nepal and Kosovo as sister organizations?

I believe such collaboration is indeed feasible. We are not embarking on a new chapter in our relations. Prior to my visit, Kosovo hosted a delegation of journalists and civil society representatives from Nepal, during which we discussed the situation in Kosovo and its geopolitical context, aiming to lay the groundwork for formal diplomatic relations between Nepal and Kosovo. During my visit, I had the opportunity to engage with ministers, local officials, mayors, and leaders of the Municipal Association, which opens avenues for establishing a friendship group. Nepal is held in high regard in Kosovo, and many of our citizens have traveled to Nepal for climbing and trekking adventures. Both countries possess mountainous landscapes, although Kosovo's mountains are not as prominent.

This partnership has the potential to create new opportunities. A meeting has already taken place between the municipalities, and we anticipate a series of visits among mayors from various cities in Nepal and Kosovo. Our aim is to enhance cultural and economic exchanges across multiple levels in the near future. These efforts are supported by the communities of both Nepali and Kosovo citizens. I am confident that once the Nepali populace and government gain a clearer understanding of the circumstances in Kosovo, the formalization of relations will become feasible. We can initiate mutual people-to-people connections, with government cooperation following suit.

Now, let us discuss Helvetas Nepal, the organization that

facilitated your visit to Nepal. We are a committed partner of the Nepali government, receiving support from the Swiss government and other international entities. A similar situation exists in Kosovo, where Helvetas Kosovo is actively involved in bolstering governmental and local authority capacities. What is your perspective on the assistance provided by Helvetas?

We must express our gratitude to Helvetas Kosovo for enabling this visit and for advocating for the establishment of relations with various countries, including Nepal. Our delegation sincerely appreciates the efforts and hospitality extended by Helvetas Nepal in organizing numerous significant meetings and site visits. Helvetas Nepal has played a crucial role in fostering people-to-people relations



and promoting a deeper mutual understanding. There exists a promising opportunity for Kosovo and Nepal to cultivate and enhance amicable relations at both the state and community levels.

Given your two-day visit, how do you assess your experience and interactions across various levels? What insights have you gained?

During this visit, my schedule has primarily consisted of formal meetings and dinners. Following our discussions, we have identified opportunities for further collaboration. This trip has yielded very positive outcomes in Nepal and has allowed me to engage with the country and its people. I have found the Nepalese to be exceptionally kind.

What is your perspective on the potential for further enhancement?

Strengthening relationships among individuals, politicians, educational institutions, and partners can significantly broaden the foundation for sustainable connections. We are adopting effective practices, and I would like to express my gratitude for your warm hospitality and the productive meetings.

Nepal's Advantage

Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) has successfully exported electricity valued at Rs 12.72 billion to India over a span of four months.

By A CORRESPONDENT

In spite of significant disruptions to Nepal's power infrastructure, including damage to power plants and transmission lines due to severe flooding in October, the NEA has managed to export electricity worth Rs 12.72 billion to India.

Kul Man Ghising, the Managing Director of NEA, has remained steadfast in his commitment to exporting surplus energy, even amidst ongoing criticism from Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli and Minister of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation, Deepak Khadka.

Both PM Oli and Minister Khadka have exerted pressure on MD Ghising, urging him not to sever power supply to major industrial clients who have accrued debts exceeding Rs 12 billion to the NEA for utilizing dedicated feeders during load-shedding periods.

As they have been unable to leverage the Public Account Committee, the Commission of Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA), the courts, and other institutions to remove MD Ghising for his refusal to comply with their directives regarding debt collection, they are now attempting to utilize a Commission of Inquiry to suspend him from his position.

In spite of this antagonism and lack of cooperation from the government and ministry, MD Ghising is diligently pursuing all necessary measures to maintain the momentum of electricity exports to India.

In the first quarter of the ongoing fiscal year, Nepal exported electricity valued at Rs 12.72 billion to India. The Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) reported



that a total of 1,667,892,000 units of surplus electricity, generated during the rainy season, were sent to India at a unit price of Rs 7.63.

The NEA is marketing this surplus power to the Indian states of Haryana and Bihar through the Day Ahead and Real Time Market of the Indian Energy Exchange (IEX), in accordance with a competitive rate established under the bilateral Medium Term Power Sale Agreement.

Additionally, Nepal has commenced electricity supply to Bangladesh utilizing Indian infrastructure.

Kulman Ghising, Managing Director of the NEA, indicated that the exports have been adversely impacted due to severe rains on September 27-28, which led to floods and landslides that damaged hydropower facilities and transmission lines. Currently, power

generation from the 456-megawatt Upper Tamakoshi project has been halted due to landslide damage.

The adverse weather conditions have also affected several smaller projects. Furthermore, the Kabeli Corridor Transmission Line sustained damage from flooding caused by the Mai River, leading to the suspension of approximately 200 megawatts of power from various connected projects. This situation has hindered power exports over the past two months and is expected to impede the government's goal of supplying around Rs 30 billion worth of electricity in the current fiscal year.

At a time when Nepal's trade deficit with India is widening, exporting surplus electricity and earning from the Indian market is a success for Nepal.

AMBASSADOR CHANDRA KUMAR GHIMIRE

Economic Diplomacy

Chandra Kumar Ghimire, a seasoned bureaucrat with extensive expertise in trade, investment, and public policy, has been appointed as the ambassador to the United Kingdom, the first nation to establish diplomatic relations with Nepal. He has prioritized economic diplomacy as a key focus of his tenure.

By A CORRESPONDENT

For any individual, the role of envoy to a nation with a diplomatic history spanning over 200 years is a source of great honor and distinction. Newly appointed Ambassador Chandra Kumar Ghimire shares this sentiment.

As he prepares to depart from Nepal to assume his diplomatic role and present his credentials in a country of significant global influence, Ghimire has been actively engaging with his predecessors, the business sector, and various community members, including retired Gurkhas.

With more than three decades of experience in public service, culminating in his position as Secretary, Ghimire has worked extensively in trade, transit, industry, and investment. His background also includes serving as Consul General in Kolkata, India. Notably, Ghimire's tenure at the Kolkata Consulate is significant, as it was Nepal's oldest diplomatic mission, facilitating bilateral relations with the United Kingdom until the establishment of Nepal's official mission there in 1934.

Nepal established its Legation in London in 1934, marking the first diplomatic mission of Nepal in a foreign nation. This mission was upgraded to an ambassadorial level in 1947 A.D.



Following his retirement from the position of Secretary, Ambassador Ghimire, who has been engaged in policy research, has directed his focus towards Nepal's status post-LDC graduation in 2026 and its implications for the trade sector.

“Serving as Ambassador to the United Kingdom presents a significant opportunity for me. I will endeavor to further enhance our longstanding bilateral relations. As Nepal is set to achieve LDC status by 2026, I will work diligently to identify market opportunities for Nepalese products under the

UK's concessional tariff, even beyond 2030,” stated Ambassador Ghimire. In addition to addressing our ongoing concerns, I will prioritize attracting foreign investment from the UK.

Despite the cordial and close ties between Nepal and the United Kingdom, which have persisted for over two centuries, particularly through the Gurkha connection, there has been a notable absence of high-level political visits from the UK to Nepal. Ambassador Ghimire expressed his commitment to facilitating such visits, stating, “I will make every effort to encourage

high-level visits from the UK to Nepal.”

A significant number of individuals of Nepali descent, including Gurkhas, have settled in the United Kingdom, necessitating that Ambassador Ghimire dedicate considerable time to various family and consular matters.

“These tasks are part of my regular responsibilities, and I will manage them effectively. My primary objective is to facilitate access for Nepali products to the British market and to enhance British investment in Nepal, as these elements are crucial for the prosperity of Nepal,” stated Ambassador Ghimire.

With three decades of experience acquired through various positions within the Nepalese civil service, culminating in his role as Secretary (Industry) in the Ministry of Industry, Commerce & Supplies until January 2021, Ambassador Ghimire, known for his gentle demeanor, is well-suited for his current role in the UK.

Before his tenure in the industry sector, Ghimire held the position of Secretary for Commerce & Supplies within the Government of Nepal. His notable leadership roles also include significant contributions to the National Planning Commission and the Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers. Throughout his career, he has established a commendable record in both policy reform and implementation.

The United Kingdom plays a vital role as a development partner for Nepal, providing grant assistance across various sectors. Ambassador Ghimire’s extensive experience will be instrumental in prioritizing these grants for Nepal.

He possesses extensive experience in the realm of industrial policy, encompassing foreign direct investment and investment promotion, industrial infrastructure development (including Special Economic Zones, Cross Border Economic Zones, Industrial Parks, Industrial Villages, and Start-up

Ecosystems), industrial administration, intellectual property rights in industry, and entrepreneurship development, all while serving as the Industry Secretary.

Ambassador Ghimire has been honored with numerous prestigious awards, including the esteemed Suprabal Jana Sewashri Medal, which is the highest state honor awarded by the President of Nepal in recognition of his significant contributions to public service. He has represented Nepal in various negotiations and at both international and national forums. Additionally, he has acted on behalf of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in the Asian and Pacific region within the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF), a global initiative associated with the WTO in Geneva, from 2010 to 2012, and played a pivotal role in the formulation of the Nepal-China Transit Protocol.

Ghimire earned an M.Phil. in Public Policy from the University of Bergen in Norway and is a gold medalist in Master of Public Administration from Tribhuvan University. He has participated in several training programs and courses, including those at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University in the USA and the University of York in the UK, where he was a Chevening Fellow.

Numerous publications, including articles authored by Mr. Ghimire, have been featured in various national newspapers and magazines, which is commendable. Additionally, several interviews showcasing his insights and perspectives have been disseminated through national television and print media. He has actively engaged in a multitude of international and national seminars, conferences, and symposia, serving in roles such as paper presenter, panelist, chairperson, and moderator.

As Nepal’s Ambassador to the UK, Ghimire has indicated that his primary focus will be to establish a bilateral tax exemption agreement. He emphasized that economic diplomacy is a



key priority for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), with intentions to implement significant initiatives in this domain.

Ghimire has reiterated his dedication to enhancing the export of Nepali products to the UK. He remarked, “A new trade policy is essential, and Nepal must pursue negotiations for preferential market access with the UK extending beyond 2030.”

Born and raised in Dharan, a former British Army base, Ghimire expressed his commitment to elevating Nepal-UK relations through the enhancement of economic diplomacy, the promotion of foreign direct investment, and the facilitation of high-level official visits from the UK to Nepal. He also outlined his intention to address the concerns of ex-Gurkha soldiers.

Furthermore, he indicated that Nepal’s shift from its status as a Least Developed Country (LDC) will result in the forfeiture of certain international advantages, which will have repercussions for the private sector. He urged the ambassadors to assist in mitigating these impacts. Ambassador Ghimire’s appointment is timely and appropriate, as he is well-suited to facilitate significant advancements for Nepal through the enhancement of bilateral trade and foreign direct investment (FDI).

ADB'S REFP Women (Em)Power

The Rural Enterprise Financing Project (REFP), funded by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), has illustrated how access to financial resources and capacity-building initiatives for local cooperatives and women managers can empower impoverished and marginalized women farmers, facilitating their transition from subsistence farming to commercial agriculture in remote regions of Nepal

By KESHAB POUDEL

With a strong commitment, determination, and essential financial backing, small-scale women farmers can significantly enhance the nation's agricultural output and the income of farming households.

The Small Farmers Agriculture Cooperatives Ltd (SFACL), which is led and managed by women and provides loans to female farmers across various regions of Nepal, has played a crucial role in shifting the country's agricultural practices from subsistence to commercial farming.

Although these cooperatives have existed for many years, offering

limited financial assistance to disadvantaged small farmers, including women, the ADB-funded REFP has expedited this transformation by increasing loan thresholds and enhancing the capabilities of the cooperatives and their managers.

Pipla Bhandari, a 62-year-old resident of Madi Municipality Ward No. 9 in Chitwan district, has established herself as a model farmer, generating fish sales exceeding Rs. 10 million (\$60,000) annually, with a net profit of Rs. 5 million (\$30,000).

Bhandari cultivates fish on her 11 bigha (2.76 hectares) of land, responding to the market demand

in Nepal. "I do not have concerns regarding the market or pricing. I supply fish when demand peaks," stated Bhandari, who has benefited from a concessional loan of Rs. 5 million (\$30,000) through the REFP project via Ayodhyapuri Women Small Farmers Agriculture Cooperatives Ltd. "I have already repaid Rs. 1.8 million to the cooperatives and will continue to make payments according to the agreed schedule."

In a similar vein, Sita Dura, a 45-year-old farmer from marginalized communities residing in Bagai, Ward No. 8 of Madi Municipality, exemplifies how access to financial resources can empower

women to become entrepreneurs.

Despite living in a remote village in Chitwan district, located 50 kilometers southeast of Bharatpur and adjacent to Chitwan National Park, Dura generates an annual income of approximately Rs. 2 million (\$13,000) from her vegetable and goat farming endeavors.

With her substantial income, she has been able to send her two children to Bharatpur for higher education. Since becoming a member of the Ayodhyapuri Women Small Farmers Agriculture Cooperative Ltd nearly eight years ago, Dura has accessed small loans, which do not exceed Rs. 600,000 (\$4,500), resulting in a modest income.

The acceleration of income facilitated by loans amounting to Rs. 2.5 million from the REFP has been significant. “The additional investment has increased our annual income,” narrated Dura.



Tika Devi Sarki, a Dalit woman residing in Lahachwok Ward No. 4 of Macchapuchre Rural Municipality of Kaski district, has demonstrated how the additional concessional loan from Lahachowk Small Farmer Agriculture Cooperative Ltd has transformed her status from untouchable to touchable. By selling quality milk to all castes in her village, where the community

previously boycotted milk sold by Dalits, Sarki has not only generated income but has also played a crucial role in altering long-standing social practices.

Previously, with a concessional loan not exceeding Rs. 500,000 (approximately US\$3,000), Sarki faced challenges in expanding her vegetable and dairy farms. Due to insufficient land to serve as collateral, she was unable to secure further loans from commercial banks, which charge high interest rates of around 13 percent.

The implementation of the REFP through local cooperatives, which has increased the limit for concessional loans to Rs. 5 million, has been a significant advantage for her. By developing a business plan, Sarki successfully applied for and received a concessional loan of Rs. 2 million to expand her business.

An additional investment of two million enables me to expand poultry production, accommo-



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dating 2,000 chicks per session. With my son's assistance, we are cultivating vegetables, producing milk, and raising broiler chickens," said Sarki.

As a single woman, Sarki currently achieves an annual turnover of approximately 2 million, with a net profit nearing 1 million each year. "I have already repaid half of my loan, and we plan to settle the remaining amount this year," she added.

Over the years, improvements in lending and investment capabilities have allowed small-holder farmers like Sarki to transition from small-scale to medium-scale farming.

Adhikari, Dura, and Sarki are among the small farmers operating enterprises supported by the Small Farmers Agriculture Cooperative (SFAC). Thousands of women small farmers have experienced significant changes in their economic status in recent years due to access to concessional loans.

Behind the success of these industrious women farmers are dedicated young and middle-aged women serving as managers and chairpersons of the SFACs.

In addition to enhancing the capabilities of small farmers, the Rural Enterprise Financing Program (REFP) also strengthens the skills of managers and staff at

SFACs and Sana Kisan Bikas Laghubitta Bittiyasanstha Ltd. (SKBBL), formerly known as Sana Kisan Bikas Bank Ltd (SKBL), with a particular focus on women. This aspect is a crucial element contributing to the project's success.

Laxmi Acharya, the manager of Lahachwok Small Farmer Agriculture Cooperative Ltd in Kaski, Indra Thapa, the manager of Women Small Farmers Agriculture Cooperative Ltd in Srankot, Laxmi Kadel, the manager of Gardi Women Small Farmers Agriculture Cooperatives Ltd, Laxmi Lamichhane, the manager of Ayodhyapuri Women Small Farmers Agriculture Cooperatives, and Meghi Kumari Mahato, the manager of Baghanda Women Small Farmers Agriculture Cooperatives in Baghanda, Chitwan, have set a commendable example in promoting small women farmers.

In addition, Purna Maya Adhikari, the manager of Small Farmer Agriculture Cooperatives Ltd, has



made significant investments in a rice mill and oil seed meals in Kathaiya. “We have allocated funds based on a comprehensive business plan and risk assessment. Over the past two years, the mill has enabled small farmers to sell their agricultural products at fair prices,” Adhikari stated.

For Laxmi Lamichhane, the manager of Ayodhyapuri Women Small Farmers Agriculture Cooperatives Ltd in Chitwan, the project has provided her with essential skills, including the development of business plans, risk assessments, and various aspects of financial literacy.

Beginning her daily duties early in the morning and continuing until late evening, Lamichhane visits women farmers, attends meetings, and offers consultations and advice. She also regularly visits the homes of borrowing farmers to collect interest payments.

Lamichhane stated, “For an extended period, I have been ap-



proving loans for farmers without possessing sufficient knowledge of financial literacy. However, I have acquired skills in risk assessment and business plan development. These competencies have significantly contributed to enhancing our institutional capacity.” He regularly visits the households of members to monitor the status of businesses funded through concessional loans, noting, “The larger

the loan, the greater the risk and opportunity.”

Following her participation in training associated with the new project, Laxmi Acharya, the manager of Lahachwok Small Farmers Agriculture Cooperatives Ltd, has begun to observe a comprehensive evaluation of risk, income, and collateral within the system. “Our lending process has become more systematic and member-oriented. In the past, we would lend up to Rs.500,000 to member farmers with relatively low risk. Now that we are extending loans in the seven-figure range, we require enhanced skills and capacity,” Acharya explained.

Women managers of Small Farmers Agriculture Cooperatives Ltd (SFACLs), who balance household responsibilities while raising children, are actively working across the nation to improve the livelihoods of smallholder women farmers by boosting productivity.

As part of the REFP initiative, the project has successfully increased



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the incomes of smallholder farmers by involving them in enterprises and commercial agricultural activities.

ADB Country Director On Project

Arnaud Cauchois, the country director of the Asian Development Bank Resident Mission, said, “this year, we’ve chosen the Rural Enterprise Financing Project as the focus of the press tour. This project is an important initiative aimed at supporting agriculture-based enterprises that operate throughout the country. By providing financing to these enterprises along with technical assistance, the project contributes to empowering rural communities and strengthening Nepal’s agricultural sector—a critical part of the economy contributing about 26% to GDP.”

He said that the project is helping small farmers and rural enterprises transition from subsistence farming to value-added enterprises by providing targeted financial support and technical

assistance.

“We’re particularly proud of the project’s strong focus on gender equity. A key aspect of the project is empowering enterprises led by women and marginalized groups through access to finance, technical training, and leadership roles, allowing them to contribute to rural economic transformation,” said Arnaud Cauchois, country director

of ADB, who joined the first leg of the press tour in Chitwan.”

Women At The Front

In the districts of Kaski and Chitwan, enterprises operated by small farmers, especially women, are involved in the production, processing, and marketing of agricultural goods, including meals, livestock, and vegetable farming. Additionally, male-operated farms and enterprises within the project are promoting gender equality by ensuring that women receive equal shares and economic benefits.

Sanvi Bahu Uddeshiya Krishi Farm, located in Majhthana in Pokhara Metropolitan City, Kaski District and managed by Breindra Thapa Magar, a returning migrant worker, is leading the way in pig production in the area.

Thapa has invested Rs. 3 million into the farm and has obtained concessional loans from the project to expand his pig population. With the support of his wife, Thapa ded-



icates time to visiting the market to sell his pigs and piglets at higher prices.

Both the husband and wife contribute equally to their work. The additional loan received from REFP has significantly increased the production capacity of my farms, necessitating the hiring of more laborers. “My wife is assisting me alongside three other employees. “

Returnee Migrants

In a similar vein, Chandra Kanta Ghimire, a returnee migrant from Saudi Arabia, operates the Mina Krishi Tatha Pashupaln Farm, where he sells 100 liters of milk daily in the local market, generating an income of Rs. 10,000.00 each day.

With a loan from Small Farmers Agriculture Cooperatives Ltd Majthahana Kaski, Ghimire constructed a shed and acquired 13 high-bred buffaloes. While Ghimire focuses on farm operations, his wife manages the care of the



buffaloes. “My wife Meena Kumar Ghimire’s contribution surpasses my own,” Ghimire remarked.

Twenty-five-year-old Bhojraj Tamang and his wife Shanti Bhattarai Tamang, who participated in a learn and earn program in Israel from 2018 to 2019, have successfully transformed a barren hilly area at the summit of Lahachwok

in Macchapurchre Rural Municipality into a hub for off-season vegetables. Utilizing 133 Ropani (6 hectares) of land, with 10 Ropanis personally owned and the remainder rented, the couple has effectively applied the skills and knowledge gained in Israel, supported by a concessional loan from ADB’s REFP.

Bhojraj Tamang has leveraged the skills and knowledge he gained in Israel, along with a soft loan of Rs. 3.2 million from Small Farmers Agriculture Cooperative Ltd Lahachwok, to achieve an annual income of approximately Rs. 2 million. By raising 58 high-breed goats, he demonstrates significant economic potential in commercial agriculture. “During the off-season, I have been earning around Rs. 1.5 million from selling mustard vegetables, benefiting from the elevation of my land. The supply of green vegetables commands a price that is five times higher,” Tamang remarked, noting that he married his wife after meeting her during his training



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in Israel.

Shanti Bhattarai Tamang, his wife from Rupanedhi, southern plain, has been actively involved in the farming business alongside her husband, and they have a two-year-old son.

Ganga Maya Timilsina, a resident of Sarangkot in Pokhara Metropolitan City, has experienced a remarkable transformation in her life. Once a struggling small farmer, she now generates an annual income of around Rs. 1.8 million through the sale of vegetables and goats, thanks to her connection to the Pokhara Market via a well-maintained road.

With a loan of Rs. 2 million from the REFP, Timilsina has diversified her agricultural production, cultivating various types of vegetables. Last year, she sold 35 quintals of produce, including tomatoes, mustard vegetables, cauliflower, and cabbage.

Living with her husband and son, Timilsina invested approximately Rs. 2 million to send her son to Canada. “Through goat and vegetable farming, I am repaying my loan and interest to Women Small Farmer Cooperatives Ltd Sarangkot,” Timilsina stated.

By the conclusion of June 2024, a total of 1,798 farmers have benefited from the project scheme, receiving an aggregate amount of Rs.

3,911,995,000. Among these beneficiaries, 1,766 farmers have obtained individual enterprise loans amounting to Rs. 3,480,795.00, while Rs. 431,200,000 has been allocated under the collective enterprise loan initiative.

Over the past four years, the project has actively promoted and financed commercial agribusiness ventures that are collectively owned by small farmers, as well as individual small enterprises, through Sana Kisan Bikas Laghubitta Bitiyasanstha Ltd. (SKBBL), previ-



ously known as the Small Farmers Development Bank (SFDB). This apex development bank is owned by Small Farmers Agriculture Cooperatives (SFACs). The Rural Enterprise Financing Project (REFP) has played a crucial role in enhancing the capacity of small farmers and fortifying the human and institutional capabilities of SFACs.

According to Dr. Shiva Ram Prasad Koirala, Chief Executive Officer, “In accordance with the agreement, SKBBL provides wholesale credit to SFACs, which in turn relend to

their small farmer members. Under this project, SFACs distribute the loan proceeds to both collective and individual enterprises of their members.”

Enhanced Capacity

The project has also illustrated that enhanced productivity and substantial returns in the agricultural sector can significantly alleviate poverty and create employment opportunities in rural Nepal. With increased agricultural incomes, smallholders are able to expand their landholdings through leasing and adopt technology for large-scale production.

The objective is to transition the existing subsistence-based agricultural practices into commercially viable activities that add value. This transformation will necessitate external assistance, which may include capacity build-

ing, business facilitation, financing, and potentially risk-sharing mechanisms such as guarantees. The initiative aims to enhance the commercialization of smallholder farmers through financial intermediation and support for value chain development.

“ADB has been actively involved in this project to enhance the livelihoods and boost the incomes of small farmers in Nepal by assisting them in financing, developing, and managing rural enterprises,” stat-

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ed Anjan Panday, Senior Program Officer at the ADB Residence Mission.

“SKBBL focuses on empowering women smallholder farmers and women managers to achieve optimal productivity,” remarked Dr. Nav Raj Simkhada, Deputy CEO of SKBBL.

The enterprises promoted by SFAC or its members are expected to engage in the production, processing, and marketing of agricultural goods. The project has crafted loan products aimed at fostering entrepreneurship among smallholder farmers involved in diverse agricultural activities. These loans will be accessible through SFACs to their members.

Since its implementation in 2020, the REFP, with a budget of 50 million dollars, has significantly supported the commercialization of agriculture. The beneficiaries of this project are smallholder farmers who are members of SFACs and can access microcredit facilities provided by these organizations. The project will also offer technical assistance to smallholder farmers for entrepreneurship development, enabling them to initiate or enhance small enterprises with a credit facility of up to NPR 5 million.

The initiative also facilitates the establishment of collective enter-

prises endorsed by SFAC and/or its members, offering credit facilities of up to NPR 20 million. Women farmers such as Dura, Adhikari, and Sarki in Ayodhyapuri Chitwan and Lahachwok, Kaski are revolutionizing agriculture through remarkable resilience and ingenuity. They skillfully manage credit and nurture their crops, demonstrating leadership and enhancing their



communities on a daily basis.

In enterprises predominantly led by men, women play a pivotal role, collaborating effectively. In every instance, there exists a profound sense of partnership between spouses. Additionally, women leaders such as the three Laxmi representatives from Chitwan and one from Kaski, along with Megha Kumar Mahato from Chitwan, have illustrated how empowered leadership can drive significant change.

Neelima Nakarmi, an economic analyst at the ADB Resident Mission, emphasized that women are essential contributors to enhancing the overall productivity of the

agricultural sector. The Asian Development Bank not only provides loans for infrastructure projects such as roads, transmission lines, and hydropower but also extends grants and loans to support the agricultural sector in Nepal.

As Nepal observes 16 Days of Activism with a focus on Gender, Disability, and Social Inclusion, REFP has showcased how the strength of women in advocating for women’s empowerment is transforming agriculture from a subsistence model to a commercial one.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) assisted in the develop-

ment of the Twenty-Year Agriculture Perspective Plan (APP), which serves as the inaugural strategic plan alongside the ongoing Agriculture Development Strategy. These documents are essential for the transformation of Nepal’s subsistence agriculture systems. Additionally, the ADB has supported numerous other initiatives aimed at modernizing the agricultural sector in Nepal.

In contrast to previous grant projects, the concessional loan-based REFP appears to be more effective in fostering ownership among small farmers.

Begin Generation

Just a few days before the winter session begins, Rasuwagadhi and Sanjen start generating power, helping NEA maintain power supply.

By A CORRESPONDENT

Badly damaged by the recent floods, the resumption of power supply from the 456 MW Upper Tamakoshi is still uncertain and is likely to cause severe power shortage in the coming days.

The completion of the 111 MW Rasuwagadhi and 42 MW Sanjen projects provide some relief. However, none of the projects can now replace 456 MW.

The construction of three hydropower projects in Rasuwa under the leadership of Chilime Hydropower, a subsidiary of Nepal Electricity Authority, has been completed.

With the completion of the three hydropower projects - Rasuwagadhi Hydropower Project of 111 MW, Sanjen Hydropower Project of 42.5 MW and Upper Sanjen Hydropower Project of 14.8 MW - 168 MW of electricity has been connected to the national grid, according to NEA.

The electricity generated from all three projects has been connected to the national transmission system at the 220/132/33 kV substation built by the authority at Thambuchet, Aamachhod-ningmo Rural Municipality, Rasuwa.

Of these, the construction of Upper Sanjen was completed in September last year and has been generating electricity commercially. Electricity generated from this project has so far been sold for Rs. 300 million.

The construction of the 42.5 MW Sanjen Hydropower Project has been completed and power generation has started on a trial basis by connecting the power to the national transmission line since Friday.



The construction of the 111 MW Rasuwagadhi Hydropower Project has been completed and is currently undergoing trial power generation.

If the trial production is successful and meets the set standards, the commercial power production of Sanjen and Rasuwagadhi will start, NEA said.

Both projects will be producing commercial power this month.

The Upper Sanjen, Sanjen and Rasuwagadhi run-of-the-river hydropower projects generate only about 80 MW of electricity during the winter season.

Under the leadership of Chilime Hydropower Company, four projects with a total capacity of 270 MW were started. Of these, three projects have been completed except for the 102 MW Middle Bhotekoshi project under construction in Sindhupalchowk district.

All the projects were affected by the damages and disruptions caused by the devastating earthquake of 2015 and subsequent aftershocks, floods and landslides, weak geological conditions, problems in transportation of construction materials and fuel supply due to Madhes movement, major floods in the project area every rainy season, COVID-19 pandemic and due to the closure of the border with China after COVID.

NEA Managing Director Kul Man Ghising said the completion of these projects, which had been delayed for various reasons, was a great achievement after continuous efforts.

“When I was the managing director of Chilime Company, the construction of all four projects was carried out simultaneously with the investment of the general public. Although the construction of the projects took some time mainly due to external circumstances,



the construction of three projects has now been completed and power generation has started,” he said.

“The projects located near the Kathmandu Valley, where there is a high demand for electricity, will help balance the power system and make it more reliable during the winter,” he said.

The cost of the projects has increased due to construction delays caused by the earthquake, the blockade and devaluation of the Nepalese currency against foreign currencies, and the extension of the construction period.

The estimated cost of the two projects, Upper Sanjen and Sanjen, was Rs. 7.35 billion, excluding interest during the construction period. Arpan Bahadur Singh, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Sanjen Hydropower Company, the promoter of the project, said that the cost of the projects was estimated at Rs. 9.20 billion, excluding interest during the construction period.

Singh said that as per the estimates, the cost of both the projects is Rs. 225 million per megawatt.

The Employees Provident Fund has provided loans to all four projects constructed under the Chilime Hydropower Company. The Chilime Hydro-

power Company owns 39.36 percent, the NEA 10.36 percent, and the local people of Rasuwa 1.28 percent of the founder shares of the company.

The Employees Provident Fund contributors and employees of the founding organizations (the Authority, Chilime and concerned local levels of Rasuwa districts) and the employees of the lending organization (Employees Provident Fund), the project-affected residents of Rasuwa and the general public hold 49 percent of the ordinary shares.



Upper Sanjen and Sanjen will generate approximately 1.8 billion units of electricity annually. Upper Sanjen can operate at full capacity for 70 minutes during the evening (peak) hours when electricity demand is highest.

CEO Singh said that by storing water in the pond, additional power will be generated in the evenings during the winter months, which will help balance the system.

Delayed for one reason or another, including the earthquake and the COVID-19 pandemic, both projects have been completed four years behind the original schedule.

However, the completion of two projects along with 220 kV Chilime-Trishuli 3 Hub gives a great success to evacuate the energy from these projects.

With the generation of over 150 MW of electricity, Nepal’s system gets some respite in the pick hour. However, the uncertainty is still looming large till the resumption of power supply of 456 MW electricity from Upper Tamakoshi.

आगो, हिटर वा गिजर प्रयोगमा होसियारी अपनाऔं

- आगो वा हिटर नजिकबाट नतापौं,
- कागज, कपडा जस्ता छिटो जल्ने खालका सामग्री आगो वा हिटरको नजिकै नराखौं,
- कोठामा आगो वा हिटर बाल्दा हावा ओहोरदोहोर हुने ब्यवस्था मिलाऔं,
- हिटरलाई समय समयमा बन्द गर्ने गरौं,
- आगो वा हिटर बन्द गरेरमात्र सुतौं,
- आगो, हिटर र बिजुलीको काम सकिने बित्तिकै बन्द गरौं,
- गिजरलाई बाथरुम बाहिर खुला ठाउँमा जडान गरौं,
- बाथरुममा गिजरको प्रयोग गर्दा भेन्टिलेसन खुला राखौं,
- गिजर खोलेर लामो समयसम्म बाथरुममा नबसौं,



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*शर्मा राना हुलेका



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