

DAO Kathmandu Regd. No. 148/11/063/064  
ISSN: 2091-0711



**VIEWPOINT**  
Park Tae-Young



**INTERVIEW**  
Mohan Prasad Gautam



**ARTICLE**  
Sunita Limbu

NEW

# SPOTLIGHT

www.spotlightnepal.com

December 13, 2024

FORTNIGHTLY

## UPPER TAMAKOSHI December 25 Deadline

### INSIDE



**PM OLI'S VISIT TO CHINA**  
BRI Agreement



**DHAKAL'S YEAR AND A HALF WITH FNCCI**  
Advocating Investment Promotion And  
Policy Reform



**ADB'S REFP**  
Reintegration Of Returnee Migrants

## “साना किसानको समृद्धि, कृषिको रूपान्तरण र उद्यमशिलताको विकास”

लघुवित्तको कार्यक्रम मार्फत ग्रामीण समुदायमा उद्यमशिलताको विकास गर्दै समुदायका हरेक सदस्यलाई आर्थिक समृद्धिको बाटोमा अगाडि बढाउन साना किसान लघुवित्त वित्तीय संस्था लि. ले अग्रणी भूमिका खेल्नरहेको छ । ७५ प्रतिशत महिला सदस्यहरूको सहभागिता रहेका साभेदार संस्थाहरू मार्फत यस संस्थाको अगुवाईमा स्वरोजगार एवं रोजगारीका अवसर अभिवृद्धि गर्ने कार्य भईरहेको छ । देशको समग्र गरिबी निवारण गर्ने कार्यमा सघाउ पुऱ्याउने उद्देश्य लिएको यस वित्तीय संस्थाले देशभरी एघार (१२) वटा शाखा कार्यालय र केन्द्रीय कार्यालय मार्फत सेवा प्रवाह गरिरहेको छ ।

७७ जिल्लाका १ हजार ६ सय ३२ वटा संस्थाहरू मार्फत २२ लाख परिवारका ८८ लाख सदस्यहरूमा थोक कर्जाका साथै क्षमता विकास, प्रविधिको हस्तान्तरण, युवा उद्यमशिलताका लागि पैरवी लगायका सेवाहरू समेत उपलब्ध गराउँदै आएको छ । यस लघुवित्तले नेपाल सरकार, अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय दातृ संघ/संस्थाहरूको सहकार्यमा समुदायमा आधारित सहकारी संस्थाहरू मार्फत सामाजिक तथा सामुदायिक कार्यक्रम संचालनमा समेत सहयोग पुऱ्याउँदै आएको छ ।

यस वित्तीय संस्थाको वेबसाईट [www.skbbli.com.np](http://www.skbbli.com.np) बाट थप जानकारी लिन सकिने छ ।



साना किसान विकास लघुवित्त वित्तीय संस्था लि.

केन्द्रीय कार्यालय बबरमहल, काठमाडौं ।

फोन. ०१-५३२०५९३/५५०५६९२/४९९९८५५



**Editor and Publisher**

Keshab Poudel

**Contributor**

Sabine Pretsch

**Design/Layout**

Sahil Mokthan, 9863022025

**Marketing Manager**

Madan Raj Poudel

Tel: 9841320517

Nabin Kumar Maharjan

Tel: 9841291404

**Editorial Office**

Kathmandu, Nepal

Tel: 977-1-4530250

**E-mail**

spotlightnepal@gmail.com

P.O.Box: 7256

**Website**

www.spotlightnepal.com

**Kathmandu DAO Regd. No.**

148/11/063/64

**Central Region Postal Regd.**

No. 36/067/068

**US Library of Congress Catalogue**

No. 91-905060, ISSN : 2091-0711

(Print), ISSN: 2091-0754 (Online)

**Printing**

Megha Offset Printing Press P. Ltd.,

Dhapasi, Kathmandu

Tel. : 977-1-4363624

**Notes From The Editor**



With the conclusion of his four-day visit to China, Nepal's northern neighbor, Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli returned with a little more confidence. Despite pressure from the ruling alliance Nepali Congress not to sign any the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), Nepal inked an agreement with China on a framework for the China on framework for BRI. It was signed after the summit with Chinese President Xi Jinping, a section of people have already started questioning the framework. However, Prime Minister Oli and the ruling Nepali Congress defended the framework, saying that there was nothing about loans for BRI projects. How Nepal's other neighbor will react to the is yet to be seen. Although Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli used his China. China visit for personal and party UML and NC interests by signing the BRI framework, he has defended Nepal's sovereignty. framework, he has defended Nepal's sovereign right to sign an agreement or not. or not. However, we have decided to support Nepal's energy sector, which is going through a is going through a very critical time. The damage caused by the recent flood in the 456 MW Upper Tamakoshi has brought Nepal to the brink of a major crisis. However, Nepal's political leadership, including Prime Minister Oli and the Minister of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation, have been trying to topple NEA's managing director, Kul Man Ghising, who has been on the war front to restore the project as soon as possible. We have decided to report how MD Ghising is working closely with Mohan Prasad Gautam, CEO of Upper Tamakoshi Limited, is driving the rehabilitation work to restore power generation from the plant by December 25. We also cover PM Oli's visit to China and other current affairs. We also covered a story on one and half years of Chandra Prasad Dhakal as a president of FNCCI as our focus story.

**Keshab Poudel**

Editor

# CONTENT

## VIEWPOINT

Park Tae-Young 3

## NEWSNOTES

4

## BUSINESS BRIEF

8

## PM OLI'S VISIT TO CHINA

BRI Agreement 12

## INTERVIEW

Mohan Prasad Gautam 24

## DHAKAL'S YEAR AND A HALF WITH FNCCI

Advocating Investment Promotion And  
Policy Reform 26

## ARTICLE

Sunita Limbu 30

## SWISS SUPPORT

Construction Of A Trekking Trail In Koshi 31



COVERSTORY:MD KUL MAN GHISING: December 25 Deadline For Upper Tamakoshi 18



The Question Arises: Do Former Prime Ministers Prachanda, Nepal, And Dr. Bhattarai Support The Terror Actions Of Hamas? 16



ADB's REFP: Reintegration Of Returnee Migrants 32



# Korea Plan To Initiate Technical Research And Provide Support Through KOPIA To Nepal



BY: PARK TAE-YOUNG

It is my great pleasure to join you today at this important seminar on agriculture, co-organized by the Embassy of the Republic of Korea and the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development, Government of Nepal. This event comes at a significant moment as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Korea and Nepal.

Over the past decades, agriculture has been a cornerstone of our cooperation, reflecting our shared commitment to the prosperity of rural communities and sustainable development. This year, to commemorate our 50 years of friendship, Korea has established a ‘Korea-Nepal Model Dairy village in Kamalamai Municipality, Sindhuli District

and launched various ODA projects aimed at enhancing agricultural productivity and rural livelihoods.

Our collaboration has been further strengthened by the active engagement of organizations like KOICA, which has worked closely with the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development. Through initiatives such as increasing incomes in rural areas, developing value chain of fruit and vegetable, and supporting rural development, KOICA Nepal Office has been a vital partner in driving meaningful change.

Looking ahead, I am delighted to share that starting next year, we plan to initiate technical research and provide support through KOPIA (Korea Partnership

for Innovation of Agriculture) project from Rural Development Administration of Korea to improve the productivity of rice and potatoes which are essential crops in Nepal. These two agencies—KOICA and KOPIA—will create synergies together and continue to be instrumental in our efforts to modernize agriculture, enhance food security, and uplift rural communities in Nepal.



The Government of the Republic of Korea is committed to deepening our agricultural partnership by sharing expertise, technology, and resources. Together, we can achieve our shared vision of resilient and sustainable agricultural systems, ensuring prosperity for generations to come.

As we gather here today to exchange ideas and explore new opportunities, let us reaffirm our dedication to strengthening agricultural cooperation. I am confident that this seminar will pave the way for innovative projects and stronger ties between our two countries.

Thank you once again for your participation and for your commitment to advancing our agricultural partnership. May our efforts today bring fruitful outcomes for the benefit of our people and our countries.

*Park Tae-Young is the ambassador of Republic of Korea to Nepal. Excerpts of the statement delivered by Ambassador at 2024 Korea-Nepal Agriculture Cooperation Seminar.*

## NEWSNOTES

### Foreign Affairs Minister Dr. Rana Address In ICJ Council

Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Arzu Rana Deuba and the members of her delegation delivered oral statement at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) at the Court's public hearings on the 'Obligations of States in respect of Climate Change' on Monday.



Speaking before the Court, Foreign Minister Dr. Rana emphasised that, despite

Nepal's snow-capped mountains and glaciers playing a crucial role in maintaining climate balance, supporting ecosystems, and preserving biodiversity, they were increasingly threatened by the rapid effects of global warming and consequent climate change.

"We are having to bear the brunt of the impacts of climate change in a disproportionate manner. In fact, we are paying for a bad 'karma' that we did not committed," she said, according to a statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Monday.

She underscored the vulnerability Nepal faced due to its geographical circumstances and relatively low level of development and made a strong case for climate justice to ameliorate the harsh suffering the climate change has brought to the lives of Nepali people.

She called out the gross injustice that countries like Nepal were experiencing. "We have been penalised for the mistakes we never made, for the crimes we never committed," she added.

The Foreign Minister highlighted Nepal's position that many vulnerable States were not able to meet the obligations under international human rights law as the actions and emissions arising from beyond their territory also had effects on the specific rights of their citizens.

Nepal's position on the other aspects of State obligations regarding climate change was presented by Udaya Raj Sapkota, Secretary at the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs.

Sapkota underscored that the general obligation to prevent transboundary harm, based on the concept of due diligence, was a well-established rule in international law. He added that such an obligation was applicable in the context of climate change as well.

He further clarified Nepal's position on the 'differentiated' nature of obligations based on treaties related to climate change. He also called for considering specific vulnerabilities of landlocked and mountainous countries as well as overall economic capabilities and constraints, while applying the principle of differentiated obligations.

In Nepal's third and last oral statement, Suvanga Parajuli, Under-Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, spoke on the legal consequences when the States fail to uphold the obligations regarding climate change. Parajuli refuted the characterisation of the climate crisis as a "collective tragedy where no specific responsibility could be assigned".

### US Assistant Secretary Of State Lu Meets Former Prime Minister Deuba

United States (US) Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, Donald Lu has met with Chairman of Nepali Congress and former Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba.

Bhanu Deuba, Chief Private Secretary of the NC President Deuba informed that in the meeting held on Sunday at the residence of the Chairman Deuba, Budhanilkant, various aspects of bilateral interest and contemporary issues were discussed between them.

He also met with Maoist Center leader and former Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda at his residence and disused about the ongoing peace process and its final conclusion.

According to the US Embassy in Nepal, United States (US) Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, Donald Lu, who arrived in Nepal on Sunday, will have a courtesy meeting with the top leadership and interact with the civil society during his visit to Nepal.



His visit is believed to contribute to strengthening US-Nepal relations and promoting cooperation between the two countries in key areas such as environmental protection, women's empowerment, cultural preservation and sustainable development. Before this, he has already visited India and Sri Lanka.

While in Nepal, he met with senior leaders of Nepal to advance cooperation on environmental protection, women's empowerment, and sustainable development, said the US



Department of State.

He also met with youth leaders to gain insights into their vision for the future of U.S.-Nepal relations. Additionally, discussions will emphasize the importance of cultural preservation, recognizing Nepal’s rich heritage as a cornerstone of its identity and a key driver of its tourism and economy.

The US Embassy in Kathmandu stated that Assistant Secretary of State Lu’s visit will contribute towards strengthening US-Nepal ties.

**SAARC Observes Its Fortieth Charter Day**

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) commemorates its historic 40th Charter Day on 8 December 2024. The SAARC was launched by the South Asian Heads of State/Government at their First Summit in Dhaka by adopting the Charter on 08 December 1985.



Since then, 08 December is commemorated as the SAARC Charter

Day every year. The Heads of State/Government of SAARC Member States, President of Bangladesh, Mohammed Shahabuddin; Chief Advisor of the Interim Government of Bangladesh, Dr. Muhammad Yunus, Prime Minister of Bhutan Tshering Tobgay; Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi; President of Maldives Dr. Mohamed Muizzu; Prime Minister of Nepal K.P. Sharma Oli; Prime Minister of Pakistan Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif; President of Sri Lanka Anura Kumara Dissanayake; and Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, Dr. Harini Amarasuriya, have issued special messages in commemoration of the 40th Charter Day.

The Foreign Ministers of Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka have also issued dedicatory messages on the occasion. In their special messages, the Heads of State/Government and Ministers of Foreign Affairs have underlined the important role of SAARC as a shared platform to its Member States for fostering mutual understanding, regional cooperation and solidarity.

They have expressed that SAARC is the embodiment of the region’s collective aspiration for peace, prosperity and advancement. The SAARC Leaders also re-committed in realizing the collective vision of a peaceful, prosperous and more integrated South Asia. Having possessed massive human resources due to youthful population, rich natural and cultural assets as well as facing the common challenges of poverty, underdevelopment and environmental degrada-

tion, South Asia has strong imperatives for regional cooperation, the Leaders have conveyed.

Emphasizing the importance of collective efforts and initiatives to achieve growth and prosperity in the region, they have unequivocally expressed their commitment and support to the SAARC process in order to fully realize the objectives spelled out in the Charter. The Leaders have also conveyed their felicitations and greetings to the peoples and Governments of the Member States on the occasion of the Charter Day. Copies of their messages are attached.

The Secretary General of SAARC has also issued a message to mark the important milestone. In his message, the Secretary General has conveyed that the special Day provides an occasion to celebrate the numerous achievements SAARC has made in consolidating and streamlining institutional structure, norm setting in priority areas as well as programmes implementation to promote the cause of regional cooperation.

This is also an occasion to forge new resolve to strengthen SAARC and reinvigorate all its processes, the Secretary General has said. To celebrate the 40th SAARC Charter Day, the Secretary General of SAARC and his spouse will host a diplomatic reception in Kathmandu in the evening of 12 December 2024.

**Bhutanese King Returns Home, Paying Homage And Offering Worship In Swoyambhunath And Boudhanath**

King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck of Bhutan, who arrived here this morning for an unofficial visit, has returned home.

King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck of Bhutan today visited Swoyambhunath, and paid homage and offered worship there. Swoyambhunath is a World Heritage Site.

Prior to this, the Bhutanese monarch was received at the Swoyambhunath premises by office-bearers of the Swoyambhu Management and Preservation Committee.

The Bhutanese king stayed there for about half an hour and observed Kathmandu Valley from the Swoyambhunath premises.

He is scheduled to visit Boudhhanath after this. The Bhutanese king arrived Kathmandu from India this morning in transit to Bhutan, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated.

Minister for Foreign Af-



## NEWSNOTES

fairs, Dr Arzu Rana Deuba, bade farewell to King Wangchuck at Tribhuvan International Airport.

He visited Swoyambhunath and Bouddhanath and paid homage and offered worship there. The Bhutanese king had arrived in Kathmandu from India this morning in transit to Bhutan, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated.

Earlier, King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck of Bhutan has visited Boudhhanath and paid homage. Before this, he visited and paid homage at Swoyambhunath.

Bhutanese King and queen Jigme Khesar Namgel Wangchuk and Jetsun Pema Wangchuk visit to Nepal was on the way to back home from their New Delhi visit.

Their visit is said to be private and they will only stay in Kathmandu for three to four hours.

### **KOICA Links Tikapur Hospital With Thimi Hospital For Referral Cases**

Nepal Korea Friendship Municipality Hospital and Tikapur Hospital have signed the Memorandum of Understanding at the witness of KOICA Nepal and Madhyapur Thimi Municipality.

The primary goals of the MOU is to improve patient referral services and increase access to healthcare. Both hospitals were established with the financial assistance from KOICA.

Dr. Dipendra Kumar Raushan, Director of NKFMH and Dr. Rem Kumar Rai, Chief, Medical Superintendent, Tikapur Hospital signed the MOU in presence of. Mooheon Kong, Country Director of KOICA and Surendra Shrestha, Mayor, Madhyapur Thimi Municipality.



The agreement sets up an organized patient referral system, enabling Tikapur Hospital patients to access specialized medical services at NKFMH more efficiently. This effort aims

to significantly enhance healthcare delivery for patients needing advanced treatments unavailable at their local facilities.

The agreement defines a well-structured process for referring patients from Tikapur Hospital to NKFMH, ensuring prompt and efficient access to advanced care. Both hospitals will develop strong communication systems to improve coordination among medical teams and optimize patient management. Additionally, the MOU includes plans for collaborative training sessions and workshops to strengthen

the expertise of healthcare professionals from both institutions.

Kong, CD of KOICA plans to link district level hospitals established under the support of KOICA with the NKFMH, which is going to be the biggest support of KOICA in the health sector so that larger synergies could be created and larger numbers of rural population can get quality specialized care in very little cost. Mr. Kong, also believes that this linkages can strengthen health insurance program of Nepal. He further added that this MOU is guided by the 5 Ps, values of KOICA i.e. People, Peace, Prosperity, Planet and Partnership.

The Mayor of Madhyapur Thimi, Mr. Surendra Shrestha stated that this MOU would be a significant step in helping the poor and vulnerable residents of Tikapur for obtaining high-quality medical care at a minimal cost.

The Chairman of Tikapur Hospital expressed his joy that this is a significant step towards bridging the gap in healthcare services for our patients, by working together with NKFMH. He expressed his belief that especially economically vulnerable people will benefit from this program.

### **Korean Ambassador, UNICEF representative Distribute Relief To Flood Victims**

Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Nepal, Park Tae-young, and UNICEF Representative to Nepal, Alice Akunga, recently visited flood and landslide affected communities in Kavrepalanchowk district.

Together the Ambassador and UNICEF Representative officially handed over essential health and hygiene supplies and opened a child-friendly space.

Nepal witnessed heavy rainfall in the last week of September, which caused widespread flooding and landslides.

Thousands of homes were damaged and destroyed, as well as thousands of water and sanitation facilities and hundreds of schools and clinics were damaged by the floods and landslide.

The government of the Republic of Korea has decided to provide US\$500,000 in humanitarian aid to Nepal to support the latter's ongoing relief efforts, according to the press statement of Embassy of Korea in Kathmandu.

Korea has been working closely with UNICEF to reach the flood-affected communities, including Kavrepalanchok, Udayapur, Okhaldhunga, Solukhumbu and Saptari, with lifesaving supplies, as well as social and protection services.

“We are proud to partner with UNICEF to ensure that the most vulnerable people and their communities affected by the disaster receive critical support in a timely manner,” said Park Tae-young, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea





to Nepal.

“Today, we distributed life saving supplies, including WASH supplies and newborn kits for mothers and their infants, which included warm clothes and blankets essential to keep them warm as temperatures are dropping at the start of winter.”

Korea has been providing immediate support to Nepal during difficult times, including the 2015 Nepal earthquake, the COVID-19 pandemic, and last year’s earthquake in Jajarkot.

Ambassador Park highlighted various aspects of Korea-Nepal relations, focusing on mutual interest and common concerns of both countries.

Korea and Nepal celebrate the 50th anniversary of their diplomatic relations established in 1974.

**Eighteen Australia Awards Scholars From Nepal To Depart for Australia**

The Australian Ambassador to Nepal, Leann Johnston and Acting Secretary at the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Baikuntha Prasad Aryal congratulated the 18 recipients of the Australia Awards scholarships for Intake 2025.

Australia Awards scholarships are funded by the Australian Government to provide emerging leaders with study and research opportunities. The scholars bring new skills, knowledge and networks to apply to Nepal’s ongoing socio-economic development and Australia-Nepal relations.

The awardees represent some of Nepal’s best talent across government, civil society and the private sector. They will pursue postgraduate degrees at Australia’s world class universities in diverse fields of study, including public policy, international relations, economics, agricultural science, ecosystem management, development studies, technology and human rights. More than 1,200 Nepalis have benefited from Australia Awards Scholarships since the 1990s.

Acting Education Secretary Aryal congratulated the recipients of Australia Awards.

“The Australia Awards are more than scholarships; they are bridges of learning and collaboration between Nepal and Australia,” Acting Education Secretary Mr Aryal said.

“As you thrive in your studies, think about the ways you

can give back to Nepal—whether by improving healthcare, advancing education, fostering innovation, or championing social justice,” he said.

Ambassador Johnston highlighted Australia’s commitment to support inclusive leadership. She said: “The Australia Awards’ focus on social inclusion makes it a scholarship that offers opportunity to all. The data speaks to this commitment with over 60 per cent of the Awards scholars for the 2025 intake coming from traditionally marginalised communities.”

Australia Awards scholars are supported throughout the period of their studies in Australia. Benefits include full tuition fees, return airfares, contribution to living expenses and medical insurance.

Applications for the next cycle of Australia Awards Scholarships will open in February 2025.

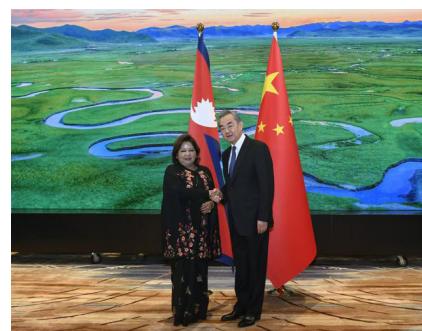
Recipients of the Australia Awards Scholarships 2025 with Acting Secretary at the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Baikuntha Prasad Aryal, Australia’s Ambassador to Nepal and Australian Embassy officials during the Australia Awards Ceremony in Kathmandu on Friday, 29 November 2024. Photo: Australian Embassy.



**FM Dr. Rana And Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi Exchanged Views**

Dr. Arzu Rana Deuba, Minister for Foreign Affairs held a bilateral meeting with Wang Yi, Member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, Director of the Office of the Central Commission for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China this evening in Chengdu.

Both the Foreign Ministers exchanged views on various aspects of Nepal-China relations and discussed matters relating to the preparation for the upcoming official visit of K P Sharma Oli, Prime Minister of Nepal, to China.



## BUSINESS BRIEF

### Korea-Nepal 2024 Agriculture Cooperation Seminar In Kathmandu

The Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Nepal organized 2024 Korea-Nepal Agriculture Cooperation Seminar in Kathmandu on 8th December, 2024 to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations between Republic of Korea and Nepal.

Nepal and South Korea signed a bilateral memorandum of understanding (MoU) on cooperation in the agricultural sector last year November 2, 2023. South Korean embassy said the memorandum of understanding is aimed at advancing cooperation between the two countries in the fields of agricultural science and technology, agriculture and livestock production and agricultural processing and production.

Nepal Agricultural Research Council and Korea Agricultural



Research Council can now advance research activities in the field of agricultural sector. Delegation from KOPIA Division, Rural Development Administration from Korea visiting Nepal and attending in the seminar and express their views to establish KOPIA Center in Nepal.

### NIMB Customers Get Special Discount In Club Himalaya

Special discount at Club Himalaya in Nagarkot for customers of Nepal Investment Mega Bank Limited.

An agreement has been signed between Nepal Investment Mega Bank Limited and Club Himalaya, Nagarkot.

According to the agreement between Nepal Investment Mega Bank (NIMB) Limited and Club Himalaya, Nagarkot, up to 10% discount on room charges will be given to NIMB's customers.

To get the discount facility, the customer has to pay through NIMB Debit/Credit Card or NIMB Smart (Mobile



Banking).

The bank has been giving various discounts and facilities to encourage customers to pay using digital means. The details of the discount are available on the official website of the bank.

<https://www.nimb.com.np/personal-banking/offers>

### Sagar Dhakal Elected The President Of Stock Brokers Association

Sagar Dhakal has elected the President of Stock Brokers Association of Nepal (ESBAN). He defeated his rival Rajkumar Timilsina and was elected as the president.

Earlier, it was said that the president of Esban would be retained by consensus, but it was decided to go to the election after an agreement could not be reached between Prince Timilsina and Dhakal.

Accordingly, in the election held on Friday, Dhakal won by getting 45 votes out of 88 votes. His opponent Rajkumar Timilsina has got 43 votes.

Nitesh Agarwal has been elected as the vice president of the association, Bhaktiram Ghimire as the general secretary,



Madan Paudel as the treasurer and Binay Paudel as the secretary. Similarly, Vishal Kumar Agarwal, Jelina Kandel, Jayant Srivastava and Priyansu Agarwal have been elected



as members of the working committee.

### PM Oli Inaugurates Damak Business Complex

Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli has inaugurated Damak Business Complex at Dapgachchhi, Damak Municipality-3 in the district .

The 18-storey business complex which is located four kilometres away from the main town area was constructed at a cost of one billion 635 million and 446 thousand. The government aims to develop the complex spread over four bighas 16 kaththa area into a major destination for domestic and foreign visitors.



First Lady Radhika Shakya, Deputy Prime

Minister and Urban Development Minister Prakash Man Singh, Koshi Province Chief Minister Hikmat Karki, among other dignitaries attended the inauguration programme that saw huge public participation.

### Ncell Foundation, Saathi, And Zonta Club Kathmandu Unite For ‘Orange the Schools’ Campaign To End Gender-Based Violence

Ncell Foundation, Saathi, and Zonta Club Kathmandu have launched the Orange the Schools Campaign to advance their shared commitment to ending gender-based violence. As part of the global Zonta Says NO campaign and the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, the ‘Orange the Schools’ campaign runs from 26 November to 10 December, reaching over 1500 students across 12 government and private schools throughout the Kathmandu Valley

The campaign aims to raise awareness among students and teachers about the prevalence of gender-based violence, harmful practices such as child marriage, cyber bullying and the importance of taking action to promote safe and equitable environments.

“Gender-based violence is a global crisis that violates basic human rights and hinders progress toward gender equality. Factors such as poverty, discrimination, and climate change further exacerbate the vulnerabilities faced by women and girls. ‘Orange the School s’ is a special campaign aimed at creating awareness in schools and encouraging collective

action to address these issues and build safer communities. Empowering youth is crucial to breaking the silence, educating for change, and building a future free from violence,” says Bina Rana, President of the Zonta Club of Kathmandu.

Bishakha Lakshmi Khadka, Head of Corporate Communications and CSR at Ncell expressing her thoughts said “Orange the School’ campaign has been instrumental in highlighting the importance of awareness and dialogue on gender-based violence. By instilling accurate information and values of equality in young minds early, we can lay the foundation for a violence-free society. In today’s evolving context and the increasing reach of technology, addressing critical issues like cyber security and data privacy is essential to mitigate the negative impacts on vulnerable segments. We are proud to be part of this campaign, and we firmly believe that our collective efforts will create a lasting impact.”

Through presentations and video screenings on topics such as child marriage, cyber security and discussions on domestic violence, a team of speakers from Zonta Club Kathmandu, Saathi, and Ncell Foundation is engaging with the students and teachers from the participating schools to foster understanding and advocacy on these important topics. The interactive sessions facilitate important conversations and inspire active participation in efforts to end gender-based violence.



“Zonta Club Kathmandu, in partnership with Saathi and Ncell Foundation, has combined our resources and expertise to maximize the campaign’s reach and impact. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the participating schools, principals, teachers, and students for their enthusiasm and support. With collective efforts, we can break the silence, inspire change, and build a future where women and children can thrive in safety and dignity,” says Shreeyukta Thapaliya, Chair of the Violence Against Women Committee of Zonta Club Kathmandu.

## BUSINESS BRIEF

### NIBL Equity Partners To Invest In Electro Power Company Limited

NIBL Equity Partners, a private equity firm focused on fostering sustainable businesses, has signed an agreement to invest in Electro Power Company Limited. This strategic partnership will support Electro Power in the development of its 44 MW hydropower project on the Bhotekoshi River, helping the company meet its equity requirements for the project.



Aligning with NIBL Equity Partners' Green Energy Vision

NIBL Equity Partners, managed by NIMB Ace Capital Limited, recognizes the immense potential of Nepal's hydropower sector in driving economic growth and fostering sustainability through clean energy. This partnership aligns with the firm's mission to contribute to the country's energy security while creating opportunities for energy exports that will boost national earnings.

#### A Step Forward for Clean Energy

"Partnering with Electro Power Company Limited for this project will inherent and create value for all stakeholders," said. Shivanth B. Pandé, CEO of NIMB Ace Capital Limited. "The project is carefully designed to minimize natural disaster risks and maximize energy output, which aligns with our fund's focus on secure investments in the clean energy sector. This investment also brings private investment that will benefit the country's economy and future energy security."

#### A Transformative Investment In Nepal's Energy Sector

The Managing Director (MD) of Electro Power Company Limited expressed his enthusiasm, saying, "This partnership will significantly speed the construction process, boost our morale and enable us to accelerate the completion of our hydropower project". Investments like this are a step forward in transforming Nepal's energy sector and unlocking the vast potential of clean energy of the country. We believe that institutional investments such as these will establish credibility in the energy sector, positively impacting the country's economy ."

The partnership between NIBL Equity Partners and Electro Power Company Limited is a testament to the growing interest and confidence in Nepal's clean energy sector. With this collaboration, both entities aim to contribute to the country's long-term sustainability and economic prosperity by harnessing the power of renewable energy.

### Nepal Received 1 Million Tourists In Last 11 Months

With 114,501 tourists visiting in November, Nepal welcomed 1,055,533 foreign tourists by November this year, according to Nepal Tourism Board (NTB). This is 5.40 per cent higher than the tourist arrivals during the same month of the last fiscal year 2023. But it is only 87.87 per cent of tourists who landed in Nepal in 2019.

A total of 108,630 tourists arrived in Nepal in November 2023 while around 130,302 tourists visited Nepal in November 2019. The highest number of tourists - 128,167 - entered Nepal in March 2024 while 124,393 tourists entered Nepal in October this year.

Similarly, about 79,100 tourists came to Nepal in January, 97,426 in February, 111,376 tourists in April, 90,211 in May, 76,736 in June and 64,600 in the month of July this year.

Likewise, around 72,719 tourists came to Nepal in August and 96,305 in September 2024. According to Mani Raj Lamichhane, director of NTB, the growth of tourist arrivals in the country is satisfactory.



"Tourist arrivals, which were affected by the global COVID-19 pandemic, are on the road to recovery. However, even in 2024, the number of tourist arrivals is unlikely to reach the level of 2019," he said.

He said that the recovery in tourist arrivals by November 2024 compared to 2019 is about 88 per cent, which is encouraging.

A total of 1,096,325 tourists arrived in the first 11 months of 2019 while 918,308 tourists arrived in Nepal during the same period of 2023.

The COVID-19 affected tourism sector is gaining



## BUSINESS BRIEF

momentum from the fiscal year 2022/23.

About 1.01 million tourists arrived in Nepal in the last fiscal year 2023/24 while the number was 614,000 in 2022/23.

Nepal received 1.19 million foreign tourists in the fiscal year 2019/20, which plunged to 230,000 in fiscal year 2020/21 in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The number declined further to 150,700 in the fiscal year 2021/22 as the virus gripped the entire world.

Lamichhane said that the tourist arrival is also unable to meet the target of NTB to bring at least 1.32 million tourists in 2024.

The NTB initial estimate was that the number of visitors this year could increase by at least 10 per cent from the peak year (2019). Based on that estimate, the NTB had estimated a target of 1.32 million tourists.

He said that it will be difficult to achieve the target of attracting the highest number of tourists this year as the arrival of foreign tourists is being affected by natural disasters that occurred in the last week of September, reduced operating hours at Tribhuvan International Airport, air accidents and poor road connectivity.

Lamichhane, however, said that tourist arrivals would increase in the coming years if the NTB and the private sector should make their efforts for marketing to bring more tourists from America and other countries, including China and India.

### Top 10 tourist generating markets

The highest number of tourists arrived in Nepal from India in the month of November. Around 19,915 tourists have come from India while 10,981 tourists from the United States of America and 9,458 tourists from China have visited Nepal, according to the NTB.

Similarly, 6,611 tourists from the United Kingdom, 5,148 tourists from Bangladesh, 4,829 people from Australia and 4,462 tourists from Thailand visited the country. A total of 4,395 people from Sri Lanka, 3,926 people from Germany and 3,841 people from France have come to Nepal in the month of November this year.

The share of India in the total tourist arrival in the month of November is 17.4 per cent while the share of the USA is 9.6 per cent, China 8.3 per cent and UK 5.8 per cent.

Similarly, the share of Bangladesh in the total tourist arrival in the month of November is 4.5 per cent, Australia's 4.2 per cent, Thailand's 3.9 per cent, Sri Lanka's 3.8 per cent, Germany's 3.4 per cent and France's 3.4 per cent.

### Global IME Bank Is The Main Sponsor Of Sudurpaschim Royals

Global IME Bank Limited and Nepal Premier League (NPL) team Sudurpaschim Royals have signed an agreement to be the main sponsor.

An agreement was signed between Global IME Bank and Sudurpaschim Royals in an event in Kathmandu.

On behalf of the bank, Deputy Chief Executive Officer Suman Pokharel and on behalf of Sudurpaschim Royals, Independent Chairman Pratap Shah have signed the agreement.

Pokharel, Deputy CEO of Global IME Bank expressed his happiness to cooperate with Sudurpaschim. The bank has supported Sudurpaschim Royals for the overall development of Nepali cricket. The bank realized its responsibility to take sports to a higher level and entered into this agreement as the main sponsor and we are excited for this collaboration," said Pokharel at the event.

Shah expressed his gratitude to the bank for joining the Global IME Bank to cooperate with the Royals in their NPL journey.

"We feel that with Global IME Bank, we have gained more strength in our goal of winning the title. I hope we will give more happiness by winning the title," said Shah.

The NPL is being held from November 15th to December 6th with the participation of 8 teams organized by CAN. Among the marquee players of Far West is the record all-rounder Dipendra Singh Airi.

The mentor is Brad Hodge from Australia and the head coach is former national team coach Jagat Tomata. Sudurpaschim will play the first match against Biratnagar Kings on 18th November.

Deependra Singh Airi, Arif Sheikh, Abhinash Bohora, Vinod Bhandari, Arjun Kumal, Khadak Bohora, Ishan Pandey, Naresh Budhair, Bhojraj Bhatt, Naren Saud, Amit



Shrestha, Vasant Khatri, Brandon McMullen (Scotland), Saif Ali Jeb (England) are in the Far West team. ), Scott Kugelein (New Zealand) and Rohan Mustafa (UAE).

# BRI Agreement

*Nepalese political leaders always have difficulty in balancing the relations with Nepal's both the neighbors. Instead of Nepal's core national interest, political leaders' personal ego and interests are guiding factor in conducting the foreign relations in the last 15 years. Despite several controversy and pressure from ruling alliance Nepali Congress, Prime Minister K.P Sharma Oli visited China from 2 to 5 December breaking with tradition and made efforts in a bid to add new momentum to diversify its connectivity to the outside world*

By A CORRESPONDENT

Despite intense debate and differences over the Belt and Road Initiative between two ruling coalition partner Nepali Congress and CPN-UML, it is yet to known what kinds of BRI agreement Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli signed during the visit.

Upon Arrival to Nepal, Prime Minister Oli said during his visit to China that there is no loan agreement with the Chinese government. He answered the questions asked by media persons at Tribhuvan International Airport and clarified that he would not take any loan before his visit to China and clarified that there was no agreement regarding the loan during his visit to China.

He said that according to the agreements made under the BRI, all the funds that Nepal will get are subsidies. He said, "Since yesterday, I have said that we are not going to take any loan, there is no talk about

taking a loan, I have been speaking here.

There was no discussion. This time we have talked about various projects under BRI. Under each project, we have separate discussions, separate agreements and how to implement it.

While in Beijing, Prime Minister Oli met with Chinese President Xi Jinping, held bilateral talks and oversaw the signing of various agreements including a framework agreement on Belt and Road Cooperation in the presence of his Chinese counterpart Li.

The Prime Minister also delivered a keynote speech under the theme of Comprehensive Democracy: A Journey towards 'Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali' at a programme organized at Peking University in Beijing. He also addressed the 'Nepal-China Business Summit' on

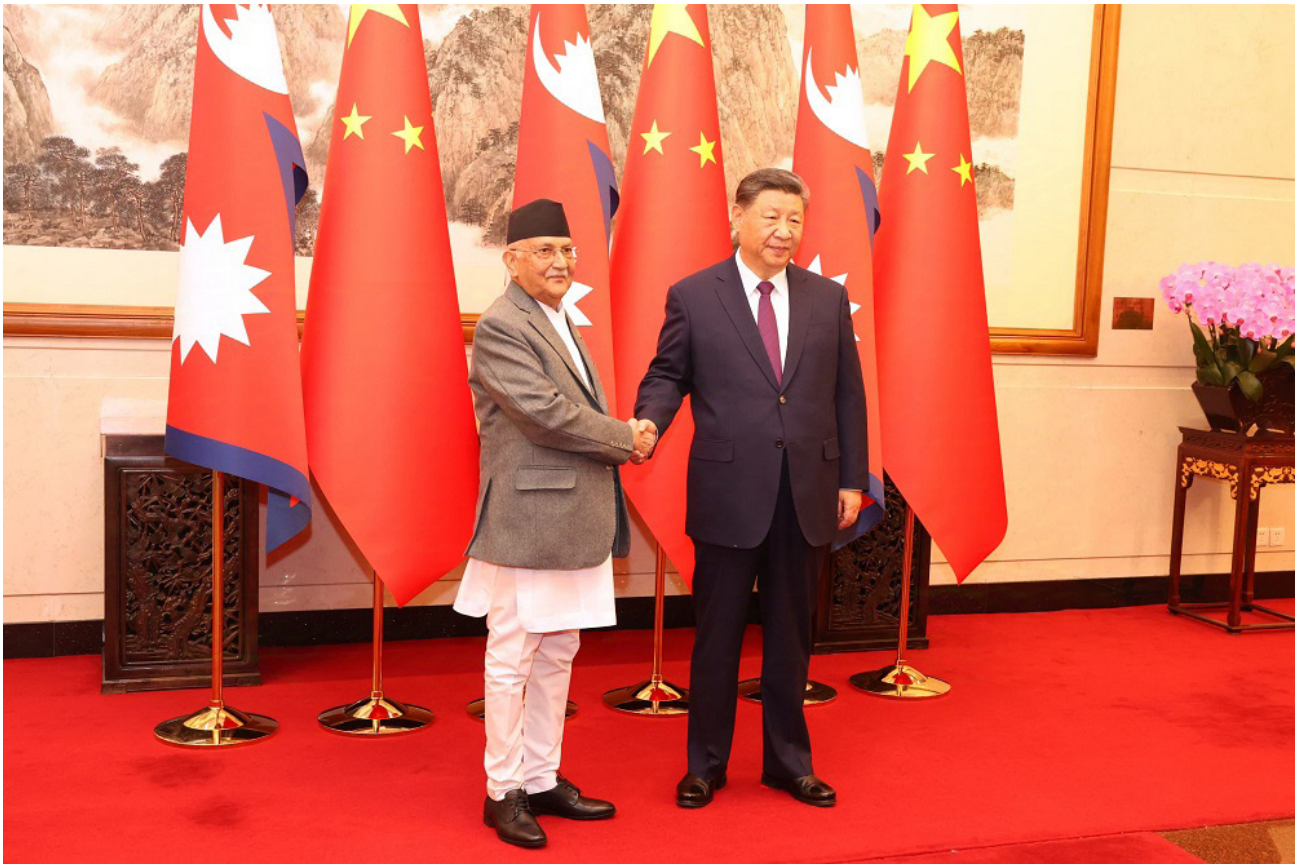
Wednesday.

However, in finalizing the wording of agreements signed during Oli's Beijing visit, the word "grant" and "aid" became a sticky point with the Nepali delegation communicating between Kathmandu and Beijing when the Chinese side objected to using the word "grant" in the bilateral agreements, according to reports in the media.

Kathmandu signed up for China's Belt and Road infrastructure initiative in 2017 and says no project has yet been implemented since a framework pact was inked.

A major reason for Oli's visit to Beijing was to get these projects off the ground with new framework agreements the Nepalis were keen to sign. However, there is reluctance among Nepali politicians particularly Nepali Congress to sign up for Chinese loans.





During their meeting on 3 December, Chinese President Xi Jinping told PM Oli that both countries would aim to strengthen their bilateral relationship through infrastructure projects aided by Chinese money. According to China's Xinhua news agency, Beijing will deepen its support for infrastructure construc-

tion under China's Belt Road Initiative (BRI).

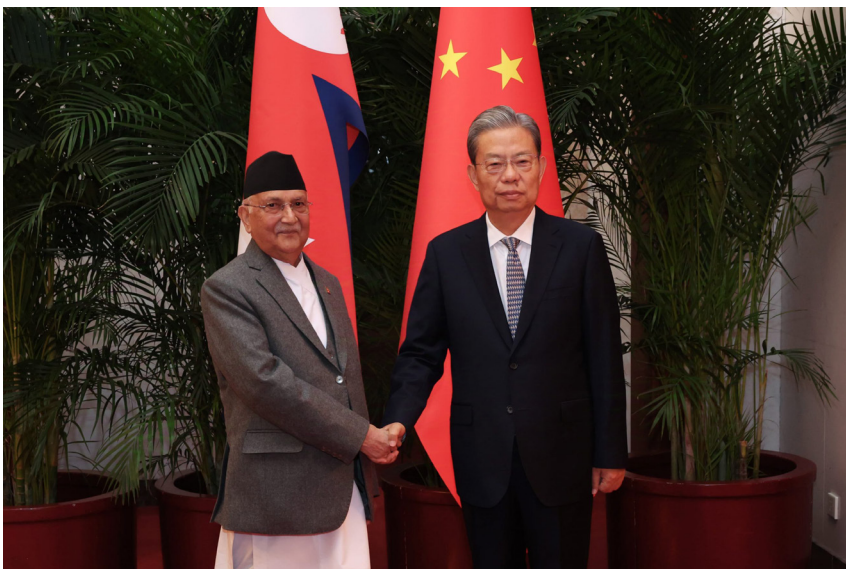
Ahead of the meeting with Xi, PM Oli met Premier Li Qiang and signed nine deals, according to Nepal's foreign ministry. They cover Beijing's support for constructing a tunnel to quicken the journey be-

tween Kathmandu and the Chinese border and the reconstruction of an ancient palace in the historic Durbar Square in the Nepali capital. The nine-story palace was damaged in a 2015 earthquake.

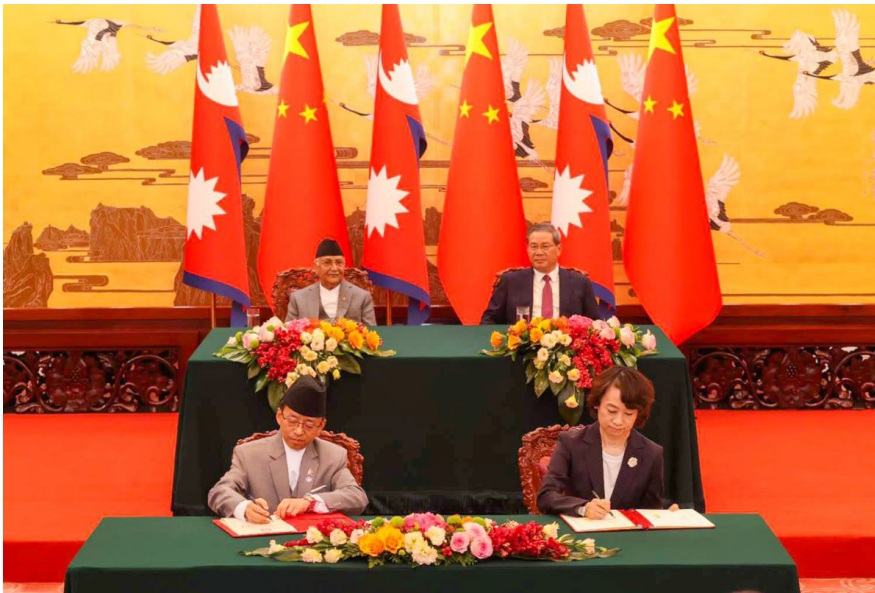
China and Nepal signed several BRI-related deals in 2017 and 2019; during the visit Xi to Kathmandu, the relationship was upgraded to a 'Strategic Partnership of Cooperation', and China pledged \$740 million as development grants.

Indian media has been closely monitoring Oli's Beijing visit, with the Hindustan Times calling him a "pro-China leader" and the Business Times describing him as a "veteran community politician".

According to India's Business Standard, a revived BRI framework agreement was signed between the two countries during Oli's visit. In a joint statement, both sides have expressed their commitment to







on the consent and request from the recipient country. We don't obtain it, if we don't need the loan how does another party force us? Therefore, it is whimsical to say that the government has signed an agreement to take loan”.

What is in the ‘BRI Framework’ signed by Nepal and China, what is the next process

Officials of Nepal and China on Wednesday signed the Chinese concept ‘Belt and Road Initiative’ (BRI) Cooperation Framework, which was taken as the main objective of Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli’s visit to China.

strengthening connectivity between the two countries in ports, roads, railways, aviation, power grids and telecommunication to help Nepal transform from a land-locked country to a land-linked one. Speaking at a program held at Peking University, Oli later said that Nepal would reap benefits from the BRI.

“New Delhi should not overly interpret the China-Nepal cooperation, which does not target any third party. Instead, the cooperation is conducive to promoting regional common development and safeguarding regional stability,” Hu Zhiyong, a research fellow with the Institute of International Relations at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, told Global Times, adding, “The BRI is a big cake for cooperation. Nepal wants to share the cake as well”.

Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr Arzu Rana Deuba has clarified that the Belt and Road Initiative Framework agreement recently signed between the Government of Nepal and China has not mentioned the issue of obtaining loan anywhere.

Minister Dr Rana said the recent agreement between Nepal and China is being superficially com-

mented upon without a thorough study. “We have signed a cooperation-based project under the BRI which does not mention the issue of taking loan”, she said at the Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA) before leaving for the Netherlands to present Nepal’s views in international hearing on climate change at the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

She also made it clear that the projects under the BRI agreement would be taken forward only on consent between both the countries. “The decision to take loan will be done

Ambassador of Nepal to China Krishna Prasad Oli said that the signing was done between the officials of the two countries.

“The Broader Framework has been agreed upon, but I am not in a position to go into detail now,” Ambassador Oli said in a brief interview with the BBC.

But Pradeep Gyawali, Deputy Secretary General of Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli’s party UML, has mentioned on social media that which







projects are included under the ‘BRI Framework’.

According to him, these include Tokha-Chhare tunnel, Hilsa-Simikot road project, Kimathanga-Khandbari road and bridge, Geelong-Kerung-Kathmandu cross-border railway, Amargadhi City Hall at Dadeldhura, Geelong-Kerung-Rasuwadaghi Chilime 220 kV cross-border transmission line, Madan Bhandari University, Kathmandu Scientific Center and Science Museum, China-Nepal Industrial Friendship Park in Damak and Jhapa Sports and Athletics Complex.

The ‘BRI’ was signed between the officials of the two countries. It is said that the document seeks to define the 10 projects mentioned in the Cooperation Framework to be prioritized.

Advocate Semant Dahal, who gave legal advice to a group of power

partner parties to reach an agreement on BRI before visiting China, said that it also included which one should be prioritized in such projects.

“About ten projects, it is written that we will analyze the investment, financial aspects, technical aspects and mainly whether the projects are feasible from an environmental point of view and whether the project will be ‘value for money’ or economically beneficial for Nepal,” Dahal said.

Before Prime Minister Oli’s visit to China, the two power partner parties Nepali Congress and CPN-UML could not reach an agreement on the BRI implementation framework until the last minute.

Nepali Congress leaders have been saying that they cannot agree to take more loans from China.

After the two parties agreed on the

same issue, it was said that a proposal was sent to China.

According to Advocate Dahal, when the BRI framework is applied to Nepal, it has been agreed between the two countries that the project will be carried forward under the ‘Aid’ framework.

Earlier, his party leaders and sources close to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs told the BBC that Prime Minister Oli’s homework for a visit to China has started after he did not receive an invitation from India for 100 days after assuming power.

Technically, this is Oli’s fourth term. In the previous second and third term, he led the power for about three and a half years from 2074 to 2079 by relying on two articles of the constitution, so it is considered as one term. Even at that time, he first visited India and later went to China.

## THE QUESTION ARISES

# Do Former Prime Ministers Prachanda, Nepal, And Dr. Bhattarai Support The Terror Actions Of Hamas?

*The parents of the deceased students are in mourning, and Bipin Joshi's family is appealing to human rights organizations for his release. Yet, none of these leaders have offered any words of support or solidarity.*

By KESHAB POUDEL

In light of their recent decision to endorse a campaign that disregards the tragic loss of life among their own citizens, three former prime ministers Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda, Madhav Kumar Nepal and Dr. Baburam Bhattarai have demonstrated a lack of empathy for the terror victims including Nepalese individuals who fell victim to Hamas terrorists on October 23.

While ten young Nepalese students were killed by Hamas and the fate of Bipin Joshi, who was kidnapped by the same group, remains uncertain, these leaders chose to participate in a nationwide signature campaign against what they termed "Israel's genocide against the Palestinian people." This action reveals their stance regarding the Nepalese and other victims of terrorism.

The parents of the deceased students are in mourning, and Bipin Joshi's family is appealing to human rights organizations for his release. Yet, none of these leaders have offered any words of support or solidarity.

In a display of alignment with extremist views, CPN-Maoist Chairman Prachanda, CPN-Unified Socialist Chairman Nepal, and former Maoist leader Dr. Bhattarai, along with radical communist figure Mohan Bikram Gharti and others, have signed in favor of this campaign.

Prachanda, along with Bhattarai, is now urged to clarify their stance regarding the deaths of ten Nepalese students caused by Hamas terrorists, as stated by a human rights activist.

Despite having privately supported Palestinian factions, including Hamas, for an extended period, Prachanda, Nepal and Dr. Bhattarai have emerged as the first prominent political figures in Nepal to openly advocate for Palestine terror act as



their student life.

Following the Hamas attack on Israel on October 23, which resulted in the deaths of over 1,300 innocent individuals, including ten Nepali students, and the abduction of more than 400 people, including Nepali citizen Bipin Joshi, the coalition government led by Prachanda refrained from condemning the terrorist actions.

Although NP Saud, the leader of the Nepali Congress, held the position of foreign minister, Prime Minister Prachanda reportedly declined to denounce the Hamas terrorists.

In his remarks, Prachanda highlighted that, despite the United Nations resolutions addressing Israel's actions and alleged genocide in Palestine, Israel has disregarded these resolutions and persisted in its oppressive measures.

The former prime minister voiced his opposition to the genocide and suffering

inflicted upon the Palestinian people, stating, "Everyone should raise their voice against inhumane attacks and killings."

For the older generation, such behavior from radical communist leaders is not unprecedented. For many decades, radical communist groups in Nepal have maintained close ties and collaboration with Palestinian terrorist organizations while criticizing Israel.

Radical communist groups, including the Maoist Center, which were responsible for the deaths of over 16,000 individuals in Nepal during their violent insurgency, rationalize all acts of terrorism led by Palestinians as efforts toward liberation. These groups have consistently failed to denounce the acts of terrorism that target innocent Israeli citizens.

Nepalese communist parties are characterized by their use of populist rhetoric, employing terms such as tyranny, genocide, fascism, expansionism, revolution, and liberation, and they have a longstand-



ing history of endorsing and supporting terrorist and violent activities.

During the Cold War, the former Soviet communist parties provided financial support to radical communists who criticized democratic nations like Israel for their responses to terrorism.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, these slogans were perpetuated by smaller radical factions. Nevertheless, the success of the Maoist Center during the People's War has revitalized such sentiments.

In this light, the recent nationwide signature campaign against Israel, initiated by organizations linked to radical communist parties in Nepal, is not surprising.

Previously, lower-ranking leaders participated in similar initiatives; however, on December 9, 2024, prominent leaders of the communist parties gathered at Ratna Park to lend their support to this campaign.

Chairman of the Communist Party of Nepal and former Prime Minister Nepal emphasized the importance of standing resolutely for justice and truth while opposing injustice and tyranny.

He condemned Israel's actions against the Palestinians and criticized Nepal's stance of neutrality in the ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestine.

Dr. Bhattarai, leader of Nepal's Samajwadi Party (Naya Shakti) and former Prime Minister, has voiced his discontent with the government for failing to clarify its position regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

He accused Israel of perpetrating genocide against the Palestinian people in the 21st century and expressed solidarity with their struggle for liberation.

Bhattarai criticized Nepal's neutral stance during the United Nations vote, asserting that the country should align itself with truth and justice.

The comments made by former prime ministers of Nepal, while participating in the "Nationwide Signature Campaign against Israel" are deemed shameful by those who have been closely monitoring the terrorist activities of Hamas and other Palestinian groups.

Despite the radical communist parties in Nepal having demonstrated their own fascist tendencies during the people's war, they continue to label others as fascists

without any substantiated justification.

For the past 70 years, Palestinian and other terrorist organizations supported by radical Islamic states such as Iran have been targeting Israeli citizens. The

last year's assault by Hamas terrorists represents the latest instance of this violence. In response, Israel has taken measures to safeguard its citizens and defend the nation.

Israel refutes the allegations against it, asserting that it did not provoke the Hamas terrorists into action. The sudden assault by Hamas on innocent Israelis and international individuals during a festive musical event resulted in the tragic deaths of 1,200 civilians, including Holocaust survivors, 39 infants, and numerous women, while thousands more were injured. Additionally, 254 individuals, including Nepali citizen Bipin Joshi, were kidnapped in these inhumane attacks.

Israeli officials question how engaging in self-defense against terrorists can be deemed inhumane. Is the killing of innocent Israeli civilians by Hamas considered humane? Is the act of neutralizing Hamas militants in defense of the nation classified as murder? The term "murder" applies to the ruthless killing of ten innocent Nepalese students who pleaded for their lives, yet were struck down by Hamas grenades.

In contrast to radical fascist terrorist groups, Israel stands as the sole democracy in the Middle East, unlike Hamas, Syria, Iran, Iraq, or Yemen. Who, then, can be labeled as fascist? Israel upholds human rights, adheres to international laws, and maintains a free press. Such conditions are not found in other Middle Eastern nations.

Hamas suppresses criticism, restricts press freedom, and limits movement, focusing solely on the eradication of Israel. This is the essence of fascism.

What is the stance on justice and truth? There appears to be a misunderstanding



of these concepts. The truth involves the tragic loss of hundreds of Israeli civilians in a single day, while justice entails holding the perpetrators accountable rather than glorifying them.

It is important to recognize that Israel is not a tyrannical regime; rather, it is a democratic nation governed by the rule of law. It stands as the only democratic state in the region, where its Arab Muslim minority has the opportunity to be elected to the parliament, the Supreme Court, and to participate fully in various aspects of life.

As a member of the Non-Aligned Movement and a firm advocate of the principles of Pancha Sheel, Nepal should maintain a neutral position. Given its significant contribution of peacekeeping forces to the United Nations and its extensive workforce in numerous countries, it is in Nepal's best interest to refrain from supporting proxies of extremist Islamic Iran, including groups such as Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Houthis, among others.

Rather than denouncing Israel, a legitimate state, the former prime ministers ought to have advocated for the liberation of territories from the oppressive rule of Hamas, which uses civilians as shields and disregards the lives of innocent Palestinians.

Established by Nepal's first democratically elected Prime Minister B.P. Koirala and strengthened each of the leaders, the relations between Nepal and Israel remain deeply close and warmth as all level and Nepal has consistently been advocating and supporting Israel's right to live as sovereign and independent state.

With a substantial majority of Nepalis supporting Israel's fight against terrorism, the recent actions of the three former prime ministers appear to be motivated by their personal interests. The action taken by three prime minister has ultimately harmed their personality eroded their credibility.

MD KUL MAN GHISING

# December 25 Deadline For Upper Tamakoshi

*Following a thorough inspection of the reconstruction efforts at the site, Kul Man Ghising, Managing Director of Nepal Electricity Authority, convened an intensive meeting with Mohan Prasad Gautam, CEO of Upper Tamakoshi, along with the Board of Directors, officials, consultants, and contractors. He has provided clear directives to ensure the resumption of power generation from Upper Tamakoshi by December 25.*

By KESHAB POUDEL

Despite a demanding schedule that included attending an official event for a photo exhibition organized by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) highlighting its 50-year contribution to the energy sector, Kul Man Ghising departed Kathmandu at 3:30 PM on December 3. He was en route to Lamabagar, the dam site of the Upper Tamakoshi Hydropower Project, located 180 kilometers northeast in the remote Dolkha district.

Navigating through challenging terrain marked by rugged roads and numerous deep potholes, MD Ghising arrived in Dolkha, the district headquarters, around 10 PM. He was accompanied by CEO

Gautam and Sangita Pahadee, Managing Director of Nepal Telecom, as well as members of the Board of Directors.

MD Ghising's early morning departure was crucial for fulfilling all official obligations, as his visit to the 456 MW Upper Tamakoshi reconstruction site is vital for ensuring a stable power supply during the winter peak and throughout the year.

A delegation from the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA), led by Managing Director and Chairman of the Board of Upper Tamakoshi Hydropower Limited, Kul Man Ghising, conducted an inspection of the project site on Wednesday.

During this visit, they received an update regarding the ongoing maintenance activities at the hydropower facility.

Following discussions with the project management team, consultants, and contractors, the delegation established a timeline aimed at completing the reconstruction and initiating power generation by December 25. The project is designed to operate at full capacity for four hours during peak demand by utilizing water storage during off-peak periods.

The installed capacity of the Integrated National Power system (INPS) is 3,210 MW, with NEA contributing 662 MW through so-





lar and thermal sources, its subsidiaries providing 492 MW, and Independent Power Producers (IPPs) contributing 1,968 MW from hydropower, 82 MW from solar, and 6 MW from Bagas (sugar mill).

Given that Nepal's peak demand is approximately 1,800 MW, the 456 MW Upper Tamakoshi project is crucial for ensuring a stable power supply during the upcoming winter months. Currently, power generation from run-of-the-river plants operated by IPPs has decreased from 1,500 MW to just over 600 MW, and NEA's own facilities are experiencing similar challenges. Consequently, any delays in the reconstruction of the 456 MW Upper Tamakoshi, which is Nepal's largest hydropower plant, could severely affect the country's power supply and potentially lead to load shedding.

The prompt resumption of power generation from Upper Tamakoshi is critically important, especially considering India's restrictions on exporting power to Nepal during

peak winter hours to satisfy its own internal demand.

This situation is of utmost urgency. It is imperative that we complete the reconstruction efforts to ensure the stability of the national power supply. There is no room for hesitation; we must finalize the reconstruction work. If required, we all need to remain on-site for several days to expedite the process, MD Ghising conveyed to the official on the morning of December 4.

He arrived at the dam site in Lamabagar around 11 am after traversing 60 kilometers of challenging mountain roads from the Dolkha district headquarters. There, he conducted an inspection of the 100 MW Tamakoshi Hydropower V project, which is part of the Upper Tamakoshi cascade project in Gonger.

During his visit, he examined the damaged areas, ongoing construction activities alongside CEO Gautam, other officials, and representatives from the contracting

firm. Power generation from the 456 MW Upper Tamakoshi, the largest operational hydropower project, is scheduled to resume by December 25, in accordance with the maintenance plan.

Despite the cold conditions in Lamabagar, the clearance of debris from significant landslides in the sand traps is nearly finished, and efforts to reconstruct the damaged sections of the sand trap wall are currently in progress.

MD. Ghising reviewed the ongoing activities and inquired with field supervisors, engineers, and laborers regarding their requirements for equipment and materials to ensure the timely completion of the work.

After three hours of site inspections across various locations, including the control room area and ongoing structural work, MD Ghising and CEO Gautam of Upper Tamakoshi Hydropower Company Ltd. engaged in two hours of detailed discussions with the consultant NEA Engineering and

## COVERSTORY



the contractor High Himal Hydro Construction Pvt. Ltd.

Time is of the essence, and each moment is critical for us. Following the flood and subsequent destruction, we have transitioned from a state of uncertainty to one of clarity. We have identified the areas of damage and the necessary repairs as time progresses. What we require now is sufficient manpower, technical expertise, and material resources,” stated MD Ghising. “It is imperative that we establish a formal agreement outlining the work plan and completion timeline. Delays in the reconstruction efforts, whether from the company or otherwise, will adversely impact the nation’s economy,” he added. “We are now aware of the issues at hand and the corresponding solutions.”

In support of MD Ghising’s position, CEO Gautam remarked, “Let us document the deadline established in today’s meeting and commence work according to the plan. We stand ready to offer any assistance needed by the contractors.” He further noted, “The

company has been incurring significant revenue losses daily,” emphasizing that he has dedicated over 50 percent of his time to the site since the disaster. “To date, we have already suffered a revenue loss of Rs.1.80 billion due to the disaster,” CEO Gautam stated. “Moreover, the damage has had repercussions on the national economy. If the work remains unfinished and power is not restored, the consequences will be even

more severe.”

From the contractor’s perspective, Taranath Sapkota, First Vice President of High Himalaya Hydro Construction Pvt. Ltd., assured MD Ghising and CEO Gautam of their commitment to adhere to the agreed-upon work plan to expedite the resumption of power generation. “We will mobilize additional equipment and hire more workers to ensure that the reconstruction is completed as scheduled.”

Time is of the essence, and each moment is critical for us. Following the flood and its aftermath, we have transitioned from a state of uncertainty to one of clarity. We have identified the areas of damage and the necessary repairs as time progresses. What we require now is sufficient manpower, technical expertise, and material resources, stated MD Ghising. He emphasized the importance of establishing a formal agreement that outlines the work plan and completion timeline. Any delays in the reconstruction efforts, whether from the compa-





ny or other sources, will adversely impact the nation's economy, he added. "We have a clear understanding of the issues at hand and the solutions needed."

In support of MD Ghising's position, CEO Gautam remarked, "Let us document the deadlines established in today's meeting and commence work according to the outlined plan. We are prepared to offer any necessary assistance to the contractors." He noted that the company is incurring significant revenue losses daily, having dedicated over 50 percent of his time to the site since the disaster. "We have already suffered a revenue loss of Rs.1.80 billion due to the disaster," CEO Gautam stated. "Moreover, the damage has had repercussions on the national economy. If the work is not completed and power is not restored, the consequences will be even more severe."

Power generation at the Upper Tamakoshi Hydropower Project, situated in Lamabagar, Bigu Rural Municipality-1, Dolakha, has been halted due to a landslide caused by continuous rainfall on September 27 and 28, which inflicted damage on the dam's headworks. The landslide affected the control room, the sand thickening pond (desander), and the culvert that channels water from the dam to the desander. The Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) has indicated that repairs to the left-side desander will be completed by December 25, allowing power generation to recommence. The partially damaged slope of the desander wall will be demolished and restored prior to the resumption of power generation. Concurrently, grouting work will address the cracks observed in the walls and ceiling of the culvert, as stated by the NEA. The reconstruction efforts



will commence immediately, focusing on the repair of the right-side desander and the design of an underground control room to replace the existing surface structure.

The objective is to finalize this project prior to the onset of the forthcoming rainy season. The repair of one of the towers along the transmission line, which sustained damage due to rainfall, has been successfully accomplished.

Given the anticipated difficulties in meeting internal electricity demands if the plant is non-operational during the winter months, the NEA team has requested an on-site evaluation to identify the necessary actions to ensure the plant is operational at the earliest opportunity.

On December 4, following a night's rest of approximately nine hours in Charikot, Managing Director Ghising commenced his journey to Gonger and Lamabagar, where the Upper Tamakoshi office and dam site are located. During his visit, he inspected the Tamakoshi V construction site and as-

sessed the ongoing work.

Binod Bhandari, Chief Executive Officer of Tamakoshi Jalvidhyut Company Ltd, along with site engineers from the Chinese firm Sino Hydro Corporation, provided MD Ghising with updates on the project's progress. He emphasized the significance of the project for the nation's power supply in the near future, noting that the timely completion of the project would significantly bolster Nepal's electricity generation capacity. CEO Bhandari remarked that the advancements made over the past six months have been commendable, stating, "If the necessary explosives are procured, the project will be completed as scheduled."

While MD Ghising was engaged in a demanding schedule visiting reconstruction sites in remote areas of Nepal, Dipak Khadka, the Minister for Energy, Water and Irrigation and Chairman of the NEA, was occupied at the NEA headquarters alongside Secretary Suresh Acharya and an advisor to establish the Chairman's Office.

For the past five months, tensions



## COVERSTORY



have arisen between the Prime Minister and Minister Khadka, along with MD Ghising, regarding the collection of revenue from industries utilizing dedicated feeder lines.

On his return journey, Ghising also inspected the construction of the 400 kV New Khimti-Barbise section of the Tamakoshi-Kathmandu 220-400 kV transmission line project, as well as the substation at New Khimti, situated in Sankhe (Fulasi) within Manthali Municipality-13 of Ramechhap.

As the work on the substation approaches completion, the 43 km 400 kV New Khimti-Barbise substation in Sindhupalchok is also nearing its final stages. Out of the 118 towers for the New Khimti-Barbise transmission line section traversing Ramechhap, Dolakha, and Sindhupalchok districts, foundations for over 100 towers have been established, 90 towers have been erected, more than 30 km of wiring has been in-

stalled, and efforts are ongoing to finalize the project.

Despite the ongoing disputes and personal criticisms, MD Ghising continues to conduct regular project visits across various regions of Nepal. With nearly 99 percent electricity coverage in the country, it is crucial to avoid any interrup-

tions in the development of new projects and the sustainability of existing ones to ensure a consistent power supply.

In the past month, he has traveled to key regions to oversee the ongoing construction projects and rehabilitation efforts for flood-damaged areas in remote parts of Nepal. During this period, three hydropower initiatives—the Upper Sanjen Hydroelectric Project (14.8 MW), the Sanjen Hydroelectric Project (42.5 MW), and the 111 MW Rasuwagadhi Hydropower Project—were successfully commissioned and integrated into the national grid via the 220 kV Chilime-Trishuli 3B Hub. Additionally, the 102 MW Middle Bhotekoshi Project is nearing the final stages of power generation.

Through his site visits, Managing Director Ghising has played a crucial role in advancing significant transmission line projects, including the 220 kV Chilime

Trishuli 3B transmission line and substation, the 400 kV Inaruwa-Dhalkebar and Dhalkebar-Nijgadh lines, as well as the 200 kV





Bardaghat-New Butwal line.

After conducting these inspections and providing guidance, MD Ghising returned home late at night on Thursday, the 5th, traveling along the BP Highway and observing the illuminated villages atop the hills and those nestled below and in the valleys. Despite having spent nearly eight years in his role as managing director, with over 70 percent of his time dedicated to traveling throughout the country, he considers this investment of time to be immensely rewarding, particularly when he witnesses the widespread illumination across the nation.

During his childhood, MD Ghising reminisced about the anticipation surrounding Maghhe Sankrati and Saune Sankrati, when the bright light atop the hill would finally be visible. “The hills would vanish into darkness,” he recalled, reflecting on his experiences while overseeing the Upper Tamakoshi hydropower project during his initial term as Managing Di-



rector from 2016 to 2020, a period during which he made over 20 visits to the site.

Since its commissioning three and a half years ago, the 456 MW Upper Tamakoshi Hydropower Project, the largest of its kind in Nepal, has been operating effectively, contributing significantly to the nation’s energy sector. However, on September 27 and 28, land-

slides caused damage to the control room, the desander, and the canal that channels water from the dam to the desander, leading to operational challenges and interruptions in power generation. Interestingly, Ghising finds himself in a similar position as the current Managing Director of NEA and Chairman of the company, both of whom share his commitment to resolving these issues. With CEO Gautam as a dependable ally, MD Ghising is well-positioned to tackle the challenges ahead and prevent further power outages.



Despite dedicating two full days to intensive work, he maintains a robust physical presence. “I derive immense satisfaction from my work when I witness brighter lights illuminating the villages,” MD Ghising stated, gesturing towards a well-lit home perched on the hill along the BP Highway. The successful rehabilitation of the 456 MW Upper Tamakoshi is essential for achieving this vision.

## Upper Tamakoshi Will Generate Power From December 25: CEO Gautam

*MOHAN PRASAD GAUTAM, the Chief Executive Officer of Upper Tamakoshi Hydropower Limited (UTKHPL), has been actively involved in efforts to recommence power generation at the 456 MW plants, which was severely affected by landslides on September 26 and 27, 2024. These landslides caused the destruction of the control buildings and significant damage to the sand trap at Lamabagar-1 in Bigu Rural Municipality, Dolakha. Additionally, the heavy rains washed away part of the access road to the dam site in Kavrebhir. To address these challenges, CEO Gautam has spent significant time on-site, overseeing the reconstruction of road and mountain cliff as well as clearing debris. After a four-day site visit and the implementation of a maintenance schedule with the goal of achieving partial power generation by December 25, he returned to Kathmandu. During a recent inspection on December 3-4 with a senior team, CEO Gautam shared insights with **NEW SPOTLIGHT** regarding the ongoing recovery efforts.*

### **What is your assessment of the current status of the rehabilitation efforts?**

We have moved from a phase of uncertainty about the extent of the damage and needed repairs to a phase of clarity. We now have detailed knowledge of the damage, its location, and its magnitude. After rehabilitating approximately 300 meters of road in Kavre Bhir and clearing debris, our current focus is on restoring the damaged section of the sand trap. As per our recent agreement, the production deadline has been set for December 25. I am optimistic that we will meet this timeline considering the current circumstances.

### **As you are aware, generating power from the 456-MW Upper Tamakoshi, the largest operational hydropower project, is crucial during the demanding winter months. What urgent steps has the company taken to resume early generation?**

Despite various procedural and legal challenges, we have successfully mobilized contractors to the site. As the CEO of UTKHPL, I have made all significant and necessary decisions. This proactive approach is a key factor enabling us to partially resume operations by December 25, in alignment with the project's maintenance schedule.

### **What caused the power generation to stop?**

Power generation at the project has been halted since a landslide, triggered by continuous rainfall on September 27 and 28, caused damage to structures in the dam area. This including the headwork, control room, sand

thickening pond (desander), and the canal (culvert) that directs water from the dam to the desander. The left sand trap is set to undergo repairs by December 25, after which partial power generation will resume.

### **Where is the current work taking place?**

Efforts are currently focused on the partially damaged old slope of the desander wall, which is scheduled for demolition and repair before power generation resumes. Concurrently, grouting is being applied to the cracks in the walls and ceiling of the culvert.

### **What additional reconstruction activities are planned?**

The reconstruction efforts will begin immediately with the repair of the alternate sand trap located on the right, along with the design of a new underground control room to replace the existing surface facility. The goal is to complete this work before the upcoming rainy season. Additionally, maintenance on one of the towers of the project's transmission line, which was damaged by the rain, has been successfully finished.

### **How was the acceleration of rehabilitation work achieved following the recent inspection by a high-level team?**

A recent inspection conducted by a team from NEA, which included the Managing Director of NEA and the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Upper Tama-





koshi Hydropower Limited, Kul Man Ghising, along with board members, has expedited the process by providing a written work schedule for the resumption of power generation. Following discussions with project management, consultants, and contractors, the team has established a timeline to complete the reconstruction and initiate power generation by December 25.

#### **What level of pressure are you currently under?**

The Ministry and the NEA are deeply concerned about the resumption of power generation, as it is crucial to meet internal power demand and supply during the winter months. Minister of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation Deepak Khadka and Minister of State of Energy Water Resources and Irrigation Purna Bahadur Tamang visited the sites soon after they were damaged and have consistently directing and monitoring progress. These concerns led to a recent on-site assessment to identify the necessary measures to make the plant operational as quickly as possible.

#### **Do you believe it is feasible to restart by December 25th?**

Currently, efforts have already been initiated to resume power generation in accordance with the established timeline making it feasible. All possible measures have been implemented for the timely maintenance of the damaged desanders, culvert, and control room. We have devised a schedule to complete the essential repairs to facilitate the resumption of power generation by December 25th.

#### **What was the extent of damage inflicted on the company by the flood?**

The damage was substantial, particularly in terms of revenue. The losses incurred from the natural disaster are estimated at Rs. 1.5 billion. Up until the last week of October from shutting down on 27 September, we were losing Rs. 40 million daily and we are currently facing a daily revenue loss of 15 million rupees due to the halt in power generation. It is anticipated that it will take approximately six months to restore full operations.

DHAKAL'S YEAR AND A HALF WITH FNCCI

# Advocating Investment Promotion And Policy Reform

*Chandra Prasad Dhakal has completed his one and a half year tenure as the President of Federation of Nepali Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) and continues to advocate for investment promotion and policy reform.*

By A CORRESPONDENT

As founder of Apple Inc. Steve Jobs once said, the person who want to change, he does not need life time but can bring the reform and change given time for his or her role. This has been proved by Chandra Prasad Dhakal, President of FNCCI.

For many, one and half year is too short to complete the remarkable work. This is not the case with President Dhakal who has made all his efforts and dedication to spare each of his valuable time for advocacy for investment promotion and policy reform.

From the first day of his office, President Dhakal has faced the most challenging movement. The day after the new Executive Committee took charge, news came that the National Assembly had passed a law to bring

the private sector under the scope of investigation for abuse of authority.

This was an incident that was approved by the upper house of parliament under the provisions that would have far-reaching impact on the private sector and could affect the investment itself. The leadership of the Federation immediately discussed the matter with the then Chief Whip of the largest party in Parliament, Ramesh Ukhari. Immediately, the Congress Parliamentary Party held a discussion at the Parliament Secretariat and called the leading private sector organizations.

There, the private sector, including Chairman Dhakal, tried to remind why the authority should not enter the private sector. After that, there were repeated discussions with Nepali Congress Chairman Sher Bahadur Deuba, CPN UML Chairman and Prime Min-

ister KP Sharma Oli, and then Prime Minister and Maoist Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda. The bill went to the State System Committee of the House of Representatives and discussion began.

The Federation felt the need to educate everyone on why the private sector was important. In collaboration with the International Finance Corporation under the World Bank Group, a study report called State of Private Sector was published in May 2080.

It showed for the first time the contribution of the private sector to the economy. According to it, it contributed 81 percent to the economy and 86 percent to employment. It was also found that many people use it as a reference material.

To take this issue to its logical con-



clusion, on 2 Bhadra 2081, the Federation organized an interaction with members of the Federal Parliament on policy reforms for sustainable economic development.

In addition to the Abuse of Authority Investigation Commission Bill, more than 12 bills related to the private sector such as power, national dignity, customs, school education, etc. were discussed in the Parliament. About 175 MPs from both parliaments were present.

On Bhadra 4, 2081, the Federation submitted a written letter to the State Law Committee to remove the provision in the Law on the Commission for Investigation of Abuse of Authority and the Prevention of Corruption that the private sector should also be investigated by the authority.

Now the political parties have agreed to stop the authority's entry into the private sector. The controversial issue for next year is dedicated and trunk lines. The dispute from almost five years ago flared up again in Bhadra 2080.

After the Electricity Authority asked the industries to cut the power lines over a controversial issue, the then Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal, in front of the team led by Federation President Dhakal, ordered the Managing Director of the Authority, Kulman



Ghisingh, to cut the lines.

Although the dispute seemed to be resolved for three months, the Pushma Authority immediately cut the line. Pros and cons were discussed. If the affected industry remained in opposition, the authority continued to insist on collecting the arrears anyway.

As a result, the Federation submitted a proposal to the government to form a high-level commission to find a sustainable solution to the dispute, and issued a statement on the issue on the 9th of Pusha, 2080. The request of the

Federation was that the Commission should work to pay the Will based on the evidence.

Immediately after that, a commission was formed under the chairmanship of former Supreme Court Judge Girish Chandra Lal on 24th Pushh 2080. And the commission also submitted the report. Even after that, there were many debates and discussions whether to implement the report of the commission or not.

But finally, on the 26th of Kartik 2081, the government decided to implement the report of the commission. This issue is now solution oriented. Another challenge was to improve the investment environment, which has been disturbed for the past three years under the leadership of the Congress government and continues to be disturbed.

The accumulation of some \$7 billion of investable funds in banks is evidence that domestic investors do not want to invest, while foreign investment has declined by 60 percent compared to three years ago to some \$6-9 billion.

That is zero decimal 2 percent of gross domestic product. Cambodia, which became a member of the World Trade Organization along with Nepal, has 12





and a half percent of foreign investment of gross domestic product while it is higher than 4 percent in the least developed countries like Rwanda, Ethiopia and Bangladesh.

The executive committee meeting held in Dhorpatan of the Federation decided to establish an investment company on the initiative of the Federation and channel the small investments from all over the country to various sectors.

The company was not managed by the Federation, but it was initially promoted and had a separate board of directors and it was promoted so that all members and non-members of the Federation were also investors. Another objective of the company, which has a capital of up to 10 billion rupees, is to encourage the private sector to invest and to convey the message that large projects can be implemented by mobilizing local capital.

In addition, 4 major investment conferences were organized outside the country during this period to promote Nepal abroad. The Nepal-China Business Summit was organized twice in China.

Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli was the chief guest at the summit held in September 2023 and then Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli was the chief guest on December 4, 2024.

China's Vice Minister of Commerce Liang Jie was the special guest in both the programs and about one and a half hundred Chinese entrepreneurs and businessmen attended the programs. The Federation organized the conference in collaboration with the Chinese partner organization CCPIT.

The Nepal-India Summit was held in New Delhi on June 18, 2020. India's Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal was the special guest at the summit where then Prime Minister Dahal was the chief guest.

Then Nepal Dubai Business Forum was organized in Dubai on 14th of Mansir 2080. A successful program

was held in co-organization with Dubai Chambers which is very influential in the world.

About 170 industrialists participated in the event which was attended by the then Prime Minister of Nepal, Dahal. On the 20th and 21st of Kartik 2080, the conference of Asia Pacific Regional Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CACI) was organized in Nepal.

After Cambodia expressed its inability to organize the conference, the conference held in Nepal was attended by about 200 businessmen, including about 60 foreigners. For the first time, a conference for women entrepreneurs was held outside the capital in Bhairahawa.

In the presence of King Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani of Qatar and the then Prime Minister of Nepal Dahal, an agreement between the Federation and Qatar Chamber was signed in Kathmandu on 12 Baisakh 2081 for the establishment of Nepal-Qatar Joint Commercial Council comprising the private sectors of Nepal and Qatar.

Subsequently, the presidential meeting was held in Doha. It was agreed to establish the BIMSTEC Chamber of Commerce at the BIMSTEC Business Summit 2024 to be held in New Delhi, India on August 6-7, 2024. His proposal was made by President Dhakal at a similar conference held in Kolkata in June 2023.





After continuous participation in the international investment conferences of the Federation, the draft of the bilateral investment agreement was approved by the Council of Ministers after continuous demands in the relevant bodies regarding the need for bilateral investment agreements with potential investment countries.

Discussions to reach an agreement with some countries have progressed. The Federation is facilitating them. At the third investment conference held on the 16th and 17th of Baisakh, 2081, the laws that hindered investment were reformed at the request of the private sector.

This is the beginning of the reform. Meanwhile, the Federation has realized that it is necessary to move forward with the New Phase Reform Plan for structural reforms. On Asoj 25, 2080, the federation held a large-scale economic discussion program and demanded that a new phase of economic reform should be implemented along with the current capital loan guidelines and other reforms, and for this, the federation demanded the formation of a high-level commission.

Meanwhile, some of the demands were addressed in the third quarter review of last year's monetary policy. There were some changes in the current capital loan guidelines. Although it was a little relief, not all entrepreneurs could feel the complete relief.

The monetary policy of the current fiscal year included some other points. But they were not enough for improvement. We were the first to call for the formation of a high-level commission involving the private sector for the new phase of reforms.

This issue was also included in the 100-day program of the new finance minister. In the 100-day program speech of the honorable Prime Minister, it is clearly mentioned that the commission was formed according to the demand of the private sector.

Subsequently, a committee was



formed under the chairmanship of former finance secretary Rameshwar Khanal with the participation of President Dhakal and presidents of other organizations. Now the additional responsibility of reform has fallen on me,” says President Dhakal, “we are constantly trying and will continue to do so.

Meanwhile, a special initiative has been taken to reform the secretariat to effectively manage the activities of the federation. Business intelligence system software has been installed for research and development to provide evidence-based recommendations.

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed with Nepal Rasht Bank. With the help of this bank, Nepal International Economic Conference will be organized in the first week of February.

Accounting management has been made online under the daily operations of the Federation. As a result of effective reforms especially in accounting and other activities, the certificate of tax exemption, which was withheld for about eight years, has been obtained. This has made it easier for members to obtain tax exemption certificates.

Software for the management of certificates of origin is being developed. A committee has been formed under

the coordination of Surkrishna Vaidya, Vice President of District Municipal Industry for coordination and further improvement in this regard.

It is necessary to link all the District, Municipal, Industrial and Trade Associations issuing certificates to the mandatory online system. The Federation believes that this will make the process of issuing certificates more transparent. In cooperation with GIZ, revenue-related training was organized in 20 locations during this period. It is organizing capital market-related training in cooperation with the Securities Board.

The Federation has also started providing financial assistance of one lakh rupees to the District Town Trade Associations organizing fairs to help in market promotion. The Federation has also given importance to Corporate Social Responsibility.

About two million rupees were provided for the earthquake relief in Jajarkot and Rukum West. The Federation also supported the earthquake relief in Turkey.

The Federation has decided to provide one lakh rupees for the flood affected districts in October. The Federation provided five lakh rupees to encourage Palesha Gowdradhan, who won a silver medal in the Paralympics.

# Bridging The Gap: Nepal' Journey Of Periodic Plans For Stronger Rural-Urban Linkages



BY: SUNITA LIMBU

In an era where balanced development is vital for sustainable progress, the significance of rural-urban linkages is paramount. These connections are crucial for fostering economic, social, and environmental advantages that enhance the quality of life in both rural and urban settings. Nepal's periodic plans have progressively acknowledged the necessity of fortifying these linkages, gradually adopting a more integrated strategy that views rural-urban interdependence as essential for achieving balanced development.

Historically, rural-urban linkages were often neglected in development strategies. The Fourth Plan began to address the North-South divide (Hills versus Terai) and the rural-urban split (Kathmandu compared to other districts), underscoring the pronounced disparities in resources and development initiatives. Subsequent plans emphasized the enhancement of rural-urban linkages by boosting rural incomes, agricultural productivity, and non-farm employment opportunities while tackling urbanization challenges.

The 15th Plan aimed to foster balanced development by creating robust forward and backward linkages between rural and urban regions, concentrating on agriculture, tourism, infrastructure, and hydropower. The 16th Plan further advances these initiatives by emphasizing rural-urban interdependence, the growth of rural incomes, and the promotion of an entrepreneurial culture.

The ongoing evolution of strategies aimed at addressing rural-urban balance and sustainable livelihoods remains an area requiring further development, and the outcomes of the 16th Plan are still uncertain. While the increasing focus on rural-urban connections is praiseworthy, the execution has frequently been inadequate, resulting in numerous villages and individuals being left out of the advantages.

Despite numerous development initiatives over the years, enduring challenges continue to affect rural-urban interactions. Although some rural regions have experienced enhancements in transportation and communication, many still grapple with issues related to infrastructure, market accessibility, and economic diversification. In contrast, urban areas face the challenges of rampant urbanization and insufficient service provision. The difficulties in achieving a balanced development

approach between rural and urban sectors have been a consistent theme across various plans.

It is essential to recognize that the disparities between rural and urban regions can lead to a range of complications. For instance, the ongoing migration of individuals from rural areas in pursuit of improved opportunities and living conditions, often towards urban centers or abroad, has significantly altered demographic patterns. This migration has resulted in an imbalanced age distribution, leaving a disproportionate number of elderly individuals and children in rural communities. A critical issue remains how to establish a resilient agricultural value chain and enhance both forward and backward linkages. The continued dependence on a diminishing rural workforce, particularly amid ongoing out-migration, poses a significant challenge to revitalizing the agricultural sector.



An effective approach involves the establishment of growth poles through collaboration between rural and urban communities, which can act as focal points for economic activities, encompassing agriculture and beyond. This initiative can enhance the movement of goods, services, and individuals, thereby reinforcing both forward and backward connections between rural and urban regions.

Achieving this will necessitate improved coordination among local governments to align infrastructure, markets, service delivery, and resource distribution, with particular emphasis on disaster management due to Nepal's susceptibility to climate-related hazards.

Consequently, the periodic plan emerges as a vital instrument for mitigating existing inequalities by curbing the urban-centric allocation of resources. This plan facilitates balanced and equitable development by catering to the unique requirements of the rural populace while fostering synergies with urban expansion. However, realizing this objective demands the effective execution of plans, strong local governance, and a continuous commitment to optimizing the advantages of rural-urban connections.

*Sunita Limbu is in the process of completing her Master's in Development Studies, where she has developed a strong focus on sustainable development and the integration of rural and urban sectors. With a deep passion for development, she is committed to researching and promoting fair growth and better livelihoods.*



## SWISS SUPPORT

# Construction Of A Trekking Trail In Koshi

## Chief Minister Karki and Swiss Ambassador Dr. Meuwly jointly inaugurate TDDP

By A CORRESPONDENT

As Nepal is in the process of strengthening functional and cooperative federalism, the Swiss Government has supported a Trail-based Tourism Development Project (TDDP) involving all three tiers of government for prosperity and employment of the rural poor.

Chief Minister of Koshi Province Hikmat Kumar Karki and Dr. Danielle Meuwly, Ambassador at the Embassy of Switzerland in Nepal, jointly inaugurated the Trail-based Tourism Development Project (TDDP) at a function in Biratnaga.

Inaugurating the Tourism Based Footpath Project, Chief Minister Karki said that tourism is the main basis for growth and development. He mentioned that tourism is the strength, identity and development of the province and said that development can be achieved through tourism.

Dr. Danielle Meuwly, Ambassador of Swiss Embassy in Nepal said that economic progress and opportunities will be sought through the project. She said that the Swiss government is ready to move forward by joining hands to strengthen federalism in Nepal.

“In collaboration with 29 local governments and the Koshi Provincial Government, the project will create around 2,000 local jobs and generate half a million mandays of employment through cash-for-work during the construction of the trail,” said Swiss Ambassador Dr. Danielle Meuwly.

Sadananda Mandal, Provincial Minister for Forest, Environment and Tourism, believes that this project will play an important role in the tourism sector of Koshi Province. The Swiss government has been providing financial support to the Koshi Provincial Government in various projects since 2019.

He said that the state government expects nearly 2,000 people to get new tourism-related jobs along this 400-kilometer trail. Minister Mandal said that the project will help improve the livelihood of the people by creating employment opportunities.

The Trail-based Tourism Development Project is a bilateral initiative between the governments of Nepal and Switzerland. Helvetas Nepal provides technical assistance to the project.

The aim of the partnership is to develop

ecologically sustainable and culturally diverse trails in Koshi Province.

Through the implementation of this project, the Federal Government aims to achieve local economic development in Koshi Province by promoting sustainable tourism in the region.

Helvetas-Nepal will provide all technical support in close cooperation and coordination with the provincial and local government to promote local economic development and sustainable tourism by developing culturally and historically significant trails in the high hills of Koshi Province.

The project will be implemented by 29 local governments in cooperation with the Koshi Provincial Government. It will involve the



construction of approximately 400 km of trails and is expected to create approximately 2,000 local jobs in tourism-related businesses. In addition, approximately half a million person-days of employment will be generated through cash-for-work during trail construction.

“Once completed, the trails are expected to attract approximately 80,000 visitors annually, including domestic tourists and visitors from the region. This influx of visitors is expected to stimulate economic growth and contribute to the preservation of local culture and heritage,” said Dr. Prabin Manandhar, Country Director of Helvetas-Nepal in Biratnagar.

Under this project, Chiabaari trekking trail (Ilam Fikkal Srianu) Falgunand trail, (Fidim, Chintappu, Sandakpu, Maipokhari, Ilam) Laliguras trail (Tumlingtar, Khandwari, Numgufa Pokhari, Basantpur, There are Jaljle, Tinjure, Milken and Mandhum

traiking tails (Tawabhanjang, Tyamkedanda, Chakhewa, Dalsinge, Dhotre, Jaljle, Hashpokhari, Mayungdanda).

This project aims to promote local economic development and sustainable tourism by upgrading the stunning trails in Koshi Province. Once completed, the trails are expected to welcome some 80,000 visitors annually, boosting local communities and preserving the region’s rich cultural heritage. Another milestone in the Swiss-Nepal partnership for sustainable socio-economic development!

According to Helvetas Nepal, the core objectives of the project include the development and rehabilitation of trails to improve their safety and viability.

Similarly, the project also includes destination branding and promotion, marketing the culture and nature of Nepal. Under capacity building, the project works for unified provisions of culture and history and extreme sports. The project also includes policy advocacy. This will support the promotion of innovative products and responsible tourism.

“We look forward to future mutual cooperation aimed at engaging local people and preserving the wonderful wealth of Nepal’s culture and nature,” said Dr. Manandhar.

Four trekking routes have been opened by the government as part of the game changing project. Moreover, he believed that tourism would enhance the image of the province if the protest like strike and shutdown were banned in the province for five years.

Speaking on the occasion, the Provincial Minister for Tourism, Forest and Environment, Sadanand Mandal said that the trekking routes would be significant for tourism development.

Swiss Ambassador to Nepal, Dr. Daniel Myueli, said the Swiss government is always ready to support Nepal in its development path and implementation of the constitution and federalism.

He hoped that the project would benefit 29 local governments. Project coordinator Dr. Man Bahadur Bishwokarma presented a working paper on “Tourism and Potential” at the program.

ADB's REFP

# Reintegration Of Returnee Migrants

*Supported by the Asian Development Bank and executed by Sana Kisan Bikas Laghubitta Bittiyasantha Ltd. (SKBBL) in collaboration with Small Farmer Agriculture Cooperatives (SKFL), the Rural Enterprises Financing Project (REFP) is a \$50 million intermediary loan initiative also facilitating the reintegration of returnee migrants into society and promoting agribusiness ventures and productivity*

By Keshab Poudel

**B**hojraj Tamang, a 28-year-old resident of Lahachwok in Machhapuchre Rural Municipality Ward No. 4, returned to Nepal in June 2019 after completing a year-long vocational training program in Israel under a learn and earn initiative.

Having saved approximately Rs. 900,000 (US\$ 600,000) during his time in Israel and secured a loan of Rs. 500,000 (US\$ 3,000) from the Lahachwok Small Farmer Cooperative, Tamang established Harmroghar Organic and Agriculture Farm, a crop and goat farming operation located at an elevation of 1,718 meters in Arma-la, specializing in off-season organic vegetables.

Together with his wife, Shanti Bhattarai Tamang, who also participated in Israel's Learn and Earn program, they

faced significant challenges in obtaining additional funding to expand their farm.

Despite their efforts, when the Lahachwok Small Farmer Agriculture Cooperatives could not provide a loan of approximately three million, Tamang's attempts to secure financing from various commercial banks were unsuccessful due to insufficient collateral.

Tamang found himself in a state of frustration and disappointment, grappling with a difficult decision. Nevertheless, the introduction of the REFP program provided him with the necessary support to remain with his family and within his village.

With a concessional loan of 2.9 million from Lahachwok Small Farmer

Agriculture Cooperatives Ltd, Tamang was able to enhance his agricultural operations by leasing additional land, constructing shelters for goats, and implementing sprinkler irrigation and tunnels across approximately 130 Ropani (18 acres). This transformation has rendered his farm a commercially viable venture.

"The skills and training I received in Israel, along with the loan from SFAC under the REFP, have enabled me to establish and commercialize my farming activities, allowing me to sell off-season vegetables and goats, generating an annual income of Rs. 5 million. I consistently pay my bank interest and have an annual profit of Rs. 2 million," Tamang stated, expressing his desire to acquire more land for further expansion. "I have sold cauliflower, cabbage, beans, and mustard



greens for about Rs. 4 million, in addition to goats valued at Rs. 1 million,” he added, noting that he also provides employment for five local youths. “I have no intention of seeking employment abroad.”

Chandra Bahadur Shahi, the husband of Anita Sen Shahi and proprietor of Goma Agriculture Farm located in Lahachwok Ward No. 4 of Machhapuchre Rural Municipality in Kaski District, has come to the realization that commercial agriculture yields greater financial returns than foreign employment after nearly 13 years abroad, which included 6 years in Malaysia, 4 years in Dubai, and 3 years in Pokhara.

His wife, Anita Shahi, played a pivotal role by securing a concessional loan of Rs. 2.5 million from Lahachwok Small Farmer Agriculture Cooperative Ltd. This financial support has enabled Chandra Bahadur Shahi and his family to engage in the sale of milk and vegetables. Residing near the Pokhara valley alleviates concerns regarding product demand, as Shahi noted, “There is a significant demand for milk both here and in Pokhara. We receive cash payments. With an annual turnover of approximately 4 million, we generate around 2 million in profit.” Additionally, he owns a tractor for transporting hay and plowing the fields.



Shahi’s journey began in Malaysia in 2002, where he remained until 2008, before returning to operate a taxi in Pokhara. In 2014, he moved to Dubai, where he stayed for three years until the end of 2017. Utilizing the initial capital he brought back from Dubai, along with a small loan from the Small Farmer Agriculture Cooperative, his wife established a dairy farm with five buffaloes in 2019. The 2.5 million loan obtained under the REFP program has significantly transformed the Shahi family’s quality of life.

Due to the limited availability of land for collateral, securing a seven-figure loan for agricultural commercialization is unfeasible. “If we had not obtained this loan, our living conditions would have remained as they were in the past,” stated Shahi.

Birendra Thapa Magar, a returnee migrant from Majthana in Pokhara Metropolitan City, has successfully re-integrated into society. Thapa, who returned from Korea and acquired skills in pig farming, generates income by selling pigs in Pokhara and surrounding villages.

“The initiative supports small and marginalized farmers in remote areas of Nepal and enhances the capabilities of SFACL,” remarked Dr. Shiva Ram Prasad Koirala. “Since a significant portion of our migrant workforce falls into this demographic, the project will also address their needs.”

Initially, Thapa invested his modest savings along with a small loan of Rs. 500,000 from the Small Farmer Agriculture Cooperative. However, the additional funding he received through REFP has allowed him to envision his Sanvi Bahuudeshiya Krishi Farm as a commercial enterprise.

“Many returnee migrants possess





skills, exposure, and some savings, yet these resources are insufficient for commercial farming. A program like REFP is essential to retain and reintegrate returnee migrants into the agricultural sector and enhance production,” Thapa Magar emphasized. “Unfortunately, many others are not as fortunate as I am to access concessional loans.”

“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 operating throughout the country. By providing financing and technical assistance to these enterprises, the project is helping to empower rural communities and strengthen Nepal’s agricultural sector - a critical part of the economy that contributes about 26 percent to GDP,” said Arnaud Cauchois, Country Director, ADB Nepal Residence Mission.

Chandrakanta Ghimire, a 55-year-old returnee migrant from Majthana, is now demonstrating the possibilities of commercial agriculture to others. With financial support from the REFP, Ghimire has acquired 10 buffaloes and upgraded a buffalo shed, generating milk sales amounting to Rs. 2 million.

“There is a market close to my residence, and the demand for milk is

substantial. Currently selling at Rs. 130.00 per liter, Ghimire is contemplating the addition of more buffaloes to his operation.

In addition to buffaloes, Ghimire, who spent six years in Saudi Arabia, is also raising goats. “In addition to cultivating rice and other traditional crops, Ghimire supplements his income through the sale of buffalo milk and goats.

A primary goal of the REFP initiative is to enhance the income of smallholder farmers by engaging them in rural enterprises and commercial agricultural practices.



Laxmi Acharya, the manager of Lahachwok Small Farmers Agriculture Cooperatives, noted that over seventy percent of their 1,200 members are connected to migrant workers in some capacity.

Likewise, Rabi Ranabhat, manager of the Small Farmer Agriculture Cooperative in Majhtar and Kaski, remarked that returnee migrants possess the skills and capacity to effectively utilize loans. He highlighted that Thapa Magar has achieved success in pig rearing due to his superior skills compared to others.

Given that a significant proportion of migrant workers originate from smallholder backgrounds, investments like the REFP modalities are crucial for the successful reintegration of returnee migrants.

The International Office of Migration reports that more than 2.5 million Nepalese individuals are employed abroad, with over 400,000 returning to their homeland. Many of these returnees aspire to contribute positively to their country; however, a significant number find themselves compelled to seek employment overseas again due to insufficient job opportunities at home.

In light of this scenario, the experiences of Tamang, Shahi, Thapa, and Ghimire illustrate a potential solution. The



initiative provides financial support for rural enterprises through SKBBL, formerly known as SFDB (SFAC). Additionally, the Rural Enterprise Financing Project (REFP) enhances the capabilities of SFDB and SFAC to fund rural enterprises, while also promoting value chain development and offering business facilitation assistance to smallholder farmers, with a particular focus on women.

The project aims to finance approximately 500 individual enterprises, including start-ups, with a target of at least 30% being initiated by women. This initiative will also aid in the reintegration of returning migrants. By offering value chain development and business facilitation support to these enterprises, especially those led by women, the project seeks to discourage men from pursuing employment opportunities abroad.

“We are committed to reaching out to smallholder farmers in need. Given that a majority of migrant workers come from this demographic, the project is poised to facilitate the reintegration of returning migrants as well,” stated Dr. Navaraj Simkhada, Deputy Chief Executive Officer of SKBBL.

The project primarily benefits smallholder farmers who are affiliated with SFACs, enabling them to access mi-



crocredit facilities.

This initiative offers technical support to smallholder farmers aimed at fostering entrepreneurship and facilitating the establishment or enhancement of small businesses, with credit options reaching up to NPR 5 million. Additionally, the project aids in the formation of collective enterprises promoted by SFAC and/or its members, providing credit facilities of up to NPR 20 million.

Anjan Panday, Senior Program Officer

at the ADB Nepal Resident Mission, noted that the REFP has developed credit products specifically designed to cultivate entrepreneurship among smallholder farmers involved in various agricultural activities. He emphasized that the project has successfully reached a significant number of marginalized and impoverished farmers.

Research indicates that numerous impoverished families in rural Nepal opt to seek employment abroad due to low agricultural productivity, minimal returns from farming, scarce off-farm job opportunities, and inadequate credit access for small farmers.

Neelina Nakarmi, Economic Analyst at the ADB Nepal Resident Mission, remarked that the REFP has a substantial impact on enhancing the livelihoods of impoverished and marginalized farmers by boosting productivity and commercialization through strategic investments.

As the government of Nepal strives to reintegrate returnee migrants into their communities, the REFP’s strategy of transitioning subsistence agriculture to a commercial model is a commendable approach to facilitate this reintegration.



# वायु प्रदुषणबाट जोगिऔं

वायु प्रदुषणले:

- फोक्सोको क्यान्सर, ब्रोन्काईटिस, दमजस्ता श्वासप्रश्वाससम्बन्धी रोग लाग्न सक्छ,
- मुटु, रक्तसञ्चार प्रणाली, मष्तिष्कमा समेत गम्भीर असर पुऱ्याउन सक्छ,
- सुख्खा खोकी लाग्ने, घाँटी चिलाउने तथा आँखामा असर देखा पर्न सक्छ,
- सहरी क्षेत्रमा यसको असर बढी हुन सक्छ ।

त्यसैले:

- वायु प्रदुषण न्यूनीकरणका लागि सवारीसाधनको समय-समयमा मर्मत गरौं,
- कच्ची सडकहरू कालोपत्रे गरौं,
- घर तथा कार्यालय एवं खाली स्थानमा वृक्षारोपण गरौं,
- घर, सडक तथा सार्वजनिक स्थानको सरसफाई गरौं ।

वायु प्रदुषणको असरबाट बचौं र बचाऔं ।



नेपाल सरकार  
विज्ञापन बोर्ड



Drive towards  
sustainability with  
**Global Auto Loan**



**Fixed  
Interest  
Rate**

**8.25% p.a. For up to 5 years**

**8.49% p.a. For above 5 years**



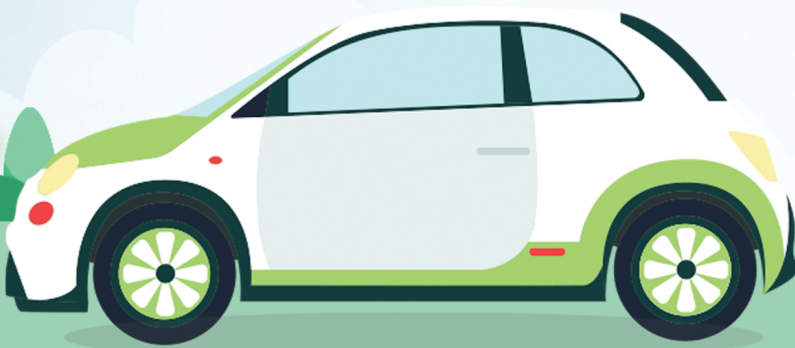
Loan tenure  
maximum 7 years



Free credit card  
issuance fee



Free mobile/internet  
banking for 1st year



**Global IME Bank**

ग्लोबल आइएमई बैंक लि.

सबैका लागि बैंक



**GLOBAL CONNECT**

Call Us: +977-1-5970600

globalconnect@gibl.com.np

# NIMB

## Green Future Savings Account

### एक खाता एक रूख, दुवै भविष्यको लागि

यस योजनाबाट संकलित  
निक्षेपलाई बैंकले दिगो र  
वातावरणमैत्री आयोजनामा  
लगानी गर्नेछ ।



\*शर्मा राना, हुबेला



**NIMB**  
नेपाल इन्भेस्टमेन्ट मेगा बैंक लि.  
NEPAL INVESTMENT MEGA BANK LTD.

+977-1-4545481, 9851147829, 9851145829  
info@nimb.com.np, helpdesk@nimb.com.np  
www.nimb.com.np

समृद्धिको पथमा सँगै अघि बढ्दै