

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



OPINION
Dipak Gyawali



VIEWPOINT
Chandra Prasad Dhakal



FORUM
Maeda Toru

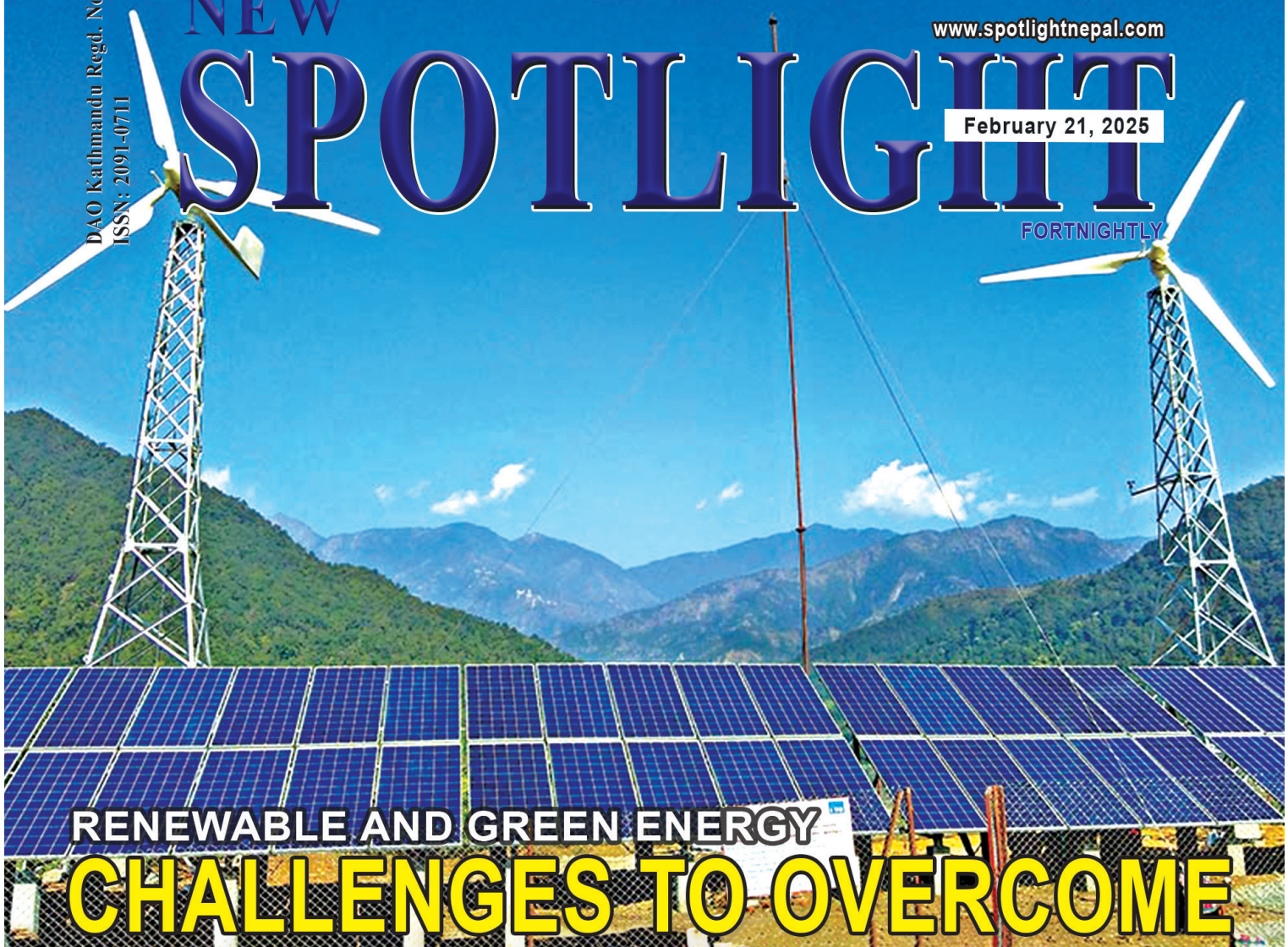
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February 21, 2025

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RENEWABLE AND GREEN ENERGY

CHALLENGES TO OVERCOME

INSIDE



GREEN ECONOMY
A Priority



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More Cross Border Transmission line



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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



In recent years, Nepal has made significant progress in its energy sector, with almost 99 percent of the population now having access to electricity through the central grid and other renewable energy sources. The Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) has been rapidly advancing in the generation, transmission, and distribution sectors, ensuring a reliable and uninterrupted power supply through the central grid. Additionally, the Alternative Energy Promotion Center (AEPC) has been extending its reach to remote and off-grid areas, providing renewable energy solutions such as bio-gas, solar, and wind power. Over the past 28 years, AEPC has played a crucial role in supporting marginalized communities in adopting solar and other renewable energy technologies. With Nepal's commitment to becoming a zero-emission country by 2045, the role of AEPC is more important than ever. As the cost of renewable energy sources like solar decreases and hydropower costs rise, solar energy is poised to play a key role in Nepal's energy transition. This week, we will explore the significance of renewable energy in achieving Nepal's emissions targets by 2045 and the pivotal role of AEPC in this endeavor.

Keshab Poudel

Editor

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Japan And Nepal Have A Long-Standing Relations



BY: MAEDA TORU

His Majesty will turn 65 on the 23rd of February. It is also a privilege for me to host this reception for the first time in Nepal after my arrival in early January.

Japan and Nepal have long-standing relations that can be traced back to the end of the 19th century when a Japanese Buddhist monk, KAWAGICH Ekai, visited Nepal in 1899 on his way to Tibet. In 1902, the Nepali government sent eight students to Japan to learn about Japanese development and technology. These early exchanges laid the foundation for our enduring relationship. His Majesty the Emperor also paid a state visit to Nepal when he was Crown Prince in 1987. Last year, the visit of the then Foreign Minister KAMIKAWA Yoko to Nepal in May further deepened our relationship.

Since 1969, for more than half a century, Japan has been a major development partner of Nepal. Our partnership has successfully implemented various projects and programs in many areas including infrastructure, disaster prevention, climate change, agriculture, healthcare, education, and capacity development. These projects and programs have involved a cumulative 226 billion yen (or 208 billion rupees) of grants, 147 billion yen (or 135 billion rupees) of concessional loans, nearly 6,000 Japanese experts and volunteers in Nepal, approximately 6,900 Nepali trainees in Japan, and 333 community projects in cooperation with various international organizations, NGOs, and municipalities.

Currently, Japan is working on a major tunnel project in the Nagdhunga area. I am pleased to know that the tunnel will be completed this year and is expected to be operational early next year.

After the major earthquake in 2015, Japan contributed to the reconstruction of 274 schools in the affected areas and historical heritage buildings in the Kathmandu Valley. In

September last year, the Sindhuli highway, another major project Japan has been involved in, was severely damaged by heavy rainfall. The government of Japan is now seriously considering ways to improve the situation in cooperation with the government of Nepal.

As we look into the future, we warmly welcome Nepal's participation in EXPO 2025 in Osaka, Kansai, starting from April this year. I believe that it will provide an opportunity for Japanese people to learn more about Nepal's unique culture, natural beauty, and future potential, thereby promoting tourism, trade, investment, and people-to-people exchanges between our two countries.



In 2026, Japan and Nepal will celebrate the 70th anniversary of our diplomatic relations. We look forward to initiating discussions with various friends and friendship organizations on both sides on how to further promote our friendship during the year.

Recently, we have witnessed a rapid increase in the number of Nepali people in Japan. Currently, more than 200,000 Nepali people live in Japan as students, businesspersons, workers, and their families. It is expected that this trend will continue for some time, given the socio-economic situations in both countries. I hope Japan and Nepal can collaborate to make this new important element of our relations another opportunity to create positive impacts on both societies and strengthen the ties between the two peoples and countries.

In closing, I would like to express my sincere gratitude once again to The Right Honorable Vice President Yadav and all the distinguished guests for your valuable presence today. I would also like to thank the Japanese restaurants and companies in Kathmandu who have kindly contributed some stalls to this reception.

Maeda Toru is the newly arrived ambassador of Japan to Nepal. Excerpts of his statement delivered during the reception.

NEWSNOTES

Women entrepreneurs From Africa And Asia Connect With UK Companies To Diversify Their Supply Chains

(Manchester) – UK companies explore business opportunities with 50 women-led businesses from ten countries – Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Zimbabwe, Bangladesh, Mongolia, Nepal and

Pakistan – following a trade mission in Manchester. As part of the trade mission, British buyers looking to diversify their supply chains met women entrepreneurs working in the fresh and processed agrifood, handicrafts, textiles



and apparel, handicrafts, beauty, information technology, and business process outsourcing sectors, through a series of business-to-business meetings.

The trade mission from 10-12 February helps strengthen the UK's manufacturing sector by providing British companies with reliable potential suppliers and reducing production costs, directly supporting the Made in UK strategy to promote high-quality British exports and drive domestic industry growth.

Participating women-led businesses visited UK companies relevant to their sectors, and attended information sessions with sector-specific associations, standards bodies and partnering chambers of commerce to bolster their knowledge of trends, the business environment and UK market entry requirements.

Six of the ten participating delegations are from the global network of SheTrades Hubs—resources centres for women entrepreneurs that are co-owned by the International Trade Centre and host instructions—including in

Ghana (Ghana Export Promotion Authority), Bangladesh (Small and Medium Enterprise Foundation), Kenya (Absa Bank Kenya), Nigeria (Nigerian Export Promotion Council), Rwanda (Private Sector Federation –

Specialized Cluster), and Mongolia (Mongolian National Chamber of Commerce and Industry). By collaborating with key stakeholders and enhancing bilateral connections between the UK and the 10 represented countries, the trade mission, company visits, and market-information sessions support sustainable trade for women's economic

empowerment.

UK Minister for the Indo-Pacific, Catherine West, said: 'Women entrepreneurs across the world face greater challenges to export compared to their male counterparts, with fewer connections to buyer networks and limited access to key market information.

'Our SheTrades Commonwealth+ programme aims to counter that – connecting women entrepreneurs from across Asia and Africa to British businesses, increasing choice for British consumers and supporting domestic growth. It's a win-win.'

Pamela Coke-Hamilton, Executive Director of the International Trade Centre (ITC), which led on the organization of the trade mission with the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce and other UK-based chambers, said: 'We're laying the foundation for women entrepreneurs to meet directly with buyers, scale up their businesses and access new markets, benefiting from global trade opportunities. This trade mission will

enable collaboration and knowledge sharing to drive gender-inclusive economic growth, led by the women entrepreneurs – a priority we share with the UK.'

Susana Córdoba, Head of International Trade at Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce, said: 'We were delighted to host this key international event in Manchester. The contacts that have been made here between

British businesses and those from across Africa and Asia will strengthen our global ties and lead to future commercial success.'

This trade mission was organized by the UK Government-funded SheTrades Commonwealth+ Programme, in collaboration with the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce, and in partnership with the London Chamber of Commerce, Greater Birmingham Chamber of Commerce, and West and North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce.

Japan's National Day Celebrated In Kathmandu

Maeda Toru, newly arrived Ambassador of Japan to Nepal, hosted a National Day Reception at his official Residence in Tahachal today to celebrate the 65th Auspicious Birthday of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan.

Ambassador Maeda, in his speech, highlighted the long-term relations between Japan and Nepal, referring to the historical exchanges started in the 19th century, high-level visits including His Majesty the Emperor's visit to Nepal in 1987 and the development cooperation between Japan and Nepal for more than half a century. He also looks forward to the 70th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Nepal in 2026, as an excellent opportunity to further promote the friendship between the two countries.

About 350 guests, including Ramsahay Prasad Yadav, Vice President, as the Chief Guest, Prakash Man Singh, DPM



and Minister for Urban Development, Teju Lal Chaudhary, Minister for Youth and Sports, Hon. Ms. Bimala Ghimire, Vice Chairman of National Assembly, Indra Rana, Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, former prime ministers, former ministers, members of the Federal Parliament, Ambassadors, Heads of International Organizations in Nepal, government officials and many friends of Japan attended the reception.

Global Library Summit 2025: A Landmark Event in Library Diplomacy

The Global Library Summit (GLS) 2025, which took place from February 5-7 at South Asian University, New Delhi, was a significant event focusing on library diplomacy, knowledge preservation, technological advancements, and international collaboration.

Nepal had a strong presence at the summit, with distinguished professionals presenting valuable research on various topics such as Libraries and Cultural Heritage Preservation, E-Resource Usage Analysis, and Technological Advancements in University Libraries. The summit also played a key role in establishing the Regional Federation of South Asian Library Associations (REFSALA), with Nepal contributing to its drafting committee.

An important announcement at GLS 2025 was the confirmation of GLS 2026 in Colombo, Sri Lanka, and the proposal for GLS 2027 to be hosted in Kathmandu, Nepal. This presents a great opportunity for Nepal to showcase its cultural heritage, library science advancements, and digital transformation efforts on a global platform.

Given the significance of this event for Nepal's academic and professional communities, I kindly request your esteemed media outlet to publish and share this news widely. Your support will help raise awareness among the public, policymakers, and the academic sector about Nepal's growing role in global library diplomacy and LIS devel-

opment.

The Global Library Summit 2025 at South Asian University, New Delhi, brought together scholars, librarians, and information professionals from around the world to discuss knowledge preservation, technological advancements, and international collaboration in Library and Information Science (LIS).

Nepali professionals delivered notable presentations on topics such as Libraries and Cultural Heritage Preservation, E-Resource and User-Centric Usage Analysis, and University Libraries & Technology in Pokhara University. SAARC Library Integration & REFSALA was also discussed by Nepali participants.

Other Nepali attendees included representatives from the Russian Cultural Centre in Kathmandu and Khwopa College in Bhaktapur. A session on Soft Power in Foreign Policy, organized by Nepali students at SAU, featured Dr. Lila Nyaichyai as the keynote speaker. SAU offers scholarships for Nepali Master's and Ph.D. students in various fields.

A key outcome of the summit was the decision to re-establish the Regional Federation of Library and Information Science (REFSALA). NLA President Mr. Pushparaj Subedi presented a draft constitution, and a committee consisting of members from Nepal, India, and Sri Lanka was formed to finalize it.

Delegates toured the Prime Minister Museum and SAU Central Library. The summit strengthened regional con-



nections, bringing together LIS leaders such as Dr. Preethi Liyanage from Sri Lanka and Dr. Dilara Begum from Bangladesh, as well as representatives from regional library associations.

GLS 2025 emphasized the importance of libraries in sharing knowledge, preserving culture, and fostering international cooperation. The summit laid a solid groundwork for future advancements in library diplomacy and digital evolution.

NEWSNOTES

Nepal And France Launch Hydro Nepal Project To Support Hydropower

The French Embassy, the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA), and Blue Water Intelligence (BWI) have signed MoU for the launch of the HydroNepal Project.

This initiative marks a significant milestone in digitizing Nepal's river basins to optimize its vast hydropower resources and support preparedness for hydrological risks.

The HydroNepal project will support Nepal's long-term vision for low carbon energy development by digitizing basin data and providing advanced hydrological insights, including river discharge forecasts, flow duration curves, and flow frequency analysis—even for un-



gauged rivers. By leveraging state-of-the-art AI-powered hydrological modelling and data-driven solutions, HydroNepal will improve Nepal's hydrological data acquisition for hydropower projects.

By collaboration between NEA, BWI and academic institutions such as Tribhuvan University's Central Department of Hydrology and Meteorology (CDHM), the project aims to enhance the understanding of hydrological processes in the Himalayan region under a changing climate and their impact on hydropower generation.

The signing of the MoU took place at the NEA Head office, Darbar Marg, between Kul Man Ghising, Managing Director, NEA and Jeremy Fain, CEO, BWI, in presence of French Ambassador to Nepal Virginie Corteval.

On this occasion, Madame Ambassador remarked: "The HydroNepal project is a testament to the strong commitment between Nepal and France in advancing sustainable energy. France is pleased to contribute to Nepal's efforts to optimize its hydropower potential and enhance climate resilience" to which Mr. Kul Man Ghising added: "Let us work together to making this project a success and turning this historic moment of cooperation into a foundation for many more fruitful ventures between Nepal and France."

Blue Water Intelligence is a French private basin dig-

itization company dedicated to providing AI-powered hydrological forecasts to governments and companies. BWI operates in South Asia, Africa, Central America, and Europe.

British Prince Edward and Princess Sophie Attends Parade In Pokhara

British Prince, Edward, Duke of Edinburgh, and Princess Sophie, Duchess of Edinburgh, observed a parade presented by 274 Nepali youths, who completed selection process and formally joined the British Army this year, in the programme organized at Pokhara-based British Camp today.

Similarly, they visited family members of newly recruited Gurkha Army and acquired information, along with attending the annual Gurkha attestation parade.

On the occasion, Prince Edward said, "Now, you are the Gurkha Army soldier. You are one of the 274 new Gurkha army soldiers out of 13,000 aspiring candidates. You are in a position to feel very proud of your achievement."

Similarly, British Ambassador to Nepal, Rob Fenn, and Colonel Commandant Brigade of Gurkha, Major General Strickland DSO MBE were also present on the occasion.

Thirty-eight coronation medals, two long-term service and good conduct medals were also presented on the occasion. The couple also inspected the activities carried out by residential home of Gurkha Welfare Trust. The home is taking care of 20 elderly Gurkha veterans and their widow. They also inquired about activities of Kadoorie Agriculture Aid Association.(RSS)

Ambassador Oli Paid A Courtesy Call On The Prime Minister Of Cambodia

Ambassador Dhan Bahadur Oli, Ambassador (non-resident) Nepal to the Kingdom of Cambodia paid a courtesy call on Samdech Moha Borvor Thipadei Hun Manet, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia at the Peace Palace, Phnom Penh .

While congratulating the Ambassador, the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia expressed satisfaction on subsisting excellent bilateral relations between two countries and wishes for further strengthening the relations through activating bilateral mechanisms in pertinent areas like trade, investment and tourism. Further, Prime Minister assured his supports to Ambassador Oli in his all endeavors in taking the bilateral relations to a new height during his tenure as Ambassador.

Preceding to that Ambassador Oli had courtesy meeting with Chay Borin, Minister of Cults and Religion, UN

Kheang, Secretary of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Chhay Makara, Director



General of the Department of Asia-Pacific and Tho Samnang, Director General of Department of Legal, Consular, and Border Affairs, and discussed various aspects of bilateral relations and mutual benefits.

Ambassador Yadav Presented Her Credential To Governor General Of Australia

Chitrallekha Yadav, Ambassador of Nepal to the Commonwealth of Australia, presented Letters of Credence to Sam Mostyn AC, Governor-General of Australia amid a special ceremony organized at the Government House in Canberra .

Ambassador Yadav was accorded Guard of Honor at the ceremony.

Following the credential ceremony, Ambassador Yadav paid a courtesy call on Governor General of Australia.

During the meeting, they shared views on various aspects of bilateral relations between Nepal and Australia which is



based on mutual understanding, trust and cooperation and fostered by growing people to people relations.

Sagarmath Sambaad To Be Held In May 16-18

The preparatory meeting of the Sagarmatha Sambaad was held today at the presence of Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli.

The Government of Nepal is scheduled to host the Sagarmath Sambaad, Nepal’s flagship dialogue forum on contemporary issues of global significance, in Kathmandu on May 16-18.

During the meeting held at the Prime Minister’s official residence in Baluwatar, formation of the PM-headed Directorate Committee has been proposed.

Likewise, discussions were held to form the Executive Committee for the Sagarmatha Sambaad under the chair of Foreign Affairs Minister Dr Arzu Rana Deuba.

Furthermore, preparations have been initiated to form the Secretariat at the Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers.

Minister for Forest and Environment Ain Bahadur Shahi Thakuri, Prime Minister’s Economic and Development Affairs Advisor Dr Yubraj Khatiwada and other officials were present at the meeting.

The Head of the State or the governments from India, China and the South Asian countries will be invited as the special guests for their participation in the Sagarmatha Sambaad.

For effective publicity of the event at national and international media outlets, the government has unveiled a portal www.sagarmathasambad.com from today itself.

A pre-event ahead of the Sagarmatha Sambaad has been



proposed ensuring the representation of women and children, senior citizens, youth, ethnic and marginalized communities and classes.

Likewise, sideline events and exhibitions have been proposed with partnership of Nepal Tourism Board, Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industries and the private sector.

PM Oli had announced the organization of Sagarmatha Sambaad on the occasion of the International Year of Glaciers’ Preservation on January 21.(RSS)

BUSINESS BRIEF

NIMB Supported Geta Eye Hospital

Nepal Investment Mega Bank Ltd. (NIMB) as part of its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative, has provided 15 sets three-seater steel chairs to Geta Eye Hospital in Geta, Kailali. This contribution aims to enhance the hospital's seating facilities, ensuring greater comfort for patients and visitors.



Geta Eye Hospital is a key healthcare provider in the area, offering essential eye care services to thousands of patients annually. Recognizing the need for better infrastructure, NIMB took the initiative to support the hospital, reinforcing its commitment to community welfare.

Speaking on the occasion, the Bank stated, that “We are honored to contribute to Geta Eye

Hospital and support its efforts in delivering quality healthcare. This initiative aligns with our commitment to social responsibility and community service.”

The hospital management expressed gratitude for the generous support, emphasizing that the new seating arrangements will significantly benefit patients and their families.

Don't Obstrut Infrastructure Development Works: FNCCI President President Dhakal

Chandra Prasad Dhakal, President of the Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FNCCI) has requested that infrastructure development should not be obstructed under any pretext. He also urged political parties and ordinary citizens to put development above politics and religion.

President Dhakal said that in the context of the government's desire to bring in internal and external investment for economic development and create an investment-friendly environment. Ge



He said the recent activities to stop the development of infrastructure are regrettable.

Speaking on the occasion of the inauguration of the 30th edition of CAN Info-

tech, which began on Thursday at Bhrikutimandap in Kathmandu, President Dhakal held the view that anti-development activities will discourage investment in Nepal.

Aiming at the recent protests and comments about the Pathibhara Kevalkar project, he said, “on the one hand, we are talking about bringing in domestic and foreign investment for development, on the other hand, we have stopped the investment in infrastructure development under various pretexts and made negative comments.

He said that this will not only worsen the investment environment, but we have also obstructed the campaign to create jobs in the country and stop the youths who went abroad for employment in Nepal.

Construction Of Cable Car Will Bring Economic Prosperity In Pathivara: Stake Holders

The stakeholders have stressed the need for resolving disputes over the construction of a cable car in Taplejung through dialogue. The Pathivaradham is a famous pilgrim site in Taplejung district.

They also viewed the development work should be environment-friendly.

The speakers at a press meet said dialogue was the best option to settle the differing stands surrounding the cable car construction. The press meet was organized by Phungling municipality on Monday. It was attended by local level people's representatives, representatives from various organizations, business community, and media persons.

Mayor Amir Maden said Taplejung district was waiting for development works for long. The cable car can be an effective medium to launch developments here, he said, adding that the dispute, however, needs immediate resolution.

The cable car is not only a ropeway to facilitate those visiting the famous pilgrim site in the district but also a means to create jobs and promote tourism, he argued. The mayor also urged the ‘no cable car group’ to join dialogue for clearing hurdles.

General Secretary of Taplejung Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Kamal Limbu, viewed it is essential to forge unity and be univocal on construction of cable car in Taplejung.

Other speakers representing the political parties also underlined the need for holding dialogue to sort out problems and find amicable solution. (RSS)

Nepal Investment Mega Bank Has Shifted Khushibu Branch

Nepal Investment Mega Bank Limited has shifted the currently existing Khushibu branch office to about 90 meters west from the current branch.

The bank has relocated its branch office in Kathmandu District, Kathmandu Metropolitan City, Ward No. 17, Khushi-

bu, within the same ward, about 90 meters west.

The Chief Executive Officer of the Bank Jyoti Prakash Pandey inaugurated the branch. He said that this branch will provide excellent banking services and facilities to the customers. All banking services have



started from Khushivu branch since Sunday.

Currently, the bank has 283 branch offices, 65 extension counters, 66 branchless banking and 266 ATMs. The branch network can also be viewed from the bank's website

NEA Declares Dhanushadham A Electricity Theft-Free Municipality

Dhanushadham in Dhanusha district has achieved the status of being an electricity theft-free municipality. This accomplishment was made possible through the joint efforts of Dhanushadham Municipality and the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA). The declaration of Dhanushadham as an electricity theft-free zone was announced by



NEA's Managing Director Kulman Ghising and Municipal Chief Baleshwar Mandal during a program held in Dhanushadham on Saturday. As part of this initiative, free electricity me-

ters were distributed to households in the municipality that are economically disadvantaged. Electricity theft, which includes unauthorized connections, tampering with

meters, or any other form of illegal electricity usage, is a serious offense that results in financial losses. The successful implementation of this project in Dhanushadham serves as a model for promoting legal and safe electricity consumption practices.

The authority is distributing free electricity meters to disadvantaged households to increase access to electricity and prevent unauthorized use. The authority has distribution centers nationwide where they provide free meters and connect electricity for the poor.

The underprivileged will receive a single-phase energy me-

ter and MCB box with a 5-30 amp capacity at no cost. There is no service fee for meter connection. Executive Ghising mentioned that Dhanushadham is striving to become a municipality free of electricity theft through its own efforts.

He emphasized that controlling electricity theft is a top priority for the authority as it is a social issue. Ghising also highlighted that the final phase of electrification is underway, extending electricity to mountainous regions, the Madhesh area, Karnali, and far-western slums to provide power to residents currently living without it.

Under the Uzyal Abhiyan initiative, our goal is to boost electricity consumption in the country by improving the reliability and quality of electricity supply in areas where it is already available. We are also prioritizing efforts to bring electricity to remote areas that currently lack access. Despite challenges such as unpaid salaries for employees, we are committed to providing electricity to households," Ghising explained.

He emphasized the importance of increasing production and productivity in the Terai region, which serves as Nepal's food basket, by electrifying irrigation systems. Collaboration with local authorities has been key in advancing this initiative.

Ghising highlighted ongoing projects with an investment of approximately 40 billion rupees aimed at expanding and enhancing infrastructure for transmission and distribution. These efforts are focused on ensuring sufficient, reliable, and high-quality electricity supply in the Madhesh province, which holds significant potential for growth in the agricultural and industrial sectors.

The municipal head highlighted the progress made in irrigation and household electrification, suggesting the need for subsidies to promote electric stoves over cooking gas. A play was performed during the event to emphasize the social impact of electricity theft.

In the Madhesh province, the electricity leakage towards distribution stands at 14.20 percent in the current fiscal year 2081-82. The target for this year is to reduce electricity leakage in the province to 11.9 percent.

Efforts are being made to control non-technical leakages through campaigns targeting theft prevention, tax collection enforcement, and strict actions against meter tampering. The authority is also promoting meter installations and monitoring customers without meter readings.

Each distribution center has been assigned a leakage control target, with activities being carried out accordingly. The authority successfully reduced system electricity leakage to approximately 12.73 percent last year, down from 25.78 percent eight years ago.

Online Labour Permit Approval Begins From UAE

The government has started the service of online labour permit approval from United Arab Emirates (UAE).

BUSINESS BRIEF

Minister for Labour, Employment and Social Security Sarat Singh Bhandari marked the beginning of the service amid



an event in Dubai on Thursday, according to the Embassy of Nepal in Abu Dhabi.

On the occasion, Minister Bhandari said the government will gradually improve the services making them simplified, accessible and technology-friendly by considering the welfare of Nepali migrant workers in the countries of destination.

He stated that the provision of online labour permit approval will benefit Nepali labourers as they could continue their professions and business without travelling to Nepal to get their documents updated.

Minister Bhandari stated that this service will be gradually initiated from other diplomatic missions too. RSS

The Government And The Private Sector Needs A Close Collaboration For The Development Of The IT Sector: President Dhaka

Chandra Prasad Dhakal, President of the Federation of Nepalese Industries and Commerce, said that the state of Nepal's development of the information technology sector requires cooperation between the government and the private sector for the development of the information technology sector in Nepal.

Speaking at the opening program of the 30th edition of the comprehensive information and communication technology exhibition 'CAN Infotech', which started today at Bhrikutimandap in Kathmandu, he said that the goal of an IT hub can be achieved only with the cooperation



of the government and the private sector.

Stating that the IT sector is a global market, can export services worth billions of rupees and can

employ millions of people,

Chairman Dhakal requested the government to work for necessary policy and structural reforms for the further development of this sector.

Informing that Federation of Nepal Chamber of Commerce and Industry has been debating and lobbying with the government for timely policy reforms in the fields of IT, startups and innovation as well as various other laws.

He said that the amendments made in recent laws for the development of the Nepali Information Technology (IT) sector will contribute significantly to the development of this sector.

By approving the Ordinance on the amendment of the law, the legal system that will allow Nepali IT companies to invest abroad, open branches, do business and bring their income into Nepal will enable Nepali IT companies to compete in the international market and increase foreign exchange earnings.

He said. Can Infotech also said that the latest technology startup innovation and talents and inventions developed according to the demand of the local market will help the campaign of creating Digital Nepal.

In the context that the government has drafted the 'National Artificial Intelligence Policy 2081' for the development and use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Nepal, the proposed policy will build a safe and sustainable AI ecosystem.

Bamboo Conference From March 27, NRB Governor Calls For Its Use For Green Economy

Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) Governor Maha Prasad Adhikari has highlighted the potential of bamboo in promoting a green economy and creating an environmentally friendly atmosphere.

During his address at a programme to share details about the upcoming First National Bamboo Conference, scheduled from March 27 to February 1 in Diktel, Khotang, the central bank's governor stressed the need of a green economy for sustainable economic growth. He stated that the decision to host the conference in Diktel, rather than in an urban centre, presents a challenge to urban-centric events and encourages a broader, more inclusive perspective.

Governor Adhikari expressed his hope that the Bamboo Conference would set a new precedent for promoting the green economy. He committed to supporting, both officially and personally, the production, use, and export of bamboo products.

Former Minister Ganesh Shah, also speaking at the event, emphasized the Conference's potential to boost bamboo-based industries. He added that bamboo plays a significant role in Nepal's religion, culture, tradition, and



small-scale industries, and that it is a versatile product with numerous uses.

Dr Rajendra KC, Director General of

the Forest Research and Training Centre, said Nepal's bamboo could be marketed internationally under the 'Himalayan Bamboo Brand.' He further stated that the Conference would be a productive step toward achieving this goal. Dr. KC also added that the use of bamboo is increasing in rural areas for practical purposes, while in urban areas, it is more of a trend.

Nepal is home to 81 species of bamboo. The country accounts for 19 percent of the global bamboo coverage.

Pradeep Dangal, a representative from Green Bamboo Creation Pvt. Ltd., stressed that bamboo is a fast-growing plant, and promoting its production and use could contribute to economic prosperity. Bamboo products, being entirely environmentally friendly, are alternatives to plastic items.

Dangal also added that bamboo is deeply ingrained in Nepali society, used in various cultural and practical contexts, from birth to death. Additionally, bamboo plays a crucial role in balancing oxygen and carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere, he said.

According to Diktel municipality mayor Tirtha Raj Bhattarai, the Conference will be attended by representatives from government and non-government agencies, 100 forest users' groups, 50 universities and research centers and 100 students.

Global IME Bank And Info Developers Signed Agreement

Global IME Bank Limited is going to use the budget information management system 'Budget 360' developed by InfoDevelopers Private Limited.

Surendraraj Regmi, Chief Executive Officer of Global IME Bank and Umesh Raghuvanshi, Director, Strategy and Innovation of InfoDevelopers Pvt Ltd have signed the agreement.

The said software will help in resource mobilization by increasing the capacity of the bank for budgeting and planning.

Surendraraj Regmi, Chief Executive Officer of the Bank, said that the use of Budget 360 in the banking ecosystem will increase the Bank's budgeting and planning capabilities, as well as ensure the appropriate deployment of resources, meet the Bank's financial objectives and help in making effective decisions in financial management.

He also expressed his belief that it will help contribute to the sustainable development of the overall bank.

InfoDevelopers Pvt. Ltd. Umesh Raghuvanshi, Director of Strategy and Innovation, said that he was excited to implement Budget 360 by signing an agreement with Global IME Bank and informed that this software will help simplify the work of the bank's financial plans and help in making data-based decisions.

'Budget 360' is a modern financial management system that automatically manages finances. This software, developed by Infodevelopers, is an integrated system with features such as automatic goal setting, real-time reporting, and continuous tracking. This software has been designed in such a way that the bank can use it at its own convenience.

On behalf of the bank, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Suman Pokharel, Assistant Chief Executive Officer, Chandraraj Sharma and Infodevelopers Pvt Ltd participated in the event. Corporate Manager, Subas Paudel was also present.

Global IME Bank is recognized as the best bank of Nepal in two categories under Global Finance's Best Bank Award 2024 and Euro Money Award for Excellence 2024. In addition, Global IME Bank has been honored by various national and international organizations in different categories. Global IME Bank is the first commercial bank in the private sector with a network of branches in all the districts of the country.

The bank has been providing excellent service to its customers from more than 1,100 service centers including 355 branch offices, 379 ATMs, 237 branchless banking services, 69 extension and revenue collection counters and 3 foreign representative offices. In addition to providing banking services to Nepali citizens, the bank has also been providing remittance services from various countries of the world.



The bank has been receiving remittances from the United States of America, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Malaysia, South Korea, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, UAE, Bahrain, Kuwait, India, Jordan and other countries.

Nepal's Governance Mired In Endemic Corruption



BY: DIPAK GYAWALI

In these troubled times, as the Old World Order declines and a new one is going through excruciating labour pains struggling to be born, it behooves us citizens worried sick about Nepal's rampant kleptocracy to seriously rethink where we should be going and how. Thanks to [Donald Trump](#), it is now excruciatingly obvious what some of us have been saying for long: that the 2005/06 colour-coded "rhododendron revolution" in Nepal against its monarchial institution and [Hindu identity](#) was based on much duplicity and fraud. Today, the crows are coming home to roost. Starting with the prime minister, deputy prime minister as well as foreign, home, finance and other ministers, the entire lot is engulfed in corruption scandals that elsewhere would have seen them instantly resign from office if not head for jail. They don't, and they use their hold on the reins of power to prevent the police and judiciary to even initiate investigations and cases against them. The rot extends all the way down to village and municipal ward leaders openly demanding bribes for services they are obliged provide.

This essay is just a sad continuation of similar warnings issued earlier and ignored, mainly because Nepal's [civic sphere](#) of intellectuals and journalists has compromised itself and is mired in corruption that comes from hanging on to political coat-tails and giving up independence to rely on [handout journalism](#). In an [earlier essay some eight years ago](#), I had described the structural corruption behind foreign "grants" that saw Nepalis actually subsidizing Western contractors, something that USAID too now is seen to be rife in.

It was the case of the 70 MW Middle Marsyangdi hydroelectric project, a "grant" from Germany that was essentially a reallocation of funds from the aborted Arun-3 where Germany would pay for 82% of the project cost and Nepal would cover the remaining 18%. The contract fine prints, however, required Nepal to pay for any increases in cost that might be incurred. With the project controlled completely by German consultants and contractors, it was eventually completed with fifty months' time overrun and costs ballooning to five times the going international per kilowatt construction costs. It meant that Nepal ended up paying 70% of the cost of the project, not the initially hoped

for 18%. How many Nepali politicians and managers, to say nothing of Germans, personally benefitted from all this anyone's guess.

Just over a year ago, I chronicled the corruption scams that Nepal's current rulers are embroiled in. They make what in other normal countries would be embarrassing headlines in all newspapers almost every day. A popular online portal detailed [eight major scams](#) by those at the highest level of government, the culprits continuing in office with absolutely shameless impunity. It quoted another [investigative report](#) that detailed how those in power kept themselves in power by misusing government machinery. It is worth reproducing as it continues to be today's sad current reality.

"They steal state revenues, capture development expenditure, engage in rent-seeking from the private sector and extract natural resources, milk wealth from citizens, control institutions, favour their kith and kins in lucrative dealings, and save the big fishes when things go south — all to amass wealth and consolidate power and use that to keep the corrupt mechanism intact. As all layers of state and non-state institutions are in bed for corruption, there is little room for accountability and justice."

What is shocking is the blatant "who cares about your criticism" attitude. Bad as it is at the top national level, it gets disgustingly barefaced at the local ward level. In a study I was involved in recently, we interviewed village entrepreneurs eager to begin new ventures such as expanded dairy farming or small-scale food processing but who could not. They reported that so much bribe was asked even for registering their enterprises at the local level that it was just not profitable to move forward with the venture!

All this is contributing to a very foul public mood across Nepal. It ranges from resigned fatalism of the youth who see no future for them in the country to anger at their being betrayed by their leaders among party cadres. If there is one major proof that the current political system is not working, it is shown by the thousands of youths who migrate out for menial jobs every day from Tribhuban International airport, to say nothing of those who cross the border into India, es-

pecially in west Nepal. That people are willing to sell their property in Nepal to raise seven or eight million rupees to pay human traffickers to send their wards illegally to the US risking death in Mexican jungles is a measure of their distrust of Nepal's kleptocratic Loktantrick governance. Now even that door is closed with Trump's anti-illegal immigration campaign.

What is even more telling is the fatalism among the educated youth. Enrollment in colleges is declining to the extent that some courses have had to be cancelled due to lack of students. This is happening even in technical fields such as engineering and medicine, with students opting to go to India or abroad paying much higher fees. Such Nepali colleges are, as a result, mulling merger if not even closure. A tragic consequence of this is the recent suicide of a Nepali student at the Kalinga Institute of Industrial technology: at the bachelor of engineering level there is little that KIIT could be teaching that a Nepali engineering college could not.

Why do Nepali youth have no faith in Nepal's higher education establishment? The answer is: party politicization of the academia and its administration with consequent degradation of academic quality. The country's oldest Tribhuban University was saddled with a Nepali Kangress affiliated vice-chancellor who was a known plagiarist; and Kathmandu University is deadlocked over UML-Kangress bhagbanda (sharing of spoils of office) and unable to appoint a new vice chancellor. The result is that it is not just students but even good teachers who are leaving these universities for jobs outside.

The net result is that many voices are beginning to rise against this kleptocratic dispensation, especially among disillusioned cadres of big political parties, although they have yet to solidify into a large, conclusive movement. In their networks and gatherings, the anger against their life-long party bosses who treat their parties as fiefdoms and party cadres as serfs – all the while wallowing in rampant corruption – is deep-rooted and potentially volcanic. It is seeking revenge like the manic jilted lover; and party honchos are so fearful of them that they hesitate to hold local mass meetings.

The root cause of Nepal's corruption is moral and ideological; and there are hardly any political leaders in major parties who are not tainted let alone who command a moral high ground. Political parties are far from what they or their names say: Nepali Kangress has long given up the political philosophy of democratic socialism (and the very concept of fight for social justice) that was espoused by its founders B.P. Koirala or Krishna Prasad Bhattarai. Communist parties, both United Marxist Leninists and the Maoists do not have an iota of Marx in them, but have gone the way of big lucre, more comfortable with crony capitalists than with peasants and workers.

Why such a degradation? Much of it can be traced to the political fraud perpetuated – in cahoots with foreign interests against both the King and the country's Hindu identity as well as national cohesiveness – in 2005/06. It was not the King that dissolved the parliament: it was Nepali Kangress infighting; the restoration of a dissolved parliament (without going through due elections) whose

people-given 5-year mandate had long expired, was most undemocratic; and those MPs so restored (lest we forget two eminent MPs former PM KP Bhattarai and former mayor of Kathmandu PL Singh both refused to enter the resurrected house), having sworn an oath to protect the 1990 constitution, proceeded to tear it up. A new edifice, this Loktantra, built on such a fraudulent foundation was bound to collapse, which is what we are witnessing currently with immoral alliances and protection of high and mighty from their malfeasance.

It was to address such distortions, and to bring back honest governance in Nepal, that a meeting was held on the eve of Democracy Day in Pokhara under the moral leadership of Dr Jagman Gurung and his Nepal Pragyk Manch. While still lacking organizational clout, it was a good moral stand – against unassimilable foreign agenda of republicanism, federalism and secularism (the words of former PM KP Bhattarai) that has not served the country or the people well at all. It was a good beginning, this emergence of a moral anchor for re-imagining a future movement to rid the country of kleptocrats.



Glimpses of Nepal Pragyk Manch gathering at Pokhara Chiple Dhunga on 18th February 2025

More Cross Border Transmission line

Nepal and India signs agreement on the construction of more cross border Transmission line

By KESHAB POUDEL

Nepal and India have agreed to enhance electricity trade by signing an agreement on the construction of a cross border transmission line. The goal is to enable the export of 15,000 MW of electricity from Nepal to India and Bangladesh by 2035.

The Memorandum of Understanding was signed by Suresh Acharya, Secretary of Nepal's Ministry of Energy, Water Resources, and Irrigation, and Pankaj Agarwal, Secretary of India's Ministry of Power, during a secretary-level meeting in New Delhi.

Following the secretary-level talks and agreement between the two countries, the construction of the transmission line will now progress. Since the Sher Bahadur Deuba-led government took office in 2021, Nepal-India electricity trade has seen significant growth.

Under the leadership of Kul Man Ghising, Managing Director of Nepal Electricity Authority, and then-Secretary Dinesh Ghimire, Nepal has fostered a positive environment for electricity trade with India. As a result of these efforts, Nepal began exporting electricity to India in June 2022.

During the official visit of Foreign Minister Dr. Arju Rana Deuba in September, Nepal and India agreed to explore regional electricity trade between Nepal and Bangladesh via a transmission line in India. Nepal has already exported 50 MW of electricity to India.

Ministers from the Maoist party, along with the current Minister of Energy, Water Resources, and Irrigation, Deepak Khadka, have played a role in the development of an international transmission line.

When Maoist leader Shakti Basnet served as Minister of Energy, an agree-

ment was signed with India for the purchase of 10,000 megawatts of electricity over a 10-year period. The importance of expediting the construction of the transmission line for electricity supply was emphasized.

At the 12th meeting of the Energy Joint Secretary-level Working Group between Nepal and India on January 21, it was agreed to accelerate the construction of the transmission line. The meeting also decided to construct an international



transmission line to facilitate easier import and export of electricity.

This agreement was further confirmed during a secretary-level meeting between the two countries.

Discussions during the joint secretariat meeting covered topics such as the existing electricity transmission line between Nepal and India, ongoing and proposed international transmission line projects, various hydropower projects with Indian investment, related transmission line projects, and international electricity import-export.

During the secretary-level meeting, it was decided to complete the construction of two 400 kV transmission lines from Inaruwa in Nepal to Purnia in India and from Dodhara in Nepal to Bareilly

in India by 2030.

A joint company will be established on both sides of the mentioned transmission line, with ownership shares divided between Nepal Electricity Authority and India's Power Grid Corporation Limited.

Following the agreement between the two nations, Nepal will hold a 51 percent stake in the joint company on the Nepal side, while India will have a 51 percent ownership on the Indian side. The remaining 49 percent of shares in the companies on both sides will be held by the other country.

Similarly, the completion of the Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the Chamelia-Jouljivi 220 KV double-circuit transmission line by 2025 has been agreed upon. Additionally, there is an agreement to enhance the capacity of the Dhalkewar-Muzaffarpur transmission line from 800 MW to 1000 MW.

Likewise, the construction of the 400 kV Nijgarh-Motihari and Kohalpur-Lucknow transmission lines is set to be completed by 2035 as per the agreement reached during a secretary-level meeting between the two countries.

Previously, Nepal and India signed a long-term electricity trade agreement for the export of 10,000 megawatts over 10 years, with the export of 40 MW of electricity already underway to Bangladesh.

The meeting was attended by Secretary Acharya, Joint Secretary Sandeep Kumar Dev, Director General of the Electricity Development Department Navinraj Singh, Managing Director of Nepal Electricity Authority Kulman Ghising, Deputy Managing Director Dirghayukumar Shrestha, and other officials from the Authority.



RENEWABLE AND GREEN ENERGY Challenges To Overcome

The Alternative Energy Promotion Center (AEPC) has made significant progress in expanding access to renewable energy in remote rural areas over the past 25 years. Led by influential figures such as Dr. Govinda Raj Pokharel, Dr. Ram Prasad Dhital, and Dr. Narayan Prasad Chaulagain, AEPC has become a leading institution in promoting renewable energy in remote and rural Nepal. Nepal recently celebrated International Clean Energy Day with the “Energy Transition for Resilient and Low Carbon Economy Summit-2025” on the International Day of Clean Energy, where AEPC, under the leadership of current Executive Director Nawa Raj Dhakal, is paving the way for a significant shift in energy transition.

By A CORRESPONDENT

Nepal has committed to achieving zero emissions by 2045 as part of its NDC commitment under the Paris Agreement, emphasizing the importance of reducing the use of dirty energy and transitioning to renewable clean energy. While

the target has been set, concerted efforts from all stakeholders are essential to reach this goal. Nepal must focus on transforming energy consumption in household cooking, transportation, and industries by replacing current reliance on biomass and fossil fuels.

Dr. Ram Prasad Dhital, chairperson of the Electricity Regulatory Commission, emphasized the global importance of energy transition to achieve climate goals. Nepal is in a unique position with abundant hydropower resources, growing energy demand, and potential for cross-border trade.

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However, challenges such as regulatory gaps, capacity limitations, and the need for policy alignment must be addressed.

While hydropower dominates Nepal's green energy sector, there are other cost-effective and reliable renewable energy sources like solar and wind available. It is crucial to triple the capacity of renewable energy by 2030, increasing Solar PV capacity to 5457 GW, hydro to 1465 GW, Wind onshore to 3040 GW, wind offshore to 494 GW, Geo Thermal to 105 GW, and CSP to 197 GW by 2030.

Energy Situation in Nepal

During his presentation, Dr. Dhital discussed the current state of energy in Nepal. He mentioned that over 90 percent of electricity generation in the country is derived from hydropower, with biomass being the primary energy source for rural households, accounting for over 60% of total energy consumption.

While solar and wind energy are emerging, their adoption remains limited compared to their potential. Nepal heavily relies on imported petroleum products, leading to energy insecurity. The country's energy demand is pro-

jected to increase by 8% annually due to economic growth and urbanization.

Nepal's total installed capacity is 3,243 MW, with an annual per capita energy consumption of 400 units. Despite exporting around 700 MW of electricity in the summer, Nepal still imports electricity from India to meet its winter demands.

Professor Shobhakar Dhakal



from the Department of Energy and Climate Change at the Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand, presented a detailed paper outlining Nepal's achievements and the challenges it faces in the energy sector.

Nepal has committed to generating 28,000 MW of electricity over the next 20 years, but the country's electricity infrastructure, including its transmission and distribution systems, remains inadequate. Currently, Nepal has

a transmission system spanning 6,507 circuit km, with 13,050 MVA substations.

The country boasts a 99 percent electricity access rate and an average annual domestic consumption demand of approximately 12,700 GWh. Upgrading the current transmission system from 132 kV to 220 kV and 400 kV will require significant investment, but the Nepal Electricity Authority is facing financial constraints for such a large-scale project.

Recently, the progress of the Nepal Electricity Authority has been hindered by the Minister of Energy, Water Resources, and Irrigation's interference. The Minister's personal vendetta against Managing Director Kul Man Ghising is likely to have an impact on the power system's operations.

During the event's opening ceremony, Dr. Shobhakar Dhakal, a Professor at the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), delivered a presentation on "International Experience, Opportunities, and Challenges for Nepal in Clean Energy Transformation for a

Sustainable and Low-Carbon Economy.”

During his presentation, Dr. Dhakal focused on the global perspective of clean energy conversion for a sustainable and low-carbon economy. He also discussed international experiences in addressing the need for energy conversion, as well as Nepal’s perspective on energy conversion, including its dimensions, options, and differences.

Dr. Dhakal highlighted the priority areas necessary to accelerate Nepal’s energy transformation, emphasizing issues such as energy integration and connecting various technologies like micro and small hydropower, solar energy, wind energy, and biological energy to the national transmission grid. He also stressed the importance of upgrading decentralized renewable energy systems, adopting energy efficiency measures, and promoting private sector involvement in commercial clean energy conversion.

Dr. Dhakal underscored the need for a national policy, plan, and targets to increase investment and mobilize climate and carbon finance, as well as effective institutional arrangements and coordination for clean energy transformation.

Key Points from Professor

Dhakal’s Presentation:

- Total installed capacity: 28,500 MW
- Annual electricity consumption per person: 1,500 units
- Electricity export: 15,000 MW
- Transmission system: 17,446 circuit km; Substation: 40,000 MVA
- Electricity access: 100%



- Annual domestic consumption demand: Approximately 40,710 GWh
- Investment required for electricity generation projects: Approximately \$30.7 billion
- Investment required for electricity distribution network: Approximately \$1.2 billion
- Investment required for construction of transmission lines and substations: Approximately \$5.6 billion

- Focus on NDCs, carbon neutrality, and net-zero pledges
- Transitioning away from fossil fuels and coal
- Increasing renewable energy deployment and energy efficiency
- Mobilizing climate finance
- Private sector driving energy investment decisions

- Governments influencing capital flows
- Electrification of transport sector and urban public transport
- Transitioning to electric cooking and modernizing biomass use

- Improving energy efficiency in buildings and industries.

Grid decarbonization involves the use of solar and wind power, implementing storage solutions, limiting the addition of coal-based capacity, upgrading grid infrastructure for increased flexibility, boosting the share of nuclear energy, and potentially importing hydropower from Nepal and Bhutan

. Industrial decarbonization focuses on green hydrogen, en-

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hancing energy efficiency, electrifying industrial processes, utilizing renewable energy sources like biomass, and implementing carbon capture, utilization, and storage (CCUS). The transport sector is transitioning through innovative urban planning, promoting modal shifts, adopting low carbon powertrains such as battery electric vehicles, and incorporating biofuels.

The energy consumption target is set at 532 PJ in 2023, with a per capita final energy consumption of 18.25

GJ. The plan includes expanding hydropower capacity to achieve a 7% share, increasing modern renewable energy sources to 3%, modernizing traditional bio-based energy usage (which currently accounts for

64% of energy consumption, with fuelwood making up 57%), promoting clean cooking interventions, particularly through electrification, electrifying the transport sector, and developing necessary support infrastructure. The country aims to address its trade deficit, with fossil fuels accounting for 19% of imports and 21% of the trade deficit in the fiscal year 2022/23.

Efforts are underway to improve energy efficiency in buildings,

industries, and transportation sectors. Grid modernization initiatives are focused on reducing losses, enhancing system flexibility for integrating distributed renewable energy sources, and ensuring reliability. The overall energy transition strategy emphasizes both local and global environmental sustainability, as well as considerations for a just and inclusive transition process.

Nepal's transition in cooking energy?



According to the national census, 51% of households use wood/firewood for cooking, while 44.3% use LPG, which goes against the Government's SDG target of limiting it below 40%.

Distributed power can help reduce T&D losses, lower the cost of T&D infrastructure, and enhance grid resilience (<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mset.2019.07.002>).

The integration of acceptable solar/wind power into the existing

grid depends on various factors. A decade ago, the debate was around 10-15%, but recent studies suggest it could be 20-30% before significant grid upgrades are needed to maintain stability. This percentage can be increased with grid enhancements and smart grid technologies.

The power quality and reliability of the grid in rural and isolated areas are poor, and on-grid/off-grid distributed sources can provide better support.

In Peninsular Malaysia, a 20% penetration rate of solar and wind power into the grid is considered an ideal limit to ensure electricity affordability, security, and reliability. The system can technically handle up to a 30% penetration

level, but exceeding 30-40% could lead to higher electricity costs and pose affordability risks. Beyond a 40% penetration rate, scheduled solar curtailment may be necessary to maintain stability.

By 2024, the installed capacity is projected to be 3,243 MW, with 400 KWh per capita. The country aims to export 700 MW of electricity, achieve 98% access to electricity, and meet a demand of 12,700 GWh.

By 2035, the target is to have an installed capacity of 28,500 MW, provide 1,500 KWh per capita, export 15,000 MW, ensure 100% access, and meet a demand of 40,710 GWh. To achieve the goal of limiting the temperature increase to 1.5°C, there is a need to double investments in renewable energy and triple spending on energy efficiency by 2030. The investment requirements for renewable energy and efficiency technologies under the 1.5°C Scenario are substantial and increasing, with costs for most renewable energy sources decreasing while hydro-power costs are rising. The Energy Transition for Resilient and Low Carbon Economy Summit-2025, organized by AEPC,

recently concluded with discussions involving various stakeholders, including finance and investment experts in the sector.

The Clean Energy Day Conference focused on the transition to a sustainable and low-carbon economy, addressing key issues in the current energy supply landscape.

The United Nations has designated January 26th as “International Clean Energy Day” since 2024, aiming to raise awareness and

promote the just and inclusive transformation to clean energy that benefits all living beings on Earth. Activities are planned to align with this goal.

Minister Khadka emphasized the government’s commitment to developing a low-carbon economy through inclusive energy development during his speech at the conference opening. He highlighted the alignment of

private sector in advancing renewable energy and energy efficiency. Minister Khadka also underscored the importance of extending energy access and ownership to all sectors of society as part of the government’s efforts to achieve sustainable development goals.

Speaking at the event, Secretary of the Ministry of Energy, Water Resources, and Irrigation, Sarita

Dawadi, emphasized the government’s focus on renewable energy and energy efficiency in its energy-related policies. She highlighted the recent approval of the “Energy Development



the conference topics with the goals outlined in the recently approved “Energy Development Roadmap and Action Plan, 2081” by the Government of Nepal. Minister Khadka stressed the importance of continuing clean energy development to mitigate climate-related risks and achieve the goal of net zero emissions through renewable energy and energy efficiency.

He called for support from national and international development partners in this endeavor and emphasized the role of the

Roadmap and Action Plan, 2081” by the Government of Nepal as a key step in this direction.

Dawadi mentioned that the bill on renewable energy and energy efficiency is currently being discussed in the National Assembly, and the ministry’s top priority is to ensure its passage in both houses of parliament.

The conference provided a platform for stakeholders in the clean energy sector to share their experiences, achievements, opportunities, and challenges in Nepal.

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It was seen as a significant milestone in the development of renewable energy and energy efficiency, facilitating the exchange of best practices and knowledge in the field.

Through the conference, sector-specific needs, opportunities, and challenges were identified, and efforts were made to prioritize investable projects and attract investment for clean energy transformation.

The conference aimed to identify sector-specific needs, opportunities, and challenges, prioritize investable projects, and create opportunities for investment and resource mobilization for clean energy transformation. It focused on current de-

velopment partnerships and future investment choices related to Nepal's energy transition and climate change, sharing successful project experiences and initiatives, enhancing potential investments, and promoting best practices in the field.

During the opening ceremony, Navraj Dhakal, the executive director of the center, highlighted the center's significant contributions to increasing energy access, promoting energy mix, and enhancing energy security in Nepal. The center is the main

government body working in the renewable energy and energy efficiency sector.

The action plan includes providing electricity access to 100 percent of households within the next two years through off-grid solar, wind, and small hydropower systems in areas not reached by the national grid. It also involves connecting non-existing electrical infrastructure to the grid, generating energy from



waste, establishing solar power purchase agreements, exploring the feasibility of grid-connected wind energy, and setting electricity purchase and sale rates for grid-connected energy storage systems.

Renewable energy initiatives, such as establishing standards for electrical equipment to enhance energy efficiency, conducting energy audits, promoting technologies like electric vehicles and green hydrogen for energy conversion, and enacting legal frameworks for renewable ener-

gy and energy efficiency, were discussed at the event.

During the program, Pippa Bird, Director of Development and Assistant Ambassador at the British Embassy in Nepal, expressed optimism about the future of energy transformation, highlighting the potential for achieving energy security and economic prosperity through such initiatives.

She emphasized the importance of improving access to energy

to enhance energy efficiency and commended the Alternative Energy Promotion Center for organizing a significant conference aimed at promoting renewable energy and energy efficiency.

Dr. Pema Gamso, Director General of

the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), highlighted the potential for energy conversion in various sectors in Nepal, including households, agriculture, and transportation.

Dr. Gauri Singh, Deputy Director General of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), stressed the need for collaboration to triple the deployment of renewable power generation and double energy efficiency in order to promote renewable energy effectively.

Highlighting that over 60 percent of the total investment in the sector comes from the private sector, he emphasized the importance of increasing private sector investment. The conference facilitated the exchange of experiences, discussions on investment opportunities, and strategies to accelerate the transition to clean energy for a sustainable, low-carbon economy in Nepal. The event included five technical sessions, presentations, and discussions with

national and international stakeholders from governmental and non-governmental organizations, state and local governments, and experts in renewable energy, energy efficiency, and climate change.

With over 400 participants from research, academic, development, investor, private sector, media, civil society, and sector expert backgrounds, the conference provided a platform for collaboration. Discussions at the conference focused on identifying sectoral needs for energy transformation, investment requirements, climate finance mechanisms, and strengthening development cooperation.

The event also aimed to support the effective implementation of the recently approved “Energy

Development Roadmap and Action Plan, 2081” and “Action Plan for Increasing Electricity Consumption and Reducing Mineral Fuels, 2080” by the Government of Nepal.

At the conclusion of the conference, a seven-point “Kathmandu Manifesto” was issued to emphasize the commitment to sustainable development through fair and inclusive clean energy transformation, addressing the impacts of climate change, and



fostering a low-carbon economy. The Energy Minister pledged to prioritize sustainable energy development with zero carbon emissions.

The government was strategically progressing towards establishing a resilient and low-carbon economy, focusing on sustainable and inclusive energy development. Efforts were being made to mitigate risks in development projects, boost domestic power consumption, and promote energy exports. The government

emphasized the importance of assessing and addressing risks in infrastructure development.

Participants discussed the objectives outlined in the government’s 10-year Energy Development Strategy, noting that the strategy aims to achieve targets over the next decade, including the goal of generating 28,500 megawatts of power by 2035. The government also aims to raise per capita

power consumption to 1,500 units.

Water Resources and Irrigation Secretary Sarita Dawadi emphasized the need to boost investment in the renewable energy sector to achieve full

electrification.

She suggested utilizing alternative energy sources in areas where the transmission line infrastructure is lacking. Nabaraj Dhakal, Executive Director of the Alternative Energy Promotion Centre, highlighted the organization’s partnerships with various stakeholders to ensure a sustainable and secure power system.

Cable Car Enhances Identity And Living Standards Of Citizens



BY: CHANDRA PRASAD DHAKAL

The construction of the Pathibhara cable car, which aims to connect the renowned Pathibhara Temple in Taplejung, a remote Himalayan district in Kosi Province, has sparked discussions. There have been rumors circulating on social media suggesting that the cable car project might impact the temple's historical significance and identity. The project received approval for construction in 2075, as per the decision of the Council of Ministers of the Government of Nepal.

Approximately two years ago, the involvement of the IME Group in the Pathibhara cable car project led to an acceleration in construction efforts. Following the acquisition of all necessary government and legal clearances from the Government of Nepal, the project was included in the national priority plan and progressed accordingly.

IME Group acquired a significant stake in the cable car project in 2079 with the goal of establishing tourist attractions with cable cars in all seven provinces of Nepal. The process of securing land rights for the cable car, transferring the land to the Government of Nepal in exchange for permission, has been successfully completed. Tree clearance along the cable car route, approval of the Detailed Project Report (DPR), and the commencement of physical construction work have all been finalized. The construction work officially began this month after the ceremonial laying of the foundation stone. The cable car, spanning 2.75 km from Fungling Municipality 11, Kaflepati to approximately 700 meters west of the Pathibhara Devi temple complex in Taplejung District, will feature 36 passenger gondolas and two cargo gondolas. How will the local economy be affected by the cable car project?

The construction of the cable car will reduce the travel time from the lower station to the upper station to just 10 minutes and 31 seconds. The equipment and components for the cable car will be provided by a renowned global cable car company. Basic amenities such as water, toilets, and oxygen will be available at the upper station for the convenience of pilgrims, with no additional structures planned to preserve the temple premises and its surroundings.

The cable car will offer a convenient transportation option for children, the elderly, and individuals with physical dis-

abilities, as well as for pilgrims and tourists. Those who prefer to hike will not be hindered by the cable car's presence on the current route.

Furthermore, it is anticipated that there will be a notable increase in both domestic and international pilgrims and tourists as a result of the cable car project.

The Pathibhara cable car project is estimated to cost 3 billion rupees and is expected to create direct employment opportunities for around 300 people. Local residents will be given priority, with about 80 percent of the workforce coming from the local community. Similar to other tourism projects by the IME group, locals will have the chance to invest in and benefit from the cable car project.

The construction of the cable car is anticipated to boost pilgrimage and tourism, leading to increased economic activities in the region. This growth will support local production sectors such as agriculture, household goods, and handicrafts. The project is also expected to stimulate self-employment and business expansion in various sectors, including hotels, restaurants, and transportation along the Barah area of Mechi Highway to Jhapa and Sunsari of Tamor Corridor. This economic development will result in higher tax revenues for the state.

Cable car is the safest and most environmentally friendly means of transportation in the world. Since this means of electric transport does not cause any kind of pollution, it is kept within the standards of sustainable development.

Furthermore, to minimize the environmental impact, the plants planted in the alignment area of the cable car will be maintained and protected for 5 years, with 25 trees planted for every tree cut. Subsequently, these plants will be handed over to the Government of Nepal. The implementation of the cable car project will contribute to the preservation of biodiversity and the environment. Despite the commencement of the Pathibhara cable car project, some individuals have initiated actions to impede the construction process and deter private investment. These actions include baseless accusations that tarnish the reputation and integrity of the private sector. Criticizing the entire private sector regarding the cable car project and disregarding their socie-

tal, economic, and national contributions is regrettable. The challenging terrain, high altitude, and steep ascent make it arduous for pilgrims and tourists to access the temple, especially for individuals with mobility issues, illnesses, disabilities, children, and the elderly. Some individuals charge exorbitant fees, ranging from 10,000 to 15-20 thousand rupees per person, to transport pilgrims to the temple, causing dissatisfaction among visitors.

There is an option to access the Pathibhara temple via helicopter charter as well. The cable car serves as a vital mode of transportation, offering a unique opportunity for the public to witness Pathibhara Devi, attracting a significantly higher number of pilgrims and tourists, generating employment opportunities for locals, enhancing living standards, and promoting environmental conservation and biodiversity preservation.

Furthermore, the project has committed to allocating a percentage of the cable car's profits towards initiatives such as healthcare, education, and local infrastructure through corporate social responsibility programs managed by local authorities.

IME Group's recent involvement in the Pathibhara Cable Car Company, established in 2075, highlights the long-standing discussion surrounding the construction of

a cable car in this sacred location. Therefore, the current debate on nationalizing the cable car project should be approached with caution.

After the involvement of IME Group, the cable car construction project has gained momentum. We have engaged in discussions with local representatives, political leaders, the local administration, various industrial associations, and other stakeholders in the district, urging them to support the cable car construction.

Some locals initially opposed the construction of the cable car, but we took their feedback into consideration and made adjustments to our Detailed Project Report (DPR) to address their concerns.

However, there is now an unnatural interest from individu-

als outside the district or country who are against the cable car project, which is misguided. We are closely connected to the project site and understand the sentiments and needs of the residents of Taplejung district.

It is unfortunate to see unnecessary debates about the cable car project being fueled by those who are not directly impacted by it. Such discussions detract from the development efforts in the region.

Such actions are discouraging private investment in the country for the future. It is disheartening that work is being halted even after completing all legal and regulatory procedures by state agencies. This has rendered the private sector's efforts to attract investment to the country ineffective.

Our goal of attracting more domestic and foreign tourists by developing large-scale tourist infrastructure in all seven provinces, creating numerous investment opportunities,

generating employment, and contributing to building a prosperous Nepal has been hindered.

It is unfortunate that local residents have to seek employment abroad while efforts are being made to challenge the job opportunities coming to their communities. In this situation, I trust the people of the district to discern between what is beneficial and detrimental.

Dhakai stated, "As the chairman of IME

Group, the cable car company, and the Federation of Nepal Industry and Commerce, the country's private sector umbrella organization, I am actively seeking investment in Nepal during my visits to various countries."

In the event of any delays in this project, its impact will be felt on a global scale. I urge all stakeholders once again to support the development work without causing any hindrances. It is important to remember that the cable car is simply a mode of transportation. The construction of the cable car at this heritage site will not disrupt any religious, cultural, or traditional practices, but rather enhance and preserve the existing structures. (Statement made by

Chandra Prasad Dhakai, chairperson of Pathibhara Devi Darshan Cable Car Pvt. Ltd. Excerpts of his statement delivered during the press meet.



Green Economy

A Priority

Initiated by Secretary Madhu Kumar Marasini, the National Planning Commission hosted a meeting of all concerned ministries for the first time to prioritize climate change in the forthcoming budget

By A CORRESPONDENT

No matter where a person works, what is important is their capacity and commitment. Secretary Marasini has proven this during his last five years as a secretary, demonstrating what his roles should be.

Secretary Marasini has demonstrated his capacity and commitment in various roles over the past five years, from the Ministry of Finance to the National Planning Commission. Climate change is a critical issue that affects development and the environment in Nepal, requiring collaboration and coordination among all levels of government and ministries.

The 16th five-year periodic plan aims to enhance cooperation among federal ministries to address this pressing issue.

As climate change is affecting all aspects of human life, it has become a



common agenda for the government, but it is not specifically assigned to a particular ministry.

The Secretary-Level Discussion on the 16th Plan (2024/25-2028/29) and Green and Climate-Friendly Development was the first of its kind, with

participation from all important stakeholders.

Chaired by Chief Secretary Ek Narayan Aryal and co-chaired by Vice Chair of NPC, Prof. Dr. Shiva Raj Adhikari, the meeting was attended by secretaries of sectoral ministries, representatives of the Municipal

Association of Nepal, and the National Association for Rural Municipalities of Nepal. The meeting outlined key summaries.

Organizing a high-level secretary-level meeting with Chief Secretary Aryal and Vice Chairperson Dr. Shiva Prasad Adhikari as the chief guest, the NPC has made efforts to sensitize the climate change issues in the forthcoming budget-making effort.

The meeting concluded with a 7-point declaration incorporating the directions given by the Chief Secretary and NPC Vice Chair.

Seven Point Declarations

After intense discussions and addresses by Chief Secretary Aryal, NPC Vice Chair Dr. Adhikari, and Secretary Marasini, the meeting issued a seven-point declaration.

The 16th five-year plan of the Government of Nepal has included climate change, biodiversity, and the green



economy as key transformative strategies to achieve its goal of an inclusive, just, and prosperous Nepal. I am delighted to share that the National Planning Commission (NPC) organized a high-level discussion program with the secretaries of the Government of Nepal to roll out this critical strategy in sectoral budgeting and planning. This initiative aims to ensure ownership and implementation across government sectors to help achieve the expected results. The high-level forum was well-attended, candid, and constructive, leading to a consensus statement that was approved and is available on the NPC website,” said Secretary Marasini, who always promotes team spirit and shares success

with the team.

I want to extend my sincere gratitude to Chief Secretary of the Government of Nepal, Ek Narayan Aryal, for leading and moderating the program, and to all the fellow secretaries of the government of Nepal for their active and dedicated participation. I also want to thank VC Dr. Shiva Raj Adhikari for his overall guidance and all the Members of NPC and the NPC family. Special thanks to Joint secretaries Khom Raj Koirala, Maheshwar Dhakal, and US Oam Adhikari for their excellent presentations. Apar Paudyal and Bimal Raj Regmi, PhD, have been instrumental in making the forum a great success! Thank you both!”



“I trust that this commitment will be reflected in the policies and programs of provincial and local governments,” Marasini added.

The High-Level Secretary Meeting emphasized the importance of implementing green and climate-friendly development in line with the targets of the 16th Five Year National Development Plan (2024/25-2028/29).

The National Planning Commission (NPC) organized a national workshop for all ministry Secretaries, chaired by Chief Secretary Ek Narayan Aryal on February 5th. Dr. Maheshwar Dhakal, head of the Climate Management Division and UNFCC focal point, stat-



ed that three papers were presented during the workshop. These papers covered the objectives and thematic areas of the 16th Five Year Plan from a climate change perspective by NPC, climate change policy in Nepal and ways to integrate climate actions into ministerial activities in the upcoming fiscal year by MOFE, and climate finance across all sectors by MoF.

The suggestions from the representative of Municipalities are equally praiseworthy in terms of integrating climate change actions across all levels of government as the budget planning period approaches. “We all acknowledge that climate change poses a significant threat to our time, and all ministries must share the responsibility of addressing its impacts in Nepal,” stated Dr. Dhakal. It was also recognized that considering climatic factors such as temperature, rainfall patterns, intensity, and duration when making budget planning decisions is essential to mitigate climate risks and vulnerabilities in the future.

Meeting Recommendations

To realize the vision of “Good Governance, Social Justice, and Prosperity” outlined in the 16th Plan and the long-term goal of “Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali,” it is crucial to fully integrate environmental protection, pollution control, climate resilience, disaster risk reduction, and promotion

of a green economy when formulating programs and budgets for the upcoming fiscal year 2025/26.

Implement the 16th Plan with a focus on synergies and minimizing trade-offs in key areas, themes, and programs. Emphasize the implementation and monitoring of investment programs for climate change adaptation, such as the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) and Local Adaptation Plan of Action (LAPA), as well as mitigation efforts like the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDCs) and addressing loss and damage. Ensure that development activities are aligned towards achieving net zero carbon emissions

by 2045. Increase the annual climate-relevant budget from 6 percent to 20 percent during the 16th plan period, in line with the periodic plan and medium-term expenditure framework. Engage all government entities in promoting dialogue and consensus to maximize the benefits of development assistance from developed countries and partners in climate change. Take proactive steps to enhance cooperation with the International Climate Fund, carbon trading, private sectors, and development partners. Organize the Sagarmatha Sambad program (May 16-18, 2025) to facilitate collective action and collaboration among mountainous countries on climate change.

Encourage collaboration between ministries and agencies to enhance the implementation of climate change policies and programs in line with the 16th Plan by fostering mutual understanding and capacity building among government tiers and stakeholders.

As Secretary Marasini nears the end of his distinguished bureaucratic career, his recent initiative to prioritize climate change and green economy issues and engage all stakeholders is of utmost importance.



EXPORT IMPORT

Garlic Import Surge

Authorities Investigate Spike in Garlic Imports in Nepal

By A CORRESPONDENT

Government officials expressed surprise at the significant increase in garlic imports in Nepal, particularly in recent months. The customs department director stated that the reasons behind the billions of rupees worth of garlic imports are currently under investigation.

Data from the first six months of the current fiscal year show that Nepal has imported garlic worth over 6.18 billion rupees, with the majority coming from China.

This translates to an average monthly import of over one billion rupees in garlic over the past six months.

Analysis of annual customs department statistics indicates a rising trend in garlic imports to Nepal.

Statistics show that Nepal imported garlic valued at 315 million rupees in the fiscal year 2076/077 and 1.095 billion rupees in the fiscal year 2077/078. The department reported garlic imports of 1.533 billion rupees in 2078/079 and 1.1125 billion rupees in 2079/080.

Information Officer Mukti Prasad Shrestha stated that garlic imports amounted to 2.22 billion rupees in 2080/081.

The department's data indicates that Nepal's total garlic imports reached 6.18 billion rupees. From July to December of the previous fiscal year, garlic imports were valued at 878.9 million rupees.

In comparison, Nepal imported garlic worth more than seven times the amount exported in the first six months of the current financial year, with statistics showing exports totaling 920,000 rupees during that period.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development in Nepal reported that in the fiscal year 2079/080, 73,567 tons of garlic were cultivated across 9,570 hectares.

In the previous financial year 2078/079, Nepal cultivated 9,943 hectares and produced 74,763 tons of garlic.

The Ministry's data indicates that in the financial year 2077/078, 72,490 tons of garlic were cultivated in an area of 9,784 hectares.

Government officials and farmers note that the garlic produced in Nepal is primarily consumed domestically.

Officials from the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development and the Customs Department have expressed concern about the unusually high volume of garlic imports into Nepal in recent months. An

information officer, Shrestha, stated to BBC News Nepali that they are investigat-



ing the reason behind this surge in imports. The Ministry officials suspect that garlic is being imported from China and then illegally exported to India.

Mahanand Joshi, a senior agricultural economist and information officer at the Ministry, raised doubts about the consumption of over six billion rupees worth of garlic in just six months, suggesting that there may be illegal garlic trade happening. He mentioned that they are trying to track down where the imported garlic has been distributed. During bilateral discussions, Indian officials have reportedly expressed

concerns about the illicit entry of Chinese garlic from Nepal.

The director of the customs department, Shrestha, suggested that the illegal export of Chinese garlic from Nepal could have increased due to higher demand caused by reduced production in India. However, he emphasized that an official reason for the

significant increase in garlic imports can only be determined after a thorough investigation.

Strict quarantine measures are in place in Nepal, allowing the import of plants and plant products that are not prohibited only after following the procedures outlined in the Plant Quarantine and Protection Act, 2064 and Regulations, 2066. However, some officials have noted instances where importers have brought in garlic using a letter of credit from the bank without obtaining permission from the Plant Quarantine and Pesticide Management Center.

Following a meeting of the Plant Quarantine Committee on November 17th, additional precautions have been implemented in the importation of plants and plant products, with an updated list of common pests. The Center is planning to issue a reminder notice soon, emphasizing the need for importers to obtain an entry permit before bringing in any plants or plant products.

Prakash Paudel, a senior crop protection officer and information officer at the center, stated that the Center revoked a permit for garlic import in January due to non-compliance with the conditions. The Center is urging importers to adhere to all requirements to avoid any issues with their imports.

What is the opinion of experts?

Hari Dahal, the former secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development, also questions the garlic import statistics, finding it unusual. He notes that traditionally, people in mountainous regions have historically consumed garlic grown locally, but now seem to be purchasing and consuming garlic from urban markets. Dahal recalls a time when Indian officials expressed interest in importing betel nuts from Nepal, despite limited betel nut production in the country. He suggests that a thorough study is needed to determine the underlying reasons for the significant garlic imports.

This information is based on a report by BBC Nepali Service.

ADB POWERING NEPAL

Five Decades Of Support

Powering Nepal Five Decades of ADB-Nepal Partnership in the Energy Sector

By A CORRESPONDENT

Fifty years ago, Nepal was virtually in darkness, with an electrification rate of about 2%. Most households relied on kerosene wick lamps, and industrial activities were limited.

Half a century later, Nepal has undergone a remarkable transformation. Now, over 95% of households have access to electricity. This substantial rise in electrification has significantly improved the lives of Nepalis, driving economic, social, and technological progress across the nation.

A Key Partner in Development

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) takes great pride in its role as a key partner in Nepal's clean energy transformation. The partnership between ADB and Nepal began in 1972 with funding for a transmission line project. Since then, in collaboration with other development partners, ADB has supported country's hydroelectric power generation, almost half of Nepal's transmission lines, and over one-third of its 33-kV distribution substations. ADB has also supported Nepal's development of alternative renewable energy sources such as mini-hydro, wind, and solar power, particularly in remote areas of the country.

Kali Gandaki Hydroelectric Project

Located in western Nepal, the 144 MW Kali Gandaki "A" Hydroelectric Project power station is the first hydroelectric project of over 100 MW in Nepal.

The Kali Gandaki "A" Hydroelectric Project contributed 6.6% to Nepal's total installed capacity in FY2022 and around 10% until FY2021. Nepal has around 6,000 rivers with the technical potential to generate 83GW of electricity, of which 42 GW is considered economically viable.

The project was approved by ADB in July 1996. The Japan Bank for International Cooperation also

with the support of the South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) Power System Expansion Project approved by ADB in July 2014.

Improved Transmission Systems

The 208km of 132-kV Butwal-Nepalgunj (Kohalpur) transmission line was built under Fourth Power Project approved by ADB in October



contributed to this project.

South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) Power System Expansion Project

The Kali Gandaki River in Nepal can generate at least 1 GW of electricity. The automated 220-kV Kushma substation in the western district of Parbat will help to evacuate the power generated from hydropower projects in the Kali Gandaki River Basin.

The transmission substation was built

1981. The project was implemented with the objective of strengthening transmission systems in the western and midwestern parts of Nepal and replace the imported supply of electricity with locally produced power.

Powering Agriculture Production

Kailali is one of the biggest vegetable producers of Sudurpaschim Province, but vegetable farming requires a lot of water. Hira Lal Chaudhary, a 24-year-old commercial farmer in Ghodaghodi

Municipality in Kailali district, says his income from vegetable farming has gone up significantly since he started using an electric water pump to irrigate the fields.

Ghodaghodi Municipality gets its power supply from the 132-kV Pahalmanpur Substation built through the Electricity Transmission Expansion and Supply Improvement Project approved by ADB in November 2011 and a grant from the Government of Norway. The substation is being automated through the Electricity Grid Modernization Project approved by ADB in November 2020.

Electrifying Remote Communities with Clean Energy

Small-scale, off-grid power systems, such as the one installed in the village of Thabang in Rolpa, one of the remotest places in Nepal, have effectively provided clean energy to communities in the mountains of Nepal.

Thabang is powered by a 150-kilowatt-peak solar mini-grid plant installed through the South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) Power System Expansion Project approved by ADB in July 2014 and the Scaling Up Renewable Energy Program of the Climate Investment Fund.

Helping Education in Remote Areas

The Shree Rastriya Secondary School in Solta, an isolated village in far west Nepal, operates its information and communications technology laboratory using power generated by the 75 -kilowatt-peak solar mini-grid system.

The solar mini-grid was installed through the South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) Power System Expansion Project approved by ADB in July 2014 and the Scaling Up Renewable Energy Program of the Climate Investment Fund.



Delivering Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

Gyan Kumari Shrestha from Kavrepalanchok, in the east of Kathmandu, had almost given up poultry farming after an unknown disease wiped out several hundred of her chicks, inflicting heavy losses. Amid this—and the continued deaths of her chicks—she received training organized under the ADB-supported project, Strengthening the Capacity of the Energy Sector to Deliver Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Results and was motivated to continue her business.

Since July 2021, she has been rearing a local breed of chickens—1,300 of them—which are growing well. She sells chickens and eggs in the local market, as well as in Kathmandu.

Powering Industry

Yarns and threads made of polyester were on the list of the top five exports of Nepal in fiscal year 2022. Spinning mills that produce these yarns and threads are energy intensive.

This factory in Birgung, central Nepal gets its electricity supply from the Parwanipur Substation, which was reinforced through the Energy Access

and Efficiency Improvement Project approved by ADB in November 2009.

Mitigating the Risk of Climate Change

ADB's ongoing projects, such as the Tanahun Hydropower Project, represent vital steps in Nepal's energy transition. The storage-type project offers more reliable and predictable electricity, addressing Nepal's urgent climate change challenges by controlling floods and mitigating flow variability.

Continuing Support

ADB will continue to support the Government of Nepal and partner with other development partners to further strengthen the energy sector and support Nepal's energy transition by promoting clean energy, climate adaptation, and a sustainable business model that attracts diverse investments, including private sector financing.

Source: ADB

UPPER TRISHULI-1 HYDROPOWER

Supporting Community Development

The Upper Trishuli-1 hydropower project has allocated Rs.170 million for community development in the affected areas through a community support program.

By A CORRESPONDENT

Numerous hydropower projects are currently in progress, with funding from Korean companies in collaboration with Nepali power developers and the involvement of multilateral agencies. The UT-1 project stands out as the first to dedicate a significant amount of funds towards improving the livelihoods of local communities.

As part of its corporate social responsibility, the Nepal Water And Energy Development Company, owners of the 216 MW UT-1 Hydropower Project, allocate a substantial portion of their budget each year to community development.

Nepal Water & Energy Development Company Pvt. Ltd. (NWEDC) is a specialized energy utility company focused on hydropower development in Nepal, established to attract foreign investment in the sector.

The majority ownership of NWEDC is held

by Korean strategic investors, with 50% owned by Korea South East Power Company (“KOSEP”), 15% by Daelim Industrial Co. Ltd. (“Daelim”), and 10% by Kyeryong Construction Industrial Co. Ltd. (“Kyeryong”) (collectively known as the “Sponsors”). The local partner, Bkesh Pradhanang, holds a minority stake in NWEDC.

NWEDC serves as a Special Purpose Vehicle for the development of the Upper Trishuli-1 (UT-1) Hydroelectric Project by KOEN, KIND, IFC (World Bank Group), and the local partner.

The UT-1 Hydroelectric Project, with a capacity of 216 MW, is situated

in the Rasuwa District of Nepal and is expected to generate 1456 GWh of hydroelectricity annually for supply to the National Grid of Nepal.

Approximately 170 million rupees have been utilized through community support

in the affected areas of the ongoing construction of the Upper Trishuli-1 hydroelectric power project with a net capacity of 216 MW in Rasuwa district.

The project promoter, Nepal Water and Energy Development Company Pvt. Ltd., has been providing assistance to the affected areas through various programs such as education, health, drinking water, road infrastructure, cultural initiatives, relief distribution, livelihood improvement, and income growth under social responsibility and community planning programs.



The project, supported by direct foreign investment from Korean companies, includes the construction of structures such as dams in Hakuma Project in Amachhodingmo Rural Municipality-1 and underground power plants in Uttargaigaon Municipality-1 in Rasuwa. The electricity generated will be used for domestic consumption, making Upper Trishuli-1 the largest project under construction with direct foreign investment.

In the area severely impacted by the Binakasari earthquake of 2072, the company carried out various initiatives including distributing relief materials, constructing temporary housing, building schools and health facilities, conducting helicopter rescues, organizing health camps, and other programs for earthquake victims.

This project in Nepal marked the

first time the company independently and proactively engaged with tribal communities affected by the project, ensuring they were well-informed.

A specific tribal community plan was implemented, taking into account the community’s background, environment, and cultural characteristics. A separate budget was allocated for community-chosen programs, with 2.5 million rupees already spent.

The company’s CEO, Byong Soo Min, emphasized the importance of the community support program in addressing economic and social issues, employment, and livelihood improvement in the project-affected area.

He highlighted the project’s commitment to ongoing support programs tailored to the local residents’ needs and priorities.

The project has completed the construction of the Beli Bridge in Hakubeshi over the Trishuli River at a cost of over 70 million rupees. This bridge has made it easier for the residents of Hakuksheeta in Ward No. 1 and 2 of Amachhodingmo Rural Municipality to access the road, particularly towards the headquarters, Nuwakot, and Kathmandu.

The bridge is also being used for transportation for construction work, with 18 lakh 57 thousand rupees spent on road construction in the affected areas. An additional 70 lakh rupees have been allocated for the construction of open roads.

To improve education in the affected areas, school buildings and educational materials have been distributed, and one teacher has been provided to each of the three schools in Haku since 2018. Following its social safeguard policy, the project is supporting the construction of buildings and other programs to preserve and promote the cultural traditions of the tribal tribes in the region.

KOICA SUPPORT

Migrant to Future Innovators

From Migrant Workers to Nepal's Future Innovators

By A CORRESPONDENT

KOICA and The Bridge International successfully organized an entrepreneurship competition for returnee migrant workers. The 'Returnee Innovators Showcase', funded by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), took place on February 7 at Square Hotel in Lalitpur, Nepal.

This event was a part of KOICA's "Project for Strengthening Stage-Wise Support System for the Stable Reintegration of Korean Returnee Migrants in Nepal", also known as "K-HaMi (Korea-Happy Migration) Project." The event marked the conclusion of the "Returnee Innovators for Nepal (RIN)" program, implemented by The Bridge International, reflecting on its one-year journey and culminating in a business pitch competition with nine exceptional participants from the program. The RIN program includes basic entrepreneurship training in Korea, advanced training in Nepal, incubation support, and a business competition.

Since 2022, KOICA has invested a total of \$8 million in this initiative, providing step-by-step capacity-building support in employment and entrepreneurship to assist Nepali migrant workers from pre-departure to post-return reintegration. Additionally, the program offers startup financing and business incubation for participants who successfully complete the training. The KOICA K-HaMi project is carried out in partnership with Nepal's Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security, EPS Nepal Center, Agriculture Development Bank (ADBL), The Bridge International, Korean Federation of Community

Credit Cooperatives (KFCC), and MY Social Company (MYSC).

The event was attended by notable figures, including Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Nepal, Mr. Taeyoung Park; Joint Secretary of Labor, Employment and Social Security, Mr. Nischal Raj Pandey; and KOICA Nepal Office Country Director, Mr. Mooheon Kong. Around 150 representatives from Nepal's entrepreneurship ecosystem also took part in the event.



Ambassador Park stressed the significance of entrepreneurship in his opening speech, urging returning migrant workers to apply the skills they gained in Korea to boost economic development in Nepal. Joint Secretary Pandey commended the program's impact and its contribution to enhancing Nepal's entrepreneurial environment.

During the event, top participants from the RIN program showcased their refined business models, which were developed through an extensive entrepreneurship capacity-building program. They also shared success stories of how they applied the skills, knowledge, and expertise gained in Korea to launch their own business-

es upon returning to Nepal. Five outstanding entrepreneurs were chosen as winners, with Mr. Santosh Dahal claiming the Grand Prize (1st place), Mr. Dil Bahadur Tamang securing 2nd place, and Mr. Rajendra Basyal taking 3rd place. The winners, along with other top entrepreneurs, received business development funds, including a matching fund of up to NPR 5 lakh (KRW 5 million) as seed capital.

Over the past 15 years, the Korean government has designated Nepal as a priority development partner, providing support for various initiatives aimed at promoting entrepreneurship and economic growth. In honor of the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Korea and Nepal in 2024, the Korean Embassy released a book featuring the success stories of 26 Nepali entrepreneurs who returned from Korea. The publication is intended to motivate returnees to leverage their experiences and technical skills to establish successful businesses in Nepal.

The Government of Nepal is actively promoting entrepreneurship to create jobs and drive economic development. Through the establishment of startup guidelines and policy frameworks, Nepal is further supporting new businesses. Collaboration with Korea, which has experience in fostering entrepreneurship, is expected to boost Nepal's economic growth. KOICA and The Bridge International recently hosted an entrepreneurship competition to support migrant workers in becoming future innovators in Nepal.

Empowering Women

In the underprivileged, landless, and land-poor areas of the Terai region in Nepal, the impact of Riverbed Farming (RbF) in empowering women is evident. Hundreds of women have risen from socio-economic disadvantages to become leaders within their communities, thanks to the support and empowerment provided by RbF.

By KESHAB POUDEL

Lukhari Mandal, a 45-year-old woman from Madnal Basti in Kankai Municipality of Jhapa of Koshi Province, is recognized as one of the most influential figures in her region, even extending her political influence. Despite belonging to a marginalized group, Nir-mala Devi Sada, a woman from Gajaria Tole of Laxminiya Rural Municipality Ward 3, Dhansuha of Madhesh Province, has managed to steer her community in the right direction.

Maya Chaudhary, a 48-year-old woman from Dekhatbhuli Katan in Krisnapur Municipality, Ward 3, Kanchanpur District of Sudur Paschim Province, has transformed her family from a landless, impoverished state to becoming land owners. By joining RbF in its early stages, Maya cultivated vegetables on rented lands and river bank.

Over time, her success and the popularity of her work led her community to nominate her as a candidate for the Member of the Federal Parliament election under the Proportional Representation system. Maya is now the chairperson of Suryamukhi Agriculture Group, which has grown to include 28 members dedicated to riverbed farming.

She is also an active member of several local community groups, demonstrating the potential for meaningful change and empower-



ment through riverbed farming.

Maya started her journey in riverbed farming over 16 years ago, initially leasing 4 katha of land (0.34 acre) in river bank. As she began to reap profits, her and her husband invested further, eventually owning two bigha of land. Her leadership and role in farmer group meetings quickly solidified her position as a prominent farmer.

“My involvement with riverbed farming has been a game-changer in my life. Being able to lead groups in this farming method has significantly boosted my popularity. I come from a community of poor and landless Chaudhary community, and I believe we are

incredibly thankful to Helvetas Nepal for introducing RbF in our region. It has enabled us to become landowners and empowered the women within our community,” Chaudhary stated.

Maya’s husband, Ganga Ram Chaudhary, a Local Resource Person (LRP), has played a crucial role in their success by encouraging Maya’s participation in riverbed farming training sessions. Together, they are now reaping a profit of NRs 700,000 (approximately US \$ 5,000) during one winter season.

Active since 2008, Rupa Chaudhary, 42, has undergone a profound change, including her family members, after adopting Riverbed farm-

ing along the banks of the Mohana River. Born in Krishnapur, Ward 8 of Rajghat of Kanchanpur district, Chaudhary grew up hearing the devastation caused by the river, which would wash away homes and property.

However, the river, once a symbol of despair, has now become a beacon of hope and empowerment for women in the area. Chaudhary, who once suffered from the floods, is now a beneficiary of the river after embracing river bed farming. “We are immensely grateful to Helvetas Nepal for showing us the path to community prosperity and women’s empowerment. Although now many international organizations and various levels of government are present, it was Helvetas Nepal who came to our rescue, providing us with financial, technical, and skill support,” Chaudhary stated.

Forty-year-old Bal Bir Chaudhary, a member of the Raj Ghat as a Local Resource Person (LRP), mentioned that the Mohana Bagarkheti Krishak Samuha has 28 members, including Rupa. Bal Bir, who experienced the displacement caused by the Mohana River’s floods twice within the last four decades, explained how the river’s bank has become a source of women’s em-



powerment.

“From the despair of our village and community, the river bank of Mohana River has emerged as a haven for women’s empowerment,” stated Chaudhary. The group generates an annual income of approximately Rs.20 million, with Chaudhary earning around a million rupees each year.

In partnership with Helvetas Nepal, and working alongside the District Development Committee (DDC) and the local community, agricultural activities started in the Bank of Mohana River. The group allocated the lands according to their preferences. Despite having a husband away from home and four

small children, she chose to dedicate 5 Katthas of the river bed for agricultural purposes.

Thanks to technical assistance that included seeds and fertilizers, among others, the farmers began cultivating various crops, including watermelons. “In the first year, we were able to sell vegetables and watermelons worth around 120,000 (USD 900), which was a significant amount for us,” Rupa Chaudhary remarked.

Since beginning river bed cultivation, Chaudhary’s family underwent a dramatic change. Over the last decade, her husband has been involved in farming. Their earnings from agriculture enabled them to marry and have two sons. They also managed to send one of their sons to Bulgaria last year, covering half of his education expenses. With the financial stability from their farm, Rana has been able to set aside savings and make important family decisions.

Mandal, Maya, Rupa, and Sada have not only experienced a sense of self-assurance due to their achievements in river bed agriculture but have also witnessed their relatives flourish. Thanks to extra





earnings from her mother’s job, Bhavana Rana, 22, living in Ghuia, Dhangadhi Sub-metropolitan Ward 9, can now follow her Bachelor of Business Studies at Kailali Multiple Campus in Dhangadhi.

Lalmanti Rana, at the age of 52, was living in Dhangadhi Sub-Metropolitan ward no 9 Ghuiyaghat without any land for cultivation. Marrying at just 17 and having two daughters and two sons, she faced challenges in providing a stable income and land for her family. She toiled in the community’s farms to earn a bit of cash while her husband worked as a laborer in Rajasthan, India.

The year 2008 marked a significant shift for her and the marginalized and impoverished Rana Tharu Community in the area. In August 2008, her neighbors came together in the village to discuss the feasibility of cultivating on the river bed of the Mohana River, which was previously considered unusable. Against her initial reluctance, she joined forces with other women, forming a group of 20 members.

For the past three years, Bhabana Rana, 23, has been helping her parents with their farm by taking

twice-weekly deliveries of agricultural products from the local makeshift (Hat bazaar) to Dhangadhi on her motorbike. “During harvest season, my earnings from selling farm produce can reach up to Rs.10,000 (USD 100) per day,” Rana shared. “Even though large wholesalers come around to collect our vegetables, they only pay us half the market price.”

Rana’s family cultivates vegetables on a 1.5-hectare piece of land, which has allowed them to earn approximately Rs.600,000 (USD



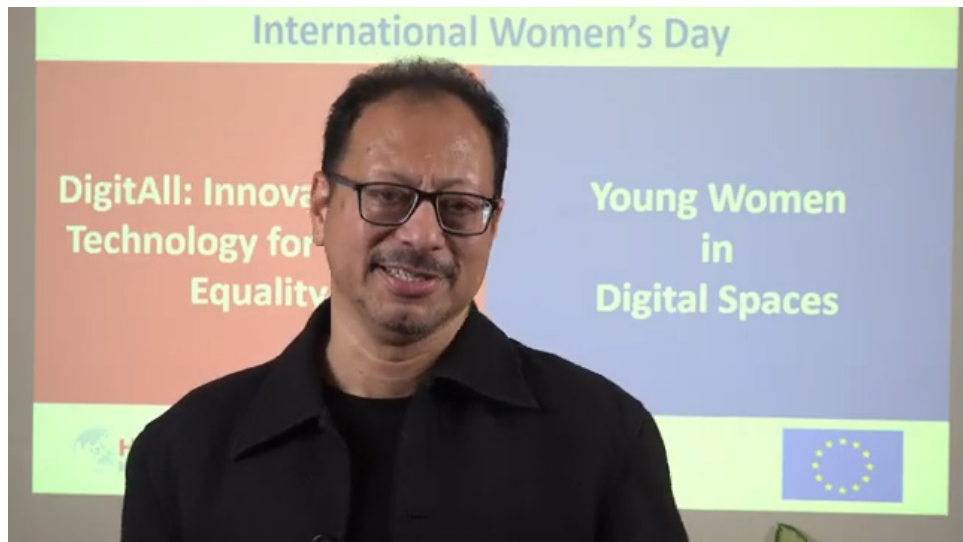
4500). “The income from farming has enabled my parents to cover the education fees of four of their children and to purchase an additional one-hectare piece of land,” Bhavana explained.

Rana is among the 10,000 families living in poverty who were provided with land to establish multi-crop farms through a scheme supported by Helvetas Nepal and its local partners. “Having this piece of land is incredibly empowering. It’s where I plant the vegetables I enjoy growing,” Rana shared.

In 2006, Helvetas Nepal, in collaboration with the District Development Committee and a local NGO, initiated efforts to reclaim and allocate large areas of degraded land, including riverbeds severely affected by floods, to underserved and impoverished households, including Dalit and other marginalized groups.

Susmita Rana, 45, from Parasan Ward No. 7 in Punarbas Municipality of Kanchanpur district, has been tending to her vegetable and watermelon farm by the Dodo River since 2009. Supported by

Helvetas-Nepal's River bed farming Project, Susmita, who comes from a landless, impoverished background, has seen her earnings climb to around Rs.250,000 (USD 2000) since starting her farm. Last month, she generated an additional Rs. 100,000 (USD 760) from the sale of watermelons, marking her income for the last two months of the winter season.



Beyond securing fresh and nutritious vegetables for her family's meals, Rana has managed to save some money for her children's education and household expenses. With her land and income, Rana feels more control over her future, saying, "I have the means to pursue my desires."

"Since Helvetas Nepal began the first River Bed Farming program in 2006, it has supported hundreds of women groups focused on their empowerment," Hari Gurung, the team leader of Helvetas-Nepal's InElam Project noted. "This initia-

tive has truly empowered tens of thousands of women."

The project has been instrumental in elevating the status of women within riverbed farming communities, which are predominantly led by women. Over the last two decades, these women have experienced significant improvements in their lives, including a boost in their quality and dignity of living conditions.

In the riverbed farming initiatives across Madhesh Province, women take charge of all five groups. Sada, who heads one of the 25-member groups, noted that this initiative has not only empowered women economically but has also sparked social and political reforms within their villages.

In the past, women were not allowed to

communicate with their in-laws, often resorting to minimal communication while wearing veils to maintain modesty. Nowadays, they engage more openly with their families.

Nepal's rural regions have traditionally been patriarchal, and women were often expected to remain secluded at home, focusing on household tasks. However, the riverbed cultivation project has introduced new opportunities, particularly for women, to engage in farming, sell their products, and interact with peers.

"Riverbed Agriculture, though not designed to help specific poor households in the Terai, successfully spread its techniques across more regions. It aided the development of communities, especially women, by training Local Resource Persons (LRPs) who have continued to play significant roles. Our work continues to include guidance and technical support to local groups after the project ended its financial backing," Dr. Prabin Manandhar, the Country Director of the Helvetas-Nepal, explained.



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