Prime Minister Deuba inaugurates Nepal’s second international airport

Prime Minister of Nepal Sher Bahadur Deuba inaugurated Nepal’s second international airport, the Gautam Buddha International Airport (GBIA), supported by the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The opening was marked by a successful landing of an international commercial flight. Mr. Deuba said the opening of the airport is a historic day in Nepal's aviation and tourism sectors and will contribute to the country’s overall development and prosperity in the long run.

ADB Vice President meets Nepal Prime Minister, reaffirms partnership

Asian Development Bank (ADB) Vice-President Shixin Chen met with Nepal’s Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba on 17 April and reiterated ADB’s commitment to further strengthen its partnership with Nepal, focusing on the government’s reforms and investments in infrastructure and human development while promoting gender equality and social inclusion and addressing climate change impacts.

During his 7-day visit to the country from 13 to 19 April, Mr. Chen also met with Nepal Finance Minister Janardan Sharma “Prabhakar”, Minister of Urban Development Ram Kumari Jhakri; Minister of Energy, Water Resources, and Irrigation Pampha Bhusal; Minister of Education, Science, and Technology Devendra Paudel; and the secretaries of these ministries. Read more.
ADB News

ADB Director General reaffirms strong support for Nepal’s development agenda and pandemic recovery

Asian Development Bank (ADB) Director General for South Asia Kenichi Yokoyama visited Nepal on 16–19 March. During his visit, Mr. Yokoyama reaffirmed ADB’s continued strong support to the Government of Nepal’s development agenda. He served as Country Director for Nepal from 2012 to 2017.

“I am very happy to be back in Kathmandu and to meet with senior government officials to discuss ADB operations in the country, our partnerships, and key strategic directions. ADB is committed to supporting Nepal in its green, resilient, and inclusive recovery from the pandemic to achieve high and sustainable economic growth, improve the lives of Nepali people and build resilience to climate change impact,” said Mr. Yokoyama.

Read more.

ADB Country Director meets Nepal Prime Minister

ADB Country Director for Nepal Arnaud Cauchois on 3 March paid a courtesy visit to Prime Minister of Nepal Sher Bahadur Deuba. During the meeting, Mr. Cauchois briefed the Prime Minister on ADB’s corporate and country priority for Nepal. Underscoring ADB’s engagement since 1969, with its cumulative assistance exceeding $7 billion, Mr. Cauchois noted ADB’s contribution to Nepal during the pandemic and commended the country’s achievement in vaccinating nearly 80% of its targeted population. He also informed that going forward, ADB will focus on tackling climate change, aligning with Nepal’s Green, Resilient, Inclusive Development (GRID) agenda, strengthening portfolio performance, and expanding private-sector operations.
Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation Minister inaugicates ADB financed substation

Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation Minister Pampha Bhusal inaugurated a 220 kV substation financed under Loan 3139-NEP SASEC Power System Expansion Project on 17 March. Energy Secretary Devendra Karki, Managing Director of Nepal Electricity Authority Kul Man Ghising, Norwegian Ambassador to Nepal Torun Dramdal, ADB Nepal’s Portfolio Management Unit Head Rudi Van Dael and high-level officials from federal and provincial governments attended the ceremony.

Nepal Minister visits innovative irrigation scheme in Bangladesh

Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation Minister Pampha Bhusal, the Government of Nepal, led a high-level delegation to Bangladesh from 25-28 April to learn from Bangladesh’s successful experience in adopting the concept of pre-paid buried piped irrigation system and its independent operation, maintenance and management under the Barind Multipurpose Development Authority. The south-south knowledge-sharing event will help prepare a $100 million innovative mechanized irrigation project in Nepal. ADB Country Director for Bangladesh Edimon Ginting accompanied the delegation that also held meetings with the Minister of Agriculture, the State Minister of Water Resources, the Government of Bangladesh.
COVID-19 response measures strengthen health system; vaccines bolster confidence

In March 2020, even before the swelling of the pandemic, the Government of Nepal introduced its $1.26 billion National Relief Program (NRP) to address the crisis overall and mitigate adverse economic and social impacts. To help, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) provided $250 million of support in May 2020 under the COVID-19 Active Response and Expenditure Support (CARES) Program.

ADB’s support via the CARES Program focused on increasing testing capacity, expanding quarantine facilities, and providing incentives to health and frontline personnel responding to COVID-19. The program also came with technical assistance to provide policy advice and enhance the capacity of government agencies to implement the NRP.
How online learning can outlive the COVID-19 pandemic

Whilst the COVID-19 pandemic shocked education systems around the world, it has also provided a unique opportunity to rethink the modus operandi of teaching and learning worldwide, including in Nepal. The blending of online, digital, and interactive learning materials in schools’ everyday processes is bound to outlive the pandemic. ADB Nepal Resident Mission’s Senior Project Officer (Education) Smita Gyawali, and consultant Pramod Bhatta published a blog that proposes several steps that Nepal can consider to enhance blended learning as it embarks in the implementation of its new school education plan. Read the blog.

Model schools improve quality of public education, benefit female, disadvantaged students in Nepal

The model school program is part of the government’s School Sector Development Plan (SSDP), which launched in fiscal year (FY) 2016 and continues until FY2022. The SSDP aims to increase access of all children to quality school education through strategic assistance and reform initiatives to improve the equitable access, quality, efficiency, governance, management and resilience of the education system. The program is supported by eight development partners including the Asian Development Bank (ADB). ADB has pledged $120 million for SSDP, of which $28 million has been allocated for the model school program under results-based financing. Read more.
Transforming education system through model schools

ADB is working with the Government of Nepal and other development partners to ensure quality education for children through the model school program—especially in the secondary level—and improve learning outcomes in science, mathematics and English subjects, in which students perform poorly. The plan seeks to upgrade at least one public secondary school in each of Nepal’s 753 municipalities to a model school. The program is supported by eight development partners including ADB. ADB has pledged $120 million for SSDP, of which $28 million has been allocated for the model school program under results-based financing. See video.

Reviving cultural heritage along the Bagmati

The Government of Nepal, with support from ADB has renovated and reconstructed over a dozen structures along the Bagmati River. These monuments, which include temples and rest houses, reflect Kathmandu’s rich cultural heritage. Over 70 historical monuments are next in line for renovation. This site is one of the cornerstones of the Bagmati River Basin Improvement Project financed by ADB. The project also supports construction of a dam upstream to augment the river’s flow during the dry season and provide clean water for religious purposes, riverbank improvement and beautification, wastewater and solid waste management, and an upgradation of an existing flood forecast system to counter the threat of natural disasters. The vision of the Bagmati River Basin Improvement Project is a clean, green, and healthy Bagmati River system that is full of life and valued by all. Watch the video.

Economic stimulus helps micro, medium and small enterprises, jobless people to weather COVID-19 crisis in Nepal

ADB is helping the Government of Nepal to implement its pandemic response plan through $250 million budget support under the CARES Program.

The program supports health response measures, social protection and relief programs, and economic recovery. Economic support under the CARES Program includes extending concessional lending to at least 10,000 affected micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises, at least 30% of which are women-led. The Government of Nepal, with the support of development partners like ADB, also provided lifelines across the country to support the poor to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic, including food assistance for at least 1.9 million households (5.5 million people). ADB also provided budgetary support to the Prime Minister Employment Program (PMEP), under which the government provides jobs for up to 100 days a year to registered jobless people. Read more.
Nepal Finance Minister chairs country portfolio review meeting

The Government of Nepal and ADB conducted a 2-day meeting to assess the progress, agree on targets, and proactively address issues of ADB-supported development projects in Nepal. Nepal Finance Minister and ADB Governor Janardan Sharma “Prabhakar” and ADB Country Director for Nepal Mr. Arnaud Cauchois jointly chaired a session on sector and project performance. Portfolio Management Unit Head Rudi Van Dael presented a comprehensive overview of Nepal’s portfolio performance in 2021 and initial findings of the portfolio diagnostic study. Issues related to systematic changes in procurement process, human resource management, inter-agency coordination and contract management were discussed. Nepal Finance Secretary Madhu Kumar Marasini also presented awards to ADB-supported projects that showed excellent results in 2021. Read the news release.

Portfolio Management Unit Head Rudi Van Dael presented a comprehensive overview of Nepal’s portfolio performance in 2021 and initial findings of the portfolio diagnostic study.

Consultation with development partners on proposed ADB commitment

ADB Nepal Resident Mission organized a consultation meeting on 21 April in Kathmandu to share the concept and progress of three of the ADB investments planned for commitment in 2022: (i) Nuts and Fruits in Hilly Areas Project; (ii) Strengthening Systems to Protect and Uplift Women; and (iii) SASEC Customs and Logistics Reforms Program (Subprogram 1). The respective mission leaders of the projects made the presentations in-person and virtually in the hybrid meeting. The event provided an opportunity to collect constructive feedback and input from the development partners for further collaboration and coordination. This is the first of the planned sessions that ADB intends to organize to continue the collaboration effort. Officials from 14 multilateral and bilateral agencies participated in the meeting.
ADB organizes energy sector working group meeting in Nepal

Major development partners engaged in Nepal’s energy sector development attended the Energy Sector Working Group meeting organized by ADB on 16 March in Kathmandu. ADB, as the Chair of the Energy Sector Working Group under the International Development Partners Group, presented a draft work plan for the working group. The development partners agreed to prepare and update the energy sector engagement matrix of development partners in Nepal to avoid duplication, create synergy, and prepare talking points for the heads of agencies to provide a coherent and consistent message on the sector issues/directions to the government. Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office (FCDO) made a presentation on advancing domestic energy and energy trade. Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) Managing Director Kul Man Ghising presented the vision, challenges, and way forward for NEA. The group also agreed to hold the Working Group meeting every quarter and the joint meetings with the government at least once a year.

Nepal Minister and ADB Director General launch the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Diagnostic Study of Selected Sectors

ADB and the Institute for Integrated Development Studies (IIDS) jointly organized a dissemination session on Nepal GESI Diagnostic Study of Selected Sectors in Nepal. Urban Development Minister Ram Kumari Jhakri, ADB’s Director General for South Asia Kenichi Yokoyama and Member of the National Planning Commission Saloni Singh were key speakers at the event held on 20 April.

Minister Jhakri appreciated the detailed content and sector focus of the study and its call for greater focus on transformative approaches targeting women and disadvantaged groups. Mr. Yokoyama provided a brief overview of ADB’s journey in expanding the focus from gender equality to gender equality and social inclusion, as reflected in the broader focus of the study. Read the publication.
Nepal Macroeconomic Update for April

ADB Nepal Resident Mission has published the April edition of the Nepal Macroeconomic Update. Per the report, Nepal’s economy is estimated to have modestly expanded by 2.3% in fiscal year (FY) 2021 after contracting by 2.1% in FY2020. GDP growth will likely modestly increase to 3.9% in FY2022 underpinned by the ongoing vaccination campaign that will repress infection flare-ups, fostering a gradual normalization in economic activity and a steady path to higher growth supported by accommodative macroeconomic policies. GDP growth is forecast at 5.0% in FY2023 on the expectation that immunization of the population against COVID-19 continues to progress, enabling further revival of economic activities that have gradually picked up since FY2021.

This edition of macroeconomic update features a special analysis of the effect of remittances on financial development, investment, and economic growth in Nepal. It highlights the importance of shifting from consumption-led growth to investment-led growth strategy.

New Recruitments

Prabina Thapa Magar
Operations Assistant
Joining date: 15 February 2022

Bijaya Koirala
Operations Assistant
Joining date: 9 March 2022
The newly-constructed Gautam Buddha International Airport in Bhairahawa