

Nepali business delegation's trade study mission to London

A delegation comprising of Bekha Man Dongol, Ajad Alam, Ramesh Adhikari, Rajan Sharma, Sulochan Rajbhandari and Kamini Chand, led by Binayak Shah, general secretary, European Economic Chamber (EEC)-Nepal, visited London between 17-24 December at the invitation of the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) to explore trade-related issues with LCCI.

Commission of the European Union under its Asia-Invest Programme had granted a 30-month project to EEC-Nepal in order to build the capacity of selected Nepali Intermediary Business Organisations (ECIBON Project)—so that these organisations could provide professional services to Nepalis and their European counterparts to facilitate bilateral trade and socio-economic interactions. The project has been in operation since August 2007, providing relevant capacity building training programmes to 30 representatives from 15 Intermediary Business Organisations (IBO) that represent all five development regions of the country.

As a part of the project, the seven-member team that visited LCCI attended a "Transfer of Technology" course on trade promotion services aimed at the EU market. The programme was intensive and included an induction in trade promotion activities and techniques, the shadowing of appropriate executives, attendance at trade promotion events, and knowledge of trade opportunities in the host country.

Different activities took place during the five-day stint in London. The Nepali delegation was given an

orientation class on London's commercial aspects; the delegation was also instructed on how Nepali chambers could improve their service towards their members by adapting a customer relation management system. Discussions were held on the benefits of participating in trade fairs organised by British companies rather than by organising own trade fairs—the involvement of British companies would help Nepali business to cash in on the experience of the organisers, as well as draw more clients.

The Nepali team visited a trade fair, "Top Drawer" at Earls Court, and found out that most handicrafts made in Nepal could be sold in the UK market; a meeting was also organised with Nepali businessmen settled in London to discuss the processes and procedures. These NRNs expressed their interest in promoting Nepali products, but at the same time said that they were concerned about the political instability, and load-shedding in Nepal.

The delegation also met with Nepali embassy officials who assured them of assistance in EEC-Nepal's future activities. The embassy officials expressed appreciation over the activities of EEC-Nepal, and described the ECIBON project as "unique and effective". A discussion was also held on how the present global economic crisis could prove to be a beneficial opportunity for Nepal.

Various experts helped the Nepali delegates get acquainted with the business system of London. Perhaps the single biggest achievement of the visit was in meeting with British investors who expressed their desire to invest in Nepal.