

Nepal–UK Tech Forum 2025

Organized by

Embassy of Nepal, London

Post-Event Report

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Venue: Embassy of Nepal, London

Executive Summary

The **Nepal–UK Tech Forum 2025**, hosted on **4 July 2025 at the Embassy of Nepal in London**, marked a **defining moment in the digital and diplomatic relationship** between Nepal and the United Kingdom. The Forum was conceived not as a one-off event, but as a **strategic platform to embed technology, innovation, and investment at the center of bilateral ties**.

As many observers noted, **the Forum was perhaps the largest event ever held overseas in the history of Nepal's diplomatic missions**. The effectiveness of the event was determined by the quality of the presentations and discussions, along with the caliber of the participants, both as speakers and as audience members.

The event brought together **over 150 distinguished participants**, including Members of Parliament from the UK, Ambassadors, senior government officials, representatives of international organizations, investors, venture capitalists, startup founders, technology entrepreneurs, academics, and prominent members of the Nepali diaspora. The diversity and seniority of participation sent a strong message: Nepal is no longer viewed only through the traditional lenses of aid, remittances, or tourism, but increasingly as a **credible partner in digital trade and innovation**.

The Forum's theme *"Fostering Digital Trade and Investment: Strengthening Bilateral Tech Ties"* captured this ambition. Discussions moved well beyond ceremonial exchanges; they focused on **policy frameworks, regulatory readiness, diaspora engagement, foreign direct investment (FDI), and co-innovation opportunities** across fintech, AI, immersive technologies, and outsourcing.

Key Highlights

- **High-Level Leadership:** Opening addresses by H.E. Chandra Kumar Ghimire (Ambassador of Nepal to the UK) and H.E. Rob Fenn (British Ambassador to Nepal) reframed Nepal–UK relations around innovation and trade.
- **Visionary Proposals:** Keynotes and presentations emphasized Nepal’s unique advantages — from hydropower-driven green data centers to a fast-growing IT export sector and a globally connected diaspora.
- **Policy Debates:** Panel 1 explored data governance, AI regulation, and the balance between sovereignty and interoperability.
- **Business Cases:** Entrepreneurs demonstrated real outsourcing success stories, showcasing cost savings and high-quality outputs from Nepal.
- **Investment Outlook:** Panel 3 candidly assessed the prospects for FDI in Nepal’s digital economy, identifying both opportunities and structural barriers.
- **Diaspora Diplomacy:** A fireside chat highlighted how global Nepalis can act as mentors, investors, and digital diplomats for Nepal.
- **Institutional Follow-Up:** The Forum concluded with the announcement of a **Nepal–UK Digital Working Group** to ensure continuity and accountability.

Outcomes

The Forum achieved a **series of concrete outcomes:**

- Agreement in principle to explore a **Nepal–UK Digital Policy Taskforce** to harmonize regulatory frameworks.
- Launch of a **Nepal–UK Digital Working Group**, jointly anchored by the Embassy of Nepal and BNCC, to carry forward recommendations.
- Renewed **UK investor interest** in fintech, outsourcing, and eco-friendly data infrastructure.
- Recognition of the **diaspora as a strategic pillar** of Nepal’s digital diplomacy.

- A clear **shift in perception**, repositioning Nepal as a *trusted digital hub* with a USD 500M+ IT services sector.

Conclusion

The Nepal–UK Tech Forum 2025 was more than a networking platform; it was a **strategic turning point**. By embedding follow-up mechanisms and securing buy-in from policymakers, investors, and diaspora leaders, the Forum has laid the foundation for a **long-term digital partnership between Nepal and the UK**.

Introduction & Context

The global economy is undergoing a profound transformation, where **technology and digital services are becoming central to trade, investment, and diplomacy**. Against this backdrop, Nepal and the UK share complementary strengths: Nepal with its young, educated, and cost-effective talent pool, and the UK with its advanced innovation ecosystem, global financial hub, and leadership in setting digital governance norms.

Nepal, long associated internationally with the Himalayas, hydropower, and remittances, is now **emerging as a digital player**. The country has over **15,000 IT graduates annually**, a rapidly growing outsourcing industry, and IT exports already exceeding **USD 515M** — growing at over **60% in recent years**. With more than 90% of its electricity generated from hydropower, Nepal also has the unique potential to host **green data centers**, aligning with global sustainability goals.

For the UK, partnerships with frontier digital economies like Nepal are not only about trade — they are part of a **broader digital diplomacy agenda**. The UK has been advancing frameworks such as the **Data Free Flow with Trust (DFFT)**, promoting ethical AI standards, and enabling cross-border digital trade agreements. Engaging with Nepal offers an opportunity to co-create trusted pathways for data, cloud, and AI collaboration in South Asia.

By convening the Forum in **London, the political, financial, and innovation capital of the UK**, the Embassy of Nepal sought to signal seriousness, credibility, and ambition. The Forum was deliberately designed to **balance policy, practice, and people**:

- **Policy** – to align on governance and regulatory frameworks.
- **Practice** – to showcase live business cases and investor signals.
- **People** – to mobilize diaspora networks as digital diplomats and investors.

The Forum thus represented both a **celebration of progress** and a **challenge to act**: progress in how far Nepal’s digital economy has come, and a challenge to turn vision into structured, long-term partnerships.

Objectives of the Forum

The Nepal–UK Tech Forum 2025 was never intended to be a ceremonial gathering; it was deliberately designed as a **strategic platform** to anchor technology, innovation, and investment as the next frontier in Nepal–UK relations. The objectives reflected both **immediate goals** and **long-term aspirations**, ensuring that the event would produce tangible momentum.

- **Showcasing Nepal’s Digital Potential**
For decades, Nepal’s global image has been shaped by its natural beauty, cultural heritage, and remittance economy. While these remain important, Nepal’s growing digital economy has often remained underappreciated. The Forum sought to **rebrand Nepal as an emerging digital hub** highlighting its IT export growth, abundance of young talent, and capacity for outsourcing, AI development, cloud services, and cybersecurity. By putting Nepali companies and leaders on stage in London, the Embassy aimed to change international perceptions.
- **Promoting Investment & Trade Partnerships**
Attracting UK FDI into Nepal’s digital sector was a central ambition. The Forum served as a **matchmaking arena** where Nepali firms could demonstrate capabilities, and UK investors could see opportunities firsthand. Beyond traditional aid and development

assistance, the objective was to encourage **joint ventures, outsourcing contracts, and venture capital linkages.**

- **Fostering Policy Dialogue**

As digital trade grows, the need for regulatory clarity becomes essential. The Forum created a space for open discussions on **data governance, cybersecurity, AI regulation, and interoperability.** Nepal, still shaping its frameworks, sought to learn from the UK's experience and align with international standards. The idea of a **Nepal–UK Digital Policy Taskforce** emerged as a direct response to this objective.

- **Engaging the Diaspora**

The Nepali diaspora in the UK includes thousands of highly skilled professionals in technology, finance, academia, and entrepreneurship. One explicit objective of the Forum was to **mobilize this diaspora as digital diplomats and investors.** Their voices were given prominence in fireside chats and panels, reinforcing the message that diaspora engagement is not peripheral but **central to Nepal's digital future.**

- **Building Institutional Mechanisms**

A recurring weakness of past conferences has been the lack of follow-up. To counter this, the Forum embedded the creation of a **Nepal–UK Digital Working Group**, co-anchored by BNCC and the Embassy, as an explicit objective to ensure continuity, accountability, and long-term engagement.

- **Strengthening Bilateral Ties through Innovation**

Finally, the Forum sought to **redefine Nepal–UK relations.** For over 200 years, ties have been shaped by history, culture, Gurkha service, and aid. The Forum aimed to **add a new chapter:** one of digital trade, innovation, and co-investment. This was both a symbolic and strategic shift, intended to update the narrative of bilateral cooperation for the digital age.

Proceedings of the Forum

Opening Remarks

The Forum began with an atmosphere of anticipation. The grand setting of the Embassy of Nepal in London, with its historic architecture at Kensington Palace Gardens, provided a fitting backdrop for a dialogue that sought to merge tradition with modernity.

Ambassador Chandra Kumar Ghimire (Ambassador of Nepal to the UK) opened the Forum with a speech that was at once **aspirational and practical**. He situated the Forum within Nepal's development trajectory, reminding participants that Nepal is poised to graduate from Least Developed Country (LDC) status by 2026. At this pivotal moment, he argued, technology and digital innovation are no longer optional but **central to sustaining inclusive growth**.

Ambassador Ghimire shared compelling statistics: Nepal's IT and digital services sector now contributes more than **USD 515 million annually**, and the country produces over **15,000 IT graduates every year** from 30+ universities and institutes. Many of these graduates, he noted, are already working with global clients, a quiet **revolution of remote work** that is expanding Nepal's GDP from beyond its borders.

He framed Nepal's value proposition directly for the UK audience: a **young, English-speaking workforce** that is globally competitive, combined with an **energy grid powered by 90% hydropower**, making it an ideal location for **sustainable digital infrastructure**. He emphasized that this *green advantage* uniquely positions Nepal as a destination for eco-friendly data centers, a point that resonated strongly with UK investors sensitive to ESG commitments.

Importantly, Ambassador Ghimire placed technology in a **diplomatic and cultural context**, calling it the "next chapter" in Nepal-UK relations. After centuries of ties built on friendship, trust, and development assistance, he urged the UK to now see Nepal as a **partner in shaping South Asia's digital future**. His final words were both urgent and optimistic: "*Nepal is racing*

like a leopard. We have the youth, we have the talent, and we have the determination. What we need now is investment, collaboration, and trust.”

Ambassador Rob Fenn (British Ambassador to Nepal) followed, offering a complementary yet candid perspective. He congratulated the Embassy of Nepal in London for convening a timely Forum and acknowledged that the UK sees **digital trade as a critical frontier of global cooperation**. He praised Nepal’s reforms under the *Digital Nepal Framework* and improvements in energy reliability and internet penetration, which make the country far more attractive to investors today than a decade ago.

However, Ambassador Fenn also addressed the **practical concerns of investors**. He highlighted that foreign investors in Nepal still face challenges in **profit repatriation**, where the lack of transparent and predictable processes discourages large-scale FDI. He also underlined the importance of **regulatory stability**, stressing that UK investors prioritize environments where rules remain predictable.

On a positive note, Ambassador Fenn drew attention to the role of **British International Investment (BII)**, which had already facilitated USD 60M in green bonds for Nepal’s infrastructure. He expressed optimism that such financial instruments could also extend into digital sectors. He further noted progress toward a **Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA)**, calling it a “game changer” for investment relations.

Ambassador Fenn concluded by emphasizing **complementary strengths**: Nepal’s dynamic workforce and the UK’s leadership in finance, policy, and innovation. He left the audience with a clear challenge: *“Together, we can create trusted digital pathways that serve both our economies and inspire the region. But to get there, we must build confidence, align policies, and act on today’s discussions.”*

Discussion Takeaways from Opening Remarks:

- Nepal is positioning itself as a **green, youthful, and globally competitive digital hub**.

- The UK acknowledges Nepal's progress but stresses the need for **regulatory predictability and investment-friendly reforms**.
- Both Ambassadors shifted the bilateral narrative from **aid and tradition to innovation and trade**.
- Their combined remarks set the stage for panels that would tackle policy, investment, and diaspora engagement in detail.

Scene-Setting Presentations

Following the opening remarks, the Forum transitioned into a series of **scene-setting presentations** designed to frame Nepal's digital opportunity from multiple perspectives: government, diaspora entrepreneurship, and private sector leadership.

Mr. Sushil Gyawali – CEO, Investment Board of Nepal (IBN)

Mr. Gyawali opened his presentation by situating Nepal in the midst of a **structural transformation**. For decades, Nepal's economy had been dependent on agriculture and remittances, but the ICT sector is now becoming one of the fastest-growing engines of growth. He underscored that Nepal's **IT service exports had grown by over 60% in recent years**, fueled by global outsourcing, freelancing, and the rise of remote work.

He stressed that Nepal is *not starting from zero*. Several globally recognized firms **Leapfrog, CloudFactory, Deerhold, and Genese Solution** already operate successfully out of Nepal, serving international clients. This, he argued, demonstrates that Nepal's **ecosystem is credible and competitive**.

Mr. Gyawali highlighted the government's role in enabling this transformation. He noted policy reforms such as **100% FDI approval in IT services, tax holidays of up to seven years, and duty-free import of IT equipment**. He also discussed the development of **IT parks and Special Economic Zones (SEZs)**, designed to attract global BPO, fintech, and AI-driven companies.

He framed Nepal's proposition to the UK audience succinctly: *"For two centuries, Nepal and the UK have enjoyed relations built on trust. It is now time to extend that trust into technology and investment. Nepal is ready and we invite you to join us."*

Key Message: Nepal has the **policy incentives, infrastructure, and talent base** to position itself as a serious destination for UK investors in digital services.

Mr. Saroj Sapkota – Partner, AGK Partners UK

If Gyawali provided the macroeconomic picture, Mr. Sapkota brought it down to the **micro-level business case**. As a chartered accountant and partner at AGK Partners UK, he presented a live case study of outsourcing accounting services to Nepal.

He explained that his firm had successfully adopted a **hybrid model**, where UK-qualified professionals collaborated seamlessly with Nepali accountants. The outcome was striking: nearly **40% cost savings**, faster turnaround times, and access to a loyal, skilled talent pool.

He stressed that outsourcing is not limited to IT coding or call centers. Even **regulated services like accounting, auditing, and compliance** could be effectively outsourced to Nepal, provided the right systems and oversight are in place. This, he said, is a **proof point that Nepal's outsourcing model is not aspirational but already operational**.

He urged investors and businesses in the audience to *"trust Nepal's talent."* He recounted how Nepali professionals consistently exceeded expectations in terms of **English fluency, professionalism, and adaptability**. His closing remark was powerful: *"If we can make it work in a regulated field like accounting, imagine the possibilities in technology, AI, or cloud services."*

Key Message: Nepal's outsourcing story is **already working** in professional services. The opportunity is ready to scale.

Mr. Anjani Phuyal – Global CEO, Genese Solution

As a UK-based diaspora entrepreneur with deep operational roots in Nepal, Mr. Phuyal's presentation carried both **visionary weight and practical credibility**.

He began by acknowledging the diaspora's unique role as **bridges between cultures, economies, and ecosystems**. Having built Genese into a global technology company headquartered in the UK but powered by Nepali engineers, he emphasized how diaspora entrepreneurs embody the "dual identity" necessary for cross-border digital partnerships.

Mr. Phuyal praised the Embassy for convening the Forum, calling it a "**turning point in bilateral digital diplomacy**". He emphasized Nepal's **youthful, globally competitive workforce**, citing examples from Genese's own operations, where Nepali engineers deliver enterprise-grade solutions to clients in Europe, the US, and Asia. He argued that Nepal's advantage is not just **cost-effectiveness**, but also **agility and resilience**.

Most notably, Mr. Phuyal proposed the creation of a **Nepal–UK Digital Governance Taskforce**. This body, he suggested, would bring together regulators, investors, and private sector leaders from both countries to jointly design frameworks for **cloud governance, AI ethics, and digital trade**. If Nepal and the UK aligned early, he argued, they could co-create a **model for cross-border digital cooperation** that could be emulated across South Asia.

His conclusion was emphatic: "*Nepal is ready for the world, and the world is ready for Nepal. What we need is structured partnership not just inspiration, but implementation.*"

Key Message: To unlock the next phase, Nepal and the UK must move from **dialogue to structured implementation** through joint taskforces and governance frameworks.

Panel 1 – Governing the Digital Future: Policy Perspectives on Infotech

The first panel of the day, moderated by **Mr. Nick Hinton (Chairman, Britain–Nepal Society)**, tackled one of the most pressing questions of the digital age: *How do we govern digital transformation in a way that balances innovation with trust and inclusion?*

Panelists

- **Mr. Ron Yip** – UK Department for Business & Trade (DBT)
- **Prof. C. Louise Thwaites** – Oxford University Clinical Research Unit
- **Mr. Ashutosh Pateriya** – EMEA Tech Lead, GSI

Discussion Highlights

Ron Yip spoke from a UK government perspective, emphasizing the principle of **Data Free Flow with Trust (DFFT)**. He explained that for UK firms to engage with countries like Nepal, **trust frameworks around data security, privacy, and intellectual property** must be established. He suggested that Nepal could benefit significantly by aligning with **international standards** from the outset.

Prof. Thwaites brought an ethical and sectoral perspective, focusing on **digital health**. She highlighted how digital innovations could transform patient care in developing countries, but warned of **risks in data misuse, consent, and security**. She urged Nepal to adopt robust safeguards early, noting: *“If you build systems without governance, you risk losing trust at the very moment when trust is most needed.”*

Mr. Pateriya represented the private sector view. He commended Nepal’s growing talent pool but stressed that global firms look for **stable, secure, and scalable environments**. He underscored the importance of **cybersecurity resilience** and compliance with frameworks like **ISO and GDPR**. Without these, he warned, large-scale outsourcing to Nepal could remain limited.

The discussion became particularly engaging when the moderator posed a question on whether Nepal should prioritize **digital sovereignty (keeping data local)** or **interoperability (allowing data to flow across borders)**. Panelists agreed that a balance would be needed for sovereignty where politically necessary, but interoperability to remain competitive in global digital trade.

Audience interaction further enriched the panel. A question was raised about the **role of the diaspora in shaping policy frameworks**. Panelists responded that diaspora professionals, many of whom work in global policy and regulatory environments, could serve as advisors to Nepal's policymakers to ensure practicality and alignment with global norms.

Takeaways from Panel 1

- **Trust is foundational** — without governance, digital trade cannot flourish.
- Nepal must urgently advance **data protection and cybersecurity legislation**.
- A **Nepal–UK Digital Policy Taskforce** could institutionalize regulatory cooperation.
- Ethical governance in sensitive sectors like health must not be overlooked.
- Diaspora expertise should be integrated into policymaking.

As moderator Nick Hinton concluded memorably: *“Innovation without governance is fragile, and governance without innovation is futile. This is where Nepal and the UK must collaborate.”*

Keynote Address – Mr. Tim Gocher OBE DL

Founder & CEO, Dolma Impact Fund

The Forum transitioned smoothly from policy debates into an investor's perspective with a keynote address by **Mr. Tim Gocher OBE DL**, founder of **Dolma Impact Fund**, the largest international private equity fund dedicated to Nepal. His keynote, titled *“AI & Technology: A Growth Driver for Nepal”*, combined both inspiration and grounded analysis.

Mr. Gocher began by situating his remarks in the context of Dolma's decade-long experience in Nepal, having invested in renewable energy, healthcare, and IT services. This track record allowed him to speak with credibility: *“We have seen firsthand that Nepal is not only a country of immense potential but also one where impact and profit can coexist.”*

He introduced the idea of **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** as a **“general purpose technology”**, likening it to the transformative role electricity once played in industrialization. AI, he argued,

will reshape every sector from healthcare to manufacturing to finance. For a country like Nepal, AI offers a unique opportunity to **leapfrog development stages**, much as mobile phones have allowed many countries to bypass landline infrastructure.

With a memorable phrase, he captured the room's attention: *"All you need for AI is brains and broadband and Nepal has both."* He elaborated that Nepal's young, highly educated population provides the **brains**, while the rapid expansion of internet connectivity supplies the **broadband**. Together, these ingredients make Nepal a serious contender in AI-driven outsourcing and innovation.

Mr. Gocher also highlighted Nepal's **green advantage**. With abundant hydropower, Nepal can host eco-friendly data centers at a time when global firms are seeking to reduce their carbon footprints. He argued that Nepal could brand itself as a destination for **"green AI and green cloud computing"**, capturing a niche in the global market.

He concluded by stressing the importance of **diaspora engagement and international partnerships**. While Dolma Impact Fund is investing in Nepal, there is vast untapped potential for UK venture capital firms, accelerators, and technology companies to co-invest or co-innovate with Nepali enterprises. His call to action was clear: *"AI is already here. The question is not whether Nepal can participate, but how fast we can move, and whether we will create the governance systems to use it responsibly."*

Key Message: Nepal has the raw ingredients — talent, connectivity, and sustainability — to become a global player in AI and digital innovation, but governance and partnerships will determine how far and how fast it can go.

Panel 2 – Changing Landscapes of Digital Trade in Nepal–UK Relations

Moderator: Mr. Steve Buckley, CEO, Britain–Nepal Chamber of Commerce (BNCC)

If Panel 1 dealt with governance, **Panel 2 shifted the focus to markets, innovation, and skills.** Moderated by Mr. Steve Buckley, the discussion explored how Nepal–UK digital trade is evolving, the opportunities it presents, and the barriers that must be addressed.

Panelists

- **Mr. Jay Paudel** – CTO, The Whisky Exchange London
- **Ms. Asha Easton** – Immersive Tech Network Lead, Innovate UK
- **Mr. Niraj Shah** – VP of Engineering, BitsKraft
- **Ms. Elena Sinel FRSA** – Founder & CEO, Teens in AI

Discussion Highlights

Mr. Jay Paudel, a diaspora professional who has built his career in the UK technology sector, shared his personal journey of bridging opportunities between the two countries. He explained how Nepali engineers he had recommended to UK firms consistently delivered at par with — and often beyond global standards. He emphasized that *“every success story of a Nepali working in London becomes a story of Nepal’s capability.”* His remarks reinforced the diaspora’s role as **trust enablers**, making it easier for UK companies to work with Nepali talent.

Ms. Asha Easton expanded the conversation into emerging fields such as **immersive technologies (AR/VR, simulation, and interactive experiences)**. She noted that while outsourcing remains important, the real opportunity lies in **co-creating innovation projects** with UK startups and research institutions. She provided examples of VR solutions in education and training, suggesting that Nepal’s creative youth could contribute meaningfully to these global innovation chains. Her message was forward-looking: *“Innovation is no longer bounded by geography, and immersive tech is one area where co-creation between our two countries can thrive.”*

Mr. Niraj Shah injected a dose of realism. While acknowledging the world-class quality of Nepali engineers, he pointed out systemic challenges: unreliable internet in certain regions,

difficulties in receiving international payments, and policy delays that create uncertainty for foreign clients. He argued that without addressing these bottlenecks, Nepal risks being stuck in low-value outsourcing rather than ascending to higher-value innovation partnerships. His remarks served as a reminder that **ecosystem reforms are just as important as talent development**.

Ms. Elena Sinel brought in a youth and inclusion perspective. As the founder of *Teens in AI*, she stressed that Nepal has a **unique demographic opportunity**: its young population could be empowered not only to consume technology but to **create it**. She proposed localizing programs like *Teens in AI* in Nepal to expose teenagers to AI, entrepreneurship, and digital skills early on. Her vision was inclusive: *“Young people must not only consume technology; they must be its creators.”*

The discussion revealed both optimism and caution. While diaspora connections and youth potential offer immense promise, the infrastructure and regulatory environment still present barriers.

Takeaways from Panel 2

1. **Diaspora professionals** are pivotal in linking Nepali talent to UK companies.
2. Nepal must **transition from outsourcing to co-innovation**, especially in fields like AI and immersive tech.
3. **Infrastructure reforms, payment** systems and internet reliability are urgent.
4. **Youth engagement** in digital innovation is key to building a long-term competitive workforce.
5. Bilateral **incubators and accelerators** could serve as platforms for shared innovation.

As moderator Steve Buckley summarized: *“Digital trade is no longer the future — it is the present. The challenge now is to ensure that Nepal and the UK are not only trading partners but co-innovation partners.”*

Panel 3 – FDI Prospects in Nepal–UK Digital Relations

Moderator: Ms. Pranu Singh, Director, Standard Chartered Bank UK

The third panel of the day moved into the critical domain of **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)**, exploring the prospects, challenges, and enablers for UK investors to engage in Nepal's digital economy.

Panelists

- **Mr. Hem Raj Dhakal** – Co-Founder & Managing Director, IME Group Nepal
- **Dr. Richard Slater** – Head of Advisory, Tripleline
- **Mr. Abhinav Sinha** – Managing Director, British International Investment (BII)
- **Ms. Lopa Patel MBE** – Digital Entrepreneur & UK Government Advisor

Discussion Highlights

Mr. Hem Raj Dhakal offered a private sector perspective from Nepal. He highlighted how the digital economy has shifted the investment profile of the country, with tech startups and ICT firms becoming increasingly attractive. However, he candidly admitted that regulatory bottlenecks and policy unpredictability continue to hold back investor confidence. He argued for a **focused digital investment promotion strategy** to position Nepal more strongly in UK markets.

Dr. Richard Slater, drawing from his experience advising across emerging markets, provided a comparative analysis. He noted that while Nepal's progress is encouraging, investors often perceive it as **less predictable than peers like Vietnam or the Philippines**. He stressed that **investor perceptions often lag behind realities**, and that Nepal needs to tell its success stories more assertively.

Mr. Abhinav Sinha spoke from the perspective of a development finance institution. He outlined the key indicators BII considers when evaluating frontier markets: **policy stability, infrastructure**

readiness, and investable deal pipelines. He suggested that **blended finance instruments** could help de-risk investments in Nepal, particularly in technology and infrastructure. He also noted that fintech success stories like **NCHL** should be leveraged to attract more FDI into adjacent sectors like insuretech and edtech.

Ms. Lopa Patel MBE addressed the issue of perceptions and narratives. She pointed out that many UK investors still associate Nepal primarily with tourism and remittances. Changing this narrative, she argued, requires **consistent storytelling and structured outreach**. She proposed the creation of a **digital innovation corridor or co-innovation program** between Nepal and the UK to institutionalize collaboration.

The panel's most engaging moment came when the moderator asked each panelist to name **one structural barrier and one enabler** for Nepal–UK digital FDI. Responses included:

- Barriers: Profit repatriation, infrastructure gaps, regulatory unpredictability.
- Enablers: Blended finance, diaspora networks, bilateral innovation platforms.

Takeaways from Panel 3

- Nepal's digital FDI profile is **promising but still aspirational**.
- **Blended finance** can play a catalytic role in de-risking investments.
- **Policy predictability and payment reforms** are essential to attract UK investors.
- Nepal must actively **counter investor misconceptions** through storytelling.
- A **digital innovation corridor** could institutionalize bilateral investment ties.

Fireside Chat – Diaspora & Digital Diplomacy: The Power of Global Nepalis

Moderator: Mr. Niranjana Kunwar, Global CTO & CISO, Genese Solution

The fireside chat provided one of the most engaging sessions of the Forum. Unlike the structured panels, the format encouraged **personal stories, candid reflections, and forward-looking**

visions. The session focused on how the Nepali diaspora can be mobilized as a **strategic asset in digital diplomacy.**

Speakers

- **Prof. Suresh Manandhar** – Honorary Professor in Artificial Intelligence
- **Ms. Ruby Raut** – CEO & Co-Founder, WUKA Wear
- **Mr. Santosh Koirala** – President, NAS-IT Nepal & Director, Techkraft

Discussion Highlights

Prof. Suresh Manandhar shared his long journey in AI research and academia. He explained how diaspora academics like himself contribute globally to cutting-edge fields but often lack structured channels to collaborate with institutions back home. He proposed practical solutions such as **diaspora experts co-supervising PhD students, co-designing curriculum, and establishing joint research labs** between UK universities and Nepali institutions. His vision was clear: *“The next breakthrough in AI could come from a Nepali student — but only if we connect them to the global knowledge network.”*

Ms. Ruby Raut, one of the UK’s leading Nepali entrepreneurs, provided an inspiring narrative of diaspora entrepreneurship. As CEO of WUKA Wear, a sustainable fashion-tech company, she illustrated how global success does not mean disconnecting from one’s roots. She emphasized that diaspora entrepreneurs can act as **mentors, investors, and market-openers** for startups in Nepal. She made a passionate case for supporting women-led innovation: *“Representation matters. When young Nepali women see someone like them succeed globally, it changes what they believe is possible.”*

Mr. Santosh Koirala brought a business and institutional perspective. He described how diaspora networks are already bridging outsourcing opportunities by connecting UK SMEs with Nepali IT firms. However, he noted these efforts are often **ad-hoc and fragmented**. To scale, he proposed creating a **formal Global Nepali Tech Network**, supported by the Embassy, to serve

as a central hub for diaspora entrepreneurs, investors, and professionals to collaborate systematically with Nepal.

The moderator, **Mr. Kunwar**, framed the diaspora not only as an economic contributor through remittances, but as a **knowledge and innovation community**. He raised a provocative point about **dual citizenship**, suggesting that unless Nepal reforms its policies to formalize long-term diaspora participation, much of this potential will remain underutilized.

Takeaways from Fireside Chat

1. The diaspora is a **strategic pillar of digital diplomacy**, not a peripheral actor.
2. **Academic collaboration** could be deepened through joint labs, curriculum design, and co-supervision.
3. Diaspora entrepreneurship can provide **capital, mentorship, and global market access**.
4. A **Global Nepali Tech Network** could institutionalize diaspora engagement.
5. Policy reforms such as **dual citizenship** are critical to unlock diaspora potential.

As Niranjan Kunwar concluded: *“Diaspora is Nepal’s soft power in the digital age. The question is: will we structure it, or let it remain an untapped potential?”*

Special Address – Leapfrogging with Fintech: The Nepal Story

Speaker: Mr. Neelesh Man Singh Pradhan, CEO, Nepal Clearing House Ltd. (NCHL)

The Forum then shifted to a special address on fintech — one of Nepal’s most remarkable digital success stories. **Mr. Neelesh Man Singh Pradhan** provided a case study on how Nepal has successfully leapfrogged in financial services.

He began by recalling the state of Nepal’s financial sector just a decade ago: **paper-based, fragmented, and slow**. Today, through NCHL’s leadership, Nepal has achieved **near-universal integration across banks and financial institutions**, allowing for seamless digital transactions nationwide.

Mr. Pradhan outlined key milestones:

- The establishment of the **National Payment Switch**, enabling interoperability across banks.
- The rise of **real-time payment systems**, ensuring instant transfers.
- Integration of **government services** into digital platforms, increasing transparency and efficiency.

He argued that fintech demonstrates Nepal's capacity to **leapfrog development stages**. Instead of moving slowly from cheques to cards to digital, Nepal has **jumped directly to mobile-first solutions**. This success, he noted, is the result of **public-private collaboration**, where regulators, banks, and private innovators worked hand-in-hand.

Looking ahead, he suggested that fintech could serve as a **blueprint for other sectors**. Similar models could be applied in **healthtech, edtech, and insuretech**, where Nepal could once again leapfrog by adopting digital-first approaches.

His concluding message was forward-looking and confident: *"If Nepal can leapfrog in fintech, it can leapfrog in AI, in cloud computing, and in digital services. The foundation has been laid — now it is time to scale."*

Key Message: Nepal's fintech journey proves that with the right collaboration, the country can leapfrog in other digital sectors, reinforcing its image as a **credible innovation hub**.

Closing & Valedictory Session

Speaker: Dr. Kapil Rijal, Chair, Britain-Nepal Chamber of Commerce (BNCC)

The Forum concluded with a valedictory session by **Dr. Kapil Rijal**, who synthesized the day's discussions and translated them into a forward-looking agenda.

He began by commending the Embassy of Nepal for convening a platform that successfully combined **policy, practice, and people**. He highlighted that the Forum had gone beyond

promotional talk to honestly discuss **both opportunities and challenges**, which enhances credibility in the eyes of investors and policymakers.

Most importantly, Dr. Rijal announced the creation of a **Nepal–UK Digital Working Group**, under the joint patronage of BNCC and the Embassy. This group will serve as the **institutional mechanism for continuity**, tasked with:

- Tracking progress on the proposed Digital Policy Taskforce.
- Facilitating UK investment delegations to Nepal.
- Structuring diaspora engagement, including the proposed Global Nepali Tech Network.
- Publishing annual updates to ensure accountability.

His closing remarks struck a balance of optimism and urgency: *“This Forum is not an end in itself, but a beginning. The commitments made here must be followed by delivery. If we act with urgency and sincerity, Nepal and the UK can together build a digital partnership that inspires the world.”*

The formal program concluded with a vote of thanks, group photographs, and a networking reception that extended late into the evening. The lively discussions during the reception between investors, entrepreneurs, policymakers, and diaspora leaders testified to the **energy and enthusiasm generated throughout the day**.

Key Outcomes of the Nepal–UK Tech Forum 2025

The Forum was not just a series of speeches; it produced **concrete outcomes** that can shape the future of Nepal–UK digital cooperation.

Policy Momentum: Toward a Nepal–UK Digital Policy Taskforce

One of the clearest outcomes was the recognition that Nepal must move quickly to align its **digital governance frameworks** with international norms. Across multiple sessions from Ron

Yip's call for trust-based trade to Prof. Thwaites' warnings about ethical digital health the message was consistent: **policy clarity drives investment confidence**.

The proposed **Nepal–UK Digital Policy Taskforce** will allow regulators, policymakers, and private sector leaders from both countries to collaborate on **data protection, cybersecurity, AI governance, and cross-border interoperability**. This initiative not only helps Nepal keep pace with global standards such as GDPR and DFFT, but also positions the UK as a trusted policy partner in South Asia.

Impact: A Taskforce will build **investor confidence**, reduce regulatory risks, and make Nepal more competitive against regional peers like Vietnam and the Philippines.

Institutional Mechanism: Launch of the Nepal–UK Digital Working Group

The most tangible outcome was the announcement of the **Nepal–UK Digital Working Group**, to be co-anchored by the Embassy of Nepal in London and the Britain–Nepal Chamber of Commerce (BNCC).

Too often, the enthusiasm of one-day conferences fades without follow-up. The Working Group addresses this gap by providing an **institutional backbone for continuity**. It will:

- Track implementation of Forum recommendations.
- Convene quarterly meetings with stakeholders (MoCIT, DBT, BNCC, diaspora, private sector).
- Act as a **contact point for UK investors**, offering clarity on opportunities and reforms.
- Publish **annual progress reports** to ensure accountability.

Impact: This Working Group transforms the Forum from an event into a **process**, ensuring that momentum is not lost and credibility is strengthened.

Investment Signals: Renewed UK Interest in Nepal's Digital Sector

Investment themes echoed throughout the day. UK investors and institutions showed renewed interest in specific areas:

- **Fintech** – NCHL was cited as a successful leapfrogging model, sparking curiosity about whether similar approaches could be applied to insure-tech and healthtech.
- **Outsourcing & SaaS** – The cases presented by Saroj Sapkota and Jay Paudel proved that outsourcing to Nepal is not theoretical but already delivering results.
- **Green Data Centers** – Perhaps the most exciting signal was investor curiosity about Nepal's potential to host **eco-friendly data centers powered by hydropower**, a differentiator at a time when AI and cloud firms are under pressure to go green.

However, caution was raised regarding **profit repatriation**. Without reforms to make repatriation smoother, large-scale UK FDI will remain limited.

Impact: Signals of interest create a window of opportunity, but **policy reforms are required to convert interest into capital flows**.

Diaspora Activation: A Strategic Pillar of Digital Diplomacy

The fireside chat highlighted that Nepal's diaspora is not just a remittance base but an **untapped innovation engine**. Diaspora professionals are already:

- Linking UK SMEs with Nepali IT firms (Santosh Koirala).
- Mentoring women in tech and advocating for inclusivity (Ruby Raut).
- Building bridges in research and academia (Prof. Suresh Manandhar).

The Forum consolidated these contributions into three concrete proposals:

- Establishing a **Global Nepali Tech Network** under Embassy patronage.
- Creating **diaspora-backed venture funds** to co-invest with UK angels.
- Enabling diaspora academics to **co-supervise PhDs and joint research labs**.

A strong call was also made for **dual citizenship or equivalent policy reforms** to unlock long-term diaspora engagement.

Impact: Diaspora engagement could accelerate Nepal's integration into global knowledge and investment networks, multiplying both capital inflows and soft power.

Perception Shift: Nepal as a Digital Partner

Perhaps the most intangible yet powerful outcome was the **shift in perception** among participants. For decades, Nepal was internationally associated with **aid, tourism, and remittances**. By the end of the Forum, it was being discussed as a **green, trusted digital hub** with a USD 500M+ IT services sector and one of the fastest-growing outsourcing industries in South Asia.

UK MPs, investors, and policymakers acknowledged that they had **underestimated Nepal's digital potential** before attending. This perception shift is critical because **investment follows credibility** — and credibility starts with changing narratives.

Impact: Nepal has successfully repositioned itself from the periphery of digital trade to a **credible partner in co-innovation and technology investment**.

Recommendations & Next Steps

For the Forum's outcomes to matter, they must be translated into **structured, time-bound actions**. The following recommendations emerged from the discussions:

0–6 Months: Immediate Actions

- **Operationalize the Digital Working Group** – Convene its first meeting within 3 months, finalize Terms of Reference, and establish a Secretariat at BNCC London with Embassy oversight.

- **Communication Campaign** – Share Forum outcomes widely through joint Embassy–BNCC channels to maintain momentum and signal seriousness.

Risk if delayed: Forum momentum dissipates, credibility gap widens.

6–12 Months: Policy & Pilot Programs

- **Advance DTAA & Profit Repatriation Reform** – Fast-track the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement and introduce transparent online systems for FDI profit repatriation.
- **Launch Pilot Collaborations**
 - Create a joint **UK–Nepal AI & Immersive Tech Innovation Lab**.
 - Expand fintech partnerships building on the NCHL model.
 - Establish diaspora-backed outsourcing hubs in London and Kathmandu.

Risk if delayed: Nepal remains locked in low-value outsourcing, missing co-innovation opportunities.

12–24 Months: Institutionalization

- **Diaspora Engagement Programs** – Formally launch the **Global Nepali Tech Network**, organize annual diaspora summits in London, and provide structured roles in mentoring and curriculum design.
- **Institutionalize the Forum** – Establish the Nepal–UK Tech Forum as an **annual flagship event**, alternating between London and Kathmandu, and secure private sector sponsorships.

Risk if delayed: Forum risks being remembered as a one-off event, weakening credibility.

Ongoing: Strategic Branding

- **Publish Annual Case Studies** – Highlighting Nepali success stories in digital services, outsourcing, and innovation.
- **Brand Nepal as a “Green Digital Hub”** – Leverage hydropower advantage in all international pitches.
- **Use Diaspora as Ambassadors** – Empower entrepreneurs like Ruby Raut and Jay Paudel to act as brand ambassadors in UK tech circles.

Risk if delayed: Investors remain unaware of Nepal’s readiness, missing the window of momentum.

Acknowledgements

The Embassy of Nepal, London, extends its deepest appreciation to all who made the Forum possible.

- **Ambassadors & Diplomats:**
 - H.E. Mr. Chandra Kumar Ghimire, Ambassador of Nepal to the UK
 - H.E. Mr. Rob Fenn, British Ambassador to Nepal
- **Keynote & Special Speakers:**
 - Mr. Sushil Gyawali – Investment Board Nepal
 - Mr. Saroj Sapkota – AGK Partners UK
 - Mr. Anjani Phuyal – Genese Solution
 - Mr. Tim Gocher – Dolma Impact Fund
 - Mr. Neelesh Man Singh Pradhan – Nepal Clearing House Ltd.
- **Moderators & Panelists:** Nick Hinton, Steve Buckley, Pranu Singh, Ron Yip, Louise Thwaites, Ashutosh Pateriya, Jay Paudel, Asha Easton, Niraj Shah, Elena Sinel, Prof. Suresh Manandhar, Ruby Raut, Santosh Koirala.
- **Parliamentarians:** Hon. Alex Baker MP and members of the APPG on Nepal for reaffirming parliamentary support.

- **Institutional Partners:** BNCC, NAS-IT, techUK, CNI, CAN Federation, FNCCI, and CNI Nepal.
- **Corporate Champions:** Genese Solution, CloudFactory, IMS Software, NCHL.
- **Embassy Team & Volunteers:** For their tireless efforts in logistics, protocol, and hospitality, ensuring the Forum's seamless execution.

Annex

Agenda (Highlights)

Time	Activities
10:00 – 10:25	Guest Arrival / Registration / Networking Tea & Coffee
10:25 – 10:30	Opening Remarks by Emcee
10:30 – 10:40	Inaugural Remarks: H.E. Mr. Chandra Kumar Ghimire, Ambassador of Nepal to the UK
10:40 – 10:50	Remarks: H.E. Mr. Rob Fenn, British Ambassador to Nepal
10:50 – 11:20	Keynote: “Nepal as an FDI Destination for UK-based Investors in Tech”
11:20 – 11:30	“The Saga of Outsourcing Accounting Services with Infotech”
11:30 – 11:45	Networking Tea & Coffee
11:45 – 12:05	“Nepal–UK Tech Trade: Unlocking Bilateral Opportunities”
12:05 – 12:15	“Engagement of Cloudfactory in Nepal: An Exciting Story”
12:15 – 13:00	Panel 1: Governing the Digital Future: Policy Perspectives on Infotech
13:00 – 14:00	Networking Lunch
14:00 – 14:30	“AI & Technology: A Growth Driver for Nepal”
14:30 – 15:30	Panel 2: Changing Landscapes of Digital Trade in Nepal–UK Relations
15:30 – 15:35	Observations – Ms. Alex Baker MP, Chair of APPG on Nepal

15:35 – 16:30	Panel 3: “FDI Prospects in Nepal-UK Digital Relations”
16:30 – 17:00	Networking Tea & Coffee
17:00 – 17:45	Fireside Chat: Diaspora & Digital Diplomacy
17:45 – 18:00	“Leapfrogging with Fintech: The Nepal Story”
18:00 – 18:10	Valedictory Session & Key Takeaways
18:10 – 18:20	Group Photo
18:20 – 19:30	Showcase in the Garden: Interactive Networking & Meetings with Innovators
19:30 – 20:30	Networking Reception – Drinks and Canapés

Participation

150+ attendees including ambassadors, MPs, government officials, investors, startup founders, diaspora entrepreneurs, academics, and media.

Media Coverage

Wide coverage across Nepali diaspora outlets, UK–Nepal business media, and Embassy social channels. Feedback consistently praised the Forum’s ability to **reframe Nepal’s global image**.

- “Nepal-UK Tech Forum highlights investment opportunities in Nepal” — *Kathmandu Post* [Kathmandu Post](#)
- Press Release — Embassy of Nepal London uk.nepalembassy.gov.np
- “Nepal-UK Tech Forum Held” — *New Spotlight Online* [SpotlightNepal](#)
- “Nepal-UK Tech Forum: Nepal calls UK-based investors to invest in IT sector” — *BiznessNews* english.biznessnews.com
- “Nepal-UK Tech Forum: Highlights digital investment opportunities” — *Hamro Patro* (Nepali media) english.hamropatro.com

- “Fostering a Digital Future: Nepal and UK deepen tech partnership” — article by Lopa Patel lopapatel.com
- “Nepal–UK Tech Forum 2025: Strengthening Digital Collaboration & Trade” — ICTFrame [Tech News Nepal |](#)

Conclusion

The Nepal–UK Tech Forum 2025 successfully positioned Nepal as a **credible digital partner** for the United Kingdom, achieved consensus on the need for policy and institutional frameworks, and generated tangible investor interest. By embedding mechanisms like the **Digital Working Group** and signaling a shift toward annual institutionalization, the Forum has laid the foundation for a **sustained, long-term digital partnership** between Nepal and the UK.