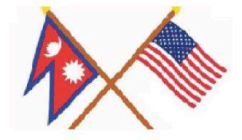
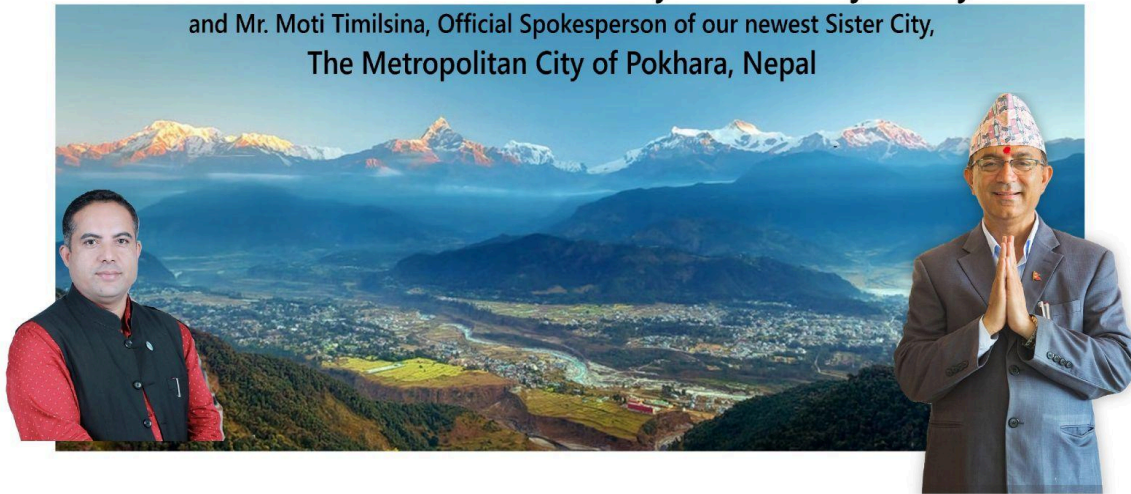


On the occasion of Nepal Day 2024
sponsored by the Nepali Language Program at Cornell, the Nepalese Student Association at Cornell
and the Ithaca-Pokhara Sister Cities Committee



Ithaca welcomes the Honorable Mayor Dhana Raj Acharya
and Mr. Moti Timilsina, Official Spokesperson of our newest Sister City,
The Metropolitan City of Pokhara, Nepal



September 24-27

2024 Pokhara Dignitaries' Visit to Ithaca

Including the first *Nepal Day at Cornell* celebration

Report from the
Ithaca-Pokhara Sister Cities Committee
(IPSCC)

Draft 1.1
by IPSCC Co-Chair Seth Sicroff



Introduction

From September 24 through 27 Ithaca hosted a visit from the **Honorable Mayor Dhana Raj Acharya** and **Mr. Moti Lal Timilsina**, Chairperson of Ward 25 and Official Spokesperson of the **Metropolitan City of Pokhara**, Nepal. Pokhara is the second largest urban center of Nepal, and the recently designated national tourism capital.

Ithaca NY is a small town, but it is the primary gateway to a substantial tourist destination and wine-growing region as well as home to two universities and a center for cutting-edge technological study and innovation. Through our Sister Cities partnership with Pokhara, Nepal, the officially designated Tourism Capital of Nepal, we seek ways to focus community initiatives, regional engagement, and international diplomacy in order to generate educational and entrepreneurial opportunities, engage in meeting global climate and health challenges, and promote cultural awareness and good will between our regions and our countries.

In the course of their visit in September 2024, the Pokhara dignitaries engaged in four initiatives and also participated in the first annual Nepal Day celebration at Cornell. The main body of this report gives a general idea of those initiatives as well as of the Nepal Day event on September 26.

In the addendum, we have attached copies of some of the key documents that led to this first exchange visit, and that we expect will pave the way for future exchange visits and collaborative projects.

Apologies

Due to illness, Mayor Cantelmo was not able to welcome Mayor Acharya and Spokesperson Timilsina personally at the time of their visit in September. However, the visiting Pokhara dignitaries reiterated their invitation to Mayor Cantelmo to visit at his earliest convenience.

We apologize also to those prospective delegates for whom we were unable to effectively assist in procuring the requisite travel visas



Acknowledgments

This first exchange visit was organized by the

- Ithaca-Pokhara Sister Cities Committee, co-chaired by Shreni Rajbhandari (graduate student in Urban Planning at Cornell University) and Dr. Seth Sicroff (CEO of Mountain Legacy International, Inc.);
- the Nepali Language Program at Cornell (directed by Prof. Hom Acharya);
- and the Nepalese Student Association at Cornell (led by President Reshma Niraula, pre-medical student at Cornell);
- The Pokhara-Ithaca Sister Cities Committee, chaired by

In addition to the above, we are grateful for the important assistance of

- Hon. Mayor Robert C. Cantelmo
- Mr. Kushal Gurung, sustainable technology expert
- Nick Helmholdt, Principal Planner / Tourism Program Director, Tompkins County
- Dr. Daniel Bass, Manager of the South Asia Program of Cornell University's Mario Einaudi Center for International Studies
- Hon. Bishnu P. Gautam, former Consul General of Nepal in New York City
- Ithaca Mayor Robert G. Cantelmo, former Elderperson Seph Murtaugh, former Elderperson Cynthia Brock
- Mr. Subash Dhungana, Foreign Liaison Officer and Information Technology Officer of the Metropolitan City of Pokhara, Nepal
- Hon. Svante Myrick, former Mayor of Ithaca
- Hon. Man Bahadur GC, former Mayor of Pokhara
- Dr. Alfred Pach, anthropologist and filmmaker

Advance Visit by Pokhara Technology Expert

Prior to his own visit, Mayor Acharya had delegated **Mr. Kushal Gurung**, a leading expert in sustainable technologies, to visit Ithaca and reconnoiter opportunities for technology transfer and collaboration. On July 8, Kushal was received by Ithaca Mayor Robert G. Cantelmo, who has actively facilitated the strengthening of the Sister Cities linkage authorized by former Mayor Svante Myrick of Ithaca and former Mayor Man Bahadur GC of Pokhara. Mayor Cantelmo has been exploring avenues to foster such linkages through the recently established “Subnational Diplomacy” unit of the US State Department.

During their stay, the visitors were lodged at the iconic [La Tourelle Hotel](#). From left: Mr. Timilsina, Ms Neurala, Hon. Mayor Acharya, Prof. Acharya



Hemp Technology



In July Mr. Kushal Gurung visited the cutting-edge hemp research center at Cornell CALS (College of Agriculture and Life Sciences) facility in Geneva, NY. There he conferred with [Kundan Moktan](#), a Nepali graduate of nearby Keuka College; Mr. Moktan is the supervisor of plant growth (and manager of 62 greenhouses) at the CALS installation.



Mayor Acharya and Mr. Timilsina followed up on the prior visit of Mr. Gurung by meeting with Cornell Hemp Research Team Project Lead Prof. [Larry Smart](#), after an hour-long drive through the Finger Lakes wine country to Geneva, NY ... and a stop at [Taughannock Falls](#) in Trumansburg.

Considering the historic position of Nepal as a center of cannabis cultivation, the countless applications of hemp fiber, as well as the impending legalization of the closely related medicinal cannabis, the future economic significance of cannabis crops is impossible to overstate. Mayor Acharya, Spokesperson



Timilisina, and Prof. Smart spent an hour or so discussing cutting edge technology and hemp products that can contribute to the mitigation of climate change. Prof. Smart is eager to collaborate on technology transfer and germplasm research. Pokhara officials will reach out to USAID to facilitate identification and possible transfer of useful hemp varieties, and Prof. Smart offered to support the application of a Nepali student to gain Fulbright support for advanced research with his project.



Next Steps for Hemp Collaboration

In December, Seth Sicroff will be visiting our Pokhara friends in Nepal. We have work to do before then. We should

1. follow up with US Agency for International Development (USAID) regarding the possibility of acquiring new varieties of hemp seeds from Nepal;
2. consult with Nepali stakeholders how to share technology for cultivation, processing, and marketing of hemp and hemp products;
3. alert Nepali students and scholars to Prof. Smart's offer to support an application for a Fulbright fellowship;
4. open discussions as to timing and other logistics for a visit by Prof. Smart to Pokhara.

Educational Opportunities at TC3

From 10 am to 1pm on Wednesday, September 25, the visitors from Pokhara visited Tompkins Cortland Community College. This was by far the best organized of all our exploratory meetings. Merryn Clay and Melinda Slawson prepared extensively for a three-hour immersive introduction to TC3. They arranged for us to see key elements of their infrastructure, including their well-equipped laboratories and attractive common areas for eating and socializing. We met with administrators of Tompkins Cortland Community College: President [Amy Kremenek](#), [Melinda Slawson](#) (Interim Director of Global Education and Initiatives) and [Merryn Clay](#) (Coordinator of Global Partnerships & Programs). Several science professors as well as current students gave thorough presentations about their work, student life, internships, and a range of opportunities. All of our interlocutors were extremely enthusiastic about the **compelling advantages of study at their institution**:

- Excellent academic curricula, particularly in the STEM fields: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
- Open admission and visa availability
- Personal attention and mentoring
- High return on investment, with excellent opportunities to transfer to Cornell and other prestigious four-year institutions, as well as a record of successful job placement.



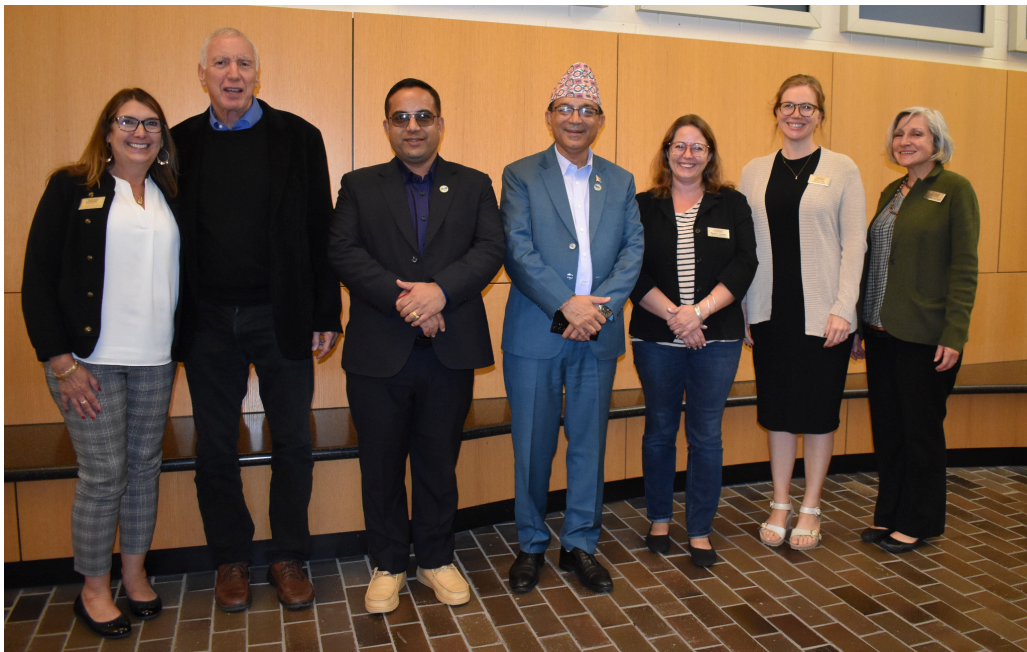
Above, left to right: Global Education and Initiatives Director Melinda Slawson; anthropologist and filmmaker Dr. Alfred Pach; TC3 President Amy Kremenek; Hon. Mayor Dhana Raj Acharya; Pokhara Spokesperson Mr. Moti Timilsina.

Below, left to right: Pokhara Spokesperson Mr. Moti Timilsina; Hon. Mayor Dhana Raj Acharya; TC3 President Amy Kremenek; Director Melinda Slawson





Above: Mayor Acharya displays a promotional video of Pokhara on his telephone.





Flags of current and past students at TC3

Next Steps for TC3 Connection

The TC3 administrators are primarily interested in recruiting Nepali students. There is also the possibility of establishing a short-term study abroad program in Pokhara for TC3 students. Topics for further consideration are:

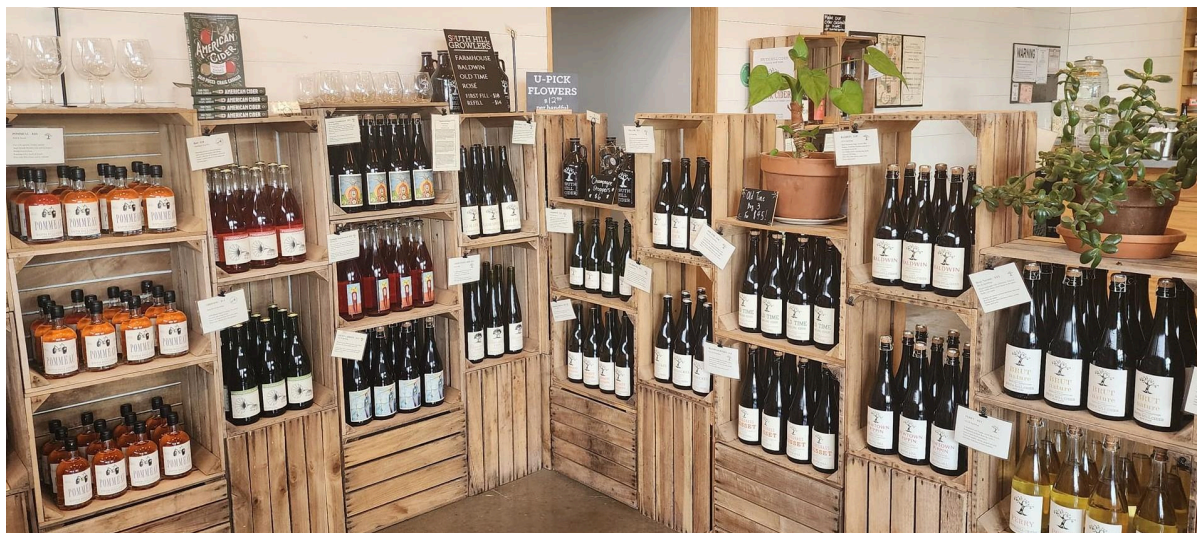
- What would be needed in terms of educational opportunities and logistics in order for TC3 students to visit Pokhara?
- What sort of venues would be most suitable to provide information about TC3 opportunities to students in Pokhara? Possibilities include visits to individual high

schools and colleges; tabling at pre-existing events, such as the Mountain Festival; television interview; online vlog; educational conference or exhibitions; contact with enterprises specializing in recruiting students for international academic institutions.

- Can recruitment efforts be carried out by proxy? (for example, by Ithaca-Pokhara Sister Cities Committee members)
- What conditions and logistical requirements would have to be met for TC3 officers to visit Pokhara?
- Can we prepare an article for publication in ECS Nepal or Nepali Times?

Tourism and Apples

On Thursday, Sept 26 Mayor Acharya and Mr. Timilsina met with [Nick Helmholdt](#) (Principal Planner / Tourism Program Director for Tompkins County) and proprietor [Steve Selin](#) at [South Hill Cider](#). Mr. Selin is a musician, apple hunter, and cider maker who for twenty years has been combining his passions on a bucolic hilltop to the south of Ithaca. Using the ancient French “keeving” technique as well as technology developed by French winemakers, he produces exceptionally clear, high-quality beverages that bring prices comparable to local wines. Apple horticulture contributes to the local economy both as a food crop and as a tourism asset. The cidery includes a restaurant that features local musicians and serves as a venue for weddings and other events. On Friday, September 27, the Pokhara officials participated in the launch of [Ithaca’s famous Apple Harvest Festival](#).





Mr. Timilsina noted the recent growth in apple horticulture in Nepal and its contribution to tourism, citing the [famous Mustang apple variety](#).

- Apples are grown on approximately 11,186 hectares in Nepal, primarily in the districts of Jumla and Mustang, as well as Manang, in the Annapurna Conservation Area; around 31,386 tons are harvested annually. Jumla, with an annual apple output of 6,799 tons, is the largest apple-producing district, and has

been designated an organic apple cultivation zone.. Mustang, in the north central area above Pokhara, is considered the “apple capital” due to the crisp, sweet quality.

- Apple products are significant attractions for trekking tourism. Besides fresh fruit, visitors purchase dried apple slices, apple pies, apple jam, apple juice, brandy and wine.
- Agro Manang, which aims to build the biggest apple orchard in South Asia, has been farming apples commercially by using high density farming technology in Manang Ngisyang Rural Municipality
- A significant problem for apple production in Nepal seems to be storage and transport.



Apple growing areas: Mustang and Manang, north of Pokhara, and Jumla, to the west.



Mayor Acharya invited Steve Selin and Nick Helmholdt to visit Pokhara

Next Steps for Apple/Tourism Collaboration

Mr. Selin expressed a desire to visit Nepal and explore opportunities for collaboration and sharing of best practices.



Above and below: Apple Harvest Festival in downtown Ithaca



Mr. Selin's expertise and insights could be extremely useful to Nepal apple growers and tourism planners. One good place to make contact would be [Bhratang Apple Farm](#) (aka Agro Manang). The project combines an apple farm and a luxury resort.

Ultimate Frisbee: Destination Nepal

The final initiative investigated by the Pokhara delegation was the Ultimate Destination Nepal project coordinated by Noah Reifenheiser, an upperclass Communications major at SUNY University at Buffalo. Ultimate Frisbee is played in over 80 countries by an estimated 7 million men and women. It is well established in Ithaca with teams competing at the high school level, at [Cornell](#) and [Ithaca College](#), and a vigorous unaffiliated league, the [Ithaca Area Ultimate Alliance](#) (IAUA).

Noah made the two-hour drive to Ithaca in order to introduce the Nepali visitors to the IAUA at one of their regular Friday evening pickup matches.

Prior to the visit, we spent twenty minutes tossing around a couple of discs. Although this was the first time either of our Nepali friends had handled one, they were remarkably adept at throwing and catching. We suspect they had prior experience.





IAUA board member Frank Adelstein (left) and Noah Reifenheiser present disk to Mayor Acharya

The final initiative investigated by the Pokhara delegation was the Ultimate Destination Nepal project coordinated by Noah Reifenheiser, an upperclass Communications major at SUNY University at Buffalo. Noah made the two-hour drive to Ithaca in order to introduce the Nepali visitors to the [Ithaca Area Ultimate Association](#) at one of their regular Friday evening matches.

Prior to the visit, we spent twenty minutes tossing around a couple of discs. Although this was the first time either of our Nepali friends had handled one, they were remarkably adept at throwing and catching. We suspect they had prior experience.

[As Reifenheiser explains,](#)

Frisbee is highly appropriate to a developing country like Nepal. It requires minimal equipment and participants can train in any open space. As a competitive sport, it is safe and accessible to all genders, and can be practiced even in a wheelchair. In addition to providing opportunities for exercise and for development of physical skills and coordination in general, UF encourages cooperation, sportsmanship, discipline, and a wide range of values that are useful in any society. As a sport that is familiar to many international travelers, it

also provides an opportunity for engagement between visitors and host communities. By hosting international competitions, Nepal will be able to promote tourism and general interest in environmental stewardship.

Next Steps for Ultimate Destination: Nepal

Ultimate has been spreading rapidly in recent decades, and is likely to be considered for the summer 2032 Olympics. If Nepali authorities support a training program as proposed by Noah, this is a sport that can bring recognition to Nepali athletes, and it is a sport to which Nepal, as the ultimate tourist organization, can give a decisive assist. In the next weeks, Noah will propose a project agenda to kick-start the new sport in Nepal. For those who want to start immediately, here are the [Ultimate Frisbee rules](#).



Nepal Day at Cornell

The main event of arranged around the Pokhara dignitaries' visit was the first observance of "Nepal Day" on the Cornell University Campus. The event, held at Clark Hall from 3:30-8 pm, was spearheaded by Prof. Dr. Hom Acharya of the Nepali Language Program, under the Asian Studies Department, and organized by the Nepali Students Association at Cornell (NSAC).



Prof. Acharya delivered a warm welcome speech and introduction, followed by a Keynote Speech by Mayor Acharya. There followed a lively panel discussion on the theme *Ithaca-Nepal Partnership: Opportunities for Grassroots Diplomatic, Educational and Entrepreneurial Initiatives*. Panel participants included Pokhara Spokesperson Moti Timilsina and four students: Reshma Niraula (pre-med, and president of the NSAC), Dinesh Ghimire, Jaya Nepal and (?) The discussion was moderated by Seth Sicroff.



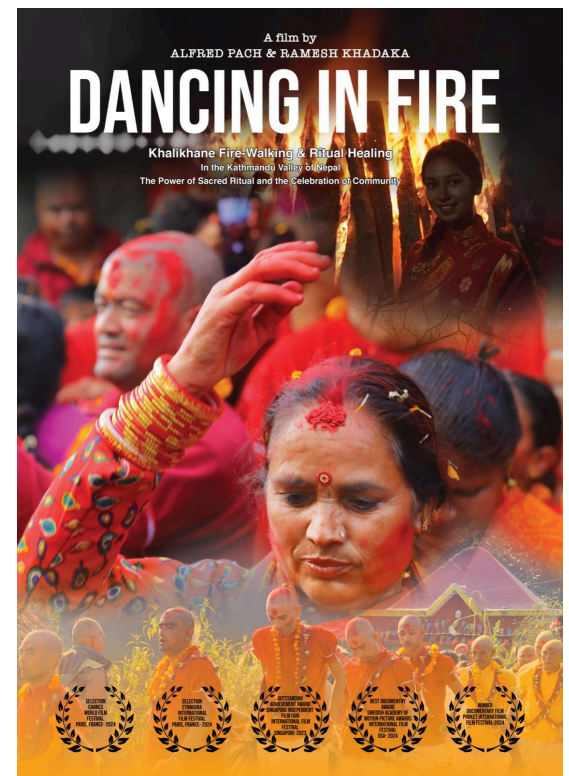


The major point of the discussion was the mutual benefits that Ithaca and Pokhara can bring to each other through the Sister Cities linkage.

Following the panel discussion, Dr. Acharya introduced filmmaker Alfred Pach, PhD (doctorate in Medical Anthropology, MPH (Master of Public Health), a scholar and program administrator with extensive experience in Nepal since 1975. Together with acclaimed cinematographer Ramesh Khadka, Pach produced the remarkable documentary [*Dancing in Fire: Khalikhane Fire-Walking and Ritual Healing in the Kathmandu Valley of Nepal*](#) (2024). According to the program notes,

this searing documentary takes us into the beating heart of a traditional Nepali community. Based on six weeks of continuous filming and extensive interviews, the documentary presents a comprehensive and nuanced perspective on a profound response to the mystery of human suffering.

Over a period of time many families in this rural village had experienced “unnatural” deaths, some of



them violent. In such cases, the dreadful circumstances are believed to impede the effectiveness of the mortuary rituals designed to facilitate their progression to the divine ancestral realm. Trapped as wandering spirits, the lingering dead deliberately induce illness and misfortune in their surviving families in an effort to draw attention to their plight.

Once that message has become unmistakable, the entire village participates in a dramatic sequence of rituals, culminating in the sacred fire-walking ceremony, designed to purify the dead and release them from the mortal world.

This process also alleviates the trauma suffered by the living family members, enabling them to process their grief over the loss of loved ones. Following the ritual events, individuals and family members can move forward with confidence and even joy.

We owe the filmmakers our gratitude for an essential insight: however unfamiliar the details may seem, this story of loss, desolation, and renewal is fundamental to the human condition.

The film screening was followed by a reception, with tea and samosas for all.



Next Steps for Nepal Day

The Nepal Day at Cornell event this year is intended to be the first iteration of an annual celebration. This year's event was a success insofar as it served to bring together the local Nepali community, but it did not attract the kind of attention and broader participation that are required for a sustainable tradition. Planning for 2025 should focus on those elements that would make it more appealing to the entire Cornell community, and also to components that would justify visa coverage for Nepalis who would like to come to Ithaca for the event. One idea that has been floated is a Nepali film festival, but there are other options. Ideally, the agenda should be nailed down early enough to assure better funding, publicity, and participation, particularly by university, municipal and diplomatic luminaries.

In addition, we need to focus on expanding the footprint of Sister Cities linkages in Ithaca and Tompkins County as a whole. An idea that has been well received is to install on The Commons a “finger sign” (something like San Francisco’s, below) pointing to all of our Sisters around the world. So far, we have Ithaca (Greece), Eldoret (Kenya) and [Komsomolsk](#) (Ukraine), in addition to Pokhara. Getting a sign installed is not so simple, so we should get moving on this in order to have it ready for an unveiling on the occasion of the next visit to Ithaca by our friends from Pokhara.



Background:

The Pokhara-Ithaca Sister Cities Linkage

Founded by President Dwight Eisenhower in 1956, [Sister Cities International](#) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation which serves as the national membership organization for individual sister cities. This network unites tens of thousands of citizen diplomats and volunteers in nearly 500 member communities with over 2,000 partnerships in more than 140 countries. Mountain Legacy, itself a 501(c)(3) incorporated in New York State, has taken the lead in initiating a Sister Cities link between Ithaca, a small city about 200 miles west of New York City, and Pokhara, a major city in central Nepal.

Letter from Ithaca Mayor Myrick to Pokhara Mayor Man Bahadur GC

The following is the letter sent in October, 2018, by then-Mayor of Ithaca NY Svante Myrick to then-Mayor of Pokhara Man Bahadur GC:



CITY OF ITHACA

108 East Green Street Ithaca, New York 14850

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR • SVANTE L. MYRICK

Telephone: 607/274-6501 Fax: 607/274-6526

October 25, 2018

Dear Hon. Man Bahadur GC:

I am delighted to learn that citizens of our communities are taking steps to establish a Sister Cities relationship between Pokhara and Ithaca.

Both Ithaca and Pokhara are diverse, progressive, and hospitable places, with strong educational institutions and a commitment to tourism. Ithaca has long standing links to Nepal: these include Cornell University's South Asian Studies department, which operates one of the most important study abroad programs in Nepal; Namgyal Monastery, the American seat of His Holiness the Dala'i Lama; and a large community of both temporary and permanent residents who have come from Nepal to study and make careers in Ithaca. All of these contribute to our rich culture, and give us reason to learn more about and from Nepal.

Like Pokhara, Ithaca has a strong commitment to sports and outdoor recreation. Our lakes are key local assets, but both Pokhara and Ithaca are also gateways to regional tourism destinations. This sector of the economy can benefit greatly from the sort of grassroots, person-to-person diplomacy that Sister Cities can foster. At the same time, Sister Cities citizens can discover other opportunities, whether educational, commercial, or philanthropic. When disasters strike, it is particularly useful to have friends ready to respond quickly and generously.

Regarding the formalization of a Sister Cities program, I must emphasize that the decision on our side is not mine alone to make, but will involve a rigorous review by our Common Council of a comprehensive plan that remains to be developed. However, I am optimistic that we will be able to formalize a durable and mutually advantageous collaboration.

Warmest regards,

Svante Myrick
Mayor

Letter from Pokhara Mayor to Ithaca Mayor'

Shortly thereafter, Mayor Man Bahadur GC responded to the above letter:

The Hon. Svante Myrick
Mayor ,City of Ithaca,Newyork 14850

It is with great pleasure that I accept the invitation to establish a sister city relationship with the city of ithaca on behalf of the citizens of Pokhara metropolitan city.

We too look forward to strengthening the relationship between our citizens through cooperative activities and exchanges in education, government, business, and other areas. We wholeheartedly agree that these activities can be of tremendous benefit to both of our communities.

We have identified a group of citizens who can work with you and your sister city committee to finalize the details of the agreement as well as to work on the initial activities and exchanges. Please note that Mr. Laxman Timilsina , will be your point of contact for finalizing the agreement and planning the initial activities. he can be reached at irc@pokharamun.gov.np or directly contact at +977 9856036733.

Like Ithaca,Pokhara is the city of mountain ,River ,Lake and Natural beauty. It is the city of adventure game like Paragliding,Hiking,Rafting etc.

Once we have finalized the details of the partnership agreement I look forward to arranging a date when we can both sign and make this relationship official. We sincerely appreciate the invitation and look forward to the wonderful opportunities that this partnership can bring to our respective communities.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Man Bahadur G.C
Mayor
Pokhara Metropolitan City

Ithaca Mayor Myrick's Proclamation

In November 2018 Mayor Svante Myrick agreed to issue a [Sister Cities proclamation](#), and Pokhara's Mayor Man Bahadur GC soon followed suit.

Finally, on 11 December 2021, Mayor Myrick officially launched the program on the occasion of a Sir Edmund Hillary Mountain Legacy Medal presentation at Southside Community Center in Ithaca. On February 2, Mayor Myrick also read the [proclamation for a television and zoom audience](#) on the occasion of his last official participation as ex officio chair of Ithaca's Common Council and honorary chair of the Ithaca-Pokhara Sister Cities Committee.

Mayor Myrick Reads Sister Cities Proclamation

Mayor Svante Myrick:

Are there any additions to or deletions from the agenda? Seeing none, we can move straight to a proclamation, a very special proclamation, a proclamation I am very excited about, which is a Sister City proclamation.

So Sister Cities, if you don't know, are informal agreements made between two communities, usually by the chief executives of each community, from two different countries. Sister Cities was founded for a particular purpose, post World War II, which was to bring communities together, recognizing that cities, especially, can play a really special role bringing people together, that even when nations are disagreeing, and, even when, as is sometimes the case, politicians at the federal level are disagreeing we find that at the local level we have more in common than we do apart. So Sister City relationships are usually formed between cities that have some sort of similar characteristics, they usually are marked by educational exchanges, possibly even trips back and forth from representatives of those communities.

[I'm] very excited about this relationship because of the ties that already exist, and I want to thank Seth Sicroff, who is here and is going to receive this proclamation, and I want to thank anthropologists David Holmberg and Kathryn March, who, through their work at Cornell University for a very long time – and in fact this past year, in December, at Southside Community Center, we held a great recognition event where they received the Sir Edmund Hillary Mountain Legacy Medal for their many decades of friendship and assistance to Nepal and for their leadership in educational exchange programs between Nepal and here in Ithaca.



And so, if I may, I'd like to read,

City of Ithaca Proclamation

WHEREAS Ithaca NY and Pokhara, Nepal, share an array of basic characteristics, including exceptionally scenic lakeside landscapes; multiple prestigious institutions of higher education; diverse and tolerant populations; important tourism and agricultural sectors; and

WHEREAS Ithaca and Pokhara both serve as gateways to recreational regions, Ithaca to the Finger Lakes, renowned for our spectacular state parks, magnificent gorges, waterfalls, world class wine and beer producers as well as fine dining, and features an exceptional array of cuisines, and has diverse public events and celebrations; and Pokhara to the Annapurna Area Conservation Project, the most visited mountaineering and trekking area in a country that is itself synonymous with mountain tourism and a destination universally recognized as one of the *Last Best Places on Earth* ;

The trekking in particular, I should say... I'm really proud to be issuing this proclamation, but [Acting Mayor] Laura [Lewis]... cinch your boots tight, because these treks to the mountains are apparently... uh... vigorous!

WHEREAS both Ithaca and Pokhara offer the advantage that, as partners, they provide a multiplier effect on account of long-established academic, commercial, political, and organizational linkages with other urban centers as well as numerous smaller

municipalities, an advantage that will be greatly enhanced by the ongoing improvement of both local airports to handle international flights, so that in establishing a privileged relationship with Pokhara, Ithaca will be effectively bonded with the entire nation of Nepal; and

WHEREAS linkage with Pokhara, and through it Nepal, will motivate educational exchanges for Ithaca's high school students and research opportunities for university students; enhance recreational and cultural tourism through pre-travel contacts so that short-term adventures are more likely to generate lifelong friendships and facilitate entrepreneurial ventures; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Ithaca NY and Pokhara, Nepal, should be recognized as Sister Cities under the terms of and with the objectives prescribed by Sister Cities International.

Very exciting! I do think Seth is here... Julie, if it's possible to promote Seth to a panelist so he can accept the proclamation...

Seth Sicroff:

I just want to first thank [former] Alderperson Seph Murtagh and Mayor Svante Myrick for carrying the ball on this. This has been a long project, and we're looking forward to even more complications in the years coming. There are many many different types of projects that could be facilitated through the Sister Cities rubric. If anybody out there has suggestions, or projects that they would like collaboration on, or if they would like to participate as members of the Steering Committee, please write to me at SisterCities@mountainlegacy.org, and I'll get back to you.

Mayor Svante Myrick:

Thank you very much, Seth. Thank you for all your hard work marshaling Seph and I, and really being such a great ambassador to the Nepalese community here in Ithaca, which is small but mighty ... and growing.

Pokhara Mayor's letter to Ithaca Mayor Cantelmo



**Pokhara Metropolitan
City
Office of the
Municipal Executive**



New Road, Kaski
Gandaki Province, Nepal

Reference Number: 2080/081

Dispatch Number: 147

28 December 2023

Mayor Robert Cantelmo

City Hall, 4th Floor

108 E. Green St.

Ithaca, NY 14850

rcantelmo@cityofithaca.org



Dear Mayor-Elect Cantelmo,

On behalf of Pokhara Metropolitan City, I congratulate you on assuming your new position as Mayor of the City of Ithaca, New York.

On December 11 I met with Dr. Seth Sicroff, who conveyed your warm greetings and shared with us your enthusiasm for building on the initial steps taken by Mayor Man Bahadur GC and Mayor Svante Myrick toward establishing a mutually beneficial Sister Cities link between our cities.

At this point the usual next step in developing the Sister Cities relationship would be an exchange of visits by the mayors of the two cities and the formalization of this relationship by means of a Memorandum of Understanding.

Pokhara has recently been designated the "Tourism Capital of Nepal," but it is particularly famous as the gateway to the Annapurna Conservation Area. We hope that you will feel inclined to undertake the trek to Annapurna Base Camp, which is one of the shorter and yet most magnificent excursions in Nepal. If you agree, we feel that early March would be the ideal time for your visit.

As we are constrained by administrative duties, our earliest available window to visit Ithaca would probably be in August.

To facilitate our collaboration, the Foreign Affairs Division, managed under my secretariat, will engage Mr. Subash Dhungana, our foreign liaison officer, to

coordinate logistics and explore prospects aligning with the new Pokhara-Ithaca Sister Cities bond. We anticipate your team's cooperation in solidifying plans for the mayoral visits at your earlier convenience.

With all best wishes for a happy new year and a productive administration,



Dhana Raj Acharya
Mayor
Pokhara Metropolitan City

Mayor

Website: pokharamun.gov.np, Email: mayor@pokharamun.gov.np, Postal Code: 6X9P+4F Pokhara

Ithaca Mayor Cantelmo's letter to Pokhara Mayor



CITY OF ITHACA

108 East Green St. Ithaca, NY 14850

MAYOR'S OFFICE

Robert G. Cantelmo, Mayor

Office Phone: 607-274-6502

Email: mayorcantelmo@cityofithaca.org

Hon. Dhana Raj Acharya
Mayor
Pokhara Metropolitan City

Dear Mayor Acharya,

Thank you for the warm greetings and congratulations that you have extended to my office and the people of Ithaca. Your letter and very thoughtful gifts were presented to me by members of the Ithaca-Pokhara Sister Cities Committee at a recent televised meeting of the Ithaca Common Council. I am grateful for your patience with my reply. As I am sure you know, government transitions are times of fluidity, and it has been a time of significant change in our beautiful city.

I am extremely pleased to accept your invitation to proceed with further steps in solidifying our Sister Cities relationship. As you may know, I am a scholar of international politics and the

importance of subnational diplomacy, and mutual ties of friendship are vital to bridge the geographic divide and bring people together. I know the Biden administration strongly supports these efforts, as they have launched the inaugural office of subnational diplomacy in the U.S. Department of State and are working closely with States and Cities to promote local-to-local relationships.

While I am unable to undertake a visit this Spring, I am hopeful that I will be able to visit this coming Winter. I have not had the opportunity to visit the Himalayas for nearly a decade and I look forward to a trek through the magnificent World Heritage Site of Annapurna Conservation Area, which my father-in-law was fortunate enough to do several years ago. I am also eager to observe Pokhara's famed Mountain Festival. Regarding your own visit to Ithaca, we of course leave the timing to you, but Ithaca and the Finger Lakes are exceptionally lovely in August and September.

I will ask Dr. Seth Sicroff, who is serving as coordinator of our Ithaca-Pokhara Sister Cities Committee, to confer with Mr. Subash Dungana regarding the timing and agenda for our visits, the details of an MOU, and all logistical issues.

We look forward to a fruitful collaboration with our new Nepalese friends!

Sincerely,

Robert G. Cantelmo
Mayor of Ithaca