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Resurgence and Inclusive Growth of Hand-woven Palpali Dhaka, a local Heritage Product, with New Brand and Collections

UKaid सीप, Palpali Dhaka Association and Tansen Municipality Partnership Enables Heritage Revival, Inclusive Job Creation, and Opening New Markets for Palpali Dhaka

Resources → [Impact Video: Brand Revival Journey](#) | [Coffee-table Photo Story](#) and [Fabric Catalogue](#)

Today, at a special private engagement in Kathmandu, British Ambassador Nicola Pollitt, Finance Secretary Madhu Marasini joined celebrities Rajesh Hamal and other prominent stakeholders to connect with and celebrate the innovations and resurgence of Palpali Dhaka—through [unveiling](#) of a new-age brand Palpali together with fabric and product collections, covering heritage; home-décor; and fashion 2022. An indigenous hand-woven fabric that originated in Tansen in Lumbini Province, Palpali Dhaka, over the last two years, is on the path to revitalization and re-positioning in local and international markets, with support from the [UKaid Skills for Employment \(सीप\) Programme](#).

In 2019, UKaid सीप enabled the co-creation of and co-funding for PDA in collaboration with the Lumbini Province Government and Tansen Municipality. Comprising of nine founding firms, सीप's UKaid सीप's multi-stakeholder partnership with PDA has enabled a coordinated platform for skilling world class weavers coupled with process, product and market access improvements. As a result, local jobs have tripled; investments by firms have increased by 40% on average; productivity has gone up by almost 30%; and growth of new enterprises has increased by 40%.

For an industry plagued by seemingly insurmountable challenges, from having local and national markets inundated with cheap Dhaka-like imitation fabrics to difficulty in finding and retaining labour, Palpali Dhaka's progress over the last two years is transformative. "These are unprecedented times for Palpali Dhaka. Productivity and production at the factories, despite the pandemic, have gone up," explained Ashoke K. Shahi, Mayor of Tansen.

Specifically, [UKaid सीप & PDA's partnership](#) mobilized a cadre of national and international actors and institutions to improve access to raw materials (yarn), expand the pool of skilled and motivated workers, inject innovations, establish internationally aligned fair trade standards, facilitate access to start-up and growth capital, enhance branding and marketing, and close the digital divide for the industry. "I am excited to see the innovation and market linkages that the Dhaka entrepreneurs working with UKaid सीप, and this enterprise development initiative is an example for our indigenous industries to move forward", said Mr. Madhu Marasini, Finance Secretary, Government of Nepal.

Speaking at the event, British Ambassador Pollitt noted, "Our combined efforts have improved industry capabilities to ensure innovative fabrics and products emerge true in spirit to their cultural origins, generate consumer appeal and create best-in-class women weavers." Also present at the event, UKaid सीप's Team Leader, Baljit Vohra, described how सीप-PDA teams facilitated active collaborations between local and global designers and buyers, and the Lumbini Provincial Government and Municipality of Tansen, to introduce and embrace culture-based innovations, recyclable materials, and story-embedded products that can continue to define the way Brand Palpali will relate to its innovative products of the future.

Unveiling the brand Nepali movie star Rajesh Hamal said, "We still see our grandmothers wearing their *chaubandi cholos* in dhaka, and our grandfathers sitting in *falchas* in their dhaka topi, but these sights are becoming rare. Today I am overjoyed to be able to say that after many ups and downs, Palpali Dhaka has stood the test of time and returns as a cherished fabric of the new generation."



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Note to the editor

About UKaid सीप

Funded by the British Embassy in Kathmandu, UKaid सीप, brokers transformational partnerships with the private and public sector to propel growth of employment and entrepreneurial opportunities in priority sectors – commercial agriculture, light manufacturing, tourism, ICT, and construction– primarily in Madhesh Province and Lumbini Province. सीप uses an innovative Challenge Fund modality to expand market-aligned skilling, affordable financial products, and ethical migration services linked to gainful livelihoods for Nepalis and transformation and growth within industries. For more, check this recent compilation of [impact stories and case studies](#).

About PDA

Palpali Dhaka Association (PDA) was established in 2020 with an aim to revive the Palpali Dhaka industry. The association plays as a catalyst to preserve the indigenous technique of producing hand woven dhaka fabric, expanding the knowledge to future generation, and improving the working conditions for weavers. Currently comprising of nine dhaka producing factories, this organization aims to standardize the quality of working conditions for the artisans through alignment with fair trade standards, introduce finest quality handmade dhaka fabrics production through certified and curriculum-based skill building trainings and collectively produce to cater to national and international markets diversifying design and product innovation. With support from UKaid सीप, Lumbini Province Government, Tansen Municipality, among other system and market actors, the association has been working towards the “Growth of Nepali Dhaka” endeavour to take the brand PALPALI to new heights.