

Nepal Tourism Board

E-Newsletter

March 4, 2005

Nepal all set to welcome Bangladeshi tourists

NTB organized a press conference in Bangladesh's capital Dhaka on March 1, 2005 on "Tourism in Nepal". Addressing Nepal Tourism Board's first ever press conference at the Dhaka Sheraton Hotel on March 1 ahead of Dhaka Travel Mart-2005, Dr. Bhoj Raj Ghimire, Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation of Nepal said "Towards facilitating Regional Tourism Cooperation and enhancing people to people contact, Nepal has already set a precedent by providing free visas for Bangladeshis which are available on arrival at Kathmandu's Tribhuvan International Airport". He further added that, "Our first participation in Dhaka Travel Mart- 2005 symbolizes our commitment not only to develop partnership with the far reaching countries but also with our neighbors. After the Dhaka Travel Mart 2005 we will review the response to identify the areas of future cooperation in trans-boundary tourism so as to facilitate more and more tourists from Bangladesh."

The press conference was also addressed by His Excellency Mr. Bhagirath Basnet, Royal Nepalese Ambassador to Bangladesh, Tek Bahadur Dangi, Chief Executive Officer, Nepal Tourism Board, Lawrence K. C. Liew, General Manager-Marketing, Cosmic Air, Nepal and Mushfiqur Rahman, Director, Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation.

The Nepalese Tourism secretary, Dr. Ghimire assured that air services agreement (ASA) between the two countries will be reviewed soon which would lead to more flights by the airlines of the two countries. His Excellency Mr. Bhagirath Basnet, Royal Nepal Ambassador to Bangladesh reiterated that Nepal is a very safe and secure destination provided by the fact that so far tourists have never been targeted. He also informed that Bangladesh already occupied the second highest position in Nepal's trade relations with SAARC countries and more inflow of tourists from Bangladesh will further strengthen the economic bond.

Tek Bahadur Dangi, Chief Executive Officer, Nepal Tourism Board while shedding light on the destination highlights of Nepal hoped that the services of Cosmic Air will be followed by GMG Airlines soon, which will further boost the tourist arrivals. Listing out the different attractions of the country including Medical Tourism facilities which would be of interest to Bangladeshis, Mr. Dangi hoped that Nepal will soon become the preferred tourism destination for Bangladeshis. The recent SASEC meeting held in Dhaka, will further strengthen the tourism marketing among the four countries of the region, especially the plans to work on the eco- tourism circuits & Buddhist circuits, he said.

Describing the experiences of his trip to Nepal, Mushfiqur Rahman, Director, Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation, said all Bangladeshis can have a memorable holiday in Nepal with its friendly people, incredible cuisine and rich culture. He also commented that for Bangladeshis Nepal is the best option for a quick holiday experience with its variety of tourism attractions and reasonably priced hotels.

Later the attractions of Nepal were highlighted before the audience of travel writers and tour operators with a multimedia presentation and a cordial invitation was extended to all present to visit Nepal's stall for further interactions with the Nepalese travel in the forthcoming Dhaka

Travel Mart- 2005.

Shiva Ratri, the Night of Shiva on March 8

Nepal is the only Hindu kingdom in the world, thus Lord Shiva is praised and worshipped throughout the kingdom. Hindus all over the world know him through different names and forms. He is the most sought-after deity amongst the Hindus and devotees pray to him as the god of immense large-heartedness who they believe grants all their wishes.

Shiva Ratri is the night of Lord Shiva when his own divine grace created him. Hindus all over the world celebrate this day with a lot of zeal and enthusiasm. Shiva Ratri literally means 'The night consecrated to Shiva'. This auspicious festival falls on the fourteenth day of the waning moon in the month of Falgun, (February - March in the Gregorian calendar). The temple of Pashupatinath in Kathmandu, which is considered as one of the holiest shrines of the Hindus, glorifying Lord Shiva, receives more than hundred thousands worshippers during the festival of Shiva Ratri. These worshippers come from far and wide to pay their respects and homage to Mahadev on his sacred day.

This year Shiva Ratri falls on March 8. The places to watch and observe during the festival are the Pashupatinath Temple, Kathmandu and all Lord Shiva's temples in Nepal.

ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEUM: A TASTE OF NEPALI CULTURE

After you've had your fill of watching the mountains, touring the monuments and ransacking the shopping centers, there's nothing like browsing around the museums for some quiet indoor relaxation in Nepal experiencing Nepal's multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-religious and multi-lingual diversities. One of such museums is the National Ethnographic Museum, which presents a kaleidoscope image of Nepal to the visitors.

In an effort to transform rich culture to the future generation as well as for the tourists to have a look at it right at the heart of the capital- Nepal Tourism Board and Nepal National Ethnographic museum has set up a permanent exhibition of eleven different ethnic communities (the Thakali, the Sherpa, the Tamang, the Gurung, the Rai, the Limbu, the Chepang, the Jyapu of Newar group, the Magar, the Sunwar, and the Tharu) in the diorama hall at the Tourist Service Center in Bhrikutimandap.

A periodic exhibition of individual ethnic community has been showcased in the ethnographic itemization of entire life cycle in ethnic exhibition hall.

The Museum aims to function as a living resource center to inform and educate both Nepalese and foreign visitors/tourists interested to know and learn about Nepal's architecture, and culture (customs life styles and folkways).

EXHIBITION HOURS

The museum is open to the general public, tourists and students daily except Mondays, from 10 am to 4 pm.

ENTRANCE FEE:

Rs. 25 /Person, Rs.10 /Person (Student)

FOR DETAILS: Phone: 977-1-4256909
Fax: 977-1-4254298
E-mail: mediacenter@ntb.org.np
Website: www.welcomenepal.com

Feature of the week

New tourism products in the Chitwan Hills

- Ram Hari Devkota

Chepangs of Chitwan, who were pursuing their traditional occupations of fishing, hunting, bird catching and farming at jungle edges, now have attempted to seek new avenues of income by displaying these originalities to tourists. The tribal people with their domination in mountainous VDCs of the district - Kaule, Siddhi, Korak and Shaktikhor- had been compelled to live on wild tubers, fruits and hunted animals till the last decade.

It is no doubt that additional income can be made and the tribal existence preserved provided the original arts, cultures, rituals, customs and identities of the Chepang people were presented before tourists visiting the area. This awareness, though lately developed, has given new hopes and enthusiasm to the people towards tourism. Aiming to improve the livelihood of the people through tourism, Tourism for Rural Poverty Alleviation Programme (TRPAP) has been launched in the area for the last two years, which has been running different programs and activities.

"The tourism programme has not only encouraged us to preserve materials, costumes and old handicrafts that were on the way to extinction, but has also inspired us to protect our tribal identity," says Ramji Maya Praja of Chepang Culture Group. This has helped in making income for living as well as encouraging the coming generations towards the protection of tribal heritage - adds Ramji Maya.

Recently, a Chepang Museum has been set up at Shaktikhor with the view to preserve and promote the primitive cultures, originalities, costumes, and life styles of the people. It also aims at making known these aspects to the world. Different materials used by the Chepangs and relics like catapults used in killing birds, slings and bows used in hunting animals, crushing devices, dhiki and janto (traditional stone tools for beating and grinding grains), pots, wooden containers, drums have been kept in the museum.

Assisted by the TRPAP, Som Bahadur Praja of Kaule-2, Hattibang has started home-stay services for tourists at home and also a grocery, which help him make a good income. 'It used to be hard to support my family by working on wages at other's houses or lands, but now I work for myself and the income is sufficient to keep my family,' says Som Bahadur.

Shuddha Bahadur Praja of Kaule- Jyandala has started bamboo and rattan works and making handicrafts for income generation. TRPAP had provided training on making different sorts of handicrafts, especially to different Chepangs including him.

Likewise, Kavita Gurung of Shaktikhor also took training on constructing improved cooking stoves (ICS) from TRPAP. She has not only helped her neighbors construct ICSs at their houses, but has also started providing training to locals from other VDCs as well as nearby districts.

Similarly, Ganga Gurung's homestay at Shaktikhor is also exemplary in the area, inspired by the visit to Ghandruk, which was organized by TRPAP.

A visit to this area, famous as the Chepang Trekking Route, can be one of the most unforgettable, explorative and romantic visits in one's life. The tourists traveling to Sauraha through this route can make a package ranging from 3 to 7 days, according to the leisure they have. The trekking tour through this route takes the visitor at proximity with the cultures, customs, life styles and traditions of Chepang people besides providing chances to have first hand experiences with the Gurung, Magar and Giripuri communal people.

Siraichuli (1946 metres), which is the highest peak in Chitwan and is on this trekking route, provides chance to have panoramic views of sun rise and sun set. It is often compared with the Tiger Hill of Darjeeling, India. One can enjoy the scenes of Dhaulagiri, Annapurna, Manaslu, Ganesh and other peaks at their front in the north while the flow of Rapti and Narayani rivers, green stretch of Chitwan National Park and Terai lowlands can be seen in the south from the spot. After few hours' walk, a visitor can reach the Upardang Gadhi, one of the ancient forts of historic importance. Along with that, one can also do bird watching, enjoying the views of different caves, cascades, wild lives and cool wilderness. There is a lot of tourism potential in the area as some of the caves in the area are yet to be explored.

A tourist can start his tour on the Chepang Trekking Route from Jogimara VDC on the Prithvi highway from two sides. There are information boards, home stay hotels, shops and other facilities for the tourists at different spots on the trekking route with the view to promoting facilities to them. There are handicraft materials kept on sale and porters available at different places on the route.

Different attempts have been made for the promotion of tourism in the area at district and local levels. A separate tourism section has been established at the District Development Committee as the Sustainable Tourism Development Section (STDS). Sustainable Tourism Development Committees have been formed in Kaule, Siddhi and Shaktikhor VDCs. A similar committee will soon be constituted at Korak VDC in the near future. Different programs and activities have been running at local level through 155 community organisations and more than 40 users committees under TRPAP.

Different kinds of training, seminar, orientation, and field visit are conducted, which are vital in building confidence of the local people and helping attract them towards different income generation works. Loans at lower rates have been made available to more than 150 local people from the fixed capital fund without any deposits with the view to encouraging them towards tourist activities. They have utilized the amount in running different sorts of occupations, directly and indirectly uplifting the living status.

The programme has helped the villagers to be organized and sociable. 'Now I can talk to other people freely and express myself in front of them without any embarrassment or inhibition,' says Relimaya Praja of Siddhi.

The programme has assisted the local people in setting up multi-purpose tourism information centre at Shaktikhor, construction of community guest house and public latrine, repair and maintenance of the tourist trekking route, drinking water and irrigation, construction of picnic and camping spots, development of alternative energy, environment conservation. TRPAP has

also assisted to conduct detailed feasibility study for the setting up of 6-kw micro-hydro project at Kaule VDC.

Some of the other villagers have been attracted to the cultivation of vegetables in the encouragement of the program. It has provided training on vegetable cultivation to the people and management of irrigation.

Local tourism entrepreneurs and different government and non-government bodies have been working in coordinated manner in order to attract the tourists visiting Sauraha to this trekking route. Since preparation of major infrastructures for the promotion of tourism in the area has been made, it is likely that the prevailing poverty in this area can be reduced through the means of tourism.

- Rural Tourism Feature 19/ TRPAP

Upcoming Events

Shiva Ratri

The Night of Lord Shiva

Date: March 8, 2005

Venue: The Pashupatinath Temple and all Shiva Temples of Nepal.

Bara Mahotsav

Date: March 4-8, 2005

Venue: Kalaiya District

Organized by: Bara Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Ranipokhari Utsav 2061

Date: March 3-12, 2005

Venue: Ranipokhari, Kathmandu

Organized by: Sukunda Event Management Pvt. Ltd.

Nationwide Open Duet Song Competition

Date: Till March 5, 2005

Venue: Bhrikutimandap, Kathmandu

Organized by: Nepal Lok Dohori Saanskritik Byaawasaayik Sangh

Ceremony and Stillness

Photographs by Frances Klatzel

Date: Till March 5, 2005

Venue: Siddhartha Art Gallery, Baber Mahal Revisited

Tel: 4411122

Khumbu Himal

Photographs by Kim Hong Sung

Date: Till March 5, 2005

Venue: Gallery Nine, Lajimpat

Tel: 4428694

Smile

Photos of Nepali icons by Kumar Ale
Date: Till March 9, 2005
Venue: Nepal Art Council, Baber Mahal
Tel: 4466956

Sama Theatre Festival

Date: Till March 13, 2005
Venue: Gurukul, Maitidebi
Tel: 4466956

Kathmandu & Kali Gandaki

Exhibition of photographs by Anagarika Sugata
Date: Till March 18, 2005
Venue: GAA, Thamel
Proceeds go to Chairo Gumba Restoration Fund
Tel: 4414785
gaa@gaa.org.np

Magic Pencil

Artworks by Britain's best children illustrators
Date: Till March 6, 2005
Venue: British Council, Lainchor
Tel: 4410798

Reflections from Tibet

An exhibition of Black and White photographs by Kevin Bubriski
Date: Till March 6, 2005
Venue: Indigo Gallery
Tel: 4413580

Tsunami Close Up

A photo exhibition of tsunami struck Indonesia by Tom V. Cakenberghe
Date: Till April 1, 2005
Venue: Via Via Café and Restaurant
Tel: 4700184

Media Center

Nepal Tourism Board
Tourist Service Center
P.O Box: 11018
Bhrikuti Mandap, Kathmandu, Nepal
Hotline Telephone No:977-1-4225709
Ph.977-1-4256909 (Ext. 181/182)
Fax. 977-1-4254298
email: mediacenter@ntb.org.np
URL: www.welcomenepal.com