

Nepal Tourism Board

E-Newsletter

March 11, 2005

Trek to EBC holds 7th position in Top Ten 'Once In A Lifetime' Trips

iExplore announced a list of Top Ten "Once-in-a-Lifetime" Trips, as determined by unique travel inquiries at iExplore over the last year on March 7, 2005. Trek to Mount Everest Base Camp (EBC) has been placed in seventh position in Top Ten ranking. Nepal is the only South Asian country to have chosen in this prestigious list. Last year The UK's leading magazine **The Observer** had ranked the **Everest Base Camp** in seventh position in 20 Journeys of a Lifetime. Champagne Flight to the North Pole has been registered as number one in the ranking which is followed by Travel to Timbuktu(Mali) and Back and Sea Kayak the Panama Canal.

iExplore founder and CEO, George Deeb, said, "As the Baby Boomers are approaching early retirement, they are less interested in accumulating hard assets at this stage in their life, and they are more interested in accumulating life changing experiences."

Deeb continued, "The above list shows you how far consumers are willing to go to get as unique an experience as possible, providing them with travel memories and 'travel bragging rights' for a lifetime."

Founded in 1999, iExplore(R) is the leading online seller of adventure and experiential travel. iExplore offers hundreds of made-to-order, guided tours that visit the farthest corners of the earth, particularly the man-made and natural wonders of the world.

Top Ten Ranking are as follows:

- 1 - Champagne Flight to the North Pole
- 2 - Travel to Timbuktu (Mali) and Back
- 3 - Sea Kayak the Panama Canal
- 4 - Stay With a Mongolian Family in the Gobi Desert
- 5 - Cage Dive with Great White Sharks in South Africa
- 6 - Camel Caravan Across the Sahara Desert
- 7 - Trek to Mount Everest Base Camp
- 8 - Take a Hot Springs Bath in Iceland
- 9 - Balloon Safari Over the Serengeti (Tanzania)
- 10 - Walk Rainforest Tree Canopies in the Amazon

Nepal Offers "Buy Three & Get One Ticket Free- Fantastic Family Offer" for Indian travelers

Enjoy your family Holiday in Nepal's Special Offer

As a part of promotional campaign in India, Nepal Tourism Board, Royal Nepal Airlines Corporation (RNAC), Cosmic Air, Nepal Recreation Centre and Pashupati Area Development Trust (PADT) have collaboratively launched an attractive offer known as **Buy Three & Get One Ticket Free- Fantastic Family Offer** in the Indian market.

Applicable to Indian nationals, this scheme is valid only on the National carrier Royal Nepal Airlines and Cosmic Air from March till May 31, 2005 to their respective sectors in India.

The buyers (3 + 1) of the Offer by both the above mentioned airlines are also entitled for **Free casino coupons worth INR 10,000.00 and will have special privilege in the Pashupatinath Temple Darshan.**

Commenting on the launch of this special offer, Mr. Tek Bahadur Dangi, CEO, Nepal Tourism Board said that the main reason behind floating this Offer is to encourage Indian tourists to travel to Nepal in a group or with family members. "Since Offer ranges from fast track Pashupathi Darshan for devout Indians to cash incentive at Casinos in Kathmandu, it is believed to attract all kind of Indian tourists in Nepal within the stipulated time. The launch of this competitive offer has been perfectly timed as the Indian summer holiday season begins from March-April onwards. These days tourist destinations like: Kathmandu, Nagarkot, Dhulikhel, Pokhara, Jomsom, Lumbini, Lukla etc. have witnessed better status of peace and normalcy than in the past. There is no problem for tourists to travel in Nepal as everything is running normally and with ease." Moreover, it is specially advised to book holiday tour in Nepal through registered travel/tour operators for guaranteed service.

NTB has been launching such offers for Indian tourists from time to time keeping in view with the importance of Indian tourists for Nepalese tourism industry.

Nepal has always been popular with Indians as a recreational, shopping and pilgrimage destination. Nepal's popularity as a tourist destination in India has increased vastly over the years for obvious reasons such as easy access, pleasant weather, exchange rate that works in their favour and so on. Hindi is widely spoken and Indian currency accepted in Nepal. Nepal is the only country where Indians do not require visa to visit.

For more information in India, please contact local agents of Royal Nepal Airlines and Cosmic Air or Nepal Tourism Board's Marketing Representative TRAC Representations (I) Pvt. Ltd., A-61, 6th floor, Himalaya House, K. G. Marg, New Delhi 110 001. Ph: +91-11-23737348, Fax: 23350270, email: ntbindia@tracrep.com. You can also visit NTB website www.welcomenepal.com or call Media Center of Nepal Tourism Board at 977-1-4225709 which opens 24 hours for more details. Please also visit the website of RNAC: www.royalnepal-airlines.com and Cosmic Air's website: www.cosmicair.com.

Nepal woos Bangladeshi tourists at DTM- 2005

Nepal received an overwhelming response during its first time ever participation in Dhaka Travel Mart (DTM) held at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel in Dhaka, Bangladesh from 4-6 March 2005.

Nepal Tourism Board with Cosmic Air as the partner airline and in joint coordination

with Nepal Recreation Center, participated in Dhaka Travel Mart-2005 along with other Nepalese private travel trade sector participants - Marco Polo Travels & Royal Singi Hotel.

The three-day international travel fair was inaugurated for the second time in Bangladesh on March 4, 2005 by Wolfgang Vollmann, Director and UNESCO Representative in Bangladesh. Organized by the leading travel magazine "The Bangladesh Monitor", Dhaka Travel Mart-2005 was participated by a total of 42 organizations from 15 countries.

Nepal Tourism Board, Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation, Tourism Malaysia, Biman Bangladesh airlines, Saudi Arabian Airlines, Malaysian Airlines, United Emirates, Qatar Airways, Druk Air of Bhutan, Dragon Air as well as various hotels, tour operators & travel agents from Bangladesh presented their destination and services with attractive packages and offers to Bangladeshi tourists. Organized with a view to promote & explore the untapped potential of the tourism industry in the region, the Mart, being Bangladesh's biggest travel trade show, was able to attract the prominent travel tour operators, media and the prospective travelers during the three days.

A seminar on "Role of Private & Public Sector" was also held by the organizers alongside the fair wherein Mr. Bikrum Pandey, MD, Himalaya Expeditions, Nepal elaborated on the joint cooperation of private & public sector for the development of tourism in Nepal.

As a part of the tourism promotion mission in Bangladesh, Nepal Tourism Board had organized a successful press conference on Nepalese tourism on 1 March 2005, in Dhaka ahead of DTM -2005 which was widely covered by the major print media & electronic channels. The media mileage received just before DTM was further strengthened & supported by a well-planned print media campaign highlighting Nepal's DTM Special Offer for Bangladeshi tourists, in major Bangladeshi dailies & travel publication prior to and during Dhaka Travel Mart-2005.

As a result, the well-decorated Nepal Stand depicting various tourism products and attractions of Nepal fetched a considerable response from Bangladeshi media, travel trade and public visitors on all 3 days of Dhaka Travel Mart-2005. Nepal Tourism Board had coordinated with Cosmic Air and Nepal Recreation Center to float the DTM-Special offer of "Buy One, Get One Free" ticket with free casino coupons worth 3000 Taka for Bangladeshi travelers. With its 'once for all' special offer, Cosmic Air received tremendous response, confirming almost 300 on the spot bookings at Nepal stall. Nepal Recreation Center had also kept raffle prizes with attractive holiday packages & casino coupons. Thus throughout the Mart, Nepal stand remained a center of attraction and finally received the "Special Recognition" award, being the most happening stall during DTM-2005.

The Nepalese private travel trade participants sought the opportunity to interact with their Dhaka based trade counterparts & establish new business network. Some of them were also able to woo the Bangladeshi travelers and cashed the opportunity with on the spot booking. NTB in its endeavor, to explore Bangladeshi tourism potential during DTM - 2005, was able to create the awareness of Nepal as the best option for a quick holiday

experience with its variety of tourism attractions and reasonably priced hotels.

The participation in the Mart was a big success in terms of creating destination awareness of Nepal among the general public and alluring Bangladeshis to travel to Nepal negating their safety concerns towards Nepal, and increasing the business-to-business contacts of Nepalese private sector participants during the Mart.

During the mart, Nepal Tourism Board was represented by Mrs. Ujjwala Dali, Manager, Tourism Marketing and Promotion.

Nepal at STF and SASEC

The Meeting of First South Asia Sustainable Tourism Forum (STF) was held in Dhaka on February 26, 2005. The Nepalese delegation was headed by the then Secretary of Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, Dr. Bhoj Raj Ghimire. The other members of the delegation included Mr. Tek Bdr. Dangi, Chief Executive Officer, Nepal Tourism Board (NTB), Mr. Subash Nirola, Director, NTB, Mr. Lila Bdr. Baniya, Manager, NTB and Mr. Mingma Norbu Shrepa, Tourism Planning Specialist, Tourism for Rural Poverty Alleviation Programme. The program was jointly organized by SNV, ICIMOD, ADB and PATA. The Chief Guest of the programme was Hon'ble State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism of Bangladesh, Mr. Mohammad Nasir Uddin.

Mr. Subhash Nirola, Director, NTB made keynote presentation on "Sustainable Tourism Development and Linking the Private Sector". Mr. Mingama Norbu Sherpa also made presentation for TRPAP on "TRPAP and linking the programme to the private Sector". Similarly PATA, WTO, UNESCO, private tour operator and Eco-Himal from Nepal also presented other papers.

The STF meeting was followed by the meeting of SASEC. The participating countries on the meeting were Bhutan, Bangladesh, India and Nepal. Sri Lanka took part as an observer. It was held on February 27 and 28, 2005. The participation of Sri Lanka in the meeting is taken as major achievement of the meeting as it is an important part of Buddhist circuit in the region. Donor agencies like SNV and ICIMOD agreed to help SASEC for joint product development program. The meeting also decided to hold next Tourism working group meeting in Colombo, Sri Lanka. India will launch recently developed promotional materials of "Buddhist Heartland" and "Nature, Culture, Adventure" in ITB-Berlin. It has been agreed to form South Asian Sustainable Tourism Forum to share learning of successful sustainable tourism practice in this region. It has also been decided to develop joint website of SASEC region. The website and portal will provide comprehensive "One Stop" data content together with relevant site linkage, a booking engine, and payment gateway.

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

International Maithali Drama Festival

Date: March 15-20, 2005

Venue: Janakpurdham

Organizer: Shree Ramananda Youth Club

Promoted by: Nepal Tourism Board

Festive Images

An art exhibition by Pradip K. Bajracharya

Date: March 13-27, 2005

Venue: The Buddha Gallery, Thamel

Tel: 4441689

Ranipokhari Utsav 2061

Date: March 3-12, 2005

Venue: Ranipokhari, Kathmandu

Organized by: Sukunda Event Management Pvt. Ltd.

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 Chaira Gumba Restoration Fund

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Fundraising for cyclist Pushkar Shah

Artworks of Govinda Azad, Temba Chhiri Sherpa and Pushkar Shah

Date: Till March 13, 2005

Venue: Nepal Art Council, Baber Mahal

Tel: 4264710

Celebrating Line

Exhibition of selected drawings

Date: March 15- April 13, 2005

Venue: Siddhartha Art Gallery, Baber Mahal Revisited

Tel: 4411122

Uttishtha

Art Workshop

Date: March 11-20, 2005

Venue: Osho Tapoban

Tel: 4242106

Reflections from Tibet

Photos by Kevin Bubriski

Date: Till March 31, 2005

Venue: Indigo Gallery, Naxal

Tel: 4413580

Magic Pencil

Artworks by Britain's best children illustrators

Date: Till May 6, 2005

Venue: British Council, Lainchor

Tel: 4410798

Media Center

Nepal Tourism Board

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