

# Nepal Tourism Board

## *E-Newsletter*

March 18, 2005

### **Nepal's Participation at ITB Successfully Concluded**

Nepal Tourism Board successfully participated in the Internationale Tourismus-Borse (ITB) in Berlin, Germany, from March 11 to March 15, 2005. Nepal's participation in the fair was led by Hon'ble Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation Mr. Buddhi Raj Bajracharya. Nepal Tourism Board coordinated Nepal's participation in ITB 2005. Eleven private companies from Nepal along with Tourism for Rural Poverty Alleviation Program (TRPAP) and Austrian Airlines as a partner airline participated in the programme. The ITB Berlin 2005 featured more than 10,000 exhibitors from about 181 countries and territories all over the world. The stalls displayed the latest tourism products of these different areas. Amongst these Nepal's participation at the fair was of great importance and fruitful, considering the importance to rekindle touch with the German market and provide assurance regarding concerns on Nepal as a safe and peaceful travel destination.

The 2005 participation of NTB at the fair was different from the years before in terms of display of new tourism products. NTB in coordination with TRPAP introduced the new tourism product areas of Nepal to the press, visitors and trade exhibitors from around the world. The new program areas of TRPAP are Dolpa, Chitwan, Rasuwa, Rupandehi, Solukhumbu and Taplejung.

Nepal Pavilion at the fair was decorated with wood carvings that reflect the architecture of old Kathmandu. The thematic Nepal pavilion depicted the typical Nepali art and architecture with varied photographs of Nepalese people, culture and natural landscape. At the centre of the stall stood a replica of the 5 storeyed Nyatapola Temple of Bhaktapur Darbar Square, which is one of the 7 Cultural World Heritage Sites of Kathmandu Valley. A traditional wood gate with carvings of auspicious figures welcomed guests into the Nepal stall.

NTB gave out tourist information and entertained the queries of visitors at the stall, giving them brochures, press material, posters, post cards, CD Rom and souvenirs from Nepal. Similarly, NTB also gave out promotional materials and information on the new tourism products of Nepal and the concept of community-based rural tourism. Several German visitors showed keen interest in the concept of community-based tourism. Many said they would visit these new areas in Nepal and expressed their willingness to contribute for the cause of environmental conservation and community development by travelling to Nepal. Other queries visitors had was regarding safety and security, travel information, trekking information, hotel information, visa rules of Nepal, etc.

The stall was visited by general public in the first three days while the last two days the stall was visited by the travel trade and media. The Nepal pavilion was appreciated by the private sector. The private sector also received similar queries about security and travel information from visitors to the stall. The participants were able to renew contacts at the fair and also establish new contacts with the tour operators.

Hon'ble Minister also had a courtesy call with his Maldivian counterpart at Maldivian stall and visited the stalls of other participating countries from Asia and Pacific. Earlier, Hon'ble Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation launched the new tourism products of Nepal at Nepal Evening Program for press and tour operators in Berlin, Germany, on March 14. During the program Hon'ble Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation Mr. Bajracharya emphasized that after the Royal Proclamation of February 1, 2005, peace, security and political stability have prevailed in the country in the better way creating a more favourable tourism scenario. Chief Executive Officer of NTB Mr. Tek Bahadur Dangi made a brief presentation on the current tourism scenario of Nepal and the importance of German market. He also

assured the media and tour operators of the various initiatives taken by the government, the national tourism board and the private sectors to provide better tourism services.

At the program National Program Manager of TRPAP Mr. Rabi Jung Pandey introduced the concept of sustainable tourism development in Nepal and presented pictures of these new tourism areas of Nepal. The promotional documentary of Rupandehi, Chitwan and the song Sa Karnali that visualizes Dolpa were also played during the program. The promotional material of NTB and TRPAP were distributed to participants at the end of the program. More than 200 participants including 150 foreign media and tour operators attended the program that also included cocktail and a traditional Nepali dinner.

Capitalising the strength of ITB, Nepal along with India, Bhutan, and Bangladesh launched tourism promotion collaterals of the SASEC region at a press conference on March 12, 2005. The collaterals launched were to promote the Buddhist Circuits and eco tourism products of the region.

The private participants at the central Nepal Pavilion at ITB 2005 were: Euro Asia Tours & Travels, Karnali Excursions, Kathmandu Experience Travels & Tours, Kathmandu Guest House, Kathmandu Travel & Tours, Nature Trail Trekking & Expedition, Nepal Sanctuary, The Explore Nepal, The Malla Hotel, Yeti Travels and M.D. Publishing Co. Pvt. Ltd.

Other participants from Nepal Shangrila Tours, Soaltee Crowne Plaza, Temple Tiger, Buddha Air, Shangrila Hotel and Intertours also participated in the ITB fair.

The Nepalese delegation at ITB is optimistic of getting increased tourism business from Germany and other countries in the region due to continued tourism interactions held through ITB and similar other initiatives.

## **NTB takes part in MITF- Malaysia**

Nepal Tourism Board (NTB) successfully participated in the 19th MATTA International Travel Fairs (MITF) held at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, from 11-13 March, 2005. In order to continue the participation, reposition Nepal's destination image, and ultimately bolster its effort in fetching more Malaysians to Nepal, NTB interacted and addressed thousands of Malaysian's curiosity, inquisitiveness and other travel related concerns right at its source. Overall survey showed that Malaysians are moreover interested on the beauty lying over the Himalayan ranges for which Nepal is abundantly endowed and popular all over the world. The craze of Himalaya was more vivid in majority of the people wishing to travel. However, safety and security was the topic of concern of all the visitors who visited Nepal stall. All the necessary publicity materials enticing them were massively distributed from the forum during the fair.

The MATTA fair is indeed the "premier" travel fair and established platform for the travel and tourism industry and consumers. In this context, the MATTA Fair is an excellent avenue for the various tourism organizations and the private sector to reach the public with their travel products, packages and services. This fair saw 753 booths in four halls of the Putra World Trade Center taken up by nearly 200 exhibitors from a spectrum of travel and tourism related organizations like National Tourism Organizations, Travel agents, Hotels, Airlines, Resorts, tour operators, theme parks, and other associated institutions.

Given continuity with the inclusion of more tour operators and their lucrative packages, this fair would create a milestone in transforming the consumers in to travelers.

The fair was participated by Mr. Aditya Baral-Manager and Gehendra Rajbhandari-Officer from NTB and Mr. Durgesh Raj Dali-Station Manger of Royal Nepal Airlines, Malaysia.

## **Int'l Maithali Drama Festival in Janakpur**

International Maithali Drama Festival has begun in Janakpur since March 15, 2005 for a week. Participated in by 10 contestants from Indian cities of New Delhi, Kolkatta, Darbhanga and from Nepal, the inaugural function was inaugurated by National Poet Madav Prasad Ghimire. Addressing the function, poet Ghimire said that the cultural heritage of Janakpur should be brought into the notice of international community which would eventually benefit the national as a whole. Inaugural function was attended by Chief District Officer, LDO, Chief Executive of Municipalities, intellectuals and other high officials of Janakpur. The

programme was held at the auditorium of Janakpur Chamber of Commerce. Speaking on the occasion on behalf of Nepal Tourism Board, Mr. Hikmat Singh Ayer, Manager- TP & RD said that Nepal Tourism Board is always positive in promoting festival like this which would help conserve the culture of a particular community. All the speakers of the programme stressed on the need to develop Janakpur as the cultural centre of Nepal bringing it in the process of mainstream development. Nepal Tourism Board has promoted this festival.

Later, in the evening, Nepal Tourism Board organised a press conference and dinner for journalists and organisers of the festival. The press conference and dinner was attended by thirty journalists. Intellectuals and journalists sought the support of Nepal Tourism Board to establish Janakpur as an epicentre of Maithali drama, culture and heritage.

International Maithali Drama Festival was started 22 years ago in Patna, India. Last International Maithali Drama Festival was held in Biratnagar, Nepal some 10 years ago. This time it has been organised in Janakpur under the initiation of Ramananda Youth Club. There are more than 20 million Maithali speaking people spread over in Nepal and India.

## **Sushmita to climb Everest**

Sushmita Maskey, 24, is now geared up to climb Mt Everest this season under the banner of Peace Everest Expedition. The expedition will be led by Ramesh Dangol (41) and other member of expedition is Sonam Dangol (27). However, it was disclosed in the press conference held on March 17, 2005 that it has already been decided that Ms. Maskey will be the only one to attempt to climb the Everest. They will leave for Lukla by the end of March. Maskey will attempt the summit with the help of Dawa Sherpa while Ramesh and Sonam will accompany her up to Camp II. Ms. Maskey will attempt to Climb Everest in the month of May which depends on the weather. The team's mission is to spread the message of peace. "I'm confident that I will be able to scale the peak," said Maskey at a press conference organised by Newa Nuga Cooperative Society and the Rotary Club of Kathmandu. She has been taking training for the past one-and-a-half years to conquer the Mt Everest. The members of Peace Everest Expedition will distribute cloths, stationary to the students of the Everest Region as a part of its mission. Maskey has so far scaled Yala peak and Island peak.

So far four Nepalese women have climbed Mt. Everest and all of them are from Everest Region and belong to Sherpa community.

## **Air Sahara resumes flights**

Air Sahara, India's fastest growing private airlines, has resumed its Delhi-Kathmandu-Delhi daily flight from March 15, 2005. The airlines had suspended its flights on this route, citing internal reasons. The airline's Boeing 737 aircraft carrying about 20 passengers landed at Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA) on March 15, at 2.45pm and returned back to Delhi with more than 20 passengers at 4.00pm. The airlines had suspended its flights to Kathmandu from February 8.

Kathmandu is Air Sahara's second international destination after Colombo, where the airline serves daily flights. The airlines will operate flights to Singapore, Thailand and Hong Kong besides the existing 23 destinations in India.

## **Feature of the week**

### **Rural Tourism Concept in SASEC**

**By L. B. Baniya**

Asia-Pacific is the most populated area in the world and millions of poor people are living with the income less than one USD per day. More than 500 million people live in the South Asia Sub-regions mostly in Bangladesh, Bhutan, the eastern states of India and Nepal. This region is very rich in natural and human resources but have many challenges for development.

To foster regional cooperation in South Asia, Asian Development Bank (ADB) has adopted a sub-regional approach to uplift the livelihood of the people. ADB has initially focused on forming the South Asia Growth Triangle that comprised Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal commonly known as BBIN. The countries identified five-priority sectors for sub regional area-transportation, energy, tourism, environment and private sector cooperation. In the first phase, the program helped to identify and prioritize sub-regional cooperation projects and program in above mentioned priority sectors. In the second phase starting from 2002, ADB is providing technical assistance in some areas.

Tourism sector is one of the important sectors for the regional development of this region. Nepal has given high priority as it has more potential, compared to other member country in this region. Recently fifth SASEC Tourism Working Group (TWG) was held in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Sri Lanka took part as an observer for the first time. The meeting concluded with very significant outcomes in tourism sector. In the past meeting, TWG has made several recommendations. Nepal organized 1st and 2nd meeting while India (Delhi) and Bhutan (Thimpu) organized 3rd and 4th TWG meeting respectively.

Meeting at Thimpu endorsed Tourism Development Plan (TDP) for SASEC. The plan has seven programmes with individual projects led by each member county. Based on the nature of the project it has been further divided into three areas like generic program, products focused program and private sector focused program. Different development partners like WTO, UNESCO, PATA, SNV, ICIMOD, and ADB have been identified in each tourism development plan to implement the TDP.

Since the formation of SASEC, Nepal is playing pivotal role in tourism sector in this region. Joint declaration of SASEC has decided to establish the SASEC Tourism Secretariat in Kathmandu to coordinate and implement projects and programs. Under SASEC tourism program Nepal has taken responsibility to lead six different projects and some of them are almost in final stages and some others are very new projects needing more attention. The project led by Nepal that is almost in the final stage is 'Training for Travel Media'. The important projects to be developed include, 'Product Standard and Industry Code of Conduct in Ecotourism and Buddhist Circuits'.

Nepali team visited Bangladesh between 24<sup>th</sup> February to 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2005 under the leadership of Secretary of Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation and other team members were from Nepal Tourism Board and Tourism for Rural Poverty Alleviation Program (TRPAP)

The Chief Guest, Honorable State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism People Republic of Bangladesh, Mr. Mohammad Nasiruddin on 26th February 2005, inaugurated the meeting of the First Sustainable Tourism Forum. It was jointly organized by SNV and ICIMOD and PATA. The meeting was participated by India, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, WTO, PATA, ADB, ICIMOD, SNV, Eco-Himal, UNESCO and private sectors from tourism industry. The meeting was followed by delivery of speeches from different countries and participants. Mr. Subash Nirola- Director of NTB delivered the keynote on behalf of Nepalese delegates on the topic of Sustainable Tourism Development and Linking the TRPAP Developed Products to the Private Sector.

Mr. Mingma Norbu Sherpa- Tourism Planning Specialist of TRPAP presented TRPAP as the case study from Nepal. The presentation was highly received by the Forum and appreciated. Nepal's experience on Sustainable Rural Tourism Development through TRPAP gained a wide recognition in the Forum and the neighboring countries got a good insight of pro-poor tourism development. TRPAP was also considered as one of the leading world model pro-poor tourism programs.

The Chief Guest, Honorable State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism People Republic of Bangladesh, Mr. Nasiruddin on 27th February 2005, also inaugurated the Fifth Tourism Working Group of SASEC. The meeting continued for 27-28 February 2005. It was jointly organized by ADB, Bangladesh Paryatan Cooperation and PATA. The meeting was participated by India, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, WTO, PATA, ADB, ICIMOD, SNV, UNESCO, Eco-Himal and Private Sectors. The 6<sup>th</sup> Tourism Working Group Meeting will be held in Bodhgaya, India and concluded in Lumbini, Nepal in 2005.

The SASEC meeting has made some progressive decisions on common interests. It provided a good forum to share Nepal's case of TRPAP experience and received a wider recognition in pro-poor tourism development arena. In addition, the Nepalese delegates knew a good sense of Nepal's position in sustainable tourism development and the role of tourism in poverty alleviation.

Secretary level participation as an observer was very important for the promotion of Buddhist Circuit tour in the South Asian region. Nepal has additional advantage from his participation in the meeting as the majority of Sri Lankan is Buddhist and Lumbini receives considerable number of Sri Lankan visitors.

It was agreed in the meeting that supporting agencies like SNV and ICIMOD agreed to work in partnership for SASEC joint Tourism Product Development Program. Each country will develop action plan of the individual program with measurable indicators and time frame.

Technical Assistance Program for HRD in SASEC is supported by ADB and within the team will prepare need assessment of HRD in tourism sector of this region. As per the decision, the four SASEC countries led by India is launching the promotional material of "Buddhist Heartland" and "Nature, Culture, Adventure-Eco-tourism" in ITB-Berlin in March 2005.

The meeting also agreed to form South Asian Sustainable Tourism Forum to share learning of successful Sustainable Tourism Practices in this region regularly. In addition, Technical Assistance will be provided to develop joint web site of SASEC regions especially with focus on joint marketing initiatives. The objective of the web site and portal ([www.visitsouthasia.org](http://www.visitsouthasia.org)) will be to provide comprehensive "One Stop" data content together with relevant site linkage, a booking engine, and payment gateway, to enable travelers to make ground handling and accommodation arrangement.

There is no doubt that SASEC tourism component is a win-win situation for all member countries within this region. The joint product development program within the member countries will definitely support tourism, which enable private sector to develop joint tour package programs for this whole region, and ultimately length of stay of tourist will increase. Not only that visitor will have great experience in this region but will also get value of their money.

### *Upcoming Events*

#### **International Maithali Drama Festival**

Date: Till March 20, 2005

Venue: Janakpurdham

Organizer: Shree Ramananda Youth Club

Promoted by: Nepal Tourism Board

#### **Festive Images**

An art exhibition by Pradip K. Bajracharya

Date: Till March 27, 2005

Venue: The Buddha Gallery, Thamel

Tel: 4441689

#### **Celebrating Line**

Exhibition of selected drawings

Date: Till April 13, 2005

Venue: Siddhartha Art Gallery, Baber Mahal Revisited

Tel: 4411122

#### **Uttishtha**

Art Workshop

Date: Till March 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

**Hidden Devotions**

An exhibition of selected paintings by Robert Passig  
Date: Till March 22, 2005  
Venue: Gallery Nine, Lazimpat  
Tel: 4428694

**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](mailto:mediacenter@ntb.org.np)  
URL: [www.welcomenepal.com](http://www.welcomenepal.com)