



SITA Nepal Tourism Update January 2008

Dear Colleagues,

Greetings from the Himalayan Kingdom of Nepal!

Visitors Arrival in 2007 Shows 27.1% Growth

The arrival of visitors to Nepal has been recorded at 27.1% growth over 2006 with the arrival figure reaching 3,60,350. One of the main reasons for such an inspiring growth in 2007 in tourist arrivals is the ongoing peace process & political stability in the country. The good air connectivity with many destinations also contributes to this growth. 2008 seems to be a very promising year for the Nepalese Travel Trade as new airlines are coming in & the existing ones are also extending their flight frequency to Nepal. December 2007 registered a growth of 13 % in the international visitor's arrival to Nepal as compared to the same month last year, as per the data released by Immigration Office Tribhuvan International Airport.

Airlines Permitted to Operate Three Additional Flights a Week

The Ministry of Culture, Tourism & Civil Aviation has decided to grant permission to all on-line international airlines to operate three additional flights a week until December 2008. According to Ministry sources, the decision has been taken in view of difficulties in the smooth flow of in-bound tourists in the country. The decision was reportedly taken after some airlines requested the Government for the extension of the operation of additional flights.

Orient Thai Links Nepal

Orient Thai Airlines, a Thai budget airline company, began thrice-a-week flights between Bangkok & Kathmandu from 05 Jan 20 08, becoming the ninth airline to fly into Nepal's sky line in the last 14 months. The number of airlines offering services to Nepal has doubled during this period, while several others have increased their frequency. According to Orient Asia International, the general sales agent of Orient Thai in Nepal, the flights are operated with 170-seater MD-82 aircraft. Since the response has been good, they are targeting corporate s as well as the religious tourists from Thailand who are headed for the birthplace of Gautam Buddha.

Nepal's First Participation in Nordic Travel Fair MATKA 2008

Nepal Tourism Board along with four Nepalese private travel companies participated for the first time in Nordic Travel Fair Matka 2008, the biggest travel event in Nordic & Baltic region, held from January 17 to 20, 2008 in Helsinki, Finland. The fair was Inaugurated by Dr.Paavo Vayrynen, Minister for Foreign Trade & Development, Government of Finland, the fair had a good response from the tour operators & professionals on the first day. There were 1,100 exhibitors from 77 countries, with a presence of 9178 tour operators & 85000 consumers, the fair showed an encouraging prospect of Nepalese Tourism in the Finnish and the North European market. As per the fair, Nepal Tourism has great future prospects in Finland.

Nepal Captured Central Stage in TTF Chennai

Nepal's participation in TTF 2008, India's largest Travel & Tourism Fair, in Chennai, received a positive response amongst Indian visitors. The Fair held on 18-20 January 2008, registered more than 10,000 general visitors & about 650 from the Travel Trade industry. The fair was inaugurated by Tourism Director of Tamil Nadu on 18 January 2007 With the participation of 8 Travel Companies, Nepal was the center of attraction at the Fair. Visitors had show keen interest regarding the pilgrimage packages of Muktinath, Pashupatiunath, & Mt. Kailash along with other soft adventure, leisure, & honeymoon offers. TTF had provided a single roof opportunity to the visitors to make their travel plans, with options to gather information on various national & international destinations.

NTB Participates in Vakantiebeurs, Netherlands

Nepal Tourism Board & MAST- Nepal (Marketing Assistance for Sustainable Tourism), along with three private companies participated in the Vakantiebeurs- 2008 held in Utrecht, Netherlands from January 8 to 13, 2008. The fair was keenly observed & visited by around 1,40,000 people. The Dutch normally enjoy long holidays to Nepal and are high spending tourists. The common people were aware of the changed situation of Nepal, therefore, there were many queries that came in about different destinations of Nepal. On January 9, Nepal organized a short presentation on Nepal to address the inquiries of the common people & to brief them on the current scenario. The presentation was a huge success. All the Nepalese participants also informed the Europeans who enjoy the beautiful & exotic nature, to visit Nepal & be blessed by the beautiful experience Nepal has to offer. The role of MAST- Nepal was indeed very effective at the Vakantiebeurs- 2008.

Farewell to Sir Edmund Hillary

A condolence meeting was organized on January 15, 2008 in memory of Sir Edmund Hillary, the first summiteer of Mt. Everest. Sir Edmund Hillary passed away at a hospital in Auckland, New Zealand on January 10, 2008, at the age of 88. Prayers were performed as per the Buddhist & Hindu tradition where the Lamas & Batuks chanted sacred Mantras for the eternal peace of the departed soul. Mr. Prithvi Subba Gurung, Hon'ble Minister for Culture, Tourism & Civil Aviation spoke of proposing to the Cabinet Meeting to name Lukla Airport as Tenzing-Hillary Airport.

Pokhara Street Festival Kicks Off



Pokhara: Five day long 9th Street Festival has been kicked off at Lakeside in Pokhara. According to Balram Pahari, coordinator of the festival, some 100 stalls have been included in the festival. Some five dozen restaurants have been serving food in the streets. Tejendra Shrestha, president of Restaurant & Bar Association Nepal (REBAN) inaugurated the festival & said that the skillful manpower is needed in the sector of tourism. He also mentioned the need for an International Airport at Pokhara. Boat race, elephant rides, tourist race, waiter race, concert & various dances are the major attractions of this festival.

Paragliding Championship 2008



Paragliding is a relatively new adventure sport in Nepal, thus, very little information is available in tourist guidebooks regarding the same. Paragliding in this Himalayan country can be a truly wonderful experience for the adventure-seekers. The experience offers unparalleled scenic grandeur while floating over villages, monasteries, temples, lakes & jungles, with a fantastic view of the majestic Himalayas. The last three years have seen the activity flourish in

Pokhara, & now it is an internationally recognized destination for free flight enthusiasts. The take off points for these flights is Sarangkot (1592m), which offers prime views of Phewa Tal & the mountains at sunrise & sunset . The landing takes place on the fields by the lake. Professional & qualified pilots provide a short briefing before launching takes place . Nepal organized the 9th Open Paragliding Championship 2008 from Jan 19 to Jan 22. The event took place in Pokhara & the take off point for the flight was Sarangkot (1592m), which offered prime views of Phewa Tal & the mountain range at sunrise & sunset. The landing point were the fields by the Phewa lake.

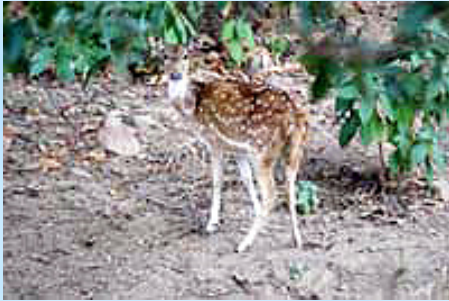
Maghe Sankranti Observed on 15th Jan 08

In the holy month of Magh, as the Sun enters the southern hemisphere, & the days begin to grow longer & warmer, people in Nepal celebrate Maghe Sankranti. Massaging the entire body with mustard oil is regarded as very auspicious act on this particular day. The family enjoys a hearty delicious meal comprising of rice cooked with lentils, yams & sweets like laddu made from sesame & sugarcane paste etc. On this day people gather around Devghat in Chitwan & take a dip into the meeting point of river Kali, Gandaki & Trisuli. This dip is believed to free devotees from their sins, cleanse their soul and bring them closer to God. It is believed that the days get longer and warmer from this day onwards. This year Maghe Sankranti was celebrated on 15 Jan 08.

Destination of the Month

Royal Bardia National Park:

The Bardia National Park is situated on the eastern banks of the Karnali river, about 400 kms. west of Kathmandu. The park is 968 sq kms. in area & extends from the Churia hills southward to the gentle slopes of the "Bhabhar". The porous slopes of the Bhabhar support large open grasslands known locally as 'Phantas'. These are some of the last remaining grasslands that once covered much of the Gangetic plains.



The western end of the Bardia is bounded by numerous water-ways of Karnali which have created many large & small gravel islands. These islands & much of the lower ground area is covered by a mosaic of grassland & riverine forest of acacia, sisam & largesilk cotton trees. In spring, the silk cotton blooms & the forest comes alive with scarlet flowers. Bardia is the home of a wide range of animals, many of which live in & around the Phantas. These open grasslands such as Baghora & Lamkoili are the best places to view animals. The most conspicuous of which is the spotted deer. Other ungulates include black buck, hog deer, samber deer, wild boar & barasingha or swamp deer. Two species of monkeys, the langur & the rhesus macaque can also be

seen. The park is famous for its small herds of wild elephants which are rarely seen. The park also boasts a small population of the rare gharial, the marsh mugger crocodile & the Gangetic dolphin. The island of the Karnali river harbours the sub-continent's largest antelope species, the nilgai or blue bull. More than 350 bird species have been recorded in Bardia, truly a bird watcher's paradise.

UP COMING EVENTS

Banke Festival

Date: 25 Jan-3 Feb, 08

Venue: Nepalgunj

Activities: Entertainment

Maha-Shivaratri

Date: 06 March 08

Venue: All over Nepal

Activities: Cultural, Religious

With Regards

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