

PAKISTAN TRYING TO IMPROVE ITS REPUTATION



Pakistan is a luring tourism destination for some but it is also considered one of the most dangerous countries in the world. Pakistani officials claim the country is safe but the reality seems to be a bit different.

Pakistan is a big south Asian country with huge **tourism potential**. There are scenic beauties, mountains, deserts as well as a rich archeological and cultural heritage. There are definitely possibilities for both leisure travelers and those longing for sightseeing.

However, there is a hitch in it. The country's image is rather bad. Pakistani officials claim the country is perfectly safe for foreign investors and that terrorist attacks happen all over the world. They also point out they put huge sums of money to fight terrorism and ensure safety. According to some officials, media create kind of panic by repeating the same story again and again.

The rest of the world, however, does not see Pakistan as a completely safe country. In a recent list by Forbes it ranked as the **fifth most dangerous country in the world**. There was the bombing of the Marriott hotel in the capital Islamabad in which some 60 people died. Recently, the Sri Lankan cricket team was ambushed in Lahore. Since July 2007 approximately 1,600 people died in various attacks. The latest news was about a girl flogged by a Taliban member in the country's northwestern region of Swat, where the religious Sharia law was introduced.

This bad image in global media scares away possible tourists. Also many **Western governments warn** their citizens against traveling to Pakistan because of safety concerns. Some European airlines, such as British Airways and Lufthansa, even suspended routes to the nuclear-armed Muslim nation. According to the tourism minister Aatur Rehman, terrorism halved receipts from tourism last year. Some 800,000 visitors came in 2007 bringing approximately 200 million dollars, but in 2008 the **number of visitors dropped below 400,000**.

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