

# NEPAL'S TOURISM GROWING



The Kingdom of Nepal has a population of 26.3 million and the country occupies an area of 147,181 sq km. The capital is Kathmandu. The kingdom is situated between India and China. Nepal is one of the world's poorest countries, and it has experienced a 10-year Maoist rebellion. The country has no real deposits of raw materials, therefore the main sector of the Nepalese economy is agriculture, which sustains 76% of the population and accounts for about 39% of the GDP. The country's infrastructure is underdeveloped.

But since the end of the rebellion, the country has witnessed a significant growth in its tourism industry. According to the Nepal Tourism Board, some 33,024 tourists arrived in the country by air in April, an increase of 78.8 per cent over April 2006. The board claims: "European arrivals secured one-third-market share during the month, with encouraging growth from major generating markets like Germany by 83.6 per cent, France by 58.4 per cent and the UK by 44.5 per cent. For the first time European arrivals have been very encouraging this summer." This growth is expected to continue least until the rainy season that starts in mid-June. The majority of tourists come from India, but most of the arrivals have been budget travelers, and it will take time before high-end tourists start arriving in the country. The tourism industry is once again becoming a very important segment of the Nepalese economy. It is one of Nepal's biggest foreign-exchange earners and provides hundreds of thousands of jobs.

There are many interesting places worth visiting in the Kingdom of Nepal. Apart from ancient temples, you can find here 8 of the 10 highest mountains in the world, including, of course, the world's most famous peak, Mount Everest. Nepal, therefore, ranks high as a favored destination in every mountaineer and rock climber's book.

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