

# PAKISTAN WANTS TO ATTRACT MORE TOURISTS THIS YEAR



Pakistan, officially the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, plans to attract more foreign tourists. The Pakistani tourism industry is an economic segment with growing importance for this country. Tourism Minister Nilofar Bakhtiar wants to bring one million foreign tourists this year and to firm up a new visa policy with India. The country, however, needs to improve its image as it is being connected with various terrorist activities. Ms. Bakhtiar said: "After 9/11, there were a lot of negative things in the media internationally which are not true, for example, for travel advisories in some countries, you would see Islamabad in red and Kabul in green."

President General Pervez Musharraf has said that they are trying hard to improve Pakistan's image abroad and to project its vast tourism potential. "We are endeavoring to project true image of the country through promotion of sports and cultural events." The country also tries to improve its image by hosting international events like Lahore Marathon. The Pakistani authorities have even declared the year 2007 as the Visit Pakistan Year. All these actions and campaigns are supposed to bring more tourists to Pakistan. The authorities also claim that there are huge amounts of money spent on the country's infrastructure. The investments include airports and communication links. Mr. Musharraf said: "The government is using its resources to put in place a befitting network of infrastructure and with the unprecedented boom in housing and information technology sectors, the country is set to offer better facilities to tourists".

There are many places worth seeing in Pakistan. The country has a rich history. Historical buildings like the Badshahi Mosque in Lahore and the Lahore Fort attract more than 40 million domestic tourists annually. The city of Lahore is considered a "crown jewel" amongst Pakistan's tourist sites. The country also boasts about the scenic beauties as it has five of the world's highest peaks including K-2.

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