

LESS LUXURY TOURISM AND MORE ADVENTURE ON MOUNT EVEREST



During the high season in April and May, many mountaineers flock to the world's highest mountain, Mount Everest. Unfortunately, this results in accidents, deaths, and waste. Nepal is now taking steps to counteract this problem by limiting luxury tourism, including helicopter flights and spa tents in the Everest base camp. However, only some agree with this decision.

Some companies promote luxury tourism at Everest Base Camp, offering amenities such as a four-poster bed in a heated cathedral tent, a private toilet, gourmet food on the glacier, and even massages in the highest spa tent in the world at an altitude of over 5000 meters.

The affected Everest communities and the Nepali government want to end luxury tourism in the upcoming spring season by issuing new rules. To achieve this goal, they are currently coordinating two new tourism laws.

The Nepalese Ministry of Tourism plans to implement new rules to conserve resources and reduce the number of tourists visiting Mount Everest. These rules include limiting the number of campsites per tourist, banning all commercial activities at Everest Base Camp that have nothing to do with mountaineering, and reducing helicopter flights to only rescue operations. Dining and private toilet tents will also disappear altogether, and luxury activities like spas will be stopped to maintain the adventurous spirit of mountaineering.

Rakesh Gurung, responsible for tourism development, emphasizes that Mount Everest, a World Heritage Site, must be protected. To conserve resources, mountaineers must carry their excrement back down themselves in special bags. Waste is a significant problem, and the human footprint must be smaller.

Last year alone, around 2,000 people visited the Everest base camp, which has significantly impacted the environment. To address this problem, the government in Kathmandu plans to increase the entrance fee for access to Everest from \$11,000 to \$15,000.

Although the new rules are not primarily aimed at foreign providers, Nepalese providers are becoming more professional each year. However, they can still offer their services more affordably than foreign companies, causing them to face increasing pressure.

The new rules do not intend to ban luxury at Everest Base Camp. Instead, they aim to create more space for everyone, by using smaller tents. They also aim to remove unnecessary items from the mountain. The specifics of implementing these rules are still up for discussion.

Some experts doubt whether the planned luxury ban at Everest Base Camp will achieve the desired goals. Limiting access to less qualified mountaineers would make more sense.

It's important to remember that mountain tourism is a crucial business for Nepal. The government aims to make this business more sustainable, but they do not intend to eliminate it. Nepal cannot afford unilateral restrictions on access.

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