

SATKAR

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HAN's Regional & International Tourism Outlook

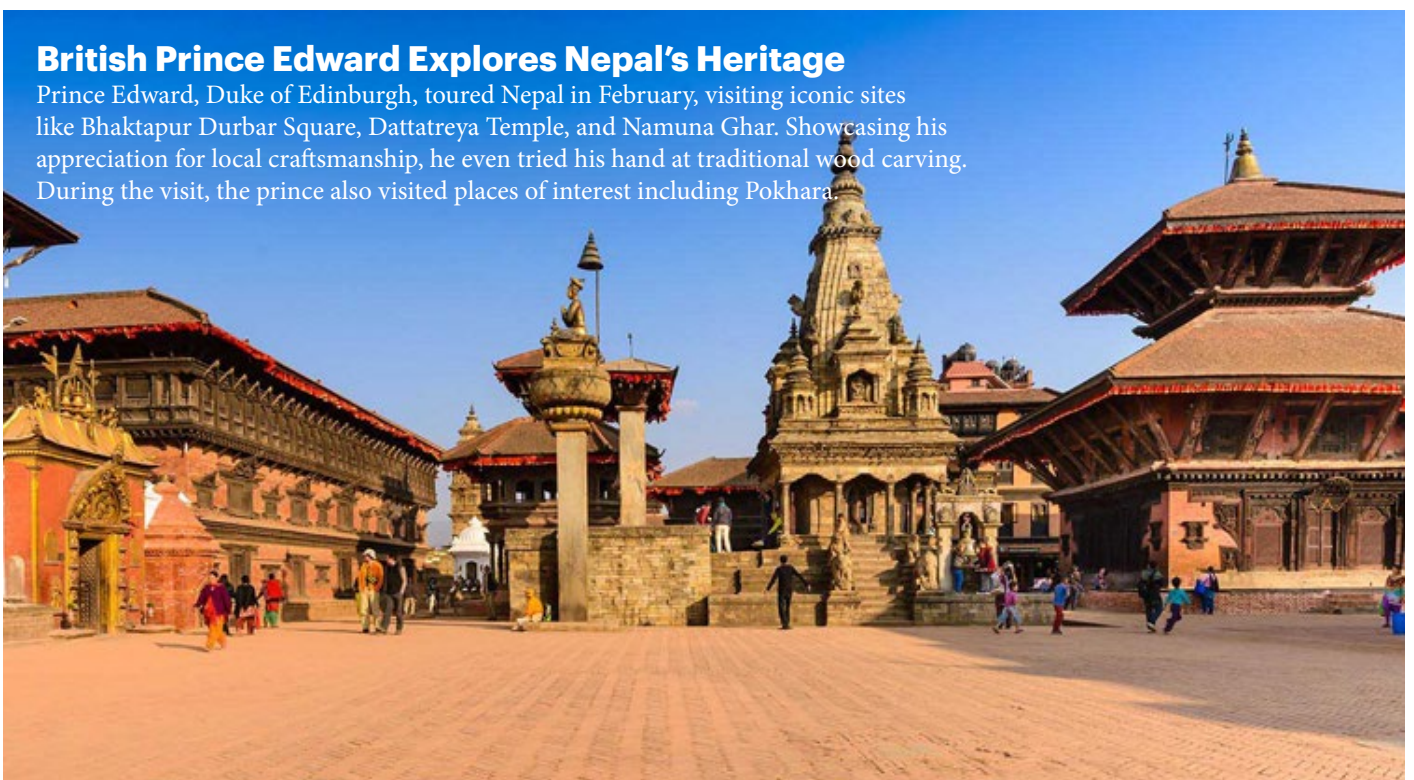
Nepal's hospitality sector is growing through strategic partnerships, with HAN strengthening regional tourism via NTB collaboration. The association focuses on safety protocols and promotions in key markets like India and China while embracing

ecotourism and digital innovation through the aegis of UNWTO partnerships. Despite challenges, HAN's commitment to sustainability and infrastructure improvements is positioning Nepal as an emerging luxury, high-value tourism destination.



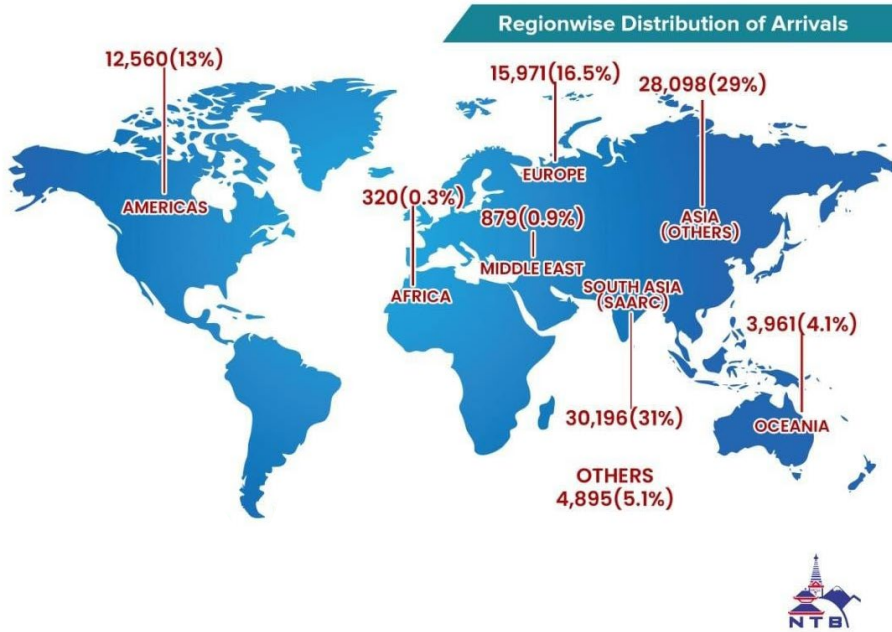
British Prince Edward Explores Nepal's Heritage

Prince Edward, Duke of Edinburgh, toured Nepal in February, visiting iconic sites like Bhaktapur Durbar Square, Dattatreya Temple, and Namuna Ghar. Showcasing his appreciation for local craftsmanship, he even tried his hand at traditional wood carving. During the visit, the prince also visited places of interest including Pokhara.



**Tourist Arrival-
February 2025**

In February, Nepal welcomed 96,880 international tourists, marking an increase compared to January. Among them, India accounted for the highest number of visitors, followed by the USA, China, Thailand, and the UK. Additionally, a significant number of tourists arrived from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Australia, South Korea, and Japan. In terms of regional distribution, SAARC countries contributed the largest share of visitors, followed by other Asian nations. Beyond Asia, European and American travelers also formed a notable portion of international arrivals. The steady rise in tourist numbers highlights Nepal's growing appeal as a top travel destination.

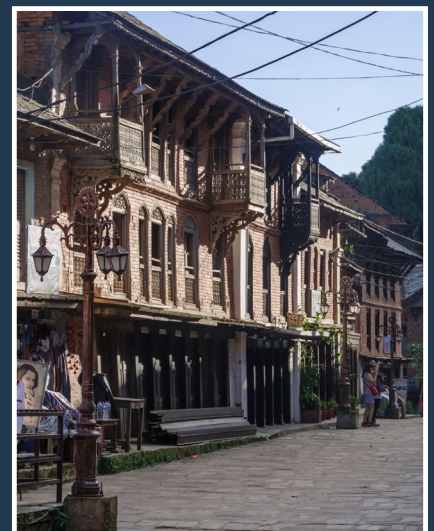


Nepal's Hospitality Industry Fuels Economic Growth

Nepal's hospitality sector, encompassing hotels, restaurants, and lodges, contributes over Rs326 billion annually to the economy, according to a new survey by the National Statistics Office. With 142,223 establishments employing 106,459 individuals, the industry plays a vital role in job creation and investment. Bagmati province leads in output, contributing Rs152.07 billion. The sector's steady growth and significant bank investments highlight its economic importance, while an upcoming domestic tourism survey aims to assess its full impact on national GDP.

Bandipur Declares 2025 as Visit Year to Boost Tourism

Bandipur Rural Municipality has officially declared 2025 as 'Bandipur Visit Year,' aiming to attract 200,000 tourists—100,000 domestic and 100,000 international. With plans for events, infrastructure improvements, and promotional activities, the campaign seeks to enhance tourism and stimulate the local economy.





Nepal's Tourism Potential Hindered by Infrastructure Challenges

Despite its natural beauty and cultural heritage, Nepal's tourism sector faces setbacks due to poor infrastructure, inefficient transportation, and inadequate amenities. Experts highlight underdeveloped road networks, congested airports, and a lack of basic facilities as major barriers to growth. Frequent landslides and aviation limitations further disrupt travel, affecting tourist arrivals. To unlock Nepal's full tourism potential, investment in sustainable infrastructure, improved connectivity, and better facilities is essential for enhancing visitor experience and long-term industry growth.



Lumbini: A Sacred Site Listed at New York Times's Top Travel Pick

Lumbini, the birthplace of Lord Buddha, has gained global recognition as a premier cultural and spiritual destination.

Ranked 9th on The New York Times list of 52 must-visit places worldwide, this UNESCO World Heritage Site has transformed from an underdeveloped pilgrimage spot into a thriving center of heritage tourism. The addition of new temples, including the Thousand Temple,

and a surge in international visitors—over 1.1 million in 2024—highlight its growing appeal. Lumbini's remarkable evolution cements Nepal's potential as a leading cultural tourism hub, promising even greater global interest in the years ahead.



Nepal's Adventure Tourism Sees Strong Growth with New Regulations

Nepal remains a top adventure tourism destination, attracting thrill-seekers for trekking, mountaineering, rafting, and paragliding. Recent data shows a surge in visitors, with the Annapurna Conservation Area recording over 83,000 international tourists since mid-2024, reflecting a strong recovery. To enhance safety and local employment, Nepal now requires solo trekkers to hire local guides in national parks. Additionally, Pokhara's designation as Nepal's tourism capital further boosts its adventure appeal. However, proposed zoning changes for activities like canyoning and mountain biking in protected areas have raised environmental concerns. Despite challenges, Nepal's adventure sector continues to thrive with sustainable initiatives.

Maha Kumbh Mela 2025: A Spiritual Gathering with Global Impact

The Maha Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj, India, has attracted an astonishing 663 million devotees seeking spiritual purification at the Triveni Sangam. This massive event, one of the largest religious gatherings worldwide, symbolizes faith, devotion, and cultural heritage. With its deep religious significance, the Kumbh Mela serves as a reminder of the powerful role such spiritual festivals play in the broader tourism industry. Nepal, rich in its spiritual traditions, stands to benefit from this global interest in religious tourism, offering unique opportunities for cultural exchange and pilgrimage-based travel.



MRP Regulations in Nepal: Impact on Hotel Industry

In Nepal, Maximum Retail Price (MRP) laws protect consumers by preventing unjustified price increases. The Consumer Protection Act, 2018, governs consumer rights and business practices across trade, goods, and services, with MRP regulations. Hotels, acting as both product consumers and service providers, are significantly impacted by these regulations. This distinctive positioning amplifies the critical importance of MRP regulations, making them especially impactful in maintaining economic equilibrium. Consumer concerns regarding excessive pricing have catalyzed increased regulatory scrutiny, compelling businesses to adopt more transparent and consumer-friendly pricing models. It is noted worldwide that with qualified services the products offered by Hotel/Restaurant add value and standard.

Nepal Hosted 3rd BIMSTEC Tour Operators Meeting

Nepal hosted the third BIMSTEC Network of Tour Operators (BNTO) meeting in Kathmandu on February 6-7, 2025. This event brought together representatives from national tourism organizations including Hotel Association Nepal and key business players from all BIMSTEC member countries, including Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Nepal. The meeting focused on enhancing regional tourism collaboration, promoting sustainable travel, and exploring new opportunities in the tourism sector. Key discussions covered regional tourism growth, visa facilitation, and the future of BIMSTEC's Buddhist and Cruise Circuits.



nepal | Lifetime Experiences!



3rd Meeting of the **BIMSTEC** NETWORK OF TOUR OPERATORS FEBRUARY 6-7, 2025, KATHMANDU



Eastern Travel Mart 2025: Showcasing Koshi's Tourism Potential

The Eastern Travel Mart is set to take place on Falgun 25, 26, and 27 in Itahari, marking its milestone 5th edition. This year's event has been strategically expanded and meticulously refined to deliver a more comprehensive and dynamic experience that builds upon the success of previous iterations says HAN Koshi Province Committee Chair Mr. Rajan Shrestha. The Mart will emerge as a premier networking platform for travel agencies, bringing together an impressive consortium of key tourism leaders, official tourism board representatives, and influential travel companies from Nepal, Bihar, Sikkim, Bengal, and neighboring regions. At its core, the event maintains a laser-focused primary theme: the comprehensive promotion and exploration of tourism opportunities within Koshi Province.

As an integral component of the Mart, carefully curated sightseeing tours will offer participants an immersive journey through the diverse and captivating tourist destinations nestled within Koshi Province. The event is strategically designed to enhance direct travel business opportunities by facilitating meaningful connections between travel agencies, companies, and potential clients. A particular emphasis will be placed on adventure tourism, with compelling showcases of mountaineering experiences and enticing hill station visits that are poised to attract both domestic and international travelers. Visitors will be treated to a rich cultural tapestry, experiencing the region's vibrant heritage through authentic traditional performances and an array of local food stalls that promise to be a centerpiece attraction throughout the event.



Challenges Faced by Hotels Amid Dairy Import Ban

The February 2024 government ban on importing nine dairy products, including milk, butter, ghee, and cheese, has created significant challenges for Nepal's recovering hospitality sector. While intended to promote self-sufficiency and support local producers, this policy has forced hotels to either use limited domestic products or purchase banned items at inflated black market prices, further straining businesses still recovering from pandemic disruptions. Though some Nepali dairies produce quality products, they cannot meet the growing demand and standard. Hotel industry representatives emphasize that such restrictions impede their recovery efforts and urge the government to develop balanced solutions that would simultaneously protect local dairy producers while allowing the hospitality industry to maintain quality standards without facing additional financial hardships during this critical rebuilding period.

Enhanced Flight Safety at Gautam Buddha International Airport with RNP-AR System

Gautam Buddha International Airport (GBIA) has implemented the Required Navigation Performance Authorization Required (RNP-AR) system to improve flight safety and operational efficiency. This advanced satellite-based navigation allows landings in visibility as low as 800 meters, significantly reducing weather-related disruptions. The Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal (CAAN) introduced this system to address frequent fog-related flight delays, ensuring smoother operations. Airlines must secure CAAN approval to utilize RNP-AR, and Fly Dubai has already initiated the process. This development enhances GBIA's reliability, supporting uninterrupted international flight operations.



Music Royalty and Its Impact in the Hotel Industry

The Copyright Act, 2059, Clause 39 states 'Provisions relating to royalty collecting body' with the provision of the sub-clause (1) which states: Generally, one royalty collecting body shall be formed as prescribed in one discipline for the purposes of fixing, collecting and distributing royalty of the works relating to copyright.

Exercising the very rights of the law, the Music Royalty Collection Society Nepal (MRCNS) has been formed, which has started sending notices demanding the payment of the fixed amount. The amount thus fixed was done unilaterally, without considering the hotel industry's perspective. Hotels have been receiving letters demanding payment, which seems burdensome to hoteliers, seemingly impractical, if not amended.

Hotel Association Nepal has been lobbying in this regard, placing its concerns with authorities. HAN has been involved in a round of discussions on multiple occasions to work out the best option for the industry. Music serves as a lifeline of culture. It is an integral part of tourism and national identity as well. It plays a crucial role in enhancing the guest experience; however, this situation creates a significant dilemma that has solely arisen from authority given to the society to fix the royalty. HAN has voiced for a balanced approach—one that upholds artists' rights over their intellectual property while considering the financial constraints to hotels, namely impacting consumers in general.





Pokhara Hosts International Balloon Festival to Boost Tourism

The International Balloon Festival successfully organized in Pokhara, bringing vibrant celebrations and thrilling aerial experiences to the region.

Featuring professional pilots from 15 countries, the event covers a scenic three-kilometer route from Lauruk to Chankhapur in Pame. Organizers reported that the festival expect to play a key role in revitalizing Pokhara's post-pandemic tourism sector. Visitors can enjoy breathtaking 40-minute hot air

balloon rides with panoramic views of the Annapurna, Machhapuchhre, and Dhaulagiri mountain ranges. The festival also includes sunrise and sunset flights, night balloon glows, fireworks, balloon races, concerts, cultural performances, DJ music, food courts, and night camps, making it a must-visit event.



Annapurna Trail Gets Infrastructure Upgrade to Boost Tourism

Infrastructure development has begun along the Annapurna Base Camp and Maurice Herzog Trail in Myagdi, with a budget of Rs 12.5 million. Funded by the Annapurna Rural Municipality, Nepal Tourism Board, and Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP), the project aims to improve facilities for trekkers. The initiative includes the construction of temporary shelters, toilets, drinking water facilities, trails, tea shops, and an open museum. Due to conservation policies, only temporary structures are permitted. Additionally, bids have been invited to operate tea and snack shops along the route for tourists' convenience.



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Holi Festival: A Vibrant Boost to Nepal's Tourism

Holi, the “Festival of Colors,” is a major cultural celebration in Nepal, drawing both locals and international tourists. In 2025, it will be observed on March 13th in the hilly regions and March 14th in the Terai. Popular spots like Basantapur Durbar Square and Pokhara's Lakeside become lively hubs, boosting tourism and local businesses. Travel agencies offer guided experiences for visitors to participate safely. While the festival fosters unity and joy, tourists should stay cautious in crowded areas and opt for organic colors. Holi provides a unique opportunity to experience Nepal's rich traditions in a vibrant setting.



Chinese New Year Boosts Nepal's Tourism Sector

The Chinese New Year significantly enhances Nepal's tourism industry, attracting thousands of Chinese visitors eager to explore its cultural heritage and natural beauty. In 2024, Nepal welcomed over 101,000 Chinese tourists, a 67% increase from the previous year. To capitalize on this growth, Nepal and China have launched the “Nepal Visit Year 2025” campaign, aiming for 500,000 Chinese arrivals. Cultural events and strengthened bilateral ties further support this initiative. However, challenges such as limited air connectivity and high airfare costs remain. Addressing these issues will be crucial for sustaining Nepal's tourism momentum and economic benefits.

Nepal's Tourism Growth and Regulations

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