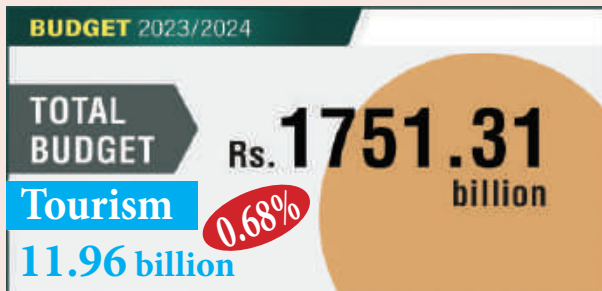




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Monthly Newsletter of Hotel Association Nepal, JUNE 2023

Budget has not contributed much for Hotel Sector



Hotel Association Nepal said that the budget of 2080/081 has not contributed significantly to solving the problems of the problematic hotel sector. Introduction of the 'luxury tax' to be levied in high end hotels will further hike price, which is deemed ill-timed for tourism sector.

The tourism decade announced by the previous government has been re-announced but 5 important months have already elapsed and no reasonable preparation is seen as of now.

Restructuring of Nepal Aviation Authority is encouraging, yet, the issue is of proper implementation and consistency of the undertakings. Hotel Association of Nepal will support the announcement of the budget for international flights from Bhairahawa and Pokhara regional international airports as this is a key issue for increasing more tourists in the country and supporting other prolific tourist areas of Nepal. The proper study the possibility of cannabis cultivation and legal branding could prepare a solid ground for health tourism. Meanwhile, HAN demands to pave ways for building of hotels in various places and overall infrastructure including road accessibility is a prerequisite for all hotels.

In order to overcome the current economic crisis, tourism sector should be accorded priority status and a collaborative approach is the need of this hour with focus to reconstruction of heritage sites, conservation of foot trails, monasteries and museums, high-altitude adventure sports tourism, Great Himalayan Trail among others. HAN has also stated that the participation of the private sector should be promoted and the investment climate coupled with proper facilitation called for the robust development in this sector.

Overall, it is not an exciting budget for tourism sector though the campaign like 'Visit Nepal: Know Nepal' is an appreciable effort. HAN has demanded a special financial policy to be introduced for such an industry that holds prospect for viable development in Nepal, which this budget has failed at large.

HAN participated at BITM

HAN President Mr Binayak Shah attended the Buddhist International Travel Mart in Lumbini. Mr Shah addressed the inaugural session of the event representing tourism associations and fraternity. Mr Shah also presented the status update of hospitality industry as a chair of the session on "Hospitality Management: The Essentials about Hospitality"



HAN met Tourism Minister Kirati & Labor Minister Bhandari



HAN team led by President Mr Binayak Shah met with Tourism Minister on May 16, 2023 at his chamber. President Mr Shah drew the attention of minister to initiate the result oriented actions in tourism and hospitality industry. Recognition of priority industry status, monetary issues, budget recommendation for FY 2080/81 and major issues facing growth hurdles in tourism industry, among others were discussed. Minister has taken the issue seriously and has initiated ministry level recommendation for resolving problems.

Likewise, HAN President Mr. Binayak Shah and Office Bearers together with Past President Council



led by Mr Yogendra Sakya, Former President, had a close meeting with minister for Labour, Employment and Social Security Mr Sarat Singh Bhandari at Hotel Ambassador. The meeting discussed on various issues facing hospitality industry and demanded the role of government to promote investors, entrepreneur and employers. Employer-friendly rules, regulations and different department has been advocated to get industry voice heard and get the issues resolved. Meanwhile, the Minister has accorded a high level of recognition to HAN and sought HAN's meaningful engagement in several programs and project of the Ministry.

HAN Celebrated Sagarmatha Day

Hotel Association Nepal participated at the "16th International Sagarmatha Day" & Mt. Everest Platinum Celebration Program on May 29, 2023. Executive Members Mr Ram Kumar Puri, Mr. Rajendra Bhatta, Mr Laxman Aryal, hotel representatives and secretariat team participated in a procession and a formal program at NTB.



Tiger Tops in Chitwan National Park: A Report

English translation of the report published in Setopati Digital Newspaper on Chaitra 28, 2079.

A few days ago, Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', while talking to reporters at his house in Shivnagar, Chitwan, not only told the anecdotes related to the Tiger Tops Hotel inside Chitwan National Park but he also expressed the opinion that it should be opened for tourism promotion.

"Opening some resorts including Tiger Tops without affecting other security will be beneficial now for tourism industry. At first, even the people in Chitwan said that they should not allow anyone to run such property. Now that's not the case," he said. "There will be a positive decision on this matter now."

In the year 2069 BS, along with Tiger Tops, Island Jungle Lodge, Temple Tigers Lodge, Safari Narayani, Chitwan Jungle Lodge, Machan Wild Life Resort and Gaida Wild Life Camp were closed within the park by the verdict of the Supreme Court.

The government had approved the operation of these hotels based on Section 6 of the National Parks and Wildlife Protection Act 2029 BS. In this section, there is a provision that the opening of hotels and resorts within the park can be done by contract according to the purpose of the Act. The government used to extend the deadline of the hotels by adopting the same arrangement before but finally, in the year 2069 BS, the Supreme Court ordered the closure of the hotels.

Before this, the hotels inside the park which used to be popular among foreign visitors, stopped their operation for good. This has brought to the end of popular destination of wildlife tourism in Nepal.

Among the seven hotels, Tiger Tops is the oldest. This hotel was opened about 9 years before the establishment of Chitwan National Park in 1973. Initially it was opened as a simple hunting lodge. In 1964, American citizens Toddy Lee Wanna and Herv Kelly opened a company called Tiger Tops Hunting, three years before the lodge opened, in 1961, Queen Elizabeth II of Great Britain accompanied by Prince Philip visited to this area for hunting. The airport itself was built in Meghauli targeting this royal visit.

In 1971, the lodge was purchased by British citizen Jim Edwards, a pioneer of tourism. During his visit to India,

Jim met then prince Basundhara Shah, brother of late king Mahendra. In 1962, Jim came to Nepal at the invitation of prince Basundhara. He was attracted by the natural beauty here. In 1964, he established Nepal's first tourism company, Nepal Wildlife Adventure Pvt. Ltd, together with American wildlife ecologist Dr. Charles (Chuck) McDougal who popularized this site with the flow of many tourists.

Jim, who started working in tourism business while staying in Nepal heard the news that the hunting lodge opened in the forest of Chitwan was on sale. He then purchased Tiger Tops Hunting Lodge together with McDougal. After Jim took over the lodge, which was opened for hunting purposes initially, turned to be the center of wildlife conservation as well. McDougal, who had already established the identity of the conservationist, took over the role of conservation while Jim looked after management, which Jim did with the help of his brother John. They were also instrumental in establishing the Chitwan National Park in 1973.

In 1974, MacDougall started the world's first long-term tiger monitoring program here, which played a central role in tiger conservation in Nepal. Even now Nepal Tiger Trust is active in conservation campaign in Nepal. Likewise, Tiger Tops also played a pivotal role in establishing the 'Ghariyal Breeding Center' in Chitwan National Park in 1978.

In 1980, Jim Edwards founded the International Fund for Nature Conservation (ITNC) which worked at the grassroots level to help protect wildlife endangered by humans. When hunting tourism started in Nepal, safari hunting tourism was also gaining popularity in Africa. Rich people used to travel to the forests of Africa to hunt and spend money in their hotels. After the opening of Tiger Tops in Chitwan, tourists going to Africa started diverting to Nepal to spend a lot of money. After starting to work on conservation, the Tiger Tops made a name for itself.

Nepal's cool climate, lush green forests and activities captivated a lot of tourists. Tiger Tops also operated the Tented Camp within the park since 1974 coupled with activities such as elephant ride, boating and jeep safaris in Chitwan Park. Gradually Tiger Tops became the talk of the safari tourism worldwide. Wildlife

lovers and the wealthy people chose Nepal with priority. Moreover, Royal families of different countries, heads of government, high-ranking people, politicians, Hollywood celebrities also started coming. Then British Prince Charles (now King), Prince Philip, Princess Anna, Prince Harry, Former US President

It is the Tiger Tops that started the International Elephant Polo Games in Meghauli in 1982. This came to be a distinct sport activity and helped attract the flow of tourists. The credit to introduce this game in Chitwan goes to Jim and his friend James Mainclark. Previously it was played in Switzerland.

Jim, who is considered the father of Nepal's safari tourism, remained in Nepal continuously until his death in 2009. After his death, two brothers and sons have been taking charge of Tiger Tops Pvt Ltd since 2009. Now the eldest son Kristen is the chairman and the youngest son Jack is the Managing Director whereas, Tim,

Company. At that time very rich people used to come here. Meghauli residents benefited the most. 'It was because of Tiger Tops that the airport in Meghauli was operational,' Jack said, "now it is being closed. The aircrafts stopped flying, the elephant polo stopped. The reason is simple, 'Tourists could not live in the forest; they stopped coming as before.' 'Even staying in a normal room inside the forest is more fun than staying in a five-star luxury hotel,' guests say. Nepal has suffered a lot due to its closure. It should be opened for the country and tourism industry rather than for me. If the government allows it, we can provide the same

should be no delay in bringing Tiger Tops, which has a history of tourism. Tourists coming here have started going to Kenya. This has caused a lot of loss to the country," says Gurung. "After the court verdict, we are repeatedly requesting this to every government. We are getting words and sympathy but NOT WORK!"

According to Gurung, 300 people worked directly inside Tiger Tops Hotel. About 200 people were indirectly employed outside. When the hotel was in operation, Meghauli was a busy place with much movement. Now foreign tourists visit some hotels located outside the park. Nepalese tourists mostly go to homestays.

Mr Ashiq Gurung, manager of Tharu Lodge in Nawalpur, says that the number of guests who used to come when Tiger Tops was in operation has stopped coming now. I could see a lot of wildlife activities then and some of them even came to the Tharu Lodge. They complain that they can't be seen like before," says Gurung. "We want to bring quality tourists rather than numbers. We wish that tourists who understand the importance of wildlife would come, but there are very few such tourists coming now."

Ms Renu Dahal, Mayor of Bharatpur Metropolitan City, said that tourism experts have suggested that the hotels inside the park should be re-operated. The kind of hustle and bustle that used to be there when Tiger Tops was in operation is not any more now. Tourism activity has gone down and further weakened. We have received a suggestion that it should be put into operation again," she said. "We will take it forward after discussing with all the concerned parties."

After the closure of the hotels, in 2069 BS, the Council of Ministers formed a working group under the coordination of Ministry of Forests and Land Conservation to submit recommendations on appropriate

long-term measures in terms of the balance between national and international practices, prevailing laws and economic-environmental impact regarding the construction, operation and regulation of tourist structures within the park area. The task force also formed a sub-committee to study it. But as the work did not go ahead smoothly, advocate Mr Bijay Kumar Basnet filed a writ in the Supreme Court demanding that the government form a task force and stop the operation of hotels inside the park.

While hearing the writ, the joint bench of Justices Mr Kalyan Shrestha and Ms Sushila Karki ordered that a mechanism should be established immediately to ensure that there is no illegal adverse environmental impact. "Since the park area is a sensitive and important environmental area, the government and related parties working under Section 6 of the National Parks and Wildlife Protection Act 2029 should try not to adversely affect the forests, wildlife, their habitats and other facilities in the area. As the issue of contracting under Section 6 of the Act is a matter of discretion of the government which can be decided under the valid principles of law and justice, this court could not interfere," the order states.

The head of administration Mr Gurung said that the court has decided that the government has the right to allow hotels to operate without adversely affecting the environment, so the decision of the government is being awaited.

Original report written by Rajesh Ghimire in Nepali and some parts abridged and translated in English.

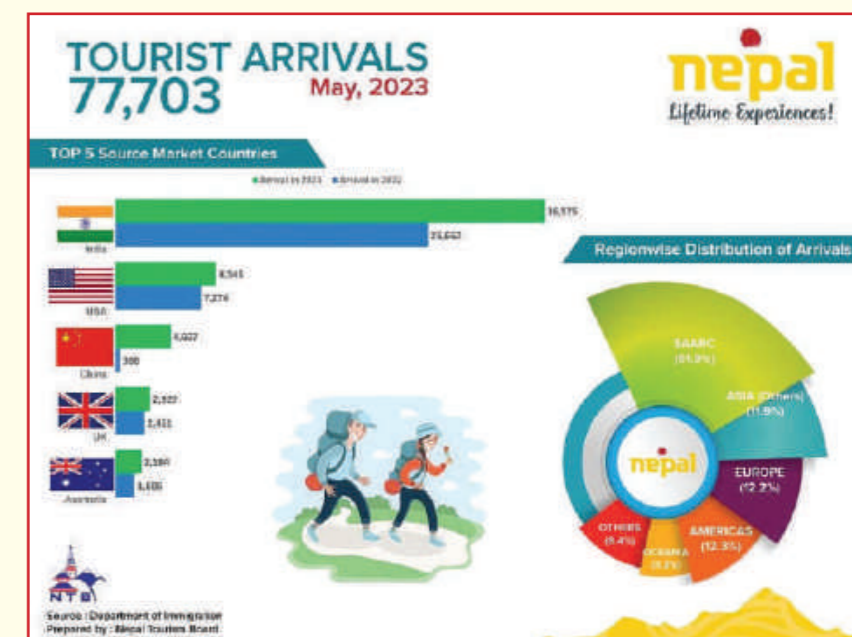
Source of all photos : Setopati Digital Newspaper



Jimmy Carter, Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Former Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, Former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, Titanic actor Leonardo DiCaprio, Actor Jeremy Irons, Actress High-profile celebrities such as Pamela Bellwood have stayed at Tiger Tops. Interestingly, Actresses Pamela and Nick Wheeler tied nuptial knot in Tiger Tops in Nepali tradition. First Everest climber Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay Sherpa, Thai Princess, Tony Hagan and other very distinguished guests arrived at Tiger Tops. Former kings of Nepal Birendra, Gyanendra Shah along with their family have stayed here. In an interview, Mr Ramsingh Gurung, administrative head of Tiger Tops, says that many members of the then royal family stayed here on many occasions.

the second son of Jim, runs a luxury resort in Sri Lanka. Contextually, Tiger Tops Pvt. Ltd also started the operation of Tharu Lodge in 1982 at Nawalpur on the edge of Chitwan National Park. Since 1988, Tiger Tops Karnali Lodge also started operation in Bardia National Park. Both of these make success story of wildlife resorts in Nepal. Tiger Tops today has been a museum-like non-operational hotel. Tourists who enter the park from Meghauli to visit the forest are shocked to see the present condition of the Tiger Tops. They return after taking photos. Jack Edwards, MD of Tiger Tops, who participated in an event organized by his old employees some time ago, said that he is waiting for the government's decision to re-operate the hotel inside Chitwan Park. 'My father also started trekking first in Nepal by opening a Mountain Travel

level of service as before. We are ready to promote tourism based on conservation," he said. "I am not a Nepali, I am a foreigner. We have done so well in the past. We can only say that we can do the same if we are provided with this opportunity." Even though the Supreme Court has completed the process and decided that hotels inside the park can be operated without affecting the conservation, the government has not decided on the matter. Jack said he is waiting for the building structures and goods until the government makes a decision. Some of our people are waiting there. There are some elephants. They and the things there are only waiting," he said. "The structures are very dilapidated. Now it costs a lot to make. If permission is given, we are ready to spend." Mr Ramsingh Gurung, head of the hotel's administration, said that there



HAN ECO Tourism Campaign



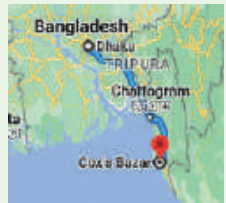
Hotel Association of Nepal (HAN) has initiated No to Single Use Plastic to promote eco-friendly products for green hospitality in the hotel industry. Single-use plastics or disposable plastics are used only once before they are thrown away. Such items include straws, coffee stirrers, soda and water bottles and packaging. Stating that elimination of single-use plastics from hotel rooms and replacing it with reusable alternatives have become a major goal for many stakeholders across the hospitality industry globally, HAN has expressed its commitment to end single-use plastics from hotel rooms by 2024 under this campaign. The association has also expressed commitment to spread awareness by hosting workshops and demonstrating alternatives to plastic products with its chapter members and central members.

RHAN Chitwan organized Cross Border Sales Mission in Bihar & Uttar Pradesh



Regional Hotel Association Nepal, Chitwan, in association with the Nepal Tourism Board organized Cross Border Sales Mission Program 2023 in Bihar & UP. The program aims to promote tourism in Nepal with a series of events and activities to attract visitors from neighboring regions, particularly Bihar and Uttar Pradesh in India. The Cross Border Sales Mission Program 2023 commenced on May 22, 2023, in Patna, India, followed by an event on May 23 in Varanasi, India.

HAN is organizing Nepal Promotion Program in Bangladesh



Hotel Association Nepal in coordination with Nepal Tourism Board is organizing Sales Mission to Bangladesh from June 20-24, 2023 in Dhaka and Cox's Bazar. The main objective of the program is to attract more Bangladesh tourist to Nepal. More than

100s of leading Tour & Travel Agents of Bangladesh is attending B2B Meeting. HAN is organizing Nepal Evening program in the presence of Nepalese Ambassador to Bangladesh in Dhaka on 21st June to promote Nepal. HAN is scheduled to sign MoU with Bangladesh International Hotel Association and will also attend other official meetings.

HAN organizing Kathmandu by Night: A Heritage Walk

Hotel Association Nepal in collaboration with Kathmandu Metropolitan City and Nepal Tourism Board is organizing Kathmandu by Night - a heritage walk. It is an initiative aimed at reviving tourism and the nightlife in Kathmandu.

"Kathmandu by Night - a heritage walk" concept aims to revitalize tourism, invigorate the local economy, and create a positive image of Kathmandu as a vibrant and culturally rich destination. By providing an opportunity for people to explore the city's heritage and experience its nightlife, this initiative strives to rekindle interest in Kathmandu's tourism sector and stimulate economic growth in the region.



Heritage bus service started in Kathmandu

With the aim of promoting the major heritage areas in the Kathmandu Valley, a heritage tour bus service has been started in Kathmandu.

The Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation and the Nepal Tourism Board (NTB) in collaboration with Lalitpur metropolis and Saja Yatayat, has started the "Sampda Tour Bus Service" recently. The bus service will provide easy access to the monuments listed in the World Heritage Site – Patan



Durbar Square, Kathmandu Durbar Square, Narayanhiti Palace Museum, Pashupatinath Temple, Boudhanath and Swayambhu temples.

HAN Sub-Committees and Coordinator

- 1 **Hotel Categories**
 - a) 5 star Chain : Mr Shashi Kanta Agrawal (Kathmandu Marriott)
 - b) 5 star Independent: Mr Ravi Bhakta Shrestha (Summit Group)
 - c) 4 star : Mr Ronesh D. Shrestha (Manaslu)
 - d) 3 star : Mr Vishal Kumar (Vaishali)
 - e) 2 star : Mr Ram Kumar Puri (Int'l Guest House)
 - f) 1 star : Mr Youb Raj Shrestha (Crown Plaza)
 - g) Tourist Standard : Mr Laxman Aryal (KTM Madhuban Guest House)
 - h) Resorts Coordinator: Mr Gyanendra Bista (Rain Forest, Chitwan)
- 2 **Account Committee/Debt Recovery** : Mr Vishal Kumar (Vaishali)
- 3 **Youth Hoteliers** : Mr. Rahul Sakya (Ambassador)
- 4 **Women Hoteliers** : Patron: Ms Shreejana Rana (IP President)
Coordinator: Ms Bidhata Shrestha(Radisson)
- 5 **Province/ Chapter** : Mr Suman Ghimire (Jungle Safari Lodge)
- 6 **Hospitality Education** : Mr. Shariq Ahmad Lari (Everest Hotel)
- 7 **Standardization/R&D/IT** : Mr Youb Raj Shrestha (Crown Plaza)
- 8 **Membership Committee** : Mr Dinesh Tuladhar (Himalaya)
- 9 **Special Zone** : Mr. Sajan Shakya (Kathmandu Prince Hotel)

This issue of NAMASTE is sponsored by :



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