

# NATTA WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

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## BEAUTY OF NEPAL





## 2560th BUDDHA JAYANTI CELEBRATION IN OFFING

As NATTA is being actively involved in the preparations of 2560th Buddha Jayanti Celebration and Int'l Bouddha Summit in conjunction with Government of Nepal (GON) and fellow associations going to be held in Lumbini from 19th May through 21st May 2016.

In this regard, the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of 101 organizing committee members was held at Nepal Tourism Board chaired by MOCTCA on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2016. The meeting discussed and reviewed on how the committee members have been performing. NATTA Executive Members Mr. Laxman Lamsal and Mr. Ghanashyam Ghimire were present in the meeting representing NATTA.



Similarly, for further discussions on the transport and sightseeing programs for the distinguished visitors, a meeting was held at NATTA Secretariat today, 29<sup>th</sup> April 2016.

Secretary Mr. Sudhir Kumar Upadhyay, Executive Members Mr. Laxman Lamsal and Mr. Ghanashyam Ghimire, officials from MOCTCA, NTB, NATHM and TURGAN were present in the meeting.

NATTA has been given three responsibilities, viz. arranging Int'l flight ticket for the international visitors, domestic flights and transportation.

## NATTA PARTICIPATED IN THE NATIONAL PARK DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

NATTA Secretary General Mr. Bhim Prasad Panta and Executive Member Mr. Ram Kumar Barakoti participated in an interactive session on Eco-Tourism organized by the office of Shivapuri Nagarjun National Park under Government of Nepal, Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation.

The program was held at Hotel Marshyangdi, Thamel on Wednesday, the 27<sup>th</sup> April, 2016. Besides NATTA, representatives from NTB, HAN and TAAN were also present.

Speaking on the occasion NATTA Secretary General said that NATTA would always stand by in the efforts of the organizers to make Shivapuri National Park an attractive destination for the tourists. He requested the Shivapuri National Park Authority to let NATTA know what they should do for the development of the park. Mr. Panta also suggested to hold the next meeting in the Park vicinity.



This is to inform all our valuable members that the NATTA Desk Calendar -2073 B.S is being distributed from the NATTA Secretariat.

Members are kindly requested to collect the same during office hours.

NATTA President, Mr. Madhusudan Acharya 1st V.P Mr. C.N Pandey, 2nd V.P Mr. D.K Sharma and Treasurer Mr. Chitra Bahadur Gurung at Earthquake Memorial Program on Baisakh 12th 2073, to pay homage to the people who lost their lives at the last year's 25th April Earthquake.

## POTENTIALITIES OF NEPAL-CHINA TOURISM DISCUSSED

A two-member delegation from Xigaze City of Tibet (China) autonomous region comprising of Mr. Shong Guo Jun (Leader) and Mr. Shi Yun Feng, Director of local National Park called on the President and Executive members of NATTA at NATTA Secretariat on 25<sup>th</sup> April, 2016. President Mr. Madhu Sudan Acharya welcomed the delegation and said that since Nepal is one of the closest neighbors of China having one of the largest economy, Nepalese tour operators are keen on receiving visitors from China. Nepal being one of the top five destinations for the tourists and also due to the very positive gesture of the government of the Peoples' Republic of China, Nepal's tourism industry is looking forward to welcoming greater number of Chinese tourists to Nepal in the days to come. Majestic Himalayas in the North and the Birthplace of Lord Buddha in Lumbini in the South could also be additional attractions for the Chinese visitors, President Acharya said.



He further said that tourism is not only an economic activity; it also is important to contribute to foster the age-long friendship of the people. If the entry points in the northern border are kept open, tourism is sure to grow rapidly. Nepal has been receiving assistance from China in billions for restoration and revival in the wake of post-earthquake situation, but if we could get the assistance to let tourism run on its track properly, results would have been more propitious, President Acharya added.

In response to President Mr. Acharya's welcome remarks, the members of the Chinese delegation said that they would do their best to convince their government authority to ease the mobility of tourists from the Nepal-Tibet entry points in the border. Tibet-the autonomous region of China is a sensitive region as such it might take some time for the government to come up with decisions promptly. Nevertheless, we have all reasons to be optimistic in this regard, the leader of the delegation Mr. Shong Guo Jun said.



## IATO AGM ELECTS NEW PRESIDENT

Mr. Madhu Sudan Acharya, President, NATTA has, on behalf of NATTA, extended hearty congratulations and best wishes to the newly elected President of Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) Mr. P.K. Sarkar. Mr. Sarkar was elected as President of IATO by the Annual General Meeting of IATO held in New Delhi on last Saturday, the 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 2016. NATTA & IATO are both committed to work in tandem for the better future of tourism in Nepal and India including the other friendly countries in the region.

## DEBRIEFING PROGRAM

Ms. Shital Sharma Poudel, the NATTA coordinator of Nepal China Sales Mission convened a debriefing meeting of the participants of Nepal China Sales Mission 2016 on Friday, 22<sup>nd</sup> April at Nepali Bhojan, Lazimpat. The mission had ended successfully on 19<sup>th</sup> April, 2016 after running sales mission programs in Beijing, Hangzhou, Shanghai and Chengdu. There were 29 Nepalese tourism entrepreneurs, who had joined the sales mission to China on 9<sup>th</sup> April, 2016. Director of Nepal Tourism Board, Mr. Sunil Sharma was in the Mission all through.

Most of the participants of the Mission suggested the NATTA Board to review the model of B2B and Press Meet and General question answer sessions. It was unanimously agreed that the mission should focus mainly on promoting packages and showcase the destination as a whole.

The debriefing meeting was hosted and sponsored by Nepali Bhojan.



### Call on Chinese to tour Nepal

The Nepali Embassy in Beijing has urged the Chinese people to visit Nepal for supporting the ongoing reconstruction initiatives.

During an event organised in the Chinese capital on Monday to mark the first anniversary of the Gorkha earthquake, Nepali Ambassador to China Mahesh Maskey said, "One can visit Nepal to enjoy its natural beauty and the Nepali culture." This would help Nepal in its bid to come out of the crisis. "Your contribution will be a part of rebuilding a new Nepal," he added. Following an extensive coverage of the disaster by global media focusing on the destruction, most tourists have refrained from visiting Nepal. To attract Chinese visitors, Nepal has offered free visas to them. China is the second largest source destination for Nepali tourism. Nirmal Raj Kafle, deputy chief of the Nepali mission, added that only 11 out of 75 districts and three of the 35 trekking routes in Nepal were damaged by the quake. According to Kafle, an increase in visits by the Chinese can help create job opportunities for thousands of Nepalis.

Maskey lauded the help and support extended by the government and people of China post-earthquake. China provided the highest grant support worth 3 billion RMB to expedite the reconstruction drive. Two short documentaries highlighting the situation in Nepal during and after the earthquake were shown at the event.



Picture 1: Pavilion of Nepal at COTTM 2016 , Beijing

Picture 2: Guest with the participants of Nepal China Sales Mission at B2B Session at Beijing, China





# Tourism struggling for REVIVAL

Ahlanaha Rayamaghi  
Kathmandu

**GOVERNMENT HAS TO WALK THE TALK AND DEVELOP INFRASTRUCTURE, ENHANCE PROMOTION AND OFFER INCENTIVES TO GET TOURISM BACK ON ITS FEET AGAIN**

The tourism sector of Nepal was hit hard by the devastating earthquake last year followed by political problems and an economic blockade. Tourist arrivals dropped by approximately 46 per cent as compared to the same period the previous year. In 2014 tourist arrivals by air were recorded at 622,662 which dropped to 300,325 in 2015/16. However, the industry now hopes to get back on track and looks forward to better days ahead.

**SILVER LINING**

"The previous two years were tragic for the entire tourism industry. Everest, Annapurna, Bizzards, earthquake-political unrest and the economic blockade severely affected the entire industry," says Praveesh Aryal, Executive Director of Hotel Association Nepal (HAN). He says that the continuous series of natural disasters and economic crisis crashed the tourism industry of Nepal.

"However, gradually the flow of tourists has increased. The occupancy rate of hotels has increased to 50 per cent which was barely 20 to 30 per cent even three months ago. The occupancy rate of hotels during this period in 2014 was 40 to 50 per cent," he adds. The tourism industry is now moving toward improvement and a revival phase. He says, "We are optimistic that till August, 2017 we will be on the path of recovery and in 2018 we shall operate in full swing."

"The role of national and international media in tourism promo-



"Our only request to the government is to provide a favourable environment for us to run our businesses."  
**Bhola Bikram Thapa**  
Managing Director, President Travel and Tours

"Economic growth leading to disposable incomes and a two day weekend that would help. As would cheaper cars and better roads in addition to smooth fuel distribution logistics."  
**Ashok Pokharel**  
President of NATO

"The government has announced Ghumfir Bazaar 2072 without any significant preparation. It would have been the right move if enough planning and development had been done by the government."  
**Madhusudhan Acharya**  
President of NATTA

trekking routes that were destroyed by the earthquake," he says. He further adds that the private sector is ever ready and always working towards the development of the sector.

"Most promotional activities are done at the initiation and cost of the private sector. The government is not serious about solving problems and issues of such an important sector," he states. He mentions that it is already a year later and reconstruction is only limited to talk which has added to the woe of the entire industry.

**FIGHTING FOR A FAVOURABLE ENVIRONMENT**

"We are not asking for any special provisions or facilities from the government for the development of tourism. Our only request to the government is to provide a favourable environment for us to run our businesses," says Bhola Bikram Thapa, Managing Director, President Travel and Tours. He said that a number of travel agencies had to shut down during the economic crisis. He says, "Even though the distance from Kathmandu to Pokhara

can be covered in four hours, it takes almost seven hours to reach due to the terrible condition of the road." Tourism cannot prosper without the development of infrastructure in the country.

According to him expansion of airport and construction of roads is a must for the betterment of tourism in Nepal.

The European Commission (EC) blacklisted Nepali airlines on December 3, 2015 has a negative impact on the entire tourism industry. The Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal (CAAN) must work to get Nepali Airlines out of this blacklist," according to Anshika Shrestha, Senior Tourism Entrepreneur.

Tourism entrepreneurs say the government must take these concrete steps before promoting tourism at the international level. Moreover, unexplored destinations such as Bira and Khatap must be promoted as a tourist destinations according to them. Tax holidays must be provided to local tourism entrepreneurs to help the industry revive. They opined that coherent policies based on realistic targets should be formed and implemented with the support of industry experts.

**SEEKING TO BOOST DOMESTIC TOURISM**

**KATHMANDU:** The government plans to proactively go ahead and officially announce 'Ghumfir Bazaar' (Dravel Week) today, the first anniversary of the devastating earthquake. The main objective of this campaign is to prepare for the international tourism year 2017/18 and promote tourism in Nepal. If this campaign is successful a total of 8,200 civil servants are expected to travel to local destinations that will generate about Rs 5 billion for the tourism industry.

"The government should seriously implement campaigns like Ghumfir Bazaar 2072 as it could help in the speedy recovery of tourism," says Anshika Shrestha, Senior Tourism Entrepreneur. She said that Nepal has several destinations that are still unexplored and this campaign can help explore such destinations. She says, "Most people residing in the capital have only travelled to Pokhara and Chitwan. However, Nepal is more than that and very beautiful and adventurous. Nepalis should first know their own country before exploring the world."

However, many in the industry are unaware about this national programme or don't expect much from it. Tourism entrepreneurs point out that such announcement are made without serious plans, targets and objectives. They feel there is a lack of serious approach to promoting even domestic tourism. According to Ashok Pokharel, President of Nepal Association of Tour Operators (NATO), "I don't think such a campaign will be very effective. The conditions just don't exist for a quantum growth in domestic tourism." He adds, that if the decision makers are really serious, there would have been visible commitment to "economic growth leading to disposable incomes and a two-day weekend that would help. As would cheaper cars and better roads in addition to smooth fuel distribution logistics."

With the lack of even proper data on existing domestic tourism and the absence of incentives and promotion the 'Ghumfir Bazaar' looks like just another programme done for the sake of doing it. —

tion is significant. Both national and international media have carried positive news about tourism in Nepal and it has helped the industry to rise again," he says. National Geographic, Traveler Magazine and London based noted travel guide Rough Guides listed Nepal as a must visit place in 2016.

**TAPPING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD**

According to him, in order to increase tourist flow the government should focus on increasing tourists from neighbouring countries. "Our focus is to attract Indian and Chinese tourists. The government has implemented free visa on arrival for Chinese tourists since January, 2016," he says. The bilateral relationship between neighbouring countries must be strong in order to boost tourism, he points out.

"We requested the government to promote Nepal's tourism during his official visit to China. The government of China plays a vital role in influencing the general population," he says. He continues, "We share an open border with India so we are attracting

Indian tourists by providing attractive tour packages to tour operators."

**PROMOTIONS NOT ENOUGH**

Tej Bishwar Gurung, First Vice President of Trekking Agencies Association of Nepal (TAAAN) says, "Just promoting Nepal as 'Once is not enough' is not sufficient. The government must do more homework to explore new destinations and develop infrastructure. Nepal holds enormous potential which is still not tapped. Tourists are attracted to the natural beauty and local products of Nepal. He explains that the industry can be revived and sustain in the long run if local people are trained and empowered to promote eco tourism.

Similarly, Madhusudhan Acharya, President of Nepal Association of Tour and Travel Agents (NATTA), says, "The government has announced Ghumfir Bazaar 2072 without any significant preparation. It would have been the right move if enough planning and development had been done by the government."

"The government has delayed reconstruction of heritage and



# MEDIA PICK OF THE WEEK

## RIP Thinley Lhondup: A Star of Oscar Nominated Nepali Movie Himalaya (Caravan)

World renowned "Caravan" actor

Thinley used to say Eric Valli had done a great service to Nepal by taking its identity to the international arena. When asked about the Nepali cinema industry, he used to say that unfair means won't succeed. If one can't succeed the first time, they can in second and third. French Director Eric Valli helped Caravan actor Thinley for his cancer treatment. "He did for me what my own parents didn't, he gave me an identity." " I am from one corner of the world while he is from another." He took me to France for the cancer treatment.



On April 24, 2016, he died. Thinley's horse was hit by another horse while travelling from Dolpa's Dunai towards Chipka. While the horse had died at the spot, Thinley was alive. Few tourists noticed the incident and brought him down to Chipka. Thinley died at around 5 pm while on the way to Kathmandu for treatment.

We will not be able to pierce the world market unless we can present our own stories. We are Nepali and we must bring about our own subject matter. We do not need a duplicate Korean film story in our productions. Just like we continue to love our own Nepali cuisine despite all the scientific progress, we must bring the Nepali taste to the world market. We will just be degrading ourselves if we do not bring quality to our restaurants, films and enterprises. (These were the sayings by Late Thinley Thondup)

## Qatar takes home double honours

Qatar Airways has been announced as the winner of two prestigious accolades at the Business Traveller Middle East Awards 2016 — Airline with the Best Business Class, and Best Airport Lounge in the Middle East for the Al Mourjan Business Lounge in Hamad International Airport. Award winners are determined through votes cast by the readers of the prestigious industry magazine, Business Traveller Middle East, making Qatar Airways a firm favourite of business travellers across the region. Coinciding with the official opening of Dubai International Airport's Concourse D, Qatar Airways also launched its new Dubai Premium Lounge. Situated near Gate 15 in Concourse D, the Dubai Premium Lounge is available to first and business class passengers, as well as privilege club platinum and gold members, who can enjoy the facilities of the lounge which are set within a modern and a sophisticated space for travellers to relax and rejuvenate before their journey.

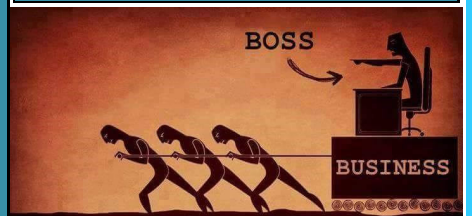
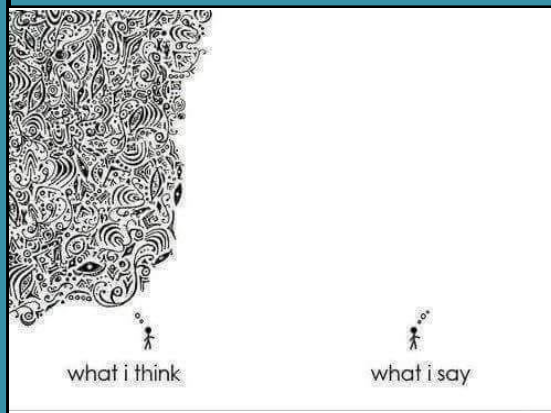
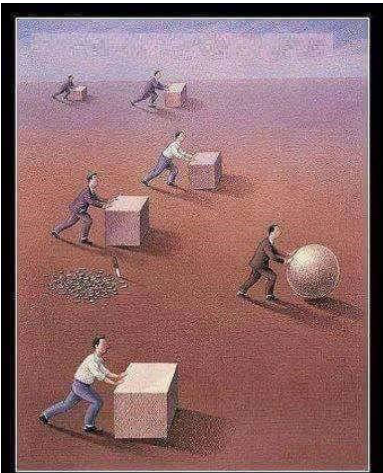
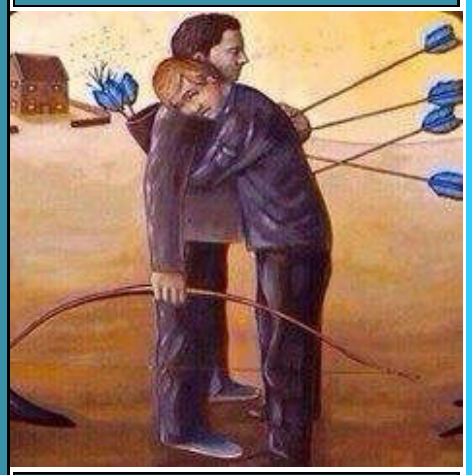
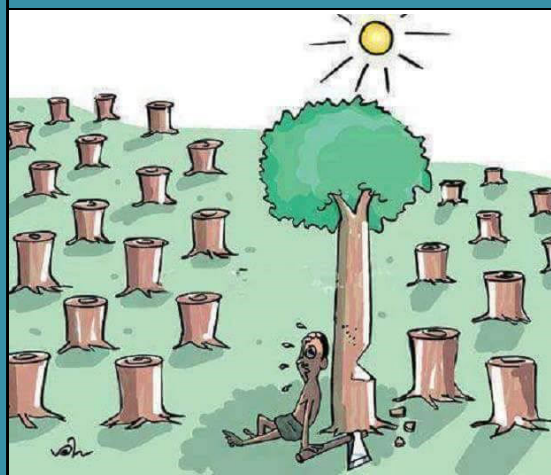
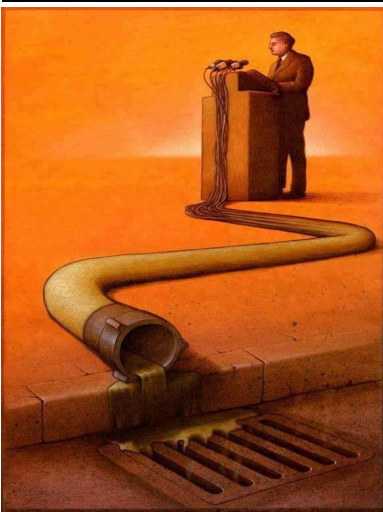
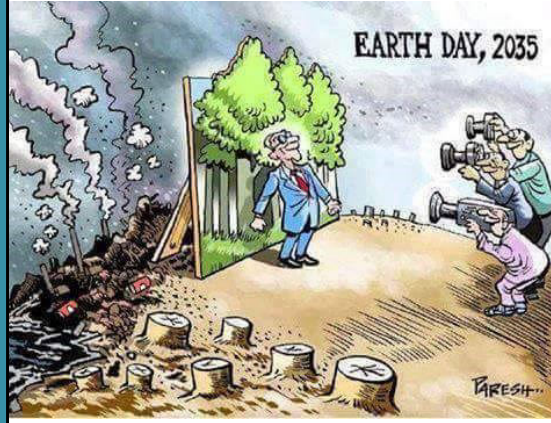
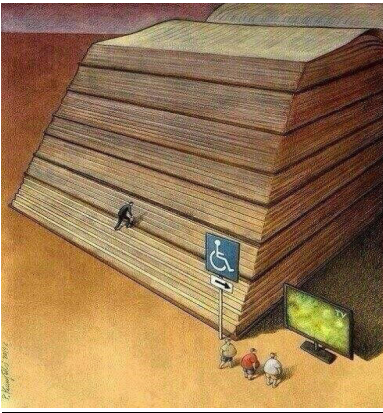
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IMAGES WITH DEEP MEANING  
PICTURES SPEAKS ITSELF

# FUN AND ENTERTAINMENT



Don't work hard  
work intelligent

