

Nepal welcomes one million tourists in 2023, highest in post-covid era

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Dhaka: Nepal welcomed 1 million tourists between January and December 2023, attributed to China's border reopening and record arrivals from India.

As per Nepal Tourism Board, the arrival numbers crossed the million mark on December 27, the first time in four years. However, this is the third time that Nepal has received over a million tourists, the previous two dating back to pre-covid era.

"It's a moment to cheer. We have crossed a million milestone again," reports cited Mani Raj Lamichhane, spokesman for the Nepal Tourism Board, saying. "Though we have recovered 85 per cent, there is a lot to do," Mani added.

Arrivals crossed the coveted one-million mark for the first time in 2018,

with 1.17 million foreign tourists streaming into the country. In 2019, the number rose slightly, to 1.19 million, following better flight connectivity with several Chinese cities. Then the Covid-19 pandemic hit in early 2020, bringing arrivals to a standstill.

Nepal welcomed 230,085 and 150,962 tourists in 2020 and 2021, respectively. In 2022, the foreign tourist numbers shot up to 614,869.

Travel restrictions and an economic slowdown following the Covid-19 pandemic delivered a massive blow to Nepal's burgeoning tourism industry, decimating revenues and profits after 2020.

Following the recovery in arrivals, profit levels of most luxury hotels surpassed pre-pandemic figures as the end of social restrictions unleashed pent-up demand for parties and conventions, said reports citing hoteliers.

India was the top tourist source market for Nepal, with a cumulative number of arrivals at 314,000 as of December 27, 2023, followed by the United States (100,000) and China (60,000), as per the board statistics.

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