

NEPAL

Location

South Asia.

Area

147,181 sq km (56,827 sq miles).

Population

28.3 million (UN estimate 2007).

Population Density

192 per sq km.

Capital

Kathmandu.

Population: 822,930 (2006).

Government

Democratic Republic.

Language

The official language is Nepali (spoken by 49%). There are many other languages, including Maithili and Bhojpuri. English is spoken in business circles and by people involved in the travel trade.

Religion

Mainly Hindu (85%) and Buddhist (8%), with a small Muslim minority (4%).

Time

GMT + 5.45.

Electricity

220 volts AC, 50Hz. There are frequent power cuts.

Head of Government

Prime Minister Prachanda since 2008 (resigned May 2009).

Telephone

Country code: 977.

Mobile Telephone

Roaming agreements exist with some international mobile phone companies. Coverage is sporadic and variable.

Internet

There are Internet cafes in Kathmandu, Patan and Pokhara - many with high-speed broadband links. Internet services are also provided by hotels.

Media

The Maoist rebellion in Nepal, and the efforts to suppress it, have had a profound impact on the media. Media rights groups say attacks on media workers have been perpetrated by both sides in the conflict. In recent years, more journalists had been arrested in Nepal than in any other country. Press freedoms were suspended under a state of emergency invoked by King Gyanendra in February 2005, and then enshrined in law. As a result, some newspapers left their editorial pages blank, or published editorials on deliberately bland topics. Up to 60 private FM radio stations were ordered not to broadcast political news. The new multi-party government of 2006 has eased some of the edicts but in 2007 there were reports of reporters fleeing violence in the south. The government publishes newspapers, and operates national radio and TV services. However, there is a growing number of private radio stations.

Post

Postal services are available in most centers. Make sure letters are hand-cancelled at the post office (post boxes should not be used for important communications).

Post office hours: The general post office in Kathmandu (near the Dharahara Tower) is open Mon-Fri 0900-1700. Main hotels will also handle post.

Press

- English-language newspapers available in Nepal are *The Himalayan Times*, *The Kathmandu Post*, *Rising Nepal* and *The Nepali Times*.
- Other dailies include *Kantipur* and *Annapurna Post*.
- *The International Herald Tribune*, *Newsweek* and *Time* can all be found in Kathmandu.
- State-owned *Gorkhapatra* is Nepal's oldest newspaper.

Radio

- *Radio Nepal* is state-run.
- *HBC 94 FM* is operated by the Himalayan Broadcasting Company.
- FM station *Radio Sagarmatha* is a public, community station.
- *Kantipur FM*, *Image FM* and *Hits FM* are commercial stations.
- *BBC World Service* is available on FM in Kathmandu.

Note

* Dates to be confirmed.

Some of the above are Hindu festivals, which are declared according to local astronomical observations. It is not possible to predict the exact dates of festivals occurring and the dates published are approximations. Travelers should check locally nearer the time for precise dates.

Below are listed Public Holidays for the January 2011-December 2011 period.

1 Jan **Basanta Panchami*.

30 Jan *Martyrs' Day*.

18 Feb *Rashtriya Prajatantra Divas (National Democracy Day)*.

4 Apr **Ghode Jatra (Festival of Horses)*.

1 Mar **Holi*.

1 Mar **Ram Nawami (Birthday of Lord Ram)*.

6 Mar *Shivaratri (in honor of Lord Shiva)*.

8 Mar *Nepalese Women's Day*.

1 Mar **Chaite Dashain*.

14 Apr *Navabarsha (New Year's Day)*.

27 May **Buddha Jayanti (Birthday of Lord Buddha)*.

1 Aug **Krishna Janmashtami*.

1 Sep **Fulpati Saptami*.

1 Sep **Maha Asthami*.

1 Sep **Maha Nawami*.

1 Sep **Vijaya Dashami*.

1 Oct **Laxhmi Puja*.

1 Oct **Ghatasthapana*.

1 Oct **Gobardhan Puja*.

9 Nov *Constitution Day*.