

# Nepal



Since the end of its civil war in 2006 Nepal has known little but political chaos. At the end of May 2012 no less than three of the constituent parties quit Nepal's Maoist-led government coalition as yet another crisis beset the country's fragile democracy. The political impasse that followed the failure to agree on a new constitution left Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai with little choice but to call for November elections.

## Constitutional crisis

Rather ironically, Nepal's interim constitution, under which the country was being administered until agreement could be reached on a definitive constitution, had no provision for fresh elections. This meant that agreement between all the political parties was vital if serious constitutional debate could be entered into. Agreement on a revised, but final, constitution had foundered on the small print rather than on major points of substance. Frustratingly, the differing sides had, in fact, been close to agreeing a new constitution as the deadline approached. The deal breaker was an inability to reach agreement on how to divide Nepal into federal provinces which thwarted the legislators.

Nepal's Maoist parties, at the head of the 15-party coalition government, whose members from Nepal's smaller parties

represent a wide range of different ethnic groupings had demanded the creation and nomenclature of the provinces be done in such a way that it reflected each region's majority ethnic groups. However, the two principal opposition parties, the Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist-Leninist (CPN-UML) and the Nepali Congress Party, argued that any ethnic federalism would damage communal relations and even risk a disintegration of the body politic.

Without a properly elected body in place Nepal faced the prospect of being unable even to find a legal framework to draft the laws necessary for holding elections. The opposition parties accused Mr Bhattarai of ignoring advice to extend the life of the constituent assembly as an interim parliament, arguing that this could be done through a constitutional amendment rather than precipitously announcing elections without establishing whether there was a legal and constitutional basis for doing so. Nepal's opposition saw this as an opportunity to bring down an already precarious government; five parties, including the Nepali Congress and the CPN-UML, had gone so far as to petition President Ram Baran Yadav to challenge the prime minister's decision. The opposition parties maintained that, following the dissolution of the constituent assembly, the prime minister had automatically lost his job.

## KEY FACTS

**Official name:** Nepal Adhirajya (Kingdom of Nepal)

**Head of State:** President Ram Baran Yadav (Nepali Congress) (from 23 Jul 2008)

**Head of government:** Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai (Maoist) (from 28 Aug 2011)

**Ruling party:** Coalition of Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) and Samyukta Loktantrik Madhesi Morcha (SLMM)

**Area:** 147,181 square km

**Population:** 31.01 million (2012)\* (26,620,809; 2011, census figure)

**Capital:** Kathmandu

**Official language:** Nepali (Devnagari script)

**Currency:** Rupee (NRs) = 100 paisa (the NRs is pegged to the Indian rupee – NRs 160 = Rs100) (Notes with the King's image became illegal tender on 17 March 2011)

**Exchange rate:** NRs96.58 per US\$ (Jul 2013)

**GDP per capita:** US\$626 (2012)\*

**GDP real growth:** 4.63% (2012)\*

**GDP:** US\$19.41 billion (2012)\*

**Labour force:** 18.00 million (2009)\*

**Inflation:** 8.31% (2012)\*

**Balance of trade:** -US\$4.95 billion (2012)

**Annual FDI:** US\$94.02 million (2011)

\* estimated figure

## Nations of the World: A Political, Economic and Business Handbook

The chaos surrounding Nepal's political future increased in mid-2012 when Nepal's Election Commission announced that it lacked a legal framework to hold the elections promised for November. The Commission declared that 'in a situation of constitutional and legal ambiguity, it will be difficult for us to proceed.' Nepal is one of the few, if not the only country in the world where electoral rules are governed by the practicality of climate and weather conditions. These state that elections cannot be held in the winter as snowfall can often prevent access to polling stations. The next practical date for elections is spring 2013.

### The economy

According to the Asian Development Bank (ADB) Nepal's economic growth dipped to 3.5 per cent in the 2011 fiscal year, restrained by slower growth in the worker remittances that underpinned consumer spending, a deep correction in the real estate market and continued political uncertainties. Expansion in services slowed sharply reflecting hesitant consumer spending and a marked decline in tourism receipts. Industrial growth fell by half, reflecting severe fuel and electricity shortages, weak construction and the closure of several manufacturing plants owing to industrial disputes. Favourable weather lead to a rebound in agricultural output, but the gain was too small to prevent overall gross domestic product (GDP) growth from slowing.

Inflation was high in the years 2009–2011, broadly mirroring price developments in India, with which Nepal has a pegged exchange rate arrangement

and tight trade links. Escalating food prices were the main driver in the first half of 2012 and, as these moderated in the second half, non-food prices picked up, partly because of increases in fuel prices by the Nepal Oil Corporation, the state-owned monopoly supplier. Prices were adjusted several times (political pressure reversed two of the increases), but were inadequate to prevent either a build up of arrears with the India Oil Corporation or supply disruptions, which led to frequent fuel shortages and transport strikes.

The budget deficit widened from 1.9 per cent to 2.4 per cent of GDP in 2011: capital spending picked up, marking the government's moves to improve project implementation and revenue fell short of target. Revenue collection as a share of GDP fell for a second year, mainly because of sharply weaker growth of customs receipts and value-added tax (VAT) dampened by stagnant non-oil imports and slow growth in private consumption (a key source of VAT). The deficit was financed mainly by borrowing from banks. Nepal Rastra Bank, the central bank, focussed much of its effort in 2011 on managing vulnerabilities in the financial sector. In recent years a growing number of small financial institutions had aggressively attracted deposits from commercial banks to expand their lending, especially for real estate. As market prices of property had fallen heavily, the share of non-performing loans had increased throughout the financial system and several small institutions required emergency assistance.

Balance-sheet problems at banks coupled with too few attractive lending opportunities ensured slow growth in credit to the private sector, despite abundant bank liquidity that pushed the interbank rate down. With about half the banking system's credit collateralised by property, the Nepal Rastra Bank was encouraging bank consolidation through incentives (it had approved six merger deals and was reviewing another six) and intended to use other measures to assist banks through a troublesome period.

The current account deficit slimmed to 0.9 per cent of GDP in 2011 after widening to 2.7 per cent of GDP a year earlier. Exports, having declined in 2010, grew by 11.7 per cent, thanks to a rebound in the growth of traditional exports such as carpets and pashmina, items that mainly go to countries other than India.

Apart from the slower worker remittances – possibly affected by the unsettled times in the main employment destinations in the Middle East – a key hindrance to greater improvement in the current account was the higher oil import bill, as non-oil imports were essentially unchanged from a year earlier. The Nepal Tourism Year 2011 campaign did manage to attract tourists over and above the usual numbers, but as most were budget tourists from neighbouring countries earnings fell by nearly 10 per cent from a year earlier.

Net capital inflows more than covered the current deficit and official foreign reserves rose to 3.0 billion, equivalent to 5.8 months of imports. The ADB reported that economic performance in the forecast period would depend primarily on how the political situation evolves. Timely completion of the peace process, including a timely resolution to the constitutional crisis, would help spur growth, but would also require an agreement on federal restructuring – one of the more contentious issues in the peace process. Such closure could allow political leaders to refocus on the economic agenda, paving the way for measures ushering in much-needed private participation in development, boosting business confidence and improving labour relations. It would also allow policies in the Immediate Action Plan for Economic Development and Prosperity, announced in January 2012, to come into force.

The ADB projections of GDP growth of 4.5 per cent in 2012 are posited on the assumption that the peace process shows some success – and that the weather is normal. The improvement over a year earlier would come from faster growth in

### KEY INDICATORS

### Nepal

	Unit	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Population	m	*27.64	*27.91	*29.96	26.62	*31.01
Gross domestic product (GDP)	US\$bn	12.30	12.60	15.80	18.60	*19.41
GDP per capita	US\$	444	452	562	653	*626
GDP real growth	%	6.1	4.7	4.6	3.5	*4.6
Inflation	%	7.7	12.6	9.3	9.6	*8.3
Exports (fob) (goods)	US\$m	986.6	840.2	901.9	999.0	1,004.3
Imports (fob) (goods)	US\$m	3,519.3	4,301.3	5,016.4	5,665.1	5,951.1
Balance of trade	US\$m	-2,523.8	-3,461.1	-4,114.5	-4,666.1	4,946.8
Current account	US\$m	344.0	-256.1	-438.0	49.0	*909.0
Total reserves minus gold	US\$m	–	–	–	–	4,306.6
Foreign direct investment (FDI)	US\$bn	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.2
Exchange rate	per US\$	69.76	77.54	73.16	71.86	86.58

\* estimated figure

agriculture and services. Strengthening remittances and rebounding tourism earnings foreshadowed in the early months of the fiscal year would buttress services. Industry was notable by its absence as a growth driver: with no improvement expected in power supply, its performance was expected to remain sluggish.

GDP growth was projected to slow to 4.0 per cent in 2013, around the rate for an economy inhibited by long-standing structural bottlenecks and policy distortions that can be addressed only gradually. Agriculture's expansion in 2011 and 2012 reflected a recovery (after earlier poor weather) that provided a fillip to growth in the sector and to GDP, but which masked deep-seated problems in raising low productivity and growth.

The ADB also noted that inflation gently declined in the first half of the 2012 fiscal year, pointing to an annual average of 8.0 per cent. Food inflation was benefiting from better harvests as well as lower global prices for imports. Despite pressure from the upward revisions in fuel prices, inflation was expected to ease to 7.0 per cent in 2013, broadly in line with India's.

## Risk assessment

Politics	Poor
Economy	Fair
Regional stability	Good

## COUNTRY PROFILE

### Historical profile

Modern Nepal began its formation in the second half of the eighteenth century, when the kingdom of Gorkha, led by Prithivi Narayan Shah, began to expand. 1769 Shah conquered Kathmandu and completed the unification of what is today's Nepal, laying the foundation of a dynasty that was to last until 2008 when parliament voted on 28 December 2007 to abolish the monarchy.

1792 Nepal's expansion was halted by Chinese armies in Tibet.

1816 Nepal became a British protectorate after the Anglo-Nepalese war. The treaty also established the boundaries as they are today.

1846 Jang Bahadur Rana extracted a decree from the monarch that transferred sovereign powers to the family of Ranas, who ruled as hereditary prime ministers for 104 years.

1923 Nepal's independence was recognised by Britain, although it retained control of the country's foreign affairs.

1950–59 King Tribhuvan fled to India, intensifying the revolt led by the Nepali Congress party (NC) against the Ranas. It ended with an agreement brokered by

India which recognised the role of the monarch, legalised political parties and established a constitutional monarchy. In the eight years that followed, the King ruled the country while political parties took shape.

1953 Edmund Hillary of New Zealand and Nepal's Sherpa Tenzing Norgay were the first climbers to reach the summit of Mount Everest (known as Sagarmatha in Nepal).

1955 Nepal became a member of the United Nations. King Tribhuvan died and King Mahendra ascended the throne.

1959 The first, multi-party, election under a new constitution was won by the NC. B P Koirala became prime minister.

1960 King Mahendra seized control and suspended parliament and politics.

1962 He introduced a new constitution establishing a party-less Panchayat system which banned political competition and parties. The King retained absolute powers.

1972 King Mahendra died in 1972 and was succeeded by his son, King Birendra, who continued his father's policies.

1979 After a series of protests against the Panchayat system, the King ordered a national referendum: the choice was between a 'reformed' Panchayat, or a multi-party democracy. A narrow majority voted in favour of the Panchayat, with reforms allowing direct elections – but still on a non-party basis.

1985 The NC began a campaign of civil disobedience for the restoration of the multi-party system.

1986 Elections were boycotted by the NC.

1990 Pro-democracy protests were staged by the NC and leftist groups which resulted in killings and mass arrests by the police. The King bowed to pressure and agreed a new democratic constitution.

1991 The NC won the elections and Girija Prasad Koirala became prime minister.

1994 Koirala's government was toppled due to party infighting. The Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxist-Leninist (CPN-UML) emerged as the largest single party in the elections and formed a minority government.

1995 The CPN-UML government was toppled, making way for a number of coalition and minority governments, until another round of elections was held in 1999.

1996 While the mainstream parties jostled for power in the centre, the Maoists launched their 'people's war'.

1998 The CPN-UML suffered a major blow when a faction of the party broke away.

1999 The NC won the general elections; Krishna Prasad Bhattarai became prime minister.

2000 Bhattarai was forced to step down due to party infighting. Koirala became prime minister again. The NC remained effectively divided between the supporters of Koirala and Bhattarai.

2001 Crown Prince Dipendra killed his closest family members, including King Birendra and Queen Aishwarya, in a drunken shooting spree, before committing suicide. Gyanendra Bir Bikram Shah Deva became king. The Maoists increased their violent campaign of opposition. Koirala resigned and Sher Bahadur Deuba (NC) became prime minister. A truce was agreed between the rebels and the government but when peace talks failed the insurgency resumed.

2002 Maoists rebels successfully staged a five-day general strike after more than 500 people were killed in clashes with government forces. King Gyanendra dissolved parliament and called for fresh general elections; the ruling NC suspended Deuba from the party for advising the King to do so. King Gyanendra dismissed Deuba, abolished the Council of Ministers and assumed executive powers. The King appointed Lokendra Bahadur Chand as prime minister.

2003 Maoist rebels and the government agreed to a cease-fire. King Gyanendra appointed Surya Bahadur Thapa of the Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) as prime minister. Maoists ended the truce. Violence and political stalemate marked the end of the year.

2004 Nepal joined the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Prime Minister Thapa resigned after weeks of civil protest. Former prime minister, Sher Bahadur Deuba, was re-appointed.

2005 King Gyanendra dismissed Deuba and assumed absolute power, citing the need to defeat the Maoists. A royal anti-graft commission sentenced former prime minister Deuba to two years imprisonment for corruption. The rebels declared a unilateral cease-fire. Maoists and opposition parties agreed a strategy to restore democracy.

2006 Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka signed the South Asia Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA). A seven-party alliance led by former prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala (leader of NC), in opposition to the King, called mass pro-democracy demonstrations. Riots broke out in the capital, leaving several police and demonstrators dead. International calls urged the King to negotiate with his opponents and in the face of so much opposition the King reinstated parliament and was removed as head of the armed forces. Parliament restricted the powers of the King as executive rule was passed to the Council of Ministers. A peace agreement was signed

between the government and Maoist insurgents, formally ending 10 years of internal conflict. Maoists rebels disarmed, monitored by the United Nations.

2007 The two chambers of parliament were replaced by a unicameral interim legislature, with Maoists holding 83 out of 330 seats, under the terms of the temporary constitution. An interim multi-party cabinet, including Maoists, was formed to prepare the way for legislative elections. The special assembly was charged with writing a new constitution, including deciding on the future of the monarchy. Three bombs exploded in Kathmandu, the first terrorist attacks since the peace agreement in 2006. Maoist members of the interim government resigned in protest at the continued existence of the monarchy. General elections were postponed due to a deadlock between Maoist and ruling parties over the abolition of the monarchy and the adoption of proportional representation. Parliament voted to abolish the monarchy and five Maoists joined the cabinet in a number of key positions, including communication and information, which gave the Maoists control over the state-run media.

2008 In parliamentary elections the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoists), won 220 seats (out of 601), the Nepali Congress party 110 seats, the CPN-UML 103 seats, the Madhesi Jana Adhikar Forum 52 seats, the Tarai-Madhes Loktantrik Party 20 seats; 20 other parties shared the remaining seats with none holding more than eight. The Constituent Assembly voted by 560–4 to declare the country a republic and depose King Gyanendra. Ex-King Gyanendra and his wife, Komal, took up temporary residence outside Kathmandu, becoming known as Mr Shah. Within days his former palace was turned into a museum; among the treasures are the royal throne and the priceless crown and sceptre. Interim Prime Minister Koirala announced he would resign if the candidate he supported for president, Ram Raja Prasad Singh, was defeated. In the presidential election no candidate won the necessary 298 votes for victory and a second round had to be scheduled, in which Ram Baran Yadav (NC) won 308 votes, beating Ram Raja Prasad Singh (nominated by the Maoists). Baran was sworn in as the first president of Nepal. Interim Prime Minister Koirala resigned after Baran took office; parliament elected Maoist leader, Prachandra (also known as Pushpa Kamal Dahal) as prime minister. The collapse of the Koshi dam, in the south-east of Nepal, led to severe flooding which forced over 50,000 people to flee their homes.

2009 The prime minister ordered the General Chief of Staff, Rookmangud

Katawal, to integrate ex-Maoist rebel fighters into the army. When he refused he was dismissed and a political crisis followed when the president revoked the dismissal. Prime Minister Prachanda resigned in protest. A 22-party coalition, led by the NC and the CPN-UML formed the government. Madhav Kumar Nepal (CPN-UML) was sworn in as prime minister. Following years of campaigning, the UK granted full residency in Britain to Gurkha veterans with at least four years' service. Chairman of Nepal Constituent Assembly (NCA), Subash Nemwang, announced that the draft of the new constitution would be ready by the deadline of May 2010. A series of demonstrations and blockades in Kathmandu turned violent as Maoist activists protested against the governing coalition and called for a parliamentary debate over the power of the president.

2010 Nepal and China agreed the height of Mount Everest to be 8,848m, the snow height. China had previously argued that it should be 4m lower, at the rock height. The ruling coalition proposed extending the mandate of the NCA for one year, in an effort to complete work on the new constitution. However the majority Maoist party refused to extend it without Prime Minister Kumar stepping down. Kumar resigned. However parliament failed seven times to elect his replacement and Kumar remained in office as acting-prime minister.

2011 In January, the only prime ministerial candidate, Ram Chandra Poudel, withdrew and further attempts to elect a prime minister were cancelled. The mandate for the UN peacekeeping mission, established in 2007, expired in January. The government and Maoists agreed to continue arms monitoring arrangements. After seven months of deadlock and 16 attempted votes, Jhala Nath Khanal (CPN-UML) was elected prime minister in February, following the Maoists' withdrawal of their own candidate and their support given to Khanal. Bank notes carrying an image of the King of Nepal ceased to be legal tender in March; the central bank estimated that as much as Rp10 billion (US\$135 million) was left un-exchanged. Mount Everest replaced the King's image. At the end of May members of parliament announced that parliament would be extended by three months so that details of the new constitution could be finalised. In June, in a ceremony to mark the occasion, Prime Minister Khanal detonated the explosion that destroyed the last landmine and to finally clear all unexploded ordnance (UXO) from Nepal. In July, Nepal said it had commissioned a new survey to determine the exact height of Mount Everest in

an effort to lay to rest the 'confusion' with China which, despite a 2010 agreement, continued to use the rock (rather than the snowline) height during border talks. The generally accepted height of 8,848 metres had been recorded by an Indian survey in 1955; a US GPS survey recorded 8,850 metres in 1999, although this figure has not been accepted by either Nepal or China. In August Prime Minister Khanal resigned, saying he was unable to forge a political consensus with other parties in order to form a government. Parliament elected Baburam Bhattarai (Maoist) as prime minister, with 340 votes against Ram Chandra Poudel (CPN) with 235. An earthquake of magnitude 6.9 struck in September in the Himalayan regions of India, Nepal and Tibet.

2012 Demobilisation of over 7,000 Maoist rebels began in February; they were given a cash payment to return to civilian life. A further 9,000 elected to join the national army, despite the limit on recruitment of 6,500 new soldiers. The result left the government in dispute with the opposition NCP. On 24 May the Supreme Court rejected the government's proposal for a three-month extension for the constitutional assembly to agree a new post-conflict constitution. On 28 May, parliamentary elections were called following years of political deadlock. Despite the electoral commission setting the date for April or May 2013, they were first postponed until 22 November, and then into 2013 at a date to be decided, and when the weather allows.

2013 The tiger population of Nepal reached 198 in July, a rise of 63 per cent since 2009.

### Political structure

#### Constitution

An interim constitution came into effect on 15 January 2007, the constitution for the State of Nepal replaced the previous constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal.

An amendment passed in March 2007 changed the country to a federal state from a unitary one. It also increased the number of constituencies in the south to 50 per cent of the seats in parliament.

#### Form of state

Federal democratic republic

#### The executive

The president is the Head of State. Under an amendment to the interim constitution (January 2007) the president, vice president, prime minister and constituent assembly chairman and vice chairman would be elected based on a 'political understanding' or failing that by a simple majority vote.

Members of the Nepalese Constituent Assembly (NCA) provide the executive which makes up the government. The 26 seats

of the NCA are divided among nine political parties, proportional to the popular vote received.

#### **National legislature**

The Nepal Constituent Assembly has 601 members, of which 240 are directly elected, 335 are elected by proportional representation and 26 members are nominated. The assembly will re-write the constitution and govern the country until an elected government can be decided. The assembly has a mandate until 2010. In August 2009 Nepal Constituent Assembly chairman Subash Nemwang expressed confidence that the draft of the new constitution would be ready by the deadline of May 2010.

#### **Legal system**

Independent judiciary

#### **Last elections**

10 April 2008 (parliamentary); 19 and 21 July 2008 (presidential, first and second round).

**Results:** Parliamentary: the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoists), won 220 seats (out of 601), the Nepali Congress Party 110 seats, the Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist-Leninist (CPN-UML) 103 seats, the Madhesi Jana Adhikar Forum (MJF) (Madhesi People's Rights Forum) 52 seats, the Tarai-Madhes Loktantrik Party (TMLP) 20 seats; 20 other parties shared the remaining seats –none with more than eight seats.

Presidential: (first round) Ram Baran Yadav (Nepali Congress) won 283 votes, Ram Raja Prasad Singh (Maoist) 270. (Second round): Yadav won 308 votes beating Singh. Paramananda Jha (Madhesi Jana Adhikar Forum (MJF) (Madhesi People's Rights Forum)) was elected vice president with 305 votes; Shanta Shrestha (Maoist) won 243.

#### **Next elections**

2010 (parliamentary) postponed.

#### **Political parties**

##### **Ruling party**

Coalition of Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) and Samyukta Loktantrik Madhesi Morcha (SLMM)

##### **Main opposition party**

Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist-Leninist (CPN-UML)

#### **Population**

31.01 million (2012)\* (26,620,809; 2011, census figure)

**Last census:** 22 June 2011: 26,620,809

**Population density:** 191 inhabitants per square km (2010). Urban population 19 per cent (2010 Unicef).

**Annual growth rate:** 2.3 per cent, 1990–2010 (Unicef).

#### **Internally Displaced Persons (IDP)**

100,000–200,000 (UNHCR 2004)

#### **Ethnic make-up**

Nepal has a mixture of Indo-Caucasian and Tibeto-Mongoloid people and a number of Tibetan refugees. There are 61 different ethnic and caste groups and many have their own language and dialect.

#### **Religions**

Hinduism (90 per cent), Tibetan Buddhism (5.3 per cent), Islam (2.7 per cent). Nepal is a Hindu kingdom, but it allows other religions to practise their faiths. It is illegal to proselytise. The Kumari Devi is revered by both Hindus and Buddhists in Nepal as a 'living Goddess'.

#### **Education**

The education system is based on the Chinese model. A non-compulsory pre-school education can begin at aged three. Primary schooling lasts for five years at the end of which students are separated into academic and technical programmes.

The academic programme is divided into lower secondary, upper secondary and higher secondary schooling in a cycle of three, two and two years until the age of 18 when, if they have been successful, students may access higher education courses at university or other institutions. The three-year lower secondary schools are of two types: general and Sanskrit. Upon completing the second stage, exams undertaken by students allows advancement to the higher secondary school or graduation with a school leaving certificate.

The Tribhuvan University, Mahendra Sanskrit University, Kathmandu University and Purbanchal University and B P Korala Institute of Health Science mainly provide higher education.

The technical programme is divided into cycles of either four and two, or four and four, years and students graduate with either a craftsman's certificate at age 16 or a technical certificate at aged 18.

**Literacy rate:** 44 per cent adult rate; 63 per cent youth rate (15–24) (Unesco 2005).

**Compulsory years:** Six to 16.

**Enrolment rate:** 113 per cent gross primary enrolment of the relevant age group (including repeaters); 42 per cent gross secondary enrolment (World Bank).

**Pupils per teacher:** 39 in primary schools.

#### **Health**

National morbidity patterns show ailments related to inadequate water and sanitation account for more than 70 per cent of all sickness reported. Furthermore, around 10,000 people die from cancer after a long-term exposure of arsenic compounds in drinking water.

There were cases of polio reported to the World Health Organisation – Global Polio Eradication Initiative in 2006; the country had previously been free of the disease and its re-emergence was due to infected travellers.

#### **HIV/Aids**

The UN estimated 60,000 people are living with HIV/Aids in 2003, which represents 0.25 per cent of the total population.

**HIV prevalence:** 0.5 per cent aged 15–49 in 2003 (World Bank)

**Life expectancy:** 61 years, 2004 (WHO 2006)

#### **Fertility rate/Maternal mortality rate:**

2.7 births per woman, 2010 (Unicef)

**Child (under 5 years) mortality rate (per 1,000):** 42 per 1,000 live births (WHO 2012); 48 per cent of children aged under five are malnourished (World Bank).

#### **Head of population per physician:**

0.21 physicians per 1,000 people, 2004 (WHO 2006)

#### **Welfare**

The government of Nepal and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) signed a partnership agreement aiming to reduce the incidence of poverty from over 40 per cent of the population to less than 10 per cent by 2017. The problems related to rural poverty are being tackled by improving access to impoverished areas. Several non-government organisations have stepped up their aid to tackle poverty and disease in the country.

It is estimated that more than 10 out of 100 people in Nepal suffer from one or the other form of disability. The government does not have concrete programmes to address the problems facing the disabled.

#### **Main cities**

Kathmandu (capital, estimated population 997,911 in 2012), Pokhara (250,902), Lalitpur (230,022), Biratnagar (217,482), Birgañj (184,418), Bharatpur (147,395), Dharan (138,987), Butwal (130,735).

#### **Languages spoken**

Maithili, Bhojpuri, Hindi, Bengali and Newari are some other languages spoken. English is spoken, mainly in urban centres.

#### **Official language/s**

Nepali (Devnagari script)

#### **Media**

Press freedom and journalists were under pressure from the former royal regime and from within Maoist-held territories. Since the change in government all anti-media laws were struck down and the interim constitution guaranteed the freedom of the press.

### Press

**Dailies:** Most newspapers are published in either Nepalese or English. The government owned *Gorkhapatra* (in English, *The Rising Nepal*) ([www.gorkhapatra.org.np](http://www.gorkhapatra.org.np)) is the oldest published daily; private newspapers include *Kantipur*

([www.kantipuronline.com](http://www.kantipuronline.com)) which also publishes *The Kathmandu Post*. Other independents include *Nepal Samacharpatra* ([www.newsofnepal.com](http://www.newsofnepal.com)) and *Rajdhani*.

**Weeklies:** Monthly magazines include, *Nepali Times* ([www.nepalitimes.com.np](http://www.nepalitimes.com.np)), *Spotlight* ([www.nepalnews.com.np](http://www.nepalnews.com.np)) and from the same publisher *The Weekly Telegraph* and the *People's Review* ([www.peoplesreview.com.np](http://www.peoplesreview.com.np)).

**Business:** The monthly magazines *New Business Age* ([www.nepalnews.com/new\\_businessage.php](http://www.nepalnews.com/new_businessage.php)) is published by Mercantile Communications, which owns over a dozen other publications in Nepal.

**Periodicals:** Monthly magazines, in English, include *ECS* ([www.ecs.com.np](http://www.ecs.com.np)) on culture, *Wave* ([www.wavemag.com.np](http://www.wavemag.com.np)), a gossip magazine and *Himal Southasian* ([www.himalmag.com](http://www.himalmag.com)) has regional reviews. In Nepalese, *Himal Khabarpatrika* ([www.himalkhabar.com](http://www.himalkhabar.com)) is a fortnightly news magazine.

### Broadcasting

**Radio:** The state-run Radio Nepal ([www.radionepal.org](http://www.radionepal.org)) reaches all areas and is listened to by up to 80 per cent of the population. Its national and regional programmes cover a wide range of shows in information, education and entertainment. There are many, private, commercial stations located regionally, which include Maitri FM (<http://maitrifm.org>), Annapurna FM

([www.annapurnafm.com.np](http://www.annapurnafm.com.np)), Kantipur FM ([www.kfm961.com](http://www.kfm961.com)) and Janakpur FM ([www.janakifm.org.np](http://www.janakifm.org.np)).

**Television:** The state-run, commercial, Nepal Television (NTV) ([www.nepaltelevision.com.np](http://www.nepaltelevision.com.np)) broadcasts nationally and internationally via satellite. Other private TV stations include Avenues TV, a news channel, Channel Nepal ([www.channelnepal.com](http://www.channelnepal.com)), Image Channel TV ([www.imagechannels.com](http://www.imagechannels.com)) and Kantipur TV ([www.kantipuronline.com](http://www.kantipuronline.com)).

**National news agency:** Rastriya Samachar Samiti (RSS)

**Other news agencies:** Nepalnews: [www.nepalnews.com](http://www.nepalnews.com)

### Economy

Nepal is a largely underdeveloped country with a subsistence agricultural economy producing a surplus of rice and wheat, used for export to India. However, it is subject to adverse external factors, such as variable monsoon rains, that can influence economic growth.

The structure of the economy indicates a semi-agrarian society with an agricultural sector that constitutes around 36 per cent of GDP, after the service sector that accounts for 48 per cent; industry accounts for some 15 per cent, of which manufacturing is 7 per cent. Around 70 per cent of manufacturing is made up of export-destined carpets and garments.

Due to its limited integration in world financial markets, Nepal was not subject to many of the pressures of the global economic crisis, although inflation spiked at 12.6 per cent in 2009 as global trade was cut. GDP growth was 4.6 per cent in 2010 and fell to an estimated 3.5 per cent in 2011 as world trade weakened for a second time.

As a young democracy, the uneasy peace between the largest party in parliament, the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoists), and an alliance of the Nepali Congress and Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist-Leninist (CPN-UML) which holds office has been maintained. As such, it has encouraged external assistance from India, the UK, the US, Japan, Germany, the Scandinavian countries and several multilateral organisations. Such aid accounts for over 50 per cent of the country's development budget.

In 2011, the UN Human Development Index (HDI) ranked Nepal 157 (out of 187) for national development in health, education and income. Since 2000, Nepal's progress has grown but has not matched the improvement of other countries in South Asia. In 2010, 54 per cent of the population experienced at least one indicator of poverty, while 78.1 per cent lived on less than the equivalent of US\$1.25 per day; the headcount poverty rate was 64.7 per cent of the population (2000–10).

Remittances from migrant workers was estimated to have reached US\$4 billion in 2011 (around 20 per cent of GDP).

Nepal has abundant prospects for hydro-electricity production and plans to export surplus power. Its prospects depend largely on a stable government and improved infrastructure. There is scope for the tourism sector, based on the country's mountainous terrain offering climbing and trekking holidays, to become a healthy foreign exchange earner as well as employment provider.

Although political uncertainties in 2012 and early 2013 delayed the final budget, a good agriculture harvest and robust services sector growth pushed GDP growth to 4.5 per cent in FY2012 from 3.9 per cent in FY2011. Supported by a favourable monsoon and timely availability of agriculture inputs, the agriculture sector grew by 5.0 per cent. Remittances held up well and with the tourism sector

performance largely contributed to the 4.5 per cent growth of services sector. The industry sector growth suffered from the unresolved structural constraints, including the shortage of electricity, poor labour relations, low productivity, and inclement investment climate.

### External trade

Nepal is a member of South Asia Association for Regional Co-operation, which operates a preferential trading arrangement (Sapta) that covers 6,000 products. In 2004 the South Asia Free Trade Area was agreed by Sapta, to be implemented between the member states (India, Pakistan, Bhutan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Maldives) by 2012.

Remittances represent 20 per cent of GDP and are a major source of foreign exchange.

Hand woven carpets and valuable cashmere pashmina fabric (for couture clothing) are manufactured for export.

### Imports

The principal imports petroleum, vehicles and manufactured goods.

**Main sources:** India (63.4 per cent of total in 2011), China (11.7 per cent), UAE (5.6 per cent).

### Exports

The principal exports are hand-made carpets, pashmina fabric and garments, wheat and rice.

**Main destinations:** India (67.7 per cent of total in 2011), US (7.7 per cent), Germany (4.5 per cent).

Agriculture accounts for around 40 per cent of GDP, providing most foreign exchange earnings and 80 per cent of employment. Only about 25 per cent of the total land area is cultivable; another 33 per cent is forested and most of the rest is mountainous. The lowland Terai region produces an agricultural surplus, part of which supplies the food-deficient hill areas.

Major food crops are rice, maize, wheat, barley and millet. The principal cash crops are sugar cane, soya beans, oilseeds, tobacco, potato and jute. Cattle, buffaloes, goats, sheep, pigs, yaks and poultry are also raised. River fish are an important source of protein.

Much of the agriculture is rain-fed and is carried out in the narrow strip of plains in the south along the border with India. Agricultural land is highly fragmented. Production is extremely vulnerable to adverse weather conditions, with little irrigation. Deforested plains and lower hilltops are terraced for rice production. Severe soil erosion is becoming a problem.

Nepal has removed all subsidies on fertilisers, which makes it difficult for Nepali produce to compete with highly subsidised Indian agro-products. There are some

transport subsidies for taking fertilisers to remote districts.

Failure of two large-scale maize crops in 2009–10 called into question the quality of the maize-seed sold to the country by several multinational seed merchants. Tests by government agronomists could not determine whether the lost crops were killed off by unusually cold weather during the growing season or whether the original seeds were a hybrid unsuitable for Nepal, rather than the required genetically modified (GM) seed. GM seed is typically expensive and there are few obstructions to smuggled counterfeit seed from India. Forests occupy around 33 per cent of Nepal's land area. The canopy cover in the mid-hills is growing thicker as a result of the government's successful policy of handing over forests to local communities. Deforestation is still high in the government-managed forests of the plains, coupled with timber that is smuggled into India.

In June 2010 the government announced a two-month logging ban throughout the country, following indications that limits on logging had been exceeded and risked deforestation leading to flooding and landslides during the monsoon season.

### Industry and manufacturing

Industry accounts for around 21.7 per cent of GDP. The sector consists mainly of manufacturing low-end consumer goods – principally carpets, garments and handicrafts. The development of this sector is constrained by poor infrastructure, a small local market, high industrial factor costs and lack of access to the sea.

Nepal offers duty concessions on raw material imports and start-up tax holidays for new industry, but foreign direct investment flows have remained slow.

The end of the Multi-fibre Agreement in 2005 has had a devastating effect on the textile industry.

### Tourism

The foothills of the Himalaya Mountains occupy most of Nepal, which is able to offer activity holidays for the athletic traveller, particularly to see the world's first and second largest (Everest and Annapurna) mountains. The less able visitor may use vehicles to reach some worthwhile sites such as temples and the Kathmandu Valley, which along with Lumibini (birthplace of the Lord Buddha) is included on Unesco's World Heritage List as places of cultural importance. Travel and tourism contributed 10.7 per cent of GDP in 2009, when Nepal recorded a high number of visitors, following the end of a period of civil unrest. However, since then the contribution fell to 9 per cent in 2010 and 8.8 per cent in 2011. Employment in the industry

matched this trend with 9.3 per cent of the workforce (1.1 million jobs) employed in the sector in 2009, which fell to 7.6 per cent (952,400 jobs) by 2011.

The government has recognised tourism as an important component of the economy and has invested in marketing and promotion. In February 2010 a new campaign was launched, *Nepal Tourism Year 2011* that saw a record number of visitors respond so that April 2011 arrivals increased by 34.3 per cent (over the same period in 2010). Visitors from India were by far the largest group at 38.3 per cent of the total number.

In a government sponsored report (*Tourism Cluster in Nepal*) published in May 2011, the authors recommend that Nepal targets high-end tourists, which will encourage greater capital investment in the sector and improve the infrastructure and the adoption of best practices.

### Environment

The Sagarmatha (Mount Everest) Pollution Control Committee (SPCC), set up in 1991, spends US\$15,000 cleaning up the Sagarmatha National Park every year. The government charges a minimum of US\$50,000 for each expedition to Mount Everest, and ploughs back 30–40 per cent of this and other tourist fees to support the SPCC's work. Since the old trekking routes pose serious problems to the indigenous communities already, there are many opposing voices among the environmentalists in Kathmandu.

### Mining

Mining and quarrying accounts for around 0.5 per cent of GDP. Among the major known mineral reserves only limestone has been extracted for commercial use in considerable volumes. Nepal also has deposits of lead, zinc, marble, iron ore and magnesite. There are no known oil or natural gas reserves, although exploration is ongoing. Consumption of oil was 18,000 barrels per day in 2008, all of which was imported. Any use of natural gas is commercially insignificant.

Nepal has a small coal industry with reserves of around two million tonnes. Annual output meets less than 5 per cent of domestic demand and about 531,000 tonnes of coal are imported

### Energy

Total installed generating capacity was 630MW in 2008, mostly supplied by hydropower, but with around 10 per cent from thermal plants. Electricity supplies only 1 per cent of Nepal's energy mix; wood fuel accounts for around 75 per cent, with agricultural waste providing most of the rest.

Hydropower offers the greatest potential, not only for sustainable energy with an estimated economically viable capacity of 43,000MW, but also a valuable component of GDP and foreign earnings in the export of surplus electricity. Early plans have foundered though, with local opposition to the new 750MW West Seti Hydro project in the remote Bajhang district, which was halted before construction was due to begin in 2008. Local people objected to the proposed terms of contract with an international consortium, whereby the project would provide Nepal with 10 per cent of the hydro plant's energy output and the remainder would be sold to northern India. Nevertheless, the government is seeking investment in more hydropower plants to increase total generating capacity to 10,000MW by 2020.

### Financial markets

#### Stock exchange

Nepal Stock Exchange (Nepse)

### Banking and insurance

#### Central bank

Nepal Rastra Bank

#### Main financial centre

Kathmandu

### Time

GMT plus five hours and forty-five minutes

### Geography

Nepal is a landlocked, roughly rectangular country located south of the Himalayan mountain range. It is about 885km long (east to west) and an average non-uniform, north-south width of 193km. The country is divided into five development regions and 75 districts. Ecologically, Nepal is divided into three regions – mountain, hill and terai (plains). India borders Nepal in the east, south and west. China borders Nepal in the north. The topography is rugged and harsh and with a vertical distance of less than 200km, the altitude changes from sea level to the highest point on earth – the 8,848m Mount Everest.

### Hemisphere

Northern

### Climate

The climate is generally temperate but harsh and cold at high altitudes. The low-lying plains are hot in summer and warm during the winters. The high mountains are permanently covered with snow (above 4,800 metres). High temperatures range between 17–30 degrees Celsius (C) and lows are in the range of 0–17 C. May–September is the monsoon season; July is the wettest month and also the hottest.

### Dress codes

If travelling outside Kathmandu, it is respectable and practical to wear casual

trousers and full-sleeved shirts and jackets. Shorts may be acceptable only in urban centres.

### Entry requirements

#### Passports

Required by all except nationals of India. Entry may be refused, and airlines may not carry passengers holding passports with less than six months validity.

#### Visa

Required by all, except nationals of India with a valid national ID card. Tourist visas are issued on arrival. Overnight visas are issued free of cost.

Business visas are only issued to those who have been officially recognised as either a) the official representative (of a commercial entity that has obtained a licence to invest in the Kingdom of Nepal in a business or industrial enterprise) or b) an individual who has obtained a licence to invest in Nepal in export trade. Applications for multiple-entry business visas (one or five years) need to be made in advance. Applications should be made to the Director General, Department of Immigration, Kathmandu

(www.immi.gov.np). An authorisation from the relevant Nepalese ministry is needed, as are photocopies of the relevant pages of the visitor's passport. The applicant will be sent application forms which must be returned fully completed. If accepted, the visa will be stamped on the visitor's passport at Kathmandu airport.

#### Currency advice/regulations

The import of local and Indian currency is prohibited. On arrival, all foreign currency must be declared, export is limited to the amount declared. Foreign currency exchange receipts must be retained as only 10 per cent of local currency will be reconverted on departure. Export of local currency is prohibited. Currency can be exchanged at banks or authorised foreign exchange dealers and at major hotels. Only Indian and Nepalese nationals may carry Indian currency; possession of Indian Rs500 bills is illegal in Nepal. Travellers cheques are accepted in banks and large hotels.

#### Customs

Personal effects may be imported duty-free. Items such as cameras, laptop computers, portable music systems and 15 reels of film are permitted as long as they are re-exported.

Exports of antiques and religious artefacts must be certified and cleared by the Department of Archaeology. It is illegal to export goods which are over 100 years old, or endangered wildlife.

#### Prohibited imports

Narcotics, beef and beef products. Firearms, ammunition and explosives, wireless radio transmitters and precious metals require special licences.

#### Health (for visitors)

##### Mandatory precautions

Vaccination certificate for yellow fever if travelling from an infected area.

##### Advisable precautions

Vaccinations that are necessary include: cholera, diphtheria, tetanus, hepatitis A, polio and typhoid. Vaccinations that may be advised include: hepatitis B, tuberculosis, Japanese B encephalitis and rabies. Anti-malarial precautions should be taken; the use of mosquito nets and repellents and covering up the body after dark can help avoid malaria, hepatitis B and encephalitis.

Use only bottled or boiled water for drinks, washing teeth and making ice. Eat only well cooked meals, preferably served hot; vegetables should be cooked and fruit peeled; avoid dairy products. A first-aid kit, including disposable syringes, would be useful.

Full medical insurance including emergency repatriation is strongly recommended.

#### Hotels

Nepal has about 100 tourist-class hotels, ranging from up-market five-star deluxe to those with one-star ratings. Other accommodation includes over 750 non-star-rated, but affordable and safe, speciality establishments.

Hotels may be full during the tourist season and it is advisable to book in advance.

Payment is required in foreign currency.

#### Credit cards

All major credit and charge cards are accepted by banks, tourist hotels and shops. ATMs can be found in Kathmandu.

#### Public holidays (national)

##### Fixed dates

11 Jan (National Unity Day – cancelled in 2007), 29 Jan (Martyrs' Day), 19 Feb (National Democracy Day), 8 Mar (Women's Day), 14 Apr (Nepali New Year), 9 Nov (Constitution Day), 29 Dec (King Birendra's Birthday).

##### Variable dates

Vasant Panchami (Jan/Feb), Shivaratri (Feb/Mar), Ghode Jatra (Festival of Horses) (Mar), Holi (Mar), Chaite Dashain (Mar/Apr), Ram Nawami (Birthday of Lord Ram) (Mar/Apr), Lord Buddha's Birthday (Apr/May), Rakshya Bandhan (Janai Purnima) (Aug), Gai Jatra/Procession of Cows (Aug/Sep), Krishna Asthami (Birthday of Lord Krishna) (Aug/Sep), Teej (Festival of Women) (Sep), Dasain (Durga Puja Festival) (Oct), Diwali/Deepawali

(Oct/Nov), Indra Jatra/Festival of Rain God (Oct/Nov).

In general, Hindu and Buddhist festivals are declared according to local astronomical observations.

#### Working hours

##### Banking

Sun–Thu: 1000–1500, Fri: 1000–1200; Kathmandu Valley, Mon–Fri: 0900–1530. Some banks open at weekends.

##### Business

Sun–Fri: 1000–1700; Kathmandu Valley, Mon–Fri: 0900–1700

##### Government

Mon–Fri: 0900–1700 (summer); Mon–Fri: 0900–1600 (winter, mid-Nov–mid-Feb).

##### Shops

Sun–Fri: 1000–1900 (some shops also open on Saturdays).

#### Telecommunications

##### Mobile/cell phones

GSM 900 and 1800 services are available in populated areas.

#### Weights and measures

Metric system (local measures are also used).

#### Social customs/useful tips

The traditional form of greeting is called *namaste* – performed by placing the palms together at chest height and bowing slightly; it means 'I celebrate the divinity in you'. Some Nepali women may prefer not to shake hands with a man. Always use the right hand to eat or pass anything on. Remove shoes before entering temples and homes.

Do not take photographs before asking permission.

#### Security

Internal terrorist activities have seen indiscriminate attacks in and around the capital as well as tourist areas, visitors are advised to exercise extra vigilance and also take care to respect any local curfews.

#### Getting there

##### Air

**National airline:** Royal Nepal Airlines (all flights must be paid for in hard currencies).

**International airport/s:** Kathmandu Tribhuvan International (KTM), 6km from the city. Facilities include bank, *bureau de change*, duty free, post office and tourist information.

**Airport tax:** Departure tax to regional neighbours (excluding China): NRs1,356; departure tax to all other destinations NRs1,695.

##### Surface

**Road:** There are many access routes from India and Tibet, however visitors must use

official crossings, which are open 24 hours. Visitors driving their own vehicle must possess a *international carnet*.

**Rail:** There are two lines in India that run to the border of Nepal at Birgani/Sunauli and at Jaynagar, but neither cross the border.

### Getting about

#### National transport

**Air:** The only way to reach many parts of Nepal is by air. Nepal has 44 domestic airports and 120 helicopter landing strips. Royal Nepal Airlines and private airline companies have flights to and from these airports. Special helicopter charters can also be arranged. Flights may be delayed during the rainy months; otherwise, they are an efficient means of getting around.

**Road:** There is a road network of over 13,000km. Kathmandu, Pokhara and Biratnagar are linked by surfaced road. Transport is difficult outside main centres. The Mahendra Highway makes west Nepal accessible throughout the year. The mountainous nature of the country means that many of its roads are unusable, especially during the winter and the monsoon.

**Buses:** Long distance day or night bus services operate from Kathmandu to all cities of Nepal.

**Rail:** The only line serves Jaynagar to Janakpur and Bizalpur.

#### City transport

**Taxis:** Metered taxis can be hailed in Kathmandu. Private taxis are also available at the hotels, but they may cost more.

**Buses, trams & metro:** The airport bus to the city centre takes 35 minutes.

#### Car hire

Driving is on the left. An international driving permit is required. Local authorities also issue a local permit upon presentation of a national licence.

Chauffeur-driven car hire is available.

### BUSINESS DIRECTORY

The addresses listed below are a selection only. While World of Information makes every endeavour to check these addresses, we cannot guarantee that changes have not been made, especially to telephone numbers and area codes. We would welcome any corrections.

#### Telephone area codes

The international direct dialling (IDD) code for Nepal is +977, followed by area code and subscriber's number:

Bhairawa	71	Janakpur	41
Bhaktapur	1	Kathmandu	1
Birgunj	51	Nepalgunj	81
Biratnagar	21	Patan	1
Dhangadhi	91	Pokhara	61

#### Useful telephone numbers

Police: 100

Directory enquiries: 197

#### Chambers of Commerce

Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Shahid Shukra FNCCI Milan Marg, Teku, Kathmandu (tel: 426-2061; fax: 426-2007; email: fncci@mos.com.np).

Nepal Britain Chamber of Commerce and Industry, British Embassy Premises, Lainchaur, PO Box 106, Kathmandu (tel: 441-0583; fax: 441-8137; email: info@nbcci.org).

Nepal Chamber of Commerce, Chamber Bhawan, Kantipath, PO Box 198, Kathmandu (tel: 422-2890; fax: 422-9998; email: chamber@wlink.com.np).

Nepal-US Chamber of Commerce and Industry, TNT Building, Tinkune, Koteswor, PO Box 2769, Kathmandu (tel: 447-8020; fax: 447-4508; email: nusacci@vishnu.ccs.com.np).

#### Banking

Agricultural Development Bank, Ramshahpath, Kathmandu (tel: 421-1744, 421-1802/3; fax: 422-5329).

Himalayan Bank Ltd, PO Box 20590, Karmachari Sanchaya Kosh Building, Tridevi Marg, Thamel, Kathmandu (tel: 422-7749, 425-0201; fax: 422-2800).

Nepal Arab Bank Ltd (Nabil Bank), PO Box 3729, Kantipath, Kathmandu (tel: 421-1784/6; fax: 422-6905).

Nepal Bangladesh Bank Ltd, PO Box 9062, Bijuli Bazar, Naya Baneshwor, Kathmandu (tel: 490-767/70; fax: 490-824, 493-259).

Nepal Bank Ltd, Dharmapath, Kathmandu (tel: 422-1185, 422-4337; fax: 422-6905).

Nepal Grindlays Bank Ltd, PO Box 3990, Naya Baneshwor, Kathmandu (tel: 421-2683/6; fax: 422-6762).

Nepal Indosuez Bank Ltd, PO Box 3412, Durbar Marg, Kathmandu (tel: 422-8229; fax: 422-6349).

Rastriya Banijya Bank, Singha Durbar Plaza, Kathmandu (tel: 425-2595, 426-8409, 425-1982; fax: 425-2931).

Citibank, PO Box 2826, c/o Hotel Yak & Yeti, Durbar Marg, Kathmandu (tel: 422-8884; fax: 422-7884).

Standard Chartered Bank, PO Box 1526, Durbar, PO Box 1526, Durbar, Marg, Kathmandu (tel/fax: 422-0129).

#### Central bank

Nepal Rastra Bank, PO Box 73, Baluwatar, Kathmandu (tel: 422-1763; fax: 425-4170; e-mail: nrb@mos.com.np).

#### Stock exchange

Nepal Stock Exchange (Nepse)  
www.nepalstock.com

#### Travel information

Automobile Association of Nepal, c/o Traffic Police Office, Kathmandu (tel: 421-1093).

Everest Air, Durbar Marg, Kathmandu (tel: 422-4188; fax: 422-6795).

Himalayan Helicopters PVT Ltd, Durbar Marg, Kathmandu (tel: 421-7236; fax: 422-5150).

Kathmandu Tribhuvan International Airport, Air Traffic Controller, Gauchar (tel: 472-258 or 473-985, ext 486; fax: 474-180; e-mail: tiao@mod.com.np).

Nepal Mountaineering Association, 16/53 Ramshah Path, PO Box 1435, Kathmandu (tel: 421-1596).

Royal Nepal Airlines, PO Box 401, RNAC Building, Kantipath, Kathmandu 711000 (tel: 421-4511; fax: 422-5348).

Tourist Information Centre, Basantpur, Kathmandu; Tribhuvan International Airport, Kathmandu (tel: 470-537).

#### Ministry of tourism

Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, Bhrikutimandap, Kathmandu (tel: 425-6231/2, 425-6228; fax: 422-7281; email: tourism@mail.com.np).

#### National tourist organisation offices

Nepal Tourism Board, Tourist Service Centre, Bhrikutimandap, PO Box 11018, Kathmandu (tel: 425-6909, 425-6229; fax: 425-6910; email: info@ntb.org.np; internet: www.welcomenepal.com).

#### Ministries

Ministry of Commerce, Babar Mahal, Kathmandu (tel: 223-489, 224-805; fax: 225-594).

Ministry of Finance, Hari Bhawan, Kathmandu (tel: 224-527, 227-367; fax: 227-529).

Ministry of Industry, Tripureshor, Kathmandu (tel: 213-880, 213-838; fax: 226-112).

Ministry of Interior, Dept of Immigration, Bhrikutimandap, Kathmandu (tel: 422-3590, 422-1996; fax: 422-3127; email: deptimi@net.np; internet: www.immi.gov.np).

Office of the Prime Minister, Singh Durbar, Kathmandu (tel: 421-000; email: info@opmcm.gov.np).

#### Other useful addresses

Asian Development Bank (ADB), Nepal Resident Mission, Srikunj Kamaladi Ward No 31, Block 2597, Ka.Na.Pa. Kathmandu; Postal address: PO Box 5017 K.D.P.O., Kathmandu (tel: 422-7779; fax: 422-5063; email:

## Nations of the World: A Political, Economic and Business Handbook

adbdrm@mail.asiandevbank.org;  
internet: www.adb.org/).

British Embassy, Laimchaur, PO Box 106,  
Kathmandu (tel: 414-588, 410-583,  
411-590, 411-281; fax: 411-789).

Department of Commerce, Kathmandu  
(tel: 422-7364, 422-7404).

Director General, Department of Immi-  
gration, Kathmandu (tel: 422-3681).

National Planning Commission, PO Box  
1284, Singha Dubar, Kathmandu (tel:  
421-5000).

Nepal Economic and Commerce Re-  
search Centre, PO Box 285, 7/358  
Kohity Bahal, Kathmandu (tel:  
421-5336).

Nepal Industrial Development Corpora-  
tion (NIDC), NIDC Building, PO Box 10,

Durba Marg, Kathmandu (tel: 411-211,  
411-225).

Royal Nepalese Embassy (USA), 2131  
Leroy Place, NW, Washington DC 20008  
(tel: (+1-202) 667-4550; fax: (+1-202)  
667-5534; e-mail:  
info@nepalembassyusa.org).

Trade Promotion Centre, Kathmandu (tel:  
524-771, 524-772; fax: 521-637).

United Nations Development Programme,  
United Nations Building, Pulchowk, PO  
Box 7, Kathmandu (tel: 523-200; fax:  
523-991).

**National news agency:** Rastriya  
Samachar Samiti (RSS)

PO Box 222; Central Office, Bhadrakali  
Plaza, Kathmandu (tel: 426-2912; fax:  
426-2744; internet: www.rss.com.np)

**Other news agencies:** Nepalnews:  
www.nepalnews.com

### Internet sites

Asian Sources Online:  
<http://asiansources.com>

Government of Nepal: [www.nepal.gov.np](http://www.nepal.gov.np)

Market information: [www.feer.com](http://www.feer.com)

News portal: [www.nepalnews.com](http://www.nepalnews.com)

Nepalese tourism: [www.visitnepal.com](http://www.visitnepal.com)