

The Kathmandu

A Few Days in the Valley

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The next time politicians are purged from the country, they need not retreat to their usual 'working vacation' destinations. Thailand and Singapore are getting old, while the time it takes to obtain a visa to a western country is too long and requires far too much information. There is an easy solution to the problem, simply buy a ticket to Nepal and stay cool till the heat dies down in Dhaka. In the worst case scenario if they come after you in Nepal, just head for the mountains, there's plenty of space to hide. All jokes aside, Nepal has become an ideal destination for Bangladeshis looking for a cheap foreign vacation. With relatively cheap tickets there and a gratis visa on arrival, it is ideal for any length of stay from a few days to a few weeks.

The reasons for going Nepal are endless, it is one of the few countries that offers visas on arrival, thus taking away painstaking lines and endless forms which have to be filled out for virtually any other country a Bangladeshi wishes to visit. Then comes the cost of going there, with two main airlines plying the Dhaka-Kathmandu route on a daily basis, it is quite easy to get a cheap flight. Biman's (www.biman-airlines.com) return air ticket to Kathmandu does not exceed 16,500, putting it on par with another major Bangladeshi tourist spot, Kolkata. Another added advantage is the fact that the Nepalese rupee is a weaker currency than the Taka, thus giving you more bang for your buck. With everything from a mattress on the floor 150 rupees a night accommodations to five star luxury, Kathmandu caters to every budget.

With the formalities of the ticket easily taken care of, one should prepare oneself for the visa on arrival. Take a few stamp sized pictures, you will need to affix them to your visa form. The visa form is short and simple, but without a picture on arrival, the process tends to be convoluted and will set you back some money. If you do not arrive with a picture, then there is a fairly easy (if not friendly) service to use at the airport to get a picture taken. The only