

Nepal

The Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal is a country in Asia. Nepal is a **landlocked** country, which means that it does not have a coast, or area where the land touches the ocean or sea. Nepal is between India and the Tibet region of China.

Mount Everest is in Nepal. It is the highest mountain in the world.



Nepal is found between India and China.

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This is a map of Nepal.

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General Information

- **Language:** Nepali is the main language spoken.
- **Population:** 29,391,883 (2011)
- **Currency (Money):** Nepalese rupee
- **Area:** 147,181 square kilometers (56,827 square miles)
- **Capital:** Kathmandu

History & People

People have been living in Nepal for a very long time. A tribe, or group of people, called the Kirati came to the area of Nepal in the 600s, or 7th century. The Kirati lived in the Kathmandu Valley. In the 700s, or the 8th century, Tibetans came to the area. Other people came from India, North Burma (Myanmar), and Yunnan (China).

Nepal's many **ethnic groups**, or people who share a common culture and history, are divided by the rough **terrain**, or land. The Nepalese are 56% of the population. Other ethnic groups

include the Maihili, Bhojpuri, Tharu, Taman, Newar, Awadhi, Magar, Gurkha, and Sherpa. Many Gurkhas serve in armies in Great Britain and India. Sherpas are known as guides for mountain climbers.

Most of the population of Nepal lives along the border with India. Most of the population is rural and lives in areas where there are farms and few people. Only 15% of the people live in cities. Kathmandu is the largest city, and also the capital.

Nepali is the **official language**, or language used by the government. It is spoken by about half of the people. Malthir and Bhojpuri are other languages spoken in Nepal.

The Land: Geography

Nepal is a small country in Asia. It is landlocked. It is surrounded by China and Tibet. Tibet is a region controlled by China. Nepal is also near India.

Nepal is in the Himalaya mountain range, or group of mountains.

The Land: Topography & Natural Resources

Nepal has three regions: the Himalayas, the central hills and valleys, and the Terai lowlands. About 80% of the country is mountains, hills, and valleys.

The Himalayas are in the north. These steep mountains have valleys with rivers, glaciers, and snow. The highest mountain is Sagarmatha, or Mount Everest. Mt. Everest is 8,850 meters (29,035 feet) high.

South of the mountains are hills and valleys. There are many farms in this area.

Nepal's biggest river is the Karnal River. It begins in Tibet and flows through Nepal. Other rivers in Nepal are the Marsayangdi, Trisuli, and Sun Kosi Rivers.

Nepal's greatest natural resources are its forests and rivers. The rivers are used for **hydropower**, which is electricity made from the flow of water. Mica, copper, talc, lignite, iron ore, cobalt and limestone are also **mined**. Mining is digging in the ground to remove useful minerals.

Deforestation, or the loss of trees, is a problem in Nepal. People use the leaves of trees for animal feed and the wood for fire.

The Land: Climate

Nepal has several different climate zones. Higher land has cooler temperatures. High peaks have snow all the time. In the central valley, summers are warm and sunny. The Terai lowlands are tropical, or hot and rainy.

Economy

Nepal is a very poor country. The people of Nepal are either **unemployed**, or don't have jobs, or **underemployed**, which means they don't have enough work and can't make more money.

Agriculture, or farming, is very important to Nepal. About 90% of the people work as subsistence farmers, only growing enough food to feed their families. Farmers in Nepal grow rice, corn, millet, wheat, sugar cane, oilseeds, potatoes, melons, and vegetables. Farm products from **livestock**, or farm animals, are buffalo's milk, cow's milk, buffalo meat, goat's milk, goat meat, and eggs.

Manufacturing, or making goods with machines, is a small part of the economy. Goods made in Nepal include clothing and rugs, cigarettes, jute, steel rods, cement, and food products.

Many **tourists**, or visitors to the country, come to see and climb the Himalayas, or hike and travel the hills and rivers.

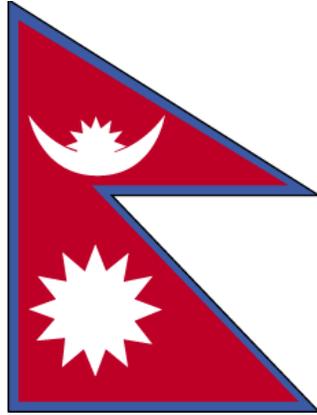
History of Government

Until 1990, Nepal was ruled by monarchs, or rulers, that gained power by birth. In 1990, the king changed the government to a parliamentary monarchy. The king ruled with the help of a prime minister and a parliament, or legislature. The legislature is the part of government that makes laws.

In 1996, the Communist Party of Nepal tried to **overthrow** the government. To overthrow a government is to remove the government from power. They wanted to begin a **socialist system**. In a socialist system, businesses are owned by the people and the government, not by individuals. A civil war, or fighting between people in the same country, began.

In 2001, those who wanted socialism became more violent. Then, a tragedy happened when the prince shot 9 people in the royal, or ruling, family and then shot himself. In 2005, the new king eliminated the parliament and said that he was the only ruler.

In 2006, those fighting in the civil war began to talk about peace and a constitution, or set of laws. Elections were held in Nepal in 2008. Those elected said that the monarchy was over and that the country would become a federal democratic republic. In a federal democratic republic, citizens elect representatives in government.



The flag of Nepal

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Government Today

Nepal is a federal democratic republic. The people elect representatives to the government. In a federal republic, some decisions are made by the central government, and some decisions are made by local government.

Nepal has a president, a vice president, and a prime minister. The president is the head of state. The prime minister is the head of government.

The legislature, or the group of representatives who make laws, is the Constituent Assembly.

Comprehension Test

Multiple-Choice Questions

1. The tribes or people of Nepal are divided by the rough

- A. farms
- B. terrain
- C. government
- D. climate

2. Most of the people live along the border with

- A. India
- B. Tibet
- C. China
- D. Kathmandu.

3. Most of the people in Nepal are unemployed or

- A. tourists.
- B. underemployed.
- C. rulers.
- D. representatives.

Fill-in-the-Blank Questions

4. _____ or farming, is important to the economy.

5. In 1996, the socialists tried to _____ the government.

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