

Nepal to keep closer eye on Everest expeditions

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In this handout photograph released on May 29, 2013, marathon participants are flagged off at Everest Base Camp in Nepal's Solukhumbu district. Nepal's tourism ministry said Friday it plans to exercise tighter control of climbers scaling Mount Everest to make sure they keep the world's highest peak clean and to prevent rows.

Nepal's tourism ministry said Friday it plans to exercise tighter control of climbers scaling Mount Everest to make sure they keep the world's highest peak clean and to prevent rows.

The ministry will set up a 10-member team made up of government officials, veteran Nepalese climbers and security officers that will start work when the next climbing season opens in the spring.

The team will ensure that climbers do not leave trash on the mountain, Purna Chandra Bhattarai, chief of the [tourism industry](#) division at the tourism ministry told AFP.

"Everest has already earned notoriety as the world's highest dumping site so we want to make sure each expedition follows the government guideline and does not leave trash," he said.

Late last year, a group of artists staged an exhibition of sculpture made from tonnes of trash collected on Mount Everest, highlighting the toll that decades of [mountaineering](#) have taken.

Discarded oxygen and cooking gas cylinders, ropes, tents, glasses, [beer cans](#), plastic and even the remains of a helicopter made up 75 artworks commissioned for the "Everest 8848 Art Project" displayed in Kathmandu.

The team being set up by the tourism ministry would also seek to prevent conflicts among the mountaineers.

Tempers sometimes boil over on the slopes of Everest among climbers who scramble to get to the top.

Early in this year's climbing season, three European climbers exchanged blows with a group of furious Nepalese guides after a dispute over climbing rights on Everest.

The Nepalese claimed the Europeans ignored a request to stay in base camp while ropes were fixed on the Lhotse Face for commercial

climbers, but the Europeans claimed they were free to ascend because they did not use ropes.

"We want to make sure that an incident like the one that occurred this season will not be repeated in the future," Bhattarai said.

The fight caused a rift between Western climbers who head to the Himalayas and the often lowly-paid Nepalese guides and porters who are vital for expeditions.

Nepal has already made it mandatory for each expedition team to hire liaison officers from the ministry to ensure better relations with locals.

On May 29, Nepal marked the 60th anniversary of the first summit of Everest, honouring the family members of Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay, the first summiteers.

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