

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4706  
ANSWERED ON:08.12.2010  
PROMOTING TOURISM THROUGH LOOK EAST POLICY  
Gandhi Shri Feroze Varun

**Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:**

(a) whether the Government has taken steps under the Look East Policy to forge better relations and partnership with the neighbouring countries like Thailand to promote tourism in the South-East Asian region; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the progress made in this regard?

**Answer**

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SMT. PRENEET KAUR)

(a) Yes.

(b) As part of the Look East Policy, India and ASEAN are actively cooperating on promotion of Tourism between India and ASEAN member countries including Thailand. India has signed an MOU/Agreement on Tourism with Thailand, Cambodia and Philippines and a bilateral MoU on Air Services with Thailand and Cambodia. The MoU on Tourism cooperation with Thailand was signed in October 2003. This Agreement aims to create conditions for long-term bilateral cooperation in tourism, including through reciprocal establishment of Representative Offices of the Tourism Departments of the two countries. It encourages the two sides to expand exchanges of expertise in operation of tourism business and in expanding exchanges in tourism studies. Both India and Thailand have opened their tourist representative offices in each others' countries. Bangkok is connected by air to nine destinations in India. There are over 100 weekly flights between the two countries.

A MOU on Air Services between India and Thailand was signed in Bangkok after consultations on 25-26 March, 2008. There is significant tourist traffic between the two countries. Last year, over 5.3 lakh Indians visited Thailand and nearly 40,000 Thais visited India.

Our Minister of Tourism and Culture participates in the India-ASEAN Tourism Forum and India ASEAN NTOs Meeting where a number of steps have been enunciated to promote tourism between India and ASEAN. An ASEAN-India website was inaugurated during the 1st meeting of ASEAN-India Tourism Ministers in January 2008. The Tourism Ministers of ASEAN and India held their second meeting on 25th January, 2010 and agreed to develop an India-ASEAN Tourism Agreement and establish a Promotional Chapter for Tourism (APCT) and a familiarization trips from India to ASEAN. It was also agreed to further develop Buddhism and Hinduism pilgrimage tourism. To promote tourism India had earlier announced visa on arrival facility to nationals of Singapore, and Japan amongst others. Now this facility has also been extended to nationals of Cambodia, Lao PDR, Vietnam and Philippines w.e.f 1st January 2011. To facilitate travel of tourists, India has also proposed an 'Open Skies Policy' with ASEAN on which discussions are ongoing.