

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
TOURISM
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1816
ANSWERED ON:16.08.2013
VISIT OF TOURISTS FROM SRI LANKA
Sugavanam Shri E.G.

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the visit of Sri Lankan tourists to various Buddhist pilgrimage places in our country has drastically reduced over the years;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the losses incurred to the Government as a result thereof;
- (c) whether the Government proposes to assist the Sri Lankan tourists to visit India and has announced any package for Buddhist circuit in this regard; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR TOURISM (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) (DR. K. CHIRANJEEVI)

(a) and (b): Ministry of Tourism does not compile the data of tourists visiting various Buddhist Pilgrimage places in the country. However, the number of Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) in India from Sri Lanka during 2010, 2011 and 2012 were 2,66,515, 3,05,853 and 2,96,983, respectively.

(c) and (d): Ministry of Tourism (MoT) does not have any country-specific package for foreign tourists.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Cooperation in the field of Tourism between India and Sri Lanka was signed on 23.01.2004. MoT has proposed to hold the first Joint Working Group Meeting between the two countries in the month of December, 2013.

A 3-member group (2 scholars and one Tour Operator) from Sri Lanka visited India under the hospitality scheme to attend the International Buddhist Conclave held in February 2010.

With a view to showcasing and projecting the Buddhist Heritage of India, the International Buddhist Conclave was organized by the Ministry of Tourism in collaboration with the State Governments of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar during 29th September to 1st October, 2012. The Buddhist Conclave was attended by 132 international delegates from around 30 countries including 2 from Sri Lanka (1 official and 1 tour operator). MoT hosted the first SAARC tour operators' conclave in New Delhi in July, 2012 in which 2 persons (1 official and 1 tour operator) attended from Sri Lanka.

MoT regularly sends brochures and publicity materials to the Indian High Commission in Colombo, Sri Lanka for the promotion of tourism to India.

MOT also organized a Road Show coinciding with the arrival of the Queen's Baton Relay for the Commonwealth Games in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 17th June, 2010, in collaboration with the Indian High Commission.