

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
TOURISM
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4246

ANSWERED ON:20.04.2015

TOURISM COMPETITIVENESS INDEX

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Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

- (a) the rank of India as per the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index and Airport density in comparison to the other developing countries;
- (b) whether the Government has taken any measures to improve the position of the country in this regard;
- (c) if so, the details thereof and the progress achieved so far by the Government in this regard;
- (d) the details of integrated plan approved and monitored as part of the Product/Infrastructure Development of Destination and Circuits Scheme; and
- (e) the funds allocated by the Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR TOURISM (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) (DR. MAHESH SHARMA)

(a): As per the Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI) 2013, of the World Economic Forum, the overall rank of India in tourism competitiveness was 65 amongst 140 countries. Rank of India in terms of Airport density was 136.

(b) and (c): Steps taken by the Ministry of Tourism to improve India's position are as follows:

i. New Schemes:

In the Budget for 2014-15, following two new schemes were announced:

(i) Swadesh Darshan - Integrated Infrastructure Development as Theme-Based Tourist Circuits. The five circuits initially identified under this scheme are: Buddhist Circuit, Himalayan Circuit, Coastal Circuit, Krishna Circuit and North-East Circuit;

(ii) National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive (PRASAD). 12 cities initially identified under the scheme are Amritsar, Ajmer, Amaravati, Dwaraka, Gaya, Kan- chipuram, Kedarnath, Kamakhya, Mathura, Puri, Varanasi and Vellankani.

ii. Electronic Travel Authorization:

The Tourist Visa on Arrival (TVoA) enabled with the Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA) Scheme, presently known as e-Tourist Visa Scheme, was launched on 27.11.2014 for nationals of 43 countries and was subsequently extended to nationals of Guyana in January, 2015 whose sole objective of visiting India is recreation, sight-seeing, short duration medical treatment, casual business visit, casual visit to meet friends or relatives etc. for a short stay of 30 days. Earlier the TVoA facility was available for nationals of 12 countries only. The e-Tourist Visa Scheme will enable the prospective visitor to apply for an Indian Visa from his/her home country online without visiting the Indian Mission and also pay the visa fee online. Once approved, the applicant will receive an email authorising him/her to travel to India and he/ she can travel with a print out of this authorization. On arrival, the visitor has to present the authorisation to the immigration authorities who would then stamp the entry into the country. The entry into India will be allowed within 30 days from the date of approval of ETA and will be valid for 30 days stay in India from the date of arrival in India.

iii. Restriction on gap for re- entry lifted:

The restriction of two-month gap on re-entry of foreign nationals coming to India on Tourist Visa and Tourist Visa on Arrival has been lifted with effect from 4th December, 2012.

iv. Central Financial Assistance:

Ministry of Tourism operates various schemes through which Central Financial Assistance (CFA) is provided to States/Union Territories (UTs) and other central agencies for overall development of tourism in the country.

v. Cleanliness and Hygiene:

To tackle the problem of hygiene and cleanliness at tourist destinations, the Ministry of Tourism has taken the initiative of launching the Campaign Clean India with a vision to ensure an acceptable level of cleanliness and hygiene practices at tourist destinations. This campaign is to be sustained through adoption and involvement of private and public sector stakeholders as a part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

vi. Sustainable Tourism:

The Ministry of Tourism has launched a Comprehensive Sustainable Tourism Criteria for India (STCI) for three major segments of tourism industry, namely accommodation, tour operators and Beaches, Back- waters, Lakes and Rivers sector on 26.08.2014.

The Comprehensive Sustainable Tourism Criteria for India (STCI) addresses need of various eco-friendly measures like Sewage Treatment Plan (STP), rain water harvesting system, waste management system, pollution control etc.

vii. Safety of Women Tourists:

The Ministry of Tourism had advised the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations to set up Tourist Police at prominent tourist spots. As a result, the State Governments/UT Administrations of Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jammu & Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha have deployed Tourist Police, in one form or the other.

An advisory has been posted on the Ministry of Tourism website www.incredibleindia.org indicating that India remains safe destination for international Tourists including women tourists.

viii. Human Resource Development:

In order to bridge the huge skill gap existing in Hospitality Industry, Ministry of Tourism has adopted a multipronged strategy to strengthen institutional infrastructure for training and education. At present, there are 21 Central Institutes of Hotel Management (CIHMs), 15 State Institutes of Hotel Management (SIHMs), 7 Food Craft Institutes (FCIs) and 5 Indian Institutes of Tourism and Travel Management (1 Head Quarter and 4 Functional Centres). Apart from these, 15 new SIHMs and 15 FCIs have been sanctioned.

(d) and (e): The Ministry of Tourism provides Central Financial Assistance (CFA) for tourism projects under Centrally Sponsored Scheme viz. Product/Infrastructure Development for Destinations and Circuits (PIDDC) to various State Governments and Union Territory Administrations, prioritized in consultation with them, as per the Scheme Guidelines, inter-se priority, liquidation of pending utilization certificates against the funds released earlier and subject to availability of funds. The number of tourism projects and amount sanctioned to various State Governments/UT Administrations during 12th Five Year Plan are given at Annexure