

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
TOURISM
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3376
ANSWERED ON:10.08.2015
Inflow of Tourists in NER
Rai Shri Prem Das;Sreeramulu Shri B.

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has framed a dedicated policy for development and promotion of tourism in the North-Eastern Region (NER) and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Government has any proposal to develop cross-border tourism with neighbouring countries through development of international tourist circuits and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government is considering to develop tourist spots through Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) and if so, the details thereof along with the funds allocated by the Government during the last three years for the purpose;
- (d) whether the inflow of tourists to NER is much less when compared to other parts of the country;
- (e) if so, the reasons therefor along with the details of foreign tourists' arrival to NER during the last three years, year-wise; and
- (f) the steps taken by the Government to boost tourism activities in NER through its cultural heritage and other historical monuments?

Answer

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

(a) and (f): Yes, Madam. A total of 10% of the plan allocation of the Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India is earmarked for North Eastern States. Of the funds allocated to the Ministry, funds sanctioned and released for North Eastern Region in the last three years are as under:

<pre> (Rs. in crore)

Year

Plan Allocation 10% earmarked

for NE Amount Released Percentage

%

2012-13 950 95 113.72 11.97

2013-14 980 98 149.16 15.22

2014-15 1100 110 144.68 13.15

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Development and promotion of tourism products and implementation of tourism projects including the projects having focus on development of infrastructure in and around heritage buildings & historical monuments is primarily the responsibility of the respective State Governments. However, the Ministry of Tourism has been providing Central Financial Assistance (CFA) to various State Governments for various tourism projects in consultation with them subject to availability of funds, inter-se priority, receipts of Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) and adherence to relevant scheme guidelines.

The Ministry of Tourism has launched two new plan schemes "Swadesh Darshan for integrated development of Circuits around specific themes" and "PRASAD for National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive". They are Coastal Circuit, Buddhist Circuit, North East India Circuit, Himalayan Circuit and Krishna Circuit identified under Swadesh Darshan Scheme initially. Seven more circuits viz. Desert Circuit, Spiritual Circuit, Ramayana Circuit, Tribal Circuit, Eco Circuit, Wild Life Circuit and Rural Circuit have recently been identified under the scheme. Under PRASAD scheme 12 cities have been identified. Kamakhya in Assam features under PRASAD scheme.

Further, following initiatives are also been taken by the Government to promote tourism in North Eastern Region:

- (i) Provision of complimentary space to the North Eastern States in India Pavilions set up at major International Travel Fairs and Exhibitions.
- (ii) 100% Central financial assistance for organizing fairs & festivals is allowed to the North Eastern States.
- (iii) Ministry of Tourism, as part of its on-going activities, annually releases print, electronic, online and outdoor media campaigns in the international and domestic markets, under the Incredible India brand-line, to promote various tourism destinations and products of the country, including the lesser known destinations which have tourism potential. The Ministry of Tourism undertakes special campaigns on NE Region on TV channels to promote tourism in the regions.
- (iv) International Tourism Mart (ITM) are organized annually with the objective of showcasing the largely untapped tourism potential of North East region in the domestic and international markets.

In addition, a series of promotional activities are undertaken in important and potential tourist generating markets overseas through the Indiatourism Offices abroad with the objective of showcasing India's tourism potential.

(b): Ministry of Tourism is working on identification of tourist circuits linking Hindu Pilgrimage sites in Nepal with those of Bihar, Uttar

Pradesh and other Indian States. A study on 'Identification of the Hindu Pilgrimage Circuit Linking Various Sites in Nepal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and other border sharing states of India' has been commissioned by the Ministry.

This Ministry has identified following circuits to be developed as Buddhist Circuits with the help of Centre/State/Private stake holders and which covers Buddhist sites of India and Lumbini in Nepal, during the 12th Five Year Plan:

Circuit 1: The Dharmayatra or the Sacred Circuit - This will be a 5 to 7 days circuit and will include visits to Gaya (Bodhgaya), Varanasi (Sarnath), Kushinagar, Piparva (Kapilvastu) with a day trip to Lumbini in Nepal.

Circuit 2: Extended Dharmayatra or Extended Sacred Circuit or Retracing Buddha's Footsteps: This will be a 10 to 15 days circuit and will include visit to Bodhgaya (Nalanda, Rajgir, Barabar caves, Pragbodhi Hill, Gaya), Patna (Vaishali, Lauriya Nandangarh, Lauriya Ariraj, Kesariya, Patna Museum), Varanasi (Sarnath), Kushinagar, Piparva (Kapilvastu, Shravasti, Sankisa) with a day trip to Lumbini in Nepal.

The issues of jointly promoting Ramayana Trail and Buddhist Circuit in India and Sri Lanka were also discussed during the Joint Working Group meeting on tourism cooperation held in April 2014.

(c): In order to improve sustainability of the projects, the Government has provisioned suitable Public-Private Partnership under the schemes of Swadesh Darshan and PRASAD introduced during 2014-15.

The project "Integrated Cable-Car and Lakeside Tourism Development Project at Loktak Lake, Manipur" has been sanctioned during 2013-14 for the State Government of Manipur at an amount of Rs.20.35 crore under Large Revenue Generating Scheme. Under this scheme, funds are allocated under Public-Private-Partnership.

(d) & (e): Yes, Madam. Some of the factors responsible for poor tourist inflow to the destination are lack of connectivity, non availability of reasonably priced hotel accommodation, absence of tourism infrastructure and carrying capacity of the destination etc. Nevertheless, the number of foreign tourist visits to North Eastern States has increased from 66302 to 84820 in 2013 and further to 118552 in 2014.

The number of foreign tourist visits to NER during 2012, 2013 and 2014 are given at annexure-I.
