

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
RAILWAYS
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:436

ANSWERED ON:07.08.2014

RAILWAY TOURISM

Dhotre Shri Sanjay Shamrao;Gopal Dr. K.

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Railways promote tourism through rail network linking major tourist destinations across the country, if so, the details thereof including the details of specialized tourist trains run by the Railways and the tour packages offered / being offered by them for the purpose;
- (b) whether the Railways propose to boost the domestic tourism and take up Eco-Tourism and Health Tourism in the country;
- (c) if so, the details thereof and the plan formulated / being formulated by the Railways to tap the potential in the field of domestic tourism in the States including Maharashtra;
- (d) whether the Railways have reviewed their tourism policy and evaluated the services being provided by them to the tourists and if so, the outcome thereof including the deficiencies noticed in the services rendered by the Railways; and
- (e) the corrective steps taken / being taken by the Railways to boost domestic tourism in the country?

Answer

MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI D.V. SADANANDA GOWDA)

(a) to (e): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (e) OF STARRED QUESTION NO.436 BY SHRI SANJAY DHOTRE AND DR. K. GOPAL TO BE ANSWERED IN LOK SABHA ON 07.08.2014 REGARDING RAILWAY TOURISM

(a): Yes, Madam. Indian Railways promotes tourism mainly by providing connectivity to most domestic tourist destinations across the country through rail network like Agra, Khajuraho, Varanasi, Shirdi, Ajmer, Amritsar, Nanded, Parasnath, Gaya, Madgaon/Vasco and many more. Specialised tourist trains including Luxury tourist trains, Buddhist special train, Bharat Darshan trains and Steam train offering package tours are also operated through Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) and select State Tourism corporations. In addition, Tour packages based on regular trains are operated through IRCTC based on market potential and operational feasibility.

(b) & (c): Yes, Madam. Indian Railways already promotes domestic tourism by providing connectivity to various tourist destinations and operating special tourist trains / products like Bharat Darshan trains, Tour packages etc. The facility of on-line booking of passengers and on-line booking of railway retiring rooms through internet are steps towards promotion of tourism. In the recent Railway Budget 2014-15, a number of tourist trains offering package tours covering special pilgrim circuits like Devi Circuit, Jyotirling Circuit, Jain Circuit, Christian Circuit, Muslim / Sufi Circuit, Sikh Circuit, Buddhist Circuit, Famous Temple Circuit etc. have been announced. A Tourist train has also been announced to run from Gadag to Pandarpur via Bagalkot, Bijapur and Solapur to cover the pilgrim and tourist places of Karnataka and Maharashtra. Taking up Eco-Tourism in North Eastern States has also been announced. However, there is no specific proposal for Health Tourism.

(d): The policies are reviewed on a regular basis and new trains as well as new tourism products are introduced / existing ones modified based on demand. Services being provided to tourist are also evaluated regularly based on feedback / complaints from the tourist and the deficiencies noticed in the services like water problem in coaches, non-availability of signage etc. are rectified.

(e): In order to boost tourism in the country, the major steps being undertaken are introduction of new train services connecting tourist destinations, upgradation and development of select railway stations to tourism importance, introduction of specialised tourism products like luxury tourist train Palace on Wheels, Deccan Odyssey, Golden Chariot, Royal Rajasthan on Wheels and Maharajas' Express catering to high end tourists covering large number of important tourist destinations, affordable budget tourist products like Bharat Darshan trains on different itineraries covering major tourist destinations, trains covering pilgrimage destinations like Buddhist special train & Tirath Specials, steam train and hill section trains. Apart from these, specialised chartered train, train based tour packages to different destinations and specialised tourism packages and products marketed through website www.railtourismindia.com etc. are available.