

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
TOURISM
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:208
ANSWERED ON:08.12.2014
INDIA S TOURISM COMPETITIVENESS INDEX
Pal Shri Jagdambika

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Travel & Tourism competitiveness Index 2013 of the World Economic Forum has ranked India quite low amongst 140 countries in tourism competitiveness;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto;
- (c) the measures taken by the Government to improve India's tourism competitiveness, particularly regarding infrastructure and restrictive visa policy; and
- (d) the success achieved by the Government in this regard?

Answer

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

(a) to (d): A Statement is laid on the table of the Sabha.

STATEMENT IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.208 ANSWERED ON 08.12.2014 REGARDING INDIA'S TOURISM COMPETITIVENESS INDEX.

(a): As per the Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI) 2013, of the World Economic Forum, India ranks 11th in Asia and Pacific region and 65th amongst 140 countries in tourism competitiveness.

(b): Improving ranking of India from 65th to 62nd position in travel and tourism competitiveness index has been set as a target in the Result Framework Document (RFD) of Ministry of Tourism for the year 2014-15.

(c): The measures taken by the Government on infrastructure and Visa policy are as below: Regarding infrastructure:

Development and promotion of tourism including creation of infrastructure is primarily the responsibility of the State Governments/Union Territory (UT) Administrations. However, the Ministry of Tourism provides Central Financial Assistance (CFA) to various States/UTs for various tourism projects prioritized for every financial year in consultation with them subject to availability of funds, inter-se priority, adherence to the scheme guidelines and liquidation of pending utilization certificates against the funds released earlier. The number of projects and amount sanctioned to the States/UTs during 11th Five Year Plan and 2012-13 & 2013-14 of 12th Five year Plan are given in Annexure I.

In the Union Budget 2014-15, the following new schemes have been announced:

- i. Development of 5 tourist circuits around specific themes and an amount of Rs.500 crore has been allocated for this propose.
- ii. With a view to beautify and improve the amenities and infrastructure at pilgrimage centres of all faiths, a National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive (PRASAD) has been announced and an amount of Rs.100 crore has been allocated.

Regarding Visa policy:

i. The Government announced Tourist Visa-on-Arrival in 2010 for citizens of five countries, viz. Finland, Japan, Luxembourg, New Zealand and Singapore, visiting India for tourism purposes. The Government extended this Scheme to the citizens of six more countries, namely Cambodia, Indonesia, Vietnam, the Philippines, Laos and Myanmar in 2011. Subsequently in 2014, Government of India has extended Visa on Arrival (VoA) Scheme for citizens of South Korea.

ii. The facility of TVoA was initially available at the international airports of Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata. However, with effect from 15 August, 2013 this facility has been extended through Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Kochi and Thiruvananthapuram.

iii. The number of TVoAs during 2011, 2012, 2013 and Jan-Oct, 2014 were 12761, 16084, 20294 and 21995, respectively.

iv. 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.

v. Ministry of Tourism organised a two day training program covering 450 officials of Bureau of Immigration handling Tourist Visa on arrival at Kochi, Chennai, Goa, Mumbai, Kolkata, Bengaluru and Hyderabad Airports.

vi. It was agreed that Tourist Visa on Arrival fee payment could be made by credit cards. Earlier it was only to be paid in rupees.

vii. Electronic Travel Authorization: The Tourist Visa on Arrival (TVoA) enabled with the Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA) Scheme was launched on 27.11.2014 for nationals of 43 countries 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.

The TVoA enabled with ETA 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.

(d): As per the Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI) 2013, of the World Economic Forum, rank of India has improved to 65th in 2013 from 68th in 2011.