

The Ministry of Tourism provides financial assistance to stakeholders and Tourism Departments of States/Union Territories for undertaking promotional activities under the Marketing Development Assistance (MDA) Scheme.

- (iii) **e-Tourist Visa (e-TV):** The Government of India has introduced the facility of e-TV for the citizens of 113 countries at 16 airports. Introduction of e-TV is a Path breaking measure by the Government in easing entry formalities in the country.

Government of India has also revised the e-TV fee in four slabs of 0, US\$25, US\$48 and US\$60 from November 3, 2015. Earlier e-TV application fee was US\$60 and bank charge as US\$2 which was uniform for all the countries. The revision of Visa fee has been done on the principle of reciprocity. Bank charges have also been reduced from US\$2 to 2.5% of the e-TV fee. During January to November, 2015 a total of 3,41,683 e-TV holders visited India indicating the success of the new online process.

Contribution of tourism sector to GDP

2857. DR. BHALCHANDRA MUNGEKAR: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

- (a) what was the year-wise contribution of the tourism sector to the GDP during the last three years;
- (b) what major steps are being taken by the Central Government to increase the earnings from the tourism sector; and
- (c) since Sindhudurga district from Maharashtra is the only district declared as 'tourism district' whether the Central Government would consider providing special grant to this district, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (DR. MAHESH SHARMA): (a) As per the 2nd Tourism Satellite Account of India (TSA)- 2009-10 and subsequent estimation for the next three years namely 2010-11, 2011-12 and 2012-13, the contribution of tourism to total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) during 2009-10, 2010-11, 2011-12 and 2012-13 were 6.77%, 6.76%, 6.76% and 6.88%, respectively.

(b) Various initiatives taken by the Ministry of Tourism to attract more foreign tourists in the country, which in turn increases the foreign exchange earnings from tourism in the country, are as below:

- (i) **Central Financial Assistance (CFA):** Ministry of Tourism (MoT) operates various schemes through which Central Financial Assistance (CFA) is provided to States/UTs for overall development and promotion of tourism.

- (ii) **Publicity and Promotion:** The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, promotes India as a holistic destination in the international markets. As part of its promotional activities, the MoT releases campaigns in the international markets under the Incredible India brand-line to showcase various tourism destinations and products including its cultural heritage.

Moreover, a series of promotional activities are being undertaken in tourist generating markets overseas through the India Tourism Offices abroad with the objective of showcasing India's tourism potential and promoting tourism to the country. These promotional activities include participation in travel fairs and exhibitions; organising road shows, Know India seminars and workshops; organizing and supporting Indian food and cultural festivals; publication of brochures, offering joint advertising and brochure support, and inviting media personalities, tour operators and opinion makers to visit the country under the hospitality programme of the Ministry.

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(c) Development and promotion of tourism is primarily the responsibility of the State Governments/Union Territory (UT) Administrations. However, MoT provides Central Financial Assistance to State Governments/UT Administrations for various tourism projects subject to availability of funds, inter-se priority, liquidation of pending utilization certificates against the funds released earlier and adherence to the relevant scheme guidelines.

The Ministry of Tourism has launched the Swadesh Darshan Scheme in the year 2014-15 with a vision to develop theme based tourist circuits on the principles of high tourist value, competitiveness and sustainability in an integrated manner by

synergizing efforts to focus on needs and concerns of all stakeholders to enrich tourist experience and enhance employment opportunities. The Ministry has identified thirteen thematic circuits namely North-East India Circuit, Buddhist Circuit, Himalayan Circuit, Coastal Circuit, Krishna Circuit, Desert Circuit, Tribal Circuit, Eco Circuit, Wildlife Circuit, Rural Circuit, Spiritual Circuit, Ramayana Circuit and Heritage Circuit for development under the Scheme.

The State Government of Maharashtra has submitted following proposals under the Swadesh Darshan Scheme for consideration:

Sl. No.	Circuit	Project
1.	Coastal Circuit	Sindhudurg Coastal Circuit
2.	Spiritual Circuit	Development of Adasa, Dhapewada, Paradsingha religious circuit

Foreign tourists visiting India

2858. SHRI AVINASH RAI KHANNA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

- (a) how many foreign tourists visited India in the year 2014-15;
- (b) whether this number increased or decreased from previous year, the details thereof;
- (c) the most visited places by foreign tourists in the country;
- (d) the steps taken to boost the number of tourists to India, if not, the reasons therefor;
- (e) the details of method/system to identify new tourism places; and
- (f) how many such places have been identified so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (DR. MAHESH SHARMA): (a) The number of Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) in India during April 2014 to March 2015 were 7.76 million (Provisional).

(b) There was an increase of 6.33 lakhs in the FTAs during April 2014 to March 2015 as compared corresponding period of previous year.

(c) The top ten States/UTs in terms of Foreign Tourist Visits (FTVs) in India during 2014 are as below: