

Popularising tourist attraction in Punjab and U.T. of Chandigarh

2216. SHRI BALWINDER SINGH BHUNDER: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) what are Government's plans to popularise places of tourist attraction in Punjab and U.T. of Chandigarh;

(b) whether any campaign has been launched abroad attracting foreign tourists to places of religious and tourist attraction in Punjab and U.T. of Chandigarh;

(c) if so, the details in this regard; and

(d) the total foreign exchange earned from tourists who visited Punjab and Chandigarh during the last two years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (DR. MAHESH SHARMA): (a) to (c) The development and promotion of tourism is primarily the responsibility of the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations. The Ministry of Tourism as part of its ongoing promotional activities releases campaigns in the international and domestic markets and also undertakes other promotional activities under the Incredible India brand-line including production of promotional material and hosting information on various tourist places in India including Punjab and Chandigarh on the website of the Ministry of Tourism to promote India as a holistic destination.

(d) The Ministry of Tourism compiles information on Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEEs) for the country as a whole. The provisional Foreign Exchange Earnings through tourism in India during 2014 and 2015 were ₹ 1,23,320 crore and ₹ 1,35,193 crore, respectively.

Foreign tourist inflow into the country

2217. DR. CHANDAN MITRA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) the year-wise foreign tourist inflow in the country for the last three years *vis-a-vis* the target set for the next three years;

(b) whether Government has taken any measures to make India a low cost tourist destination with modern infrastructure and a large number of inbound flights;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the fresh steps taken by Government to explore the huge potential existing in tourism sector in order to enhance foreign exchange earnings as well as job

generation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (DR. MAHESH SHARMA): (a) The number of Foreign Tourist Arrivals in India during 2013, 2014 and 2015 were 6.97 million, 7.68 million and 8.03 million, respectively. Ministry of Tourism has not fixed any year-wise target. However, the Twelfth Five Year Plan (FYP) document of the Niti Aayog (the then Planning Commission) had recommended that India strive to increase its share to 1 per cent in global foreign tourist arrivals by the terminal year of the Twelfth FYP.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The Government of India has undertaken following measures to make India a low cost destination with modern infrastructure and other basic amenities in tourism sector:

- (i) Stimulus to approve low cost accommodation like Bed and Breakfast units and guest houses.
- (ii) Revision of the e-Tourist Visa (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 was US \$ 2 which was uniform for all the countries. Bank charges have also been reduced from US \$ 2 to 2.5 % of the e-TV fee.
- (iii) With the objective to reduce the marketing cost of Foreign Tour Operators in developing and selling tour packages to India, the Ministry of Tourism through its India Tourism Offices overseas provides financial support in form of 'Brochure Support' for producing exclusive India tour package brochures. The India Tourism Offices overseas also undertake Joint Promotions and Joint Advertising with Foreign Tour Operators/travel agents/wholesalers, and Airlines, etc.
- (iv) Extending rewards under Service Exports from India Scheme (SEIS). The SEIS provides for rewards to all Service providers of notified services, who are providing services from India, regardless of the constitution or profile of the service provider. The rewards provided to Tourism and Travel related services under SEIS are as follows:

a.	Hotel	3%
b.	Restaurants (including Catering)	3%
c.	Travel Agencies and Tour Operators Services	5%
d.	Tourist Guides services	5%

(d) Various initiatives undertaken by the Government to boost tourism in the country and subsequently enhance the foreign exchange earnings as well as job generation are as below:

(i) Multilingual Tourist Infoline:

The Ministry of Tourism has launched the 24x7 Toll Free Multi-Lingual Tourist Info Line on 8.2.2016. The languages handled by the contact centers include ten International languages besides English and Hindi, namely, Arabic, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Chinese, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish. The multi-lingual helpdesk in the designated languages provides support service in terms of providing information relating to Travel and Tourism in India and assist the callers with advice on action to be taken during times of distress while travelling in India and if need be alert the concerned authorities.

(ii) E-Tourist Visa (e-TV):

The Government of India has introduced the facility of e-TV for the citizens of 150 countries at 16 airports. Introduction of e-TV is a Path breaking measure by the Government in easing entry formalities in the country.

During 2015, a total of 4,45,300 e-TV holders visited India indicating the success of the new online process.

(iii) 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.

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.

(iv) 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.

MoT has launched following two Schemes for development of tourism in thematic manner:

Swadesh Darshan: Swadesh Darshan was launched for development of theme based tourist circuits in a way that caters to both mass and niche tourism in a holistic manner. Thirteen 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 have been identified for development under this Scheme.

National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive (PRASAD): This Scheme has been launched for the development and beautification of pilgrimage sites to tap the growth of domestic tourists driven by religious sentiments and to augment tourism infrastructure at places of pilgrimage to facilitate pilgrims/tourists. Cities namely Amritsar, Kedarnath, Ajmer, Mathura, Varanasi, Gaya, Puri, Dwarka, Amaravati, Kanchipuram, Vellankanni, Kamakhya and Patna have been identified for infrastructure development under the Scheme.

Promotion of Silk Route tourism

2218. SHRI RITABRATA BANERJEE: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has any plans to promote the Silk Route tourism; and
- (b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (DR. MAHESH SHARMA): (a) and (b) The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) Silk Road Programme is a collaborative platform of 33 member States dedicated to enhance sustainable tourism development along the historic Silk Road route. India at