

Extension of e-visa to boost tourism

1262. SHRI BAISHNAB PARIDA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to extend e-visa to 43 countries to boost tourism in India, if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether a time-frame has been worked out to help work out fast issue of such visas;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) how far will this help to add to our foreign exchange resources?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (DR. MAHESH SHARMA): (a) to (c) The Government of India has launched e-Tourist Visa on 27.11.2014 with a view to facilitate foreign tourist visiting India. Initially, the scheme was introduced for 43 countries. However, the Scheme has since been extended to 150 countries. A list of these countries is given in the Statement (*See below*). The visa service under the Scheme is being rendered in time bound manner and decision is communicated to applicant *via* e-mail within 72 hours of making online application.

(d) The e-Tourist Visa has simplified the procedure for seeking India visa for international tourists. The e-Tourist Visa enables 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.

As a result, the year 2015 witnessed a growth rate of 4.5% in terms of Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) in India. During 2015, FTAs were 8.03 million as compared to 7.68 million in 2014. FTAs during the period January–March, 2016 were 25.08 lakh with a growth of 10.0% as compared to the FTAs of 22.81 lakh in January–March, 2015. The foreign exchange earnings during January–December, 2015 was ₹ 135193 crore as compared to ₹ 123320 crore during 2014 thereby registering the growth of 9.6%.

The e-Tourist Visa has been extended to 150 countries *w.e.f.* 26.02.2016. During January–December, 2015 a total of 4,45,300 tourists arrived on e-Tourist Visa as compared to 39,046 during January–December, 2014 registering a growth of 1040.4%. During the month of January–March, 2016, a total of 3,21,049 tourists arrived on e-Tourist Visa as compared to 75,859 during the month of January–March, 2015 registering a growth of 323.2%.

Statement*List of the countries to where e-Tourist Visa Scheme has extended*

Sl. No.	Name of Country	Sl. No.	Name of Country
1.	Albania	29.	Cook Islands
2.	Andorra	30.	Costa Rica
3.	Anguilla	31.	Cote d'Ivoire
4.	Antigua and Barbuda	32.	Croatia
5.	Armenia	33.	Cuba
6.	Aruba	34.	Czech Republic
7.	Australia	35.	Denmark
8.	Austria	36.	Djibouti
9.	Bahamas	37.	Dominica
10.	Barbados	38.	Dominican Republic
11.	Belgium	39.	East Timor
12.	Belize	40.	Ecuador
13.	Bolivia	41.	El Salvador
14.	Bosnia and Herzegovina	42.	Eritrea
15.	Botswana	43.	Estonia
16.	Brazil	44.	Fiji
17.	Brunei	45.	Germany
18.	Bulgaria	46.	Ghana
19.	Cambodia	47.	Greece
20.	Canada	48.	Grenada
21.	Cape Verde	49.	Guatemala
22.	Cayman Island	50.	Guinea
23.	Chile	51.	Guyana
24.	China	52.	Haiti
25.	China-SAR Hongkong	53.	Honduras
26.	China-SAR Macau	54.	Hungary
27.	Colombia	55.	Iceland
28.	Comoros	56.	Indonesia

Sl. No.	Name of Country	Sl. No.	Name of Country
57.	Ireland	88.	Netherlands
58.	Israel	89.	Finland
59.	Jamaica	90.	France
60.	Japan	91.	Gabon
61.	Jordan	92.	Gambia
62.	Kenya	93.	Georgia
63.	Kiribati	94.	Palau
64.	Laos	95.	Palestine
65.	Latvia	96.	Panama
66.	Lesotho	97.	Papua New Guinea
67.	Liberia	98.	Paraguay
68.	Liechtenstein	99.	Peru
69.	Lithuania	100.	Philippines
70.	Luxembourg	101.	Poland
71.	Madagascar	102.	Portugal
72.	Malawi	103.	Republic of Korea
73.	Malaysia	104.	Republic of Macedonia
74.	Malta	105.	Romania
75.	Marshall Islands	106.	Russia
76.	Mauritius	107.	Saint Christopher and Nevis
77.	Mexico	108.	Saint Lucia
78.	Micronesia	109.	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
79.	Moldova	110.	Samoa
80.	Monaco	111.	San Marino
81.	Mongolia	112.	Senegal
82.	Montenegro	113.	Serbia
83.	Montserrat	114.	Seychelles
84.	Mozambique	115.	Singapore
85.	Myanmar	116.	Slovakia
86.	Namibia	117.	Slovenia
87.	Nauru		

Sl. No.	Name of Country	Sl. No.	Name of Country
118.	Solomon Islands	135.	Ukraine
119.	South Africa	136.	United Kingdom
120.	Spain	137.	Uruguay
121.	Sri Lanka	138.	USA
122.	Suriname	139.	Vanuatu
123.	Swaziland	140.	Vatican City-Holy See
124.	Sweden	141.	Venezuela
125.	Switzerland	142.	Vietnam.
126.	Taiwan	143.	New Zealand
127.	Tajikistan	144.	Nicaragua
128.	Tanzania	145.	Niue Island
129.	Thailand	146.	Norway
130.	Tonga	147.	Oman
131.	Trinidad and Tobago	148.	Zambia
132.	Turks and Caicos Island	149.	Zimbabwe
133.	Tuvalu	150.	Argentina
134.	UAE	151.	Honduras

Development of Ramayana, Buddhist and Sufi circuits

1263. PROF. M. V. RAJEEV GOWDA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has made progress on the development of Ramayana, Buddhist and Sufi circuits;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of places from Karnataka to be included in these circuits?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (DR. MAHESH SHARMA): (a) to (c) For development of tourism infrastructure in the country, the Ministry of Tourism has launched the Swadesh Darshan Scheme-Integrated Development of Theme-Based Tourist Circuits, in 2014-15. Under the Scheme, thirteen thematic circuits have been identified for development, namely North-East India Circuit, Buddhist Circuit, Himalayan Circuit, Coastal Circuit, Krishna Circuit, Desert Circuit,