

Decline in domestic and foreign tourists in Himachal Pradesh

1418. SHRIMATI VIPLOVE THAKUR: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the tourism industry has incurred huge losses owing to a steep decline in the inflow of both domestic and foreign tourists in Himachal Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof along with Government's reaction thereto;

(c) whether Government proposes to take any steps to provide relief/assistance to stakeholders engaged with tourism industry in Himachal Pradesh; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRI K. J. ALPHONS): (a) No Sir, the numbers of Domestic Tourist Visits (DTV's) and Foreign Tourist Visits (FTV's) to the State of Himachal Pradesh have shown a continuous increase. The details for the last 3 years is as below:—

Year	DTV's	FTV's
2015	1,71,25,045	4,06,108
2016	1,79,97,750	4,52,770
2017	1,91,30,541	4,70,992

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Development of tourism in the country

1419. DR. PRADEEP KUMAR BALMUCHU: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government is planning on accelerating tourism in the country, if so, the details thereof; and

(b) the steps being taken by Government to increase the inflow of foreign tourists and earn foreign exchange?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRI K. J. ALPHONS): (a) and (b) Ministry of Tourism is according priority to the development

and promotion of tourism in the country and has taken several steps for achieving the same which *inter alia*, include the following:—

- (i) Launching the Swadesh Darshan Scheme for integrated development of theme based tourist circuits.
- (ii) Launching the National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive (PRASHAD) Scheme to beautify and improve amenities and infrastructure at pilgrimage sites.
- (iii) Promoting India as a holistic tourism destination in the domestic and international markets.
- (iv) Launching of Incredible India 2.0 Campaign marking a shift from generic promotions to market specific promotional plans.
- (v) Launching e-Visa for citizens of 163 countries.
- (vi) Developing and promoting 'Niche Tourism' products.
- (vii) Generating sufficient manpower to meet the requirements of the tourism and hospitality industry.
- (viii) Launching 24x7 toll free Multi-Lingual Tourist Helpline.

Air connectivity at Buddhist Circuit

1420. DR. KANWAR DEEP SINGH: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

- (a) whether all the places included in Buddhist Circuit have not been connected by Air;
- (b) if so, how many of these places are yet to be given air connectivity; and
- (c) what is the status of plan to develop Buddhist sites in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRI K.J. ALPHONS): (a) and (b) Ministry of Tourism is regularly pursuing with Ministry of Civil Aviation to take up opening of under-served and unserved airports / airstrips under RCS UDAN Scheme. Ministry of Tourism has also taken up the development of Buddhist Circuit under its Scheme 'Swadesh Darshan' wherein the last mile connectivity of tourist sites is also one of the components.