

objective of increasing tourist arrivals, which *inter alia* include:—

- Central Financial Assistance to States/UTs under the schemes of Swadesh Darshan, National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Heritage Augmentation Drive (PRASHAD) and Assistance to Central Agencies for the development of tourism related infrastructure in the country. Various Swachhta components are included under Swadesh Darshan and PRASHAD schemes.
- Extension of e-visa facility to citizens of 167 countries.
- Launch of the Incredible India 2.0 campaign with market specific promotional plans and content creation.
- Revamping of Incredible India website with the aim to provide more information about India as a tourist destination.
- Launch of 24x7 toll free multi-lingual tourist helpline in 12 International languages including Hindi and English.
- Organisation of annual Global Tourism Mart for India in line with major international travel marts being held in countries across the world. It provides a platform for all stakeholders in tourism and hospitality industries to interact and transact business opportunities.
- Organisation of biennial International Buddhist Conclave.
- Organisation of Annual International Tourism Mart for promotion of tourism in North Eastern States.
- Promotional activities in tourist generating markets overseas through the India Tourism Offices abroad with active participation in travel fairs and exhibitions; organising Road Shows, “Know India” seminars and workshops.
- Implementation of the Swachhta Action Plan activities in States/UTs to create awareness among tourists, School/college students and stake-holders on importance of cleanliness and hygiene.
- Organisation of Swachhta Pakhwada and Swachhta hi Sewa campaigns.

Measures to attract foreign tourists in the country

1887. SHRI BHUBANESWAR KALITA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

- (a) whether inflow of foreign tourists have not been steadily increasing;
- (b) if so, the details of arrival of foreign tourists in India during the last three years;

(c) whether Government would like to initiate some steps to improve the infrastructure of tourism interest in order to attract more number of foreign tourists; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRI PRAHALAD SINGH PATEL): (a) and (b) No, Sir. The Foreign Tourist Arrivals in India during 2016, 2017 and 2018 were 8.80 million, 10.04 million and 10.56 million (provisional) respectively.

(c) and (d) Development and promotion of tourist places is primarily the responsibility of concerned State Government/UT Administration. However, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India has taken several steps for creation of tourism infrastructure in the country so as to attract more tourists, which *inter alia* include:

- (i) Launched two flagship schemes: Swadesh Darshan-Integrated Development of Theme-Based Tourist Circuits and PRASHAD-Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive. The projects under these schemes are identified for development in consultation with the State Governments/UT Administrations and are sanctioned subject to availability of funds, submission of suitable detailed project reports, adherence to scheme guidelines and utilization of funds released earlier.
- (ii) Pursuant to the Budget Announcements of 2018-19, this Ministry has identified 17 sites in 12 clusters in the country for development as Iconic Tourist Sites.
- (iii) The 'Adopt A Heritage: Apni Dharohar, Apni Pehchaan', a collaborative effort by Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Culture and Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), State/UTs Governments, envisages developing heritage sites and making them tourist friendly, to enhance tourism potential and cultural importance in a planned and phased manner.
- (iv) Ministry provides Assistance to Central Agencies for the development of tourism related infrastructure in the country.

Importance to pilgrim places for the development of tourism

1888. SHRI K. R. ARJUNAN: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government is considering to give more importance to pilgrim places across the country for the development of tourism;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and