

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF TOURISM

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.1099#
ANSWERED ON 10.02.2022

PROMOTION OF BUDDHIST CULTURE AND TOURISM

1099#. SMT. GEETA ALIAS CHANDRAPRABHA:

Will the Minister of **TOURISM** be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of the steps taken by Government to establish the country as a global centre of Buddhist culture and tourism, with a special focus on Bodh Gaya; and
- (b) the number of projects under Buddhist Circuit theme sanctioned in Uttar Pradesh under Swadesh Darshan Scheme, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF TOURISM

(SHRI G. KISHAN REDDY)

(a) & (b): Ministry of Tourism has sanctioned projects for the development of tourism infrastructure at Buddhist sites under the 'Swadesh Darshan', 'National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive (PRASHAD)' and 'Assistance to Central Agencies for Tourism Infrastructure Development' Schemes in the country including Uttar Pradesh.

'Buddhist Circuit' has been identified as one of the thematic circuits for development under the Swadesh Darshan Scheme. Details of projects sanctioned under the Buddhist thematic circuit are:

- Development of Sanchi-Satna-Rewa-Mandsaur-Dhar in Madhya Pradesh for an amount of Rs.74.02 Crore during the year 2016-17.
- Development of Srawasti, Kushinagar & Kapilvastu in Uttar Pradesh for an amount of Rs.99.97 Crore during the year 2016-17.
- Construction of Convention Centre at Bodhgaya in Bihar for an amount of Rs.98.73 Crore during the year 2016-17.
- Development of Junagadh- Gir Somnath- Bharuch-Kutch- Bhavnagar- Rajkot-Mehsana in Gujarat for an amount of Rs.28.67 Crore during the year 2017-18.
- Development of Shalihundam-Thotlakonda- Bavikonda- Bojjanakonda- Amravati-Anupu in Andhra Pradesh for an amount of Rs.24.14 Crore during the year 2017-18.

Under the PRASHAD Scheme, 'Development of Pilgrimage Facilitation at Four Patron Saints at Yuksom, Sikkim' project was sanctioned for an amount of Rs.33.32 Crore in the year 2020-21. In addition to the above, works related to Buddhism have been undertaken in following two projects under PRASHAD Scheme:

(i) 'Development of Varanasi-Phase-I' project inter-alia includes following two components worth Rs.9.54 Crore for development of Buddhism structures:

- a) Sound and Light Show, Dhamek Stupa at a cost of Rs.734 Lakh
- b) Buddha Theme Park, Sarnath at an approved cost of Rs.220 Lakh

(ii) 'Development of Amaravati Town, Guntur District as a Tourist Destination' project inter-alia includes following two components worth Rs.1.33 Crore relating to Buddhism:

- a) Mahachaitya Stupa & ASI Museum at an approved cost of Rs.62.25 Lakh
- b) Dhyana Buddha Site Development at an approved cost of Rs.70.44 Lakh

Under the Scheme of 'Assistance to Central Agencies for Tourism Infrastructure Development', a project for the 'Illumination of monuments in Varanasi/Sarnath (Dhamekh Stupa in Sarnath, Chaukhandi Stupa in Sarnath, Tomb of Lalkan in Sarnath and Man Mahal in Banaras)' was sanctioned in 2014-15 for an amount of Rs.5.12 Crore.

In addition to the development of tourism related infrastructure under the various schemes of the Ministry of Tourism, emphasis is also being put on promoting the various Buddhist Sites within India in overseas markets. As part of the above, India Tourism Offices in overseas markets regularly participate in a number of travel and tourism fairs as well as exhibitions wherein India's Buddhist Sites are promoted.

An Action Plan has been formulated with view to evolve "a Coordinated Strategy for Revival of India as a Global Centre of Buddhist Culture and Tourism with Special Focus on Bodhgaya". The Action Plan includes interventions under 4 verticals: i) Connectivity; ii) Infrastructure and Logistics; iii) Cultural Heritage, Research & Education; and iv) Public Awareness, Communication & Outreach and the Ministry of Tourism has been made the nodal Ministry for monitoring the implementation of the Action Plan.
