

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF TOURISM

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.960
ANSWERED ON 09.02.2021

DEVELOPING SMALL TOWNS AND CITIES AS TOURIST DESTINATIONS

960. SHRI MAHESH PODDAR:

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

- (a) whether Government is considering advertising small towns and cities as tourist destinations; If so, the steps taken in this regard;
- (b) whether Government is of the view that diversifying tourist locations will bolster the tourism sector's chances of recovering strongly after the COVID-19 pandemic;
- (c) whether Government would consider temporary tax holidays and other fiscal incentives to promote tourism at new locations; and
- (d) whether Government plans to create a mechanism to promptly identify new locations with an increasing footfall of tourists and invest in their development and the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR TOURISM (INDEPENDENT CHARGE)

(SHRI PRAHLAD SINGH PATEL)

(a): Ministry of Tourism undertakes promotional activities in domestic and international markets through its schemes of 'Domestic Promotion & Publicity including Hospitality (DPPH)' and Overseas Promotion & Publicity Including Market Development Assistance (OPMD). Under these schemes, Ministry of Tourism promotes India as a holistic destination under the Incredible India brand-line. As part of its on-going activities, the Ministry releases print, electronic, online and outdoor media campaigns in the international and domestic markets, to promote various tourism destinations and products of the country including small town and cities as tourist destinations. However, specific tourist destinations identified by the respective State Governments/Union Territory for development and promotions.

(b): The Ministry of Tourism has launched the Dekho Apna Desh initiative in January 2020 with the objective of creating awareness among the citizens about the rich heritage and culture of the country and to promote domestic tourism. This initiative is in line with the 15th August 2019 address of the Honourable Prime Minister asking every citizen to visit at least 15 destinations by the year 2022.

Under this initiative Ministry is carrying out promotional activities like webinars, online pledge and Quiz programmes to generate awareness among the public about the country and its tourism destinations/products including lesser known destinations. Dekho Apna Desh initiative is being promoted extensively on social media accounts and website of the Ministry and by Domestic India Tourism offices.

(c): With an aim to incentivize stakeholders in the Tourism industry, the Guidelines for the Scheme of Market Development Assistance (MDA) for providing financial support to stakeholders for the promotion of Domestic Tourism have been modified to enhance the scope and reach of the Scheme, so as to provide maximum benefits to the stakeholders. Additional promotional activities have been incorporated including online promotions and the extent of financial assistance permissible has been enhanced. Tourism Departments of State Governments/UT Administrations are also now eligible for obtaining financial support under the scheme.

(d): Ministry of Tourism under its schemes of Swadesh Darshan, PRASHAD and Assistance to Central Agencies provides Central Financial Assistance (CFA) to State Governments/UT Administrations/Central Agencies for development of tourism infrastructure in the country. Submission of project proposal by the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations and its sanctioning is a continuous process. The projects under the scheme are identified by the respective State Governments/Union Territory Administrations & then taken up for development in consultation with the State Governments/ Union Territory Administrations.
