

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF TOURISM

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.948
ANSWERED ON 27.07.2021

**DEVELOPMENT OF BUDDHIST PILGRIMAGE SITES IN UTTAR PRADESH
AND BIHAR**

948. SHRI RAKESH SINHA:

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

- (a) whether it is a fact that there are number of Buddhist pilgrimage sites in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar;
- (b) how many of them are developed and how many of them are undeveloped from the perspective of tourism;
- (c) efforts Government is making to attract tourists from Buddhist countries and collaborate with these countries to develop these pilgrimage sites;
- (d) whether Government plans to organise Buddhist festivals in the countries with overwhelmingly Buddhist population; and
- (e) whether the Ministry has any plan to create Buddhist circuit between Kushinagar (UP) and Bodhgaya (Bihar) to facilitate and attract tourists?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF TOURISM

(SHRI G. KISHAN REDDY)

(a): Yes, Sir.

(b) to (e): Submission of project proposals for the development of tourism infrastructure and facilities at various tourist destinations including Buddhist pilgrimage sites under various schemes is a continuous process and the sanctioned projects are at various stages of implementation.

Ministry of Tourism has sanctioned projects for the development of Buddhist pilgrimage 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 States of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar as per details given below:

i. 'Buddhist Circuit' has been identified as one of the themes for development under the Swadesh Darshan Scheme. The following projects have been sanctioned in 2016-17 under this scheme:

- Development of Sravasti, Kushinagar & Kapilvastu in Uttar Pradesh for an amount of Rs.99.97 Crore.
- Construction of Convention Centre at Bodhgaya in Bihar for an amount of Rs.98.73 Crore.

ii. Under the PRASHAD Scheme, ‘Integrated Development of Varanasi – I’ project was sanctioned in 2015-16 which inter-alia includes the following two components:

- Sound and Light Show, Dhamek Stupa at a cost of Rs. 7.34 Crore.
- Buddha Theme Park, Sarnath at an approved cost of Rs. 2.20 Crore.

iii. 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.

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) Culture Research, Heritage & 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.

The efforts made for promotion and marketing of Buddhist sites including those in UP and Bihar in overseas markets including countries with overwhelmingly Buddhist population are as follows:

- Ministry of Tourism has produced films for promotion of Buddhist Destinations in India.
- Buddhist site creatives are being used as part of Incredible India 2.0 campaign.
- Ministry of Tourism has released TV, print and digital media campaigns in Buddhist source markets.
- Ministry of Tourism organizes International Buddhist Conclave (IBC) with participation of tour operators, media, opinion makers and Buddhist monks from different source markets.
- India Tourism offices in the overseas markets regularly participate in a number of travel & tourism fairs / exhibitions / expos wherein India’s Buddhist sites are promoted among large number of visitors to the event.
- Road shows were organized in ASEAN countries wherein India’s Buddhist Heritage was highlighted.
- Ministry of Tourism promotes Buddhist sites on the Incredible India website of the Ministry of Tourism.
- Ministry of Tourism has developed www.indiathelandofbuddha.in website to showcase the rich Buddhist Heritage in India.
