

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF TOURISM

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.956
ANSWERED ON 27.07.2021

PROMOTION OF TOURISM AMID COVID-19 PANDEMIC

956. DR. BANDA PRAKASH:

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

- (a) whether Government has received proposals from States for increased allocation of funds for development and promotion of tourism in view of the COVID-19 pandemic, if so, the response of Government thereto;
- (b) whether Government has framed any guidelines for hotels and tourism industry in the country for promotion of tourism in view of the COVID-19 pandemic and, if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) whether Government proposes to compensate the tourism industry by other methods like tax rebate or reduced liability on terms of Employee Provident Fund and more, if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF TOURISM

(SHRI G. KISHAN REDDY)

(a): Development and promotion of tourism is primarily the responsibility of States Governments/ Union Territory Administrations. The Ministry of Tourism has not received any proposal for increased allocation of funds for the development and promotion of tourism in the country.

(b): Ministry of Health & Family Welfare has issued SOP for hospitality industry and the Ministry of Tourism has accordingly issued detailed operational guidelines for Covid safety and hygiene for hotels, restaurants, B&Bs/ Home stays and Tourism Service Providers in June 2020 to facilitate smooth resumption of business.

(c): The Government has announced various fiscal and relief measures which are expected to benefit the tourism industry. The details are placed as Annexure.

ANNEXURE

STATEMENT IN REPLY TO PART (c) OF RAJYA SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.956 ANSWERED ON 27.07.2021 REGARDING PROMOTION OF TOURISM AMID COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The following are the various fiscal and relief measures announced by the Government which are expected to benefit the Tourism Industry:

- i. The Government announced Atmanirbhar Bharat Package vide which Rs.3 lakh crore collateral free automatic loan has been made available for MSMEs. The loan will have 4- year tenure and 12-month moratorium.
- ii. The Government waived off PF contribution for three months for organizations with less than 100 pax and 90% of their employees earn below Rs.15000.
- iii. Under Atmanirbhar Bharat package, PF contribution of both employer and employee has been reduced to 10% each from existing 12% each for all establishments covered by EPFO for three months
- iv. Deferment of TCS up to October 2020.
- v. Return filing deferred for three months with no penal interest for companies up to Rs.5 Crore, rest @ 9% penal interest.
- vi. The Central government also gave relief from various regulatory compliances under Income Tax Act, companies Act and GST Act for varying period in the wake of COVID-19 crisis to ensure business continuity and survival.
- vii. The RBI extended moratorium on term loans till 31st December 2020.
- viii. The Central Government has also given relief from various regulatory compliances under Income Tax Act, Companies Act and GST Act for varying periods in the wake of Covid-19 crisis to ensure business continuity and survival.
- ix. Suitable provision for funds for implementing the Service Exports from India Scheme (SEIS) for services rendered in FY 2019-20 has now been made by the Ministry of Finance.
- x. The Government of India has launched Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) to support eligible Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and business enterprises in meeting their operational liabilities and restarting their business.
- xi. The scope of the scheme has been enlarged with introduction of ECLGS 3.0. to cover business enterprises in Hospitality, Travel & Tourism and Leisure & Sporting sectors. The scheme is valid till 31.03.2021.
- xii. The validity of ECLGS (ECLGS 1.0, ECLGS 2.0 & ECLGS 3.0) have been extended upto 30.06.2021 or till guarantees for an amount of Rs. 3 lakh crore are issued. Last date of disbursement under the scheme has been extended to 30.09.2021.
- xiii. On 16.06.2021, Hon'ble Finance Minister announced release of SEIS scrips for 2019-20.
- xiv. Financial support to more than 11,000 registered Tourist Guides / Travel and Tourism Stakeholders. Under the new Loan Guarantee Scheme for Covid Affected Sectors, working capital / personal loans will be provided to people in tourism sector to discharge liabilities and restart after being impacted due to COVID-19. The scheme will cover 10,700 Regional Level Tourist Guides recognised by the Ministry of Tourism and Tourist Guides recognised by the State Governments and Travel and Tourism Stakeholders (TTS) recognized by the Ministry of Tourism. TTS's will be eligible to get a loan upto Rs. 10 lakh each while tourist guides can avail loan upto Rs 1 lakh each.

- There will be no processing charges, waiver of foreclosure / prepayment charges and no requirement of additional collateral. Scheme to be administered by the Ministry of Tourism through NCGTC.
- xv. Free Tourist Visa to 5 Lakh: As per the announcement, once Visa issuance is restarted, the first 5 lakh Tourists Visas will be issued free of charge. The benefit of free of charge visa will be available only once per tourist during the issuance of the first 5 lakh tourist visas (free of charge visas). The scheme will be applicable till 31st March 2022 or till 5,00,000 visas are issued, whichever is earlier.
 - xvi. Ministry of Finance has given concurrence to release SEIS scrips on 16.06.2021. Earlier, several Industry stakeholders had flagged appeals to the government to release SEIS Scrips for 2019-20 and DGFT had put a detailed proposal for the allocation for SEIS for exports made during 2019-20. Taking all circumstances into account, the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance has given concurrence to the proposal of Department of Commerce for continuation of SEIS for 2019-20 with a financial allocation of Rs.2061 crores subject to the condition that the amount will be provided through Expenditure Budget following the procedure of providing a New Minor Head.
 - xvii. These above moves are expected to immensely help the stakeholders in the sector by providing them much required liquidity and gear up for the operations in near future. Similarly, it is also expected to provide much needed relief to the government approved tourist guides who have been affected by the ongoing slowdown in the sector due to the pandemic.
 - xviii. Further, vide notification dated 26th April 2021, “Exhibitioncum-Convention Centre” has been included in the Harmonized Master List of Infrastructure Sub-sectors by insertion of a new item in the category of “Social and Commercial Infrastructure”, with a footnote defining Exhibition-cum-Convention Centre.
 - xix. The Ministry has been in regular touch with the industry stakeholders through several rounds of discussions and brainstorming sessions and examined their suggestions carefully. All such proposals have been taken up with the concerned Ministries and Departments of Government of India. Similarly, the issues pertaining to the relief measures expected from the States/UTs have been pursued with them at the highest level.
 - xx. Operational Recommendations for safe resumption of business with easing of lockdown restrictions have been issued for various segments of the travel and hospitality industry and circulated amongst all stakeholders.
 - xxi. With a view to prepare for a post-COVID 19 revival, the Ministry has formulated and issued detailed operational guidelines for Covid safety and hygiene for hotels, restaurants, B&Bs/Home stays and Tourism Service Providers on 08.06.2020 to facilitate smooth resumption of business.
 - xxii. An initiative called SAATHI (System for Assessment, Awareness & Training for Hospitality Industry) has been developed, for effective implementation of Guidelines/SOPs issued with reference to COVID-19 and beyond for safe operations of Hotels, restaurants, B&Bs and other units.
 - xxiii. Further, the Ministry of Tourism has issued modified guidelines for Recognition of Tourism Service Providers dated 08.12.2020 which are effective from January, 2021. As per the modified guidelines, Category of Greenshoot / Start-up- Agencies is being introduced for the first time. This is in keeping with the policy of the Govt. of India for encouraging Start-Ups and will also further the cause of ‘Atmanirbhar India’.
 - xxiv. 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.

- xxv. Recognising the fact that revival in the tourism sector will be largely spearheaded by Domestic tourism, the Ministry initiated arranging a series of webinars under the overall theme of Dekho Apna Desh. The objective is to generate awareness and at the same time sustain interest amongst stakeholders, students and the general public.
- xxvi. Validity of approval or certifications of hotels and other accommodation units whose project approval/re-approval and classification/re-classification have expired/were likely to expire, has been extended upto 30th September, 2021.
- xxvii. Recognition of Travel Agents, Tour Operators, Tourist Transport Operators by the Ministry of Tourism has been extended automatically by six months. Those who have submitted applications for recognition by the Ministry have been given provisional recognition for six months, pending completion of required procedures.
- xxviii. The Guidelines of the Marketing Development Assistance Programme under the Overseas Promotion and Publicity Scheme has been modified to enhance the scope and reach of the scheme, so as to provide maximum benefits to the stakeholders in the tourism industry.
