

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF TOURISM**

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.2445
ANSWERED ON 13.12.2021**

IDENTIFICATION OF BUDDHIST CULTURAL CENTRES

2445.MS. DEBASREE CHAUDHURI:

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of Buddhist Cultural Centres in India that have been identified;**
- (b) the steps taken to link them and create a Buddhist Circuit;**
- (c) the steps taken to promote Buddhist Sites to Buddhist countries; and**
- (d) whether the Ministry is planning to encourage production of buddhist cultural products for the devotees in Buddhist countries and elsewhere to reach out to them?**

ANSWER

MINISTER OF TOURISM

(SHRI G. KISHAN REDDY)

(a) to (d): 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 country as per details given below:

- 1. 'Buddhist Circuit' has been identified as one of the themes for development under the Swadesh Darshan Scheme. The following projects have been sanctioned under this scheme:**
 - Development of Sanchi-Satna-Rewa-Mandsaur-Dhar in Madhya Pradesh for an amount of Rs.74.02 Crore.**
 - Development of Srawasti, 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.**

- **Development of Junagadh- Gir Somnath- Bharuch-Kutch- Bhavnagar- Rajkot- Mehsana in Gujarat for an amount of Rs.28.67 Crore.**
- **Development of Shalihundam-Thotlakonda- Bavikonda- Bojjanakonda- Amravati- Anupu in Andhra Pradesh for an amount of Rs.24.14 Crore.**

2. 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) Integrated Development of Varanasi – I inter-alia including following two components worth Rs.9.5 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 inter-alia including following components worth Rs.1.33 Crore only 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**

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.

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 and 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.

The efforts made for promotion and marketing of Buddhist sites 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.**
- The Ministry of Tourism in collaboration with IRCTC organized a Buddhist Circuit Fam Tour and Conference from 4th - 8th October 2021 at Bodhgaya and Varanasi. The event was attended by approx. 200 delegates which included tour operators from other parts of the country, local tour operators and other stakeholders of tourism sector media, officials of Ministry of Tourism. During the event Ministry also organized an interactive session with students of Nalanda University and BHU.**
- On the occasion of the inauguration of the Kushinagar Airport by the Hon'ble Prime Minister on 20th October 2021, Ministry of Tourism organized a two-day conference on 'Tourism in Buddhist Circuits – A way forward' in Kushinagar highlighting Buddhist Circuit and its potential to draw Buddhist pilgrims and scholars around the world.**
