

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF TOURISM

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 624
ANSWERED ON 02.12.2021

REVIVAL OF TOURISM POST COVID-19 PANDEMIC

624. SHRI SANJAY RAUT:

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

- (a) whether it is a fact that the tourism industry faced a devastating impact due to COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns whereby nearly 25 million people working in the sector lost their jobs between 2020-2021;
- (b) if so, the details thereof, and the response thereto;
- (c) whether Government has come up with any alternate arrangements in light of the pandemic to ensure that India becomes a leading tourist destination once international flights are resumed on a regular basis; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF TOURISM

(SHRI G. KISHAN REDDY)

(a) & (b): Ministry of Tourism engaged National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) to conduct study on “India and the Corona Virus Pandemic: Economic Losses for Households Engaged in Tourism and Policies for Recovery”. As per the results of the study, the tourism industry faced significant impact due to COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns.

(c) & (d): Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, has relaxed the restriction for all foreign nationals intended to visit India for Tourism purposes subject to the Covid related guidelines of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoH&FW). The e-Tourist Visa / Tourist Visa are fully restored for all individual foreign nationals intended to visit India for tourism purposes w.e.f. 15th November 2021. Initially, the e-Tourist / Tourist Visa is being issued with the validity of 30 days. Further, the Government of India has announced first 5,00,000 free visa to the international tourists. Further, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India has taken several steps to revive tourism sector are at Annexure.

ANNEXURE

STATEMENT IN REPLY TO PARTS (c) to (d) OF RAJYA SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.624 ANSWERED ON 02.12.2021 REGARDING REVIVAL OF TOURISM POST COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The following are the various steps taken by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India which are expected to revive the tourism sector:

Loan Guarantee Scheme for Covid Affected Tourism Service Sector (LGSCATSS)

As announcement by the Ministry of Finance on 28.06.2021 to provide relief to the tourism sector, Ministry of Tourism has implemented the "Loan Guarantee Scheme for Covid Affected Tourism Service Sector (LGSCATSS)". Under this loan guarantee scheme, loan upto Rs. 10.00 lakh will be extended to each Tour Operators/ Travel Agents/ Tourist Transport Operators approved/ recognized by the Ministry of Tourism, upto Rs. 1.00 lakh will be extended to each Regional Tourist Guide/ Incredible India Tourist Guide approved/recognized by the Ministry of Tourism and Tourist Guides approved/ recognized by the State Govt./ UT Administration.

The purpose of the LGSCATSS of the Ministry of Tourism is to provide guarantee coverage for the loans provided by the Scheduled Commercial Banks to the above mentioned beneficiaries, to discharge their liabilities and restart their business affected due to Covid-19 pandemic.

Validity of the said scheme is till 31.03.2022 or till the guarantee of Rs. 250.00 crores are issued under the scheme, whichever is earlier and would be applicable to all eligible loans sanctioned under the scheme on or after 04.10.2021 [issuance of LGSCATSS guidelines by National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company (NCGTC)] till 31.03.2022. No guarantee fee will be charged from the Money Lending Institutions (MLIs) by NCGTC for the credit facilities provided under the Scheme.

Market Development Scheme (MDA) for promotion of Domestic Tourism:

The Ministry of Tourism has revised the Guidelines for Scheme of Market Development Assistance (MDA) for promotion of Domestic Tourism in November 2020 to enhance the scope and reach of the scheme. As per the guidelines, the stakeholders are provided with financial support for the promotion of Domestic Tourism. 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.

Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS)

Under RCS UDAN-3 Tourism, Ministry of Tourism approached Ministry of Civil Aviation, with the purpose of further improving connectivity and got 46 tourism routes included for better connectivity of important tourist places including Iconic sites .Currently 29 tourism routes have been operationalized.

Ministry of Tourism has given its recommendations for inclusion of tourism routes and improving the air connectivity in the North Eastern region. The Ministry of Civil Aviation

has recently finalized 78 Routes under RCD UDAN-4 which largely aims at increasing air connectivity to and within the North Eastern Region.

Road Connectivity and Wayside Amenities

Ministry of Tourism had shared a list of 50 Tourism Destinations including Iconic Sites and UNESCO World Heritage Sites with Ministry of Road Transport & Highways for improving road connectivity in the first phase. Where good road connectivity already exists, Ministry of Road Transport & Highways was requested to consider setting up of wayside amenities, prominent signages and beautification of the area, at a distance of 15-20 kms. on either side of the tourist destination. Ministry of Road Transport & Highways has informed that out of the 50 destinations identified by Ministry of Tourism, 23 fall under the purview of Ministry of Road Transport & Highways/National Highway Authority of India, where work is in progress.

For the remaining 27 tourist sites, Ministry of Tourism has addressed letters to the respective State Governments and PWD for improvement of connectivity and provision of wayside facilities as these roads did not fall under the purview of MoRT&H.

Virtual meetings were held with the State/UT Tourism Departments on 24th and 25th November, 2020 to get their inputs and suggestions on tourist destinations which require road connectivity and wayside amenities. Based on the inputs received from the State Governments/UTs a list of 114 destinations has been prepared and further shared with the MoRT&H for improving road connectivity to these tourist sites.

Further, a meeting with senior officers of the Ministry of Road Transport & Highway has also been held in the month of November, 2021 regarding improvement of road connectivity to the UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

Incredible India Tourist Facilitator Certification Programme:-

The Ministry of Tourism has launched the Incredible India Tourist Facilitator (IITF) Certification Programme- a digital initiative that aims at creating an Online learning platform with the objective of creating a pool of well trained and professional Tourist Facilitators across the country. The system provides basic, advanced (heritage and adventure), spoken language and refresher courses for candidates. The candidates can pursue these online courses from anywhere and at any time and at their own pace. On successful completion of the course, he/she will be a professionally certified tourist facilitator who will support tourists by disseminating information, eliciting interest in them about the country and providing experiential tourism. The Programme has been made available online w.e.f. 01.01.2020.

This digital initiative will help in employment generation and help boost the tourism industry across the country. This scheme will also help boost tourism in North-East Indian states by enhancing the facilities and quality experience of the tourists visiting in the region.

The first ever Incredible India Tourism Facilitator Basic Course online exam was conducted in Feb, 2021 for which result was announced in March, 2021 for 2230 successful candidates. The 2nd IITFC Basic Course exam was conducted on 03rd & 04th July, 2021, for which 1370 candidates appeared out of which 841 were declared successful.
