

Shri G Kishan Reddy took part in various discussions on tourism related themes during the first Incredible India International Cruise Conference 2022

India's long coast is not only a key lever for building trade and growing our exports but also an opportunity to promote tourism: Shri G Kishan Reddy

Cruise tourism is one of the most vibrant and fast growing sectors of the leisure and travel industry:
Union Tourism Minister

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The first Incredible India International Cruise Conference 2022 was held on May 14th and May 15th, 2022 in Mumbai. The Union Minister Of Tourism, Culture and the Development of the Northeastern Region (DoNER) Shri G Kishan Reddy also addressed the participants on May 15th about the various tourism related themes and discussions that included Potential of River Cruising and Cruise Tourism: Success Stories and Destination Development

During his address the Union Minister said, "India's 7,500 Kmlong coastline makes her a leader in the maritime sector. Our rich maritime history is evident from the sphere of influence our civilisation and culture has been able to create across Asia. India's long coast is not only a key lever for building trade and growing our exports but also an opportunity to promote tourism". He added, "India has long been known as the land of the rivers. The name Hindustan itself is derived from the river Sindhu. We are a country where rivers are worshipped in the form of gods and goddesses".

The two-day conference showcased abundant business opportunities in the country's cruise tourism sector with an aim to first showcase India as a desired destination for cruise passengers, highlight the regional connectivity, promote building of new destinations and attractions like lighthouses and disseminate information about India's preparedness for developing the cruise tourism sector. While speaking on the efforts being made by the Government of India to promote river cruising and cruise tourism the Union Minister said, "Since 2014 there has been a renewed effort to develop cruise tourism and river cruising in India. Cruise tourism is one of the most vibrant and fast growing sectors of the leisure and travel industry. Today, the Ministry of Tourism through the Central Financial Assistance Scheme has been supporting Tourism Infrastructure Development for developing ports and cruise Terminals, Development of Lighthouses, Purchase of ferries and Development of river cruise circuits etc".

He added, "The Government of India is also working towards the development of dedicated terminals for

cruise passengers and cruise vessels. A dedicated task force has been formulated on Cruise Tourism jointly by the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Shipping. We recently inaugurated Sagarika which is the International Cruise Terminal in Kochi which will cater to over one lakh guests. Apart from this, we are also funding the development of cruise terminals, lighthouses and other tourist infrastructure in several coastal locations. Our aim is to promote domestic and international cruise terminals at selected ports by 2023. Since many Indians visit foreign destinations for cruises we are making efforts to promote it within India”.

The Ministry of Tourism currently operates 3 major schemes and programs for the development of tourism related infrastructure that is SWADESH DARSHAN, PRASHAD and Central Financial Assistance. 10 of the 76 projects under SWADESH that have been sanctioned so far are related to a coastal theme and projects have been undertaken in Andhra Pradesh, Puducherry, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Goa, Odisha, Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Tamil Nadu. Close to Rs. 650 crore rupees has been sanctioned for this. So far the Ministry of Tourism has also sanctioned Rs. 228.61 crore for various projects towards the development of Cruise Terminals and related infrastructure in different States at the major ports under the scheme for ‘Assistance to Central Agencies for Tourism Infrastructure Development’. Details of Ports & Waterway Projects under Assistance to Central Agencies Scheme.

The Union Minister lauded the efforts of the Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways for organizing this conference and said, “I would like to congratulate my colleague Shri Sarbananda Sonwal ji for organising this conference. In the time to come we would like to see India as a global cruise hub. For the first time after independence, we are now working towards a National Tourism Policy. The Whole Of Government approach envisaged in the policy will ensure the scaling of initiatives like Cruise Tourism. As India is celebrating its 75th year of independence through Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, let us resolve to make river cruising as one of the new innovative Tourism products that we can build on a larger scale with the slogan ‘come cruise in India”.

The Union Minister also had a one-on-one interaction with business leaders and stakeholders from the cruise industry.

The aim of the various sessions in the conference was to touch upon topics related to development of cruise circuits with focus on cruise destinations, cruise infrastructure, development of skilled manpower in tourism, hospitality and shipping, conducive policy environment and post-pandemic outlook and opportunities in cruise sector. For the development and promotion of cruise tourism, ministries and government agencies are working hand-in-hand. They are also involved in development of policy frameworks, SOPs for management and operation of cruise in international, domestic/coastal and river cruise sectors. Several initiatives are being taken towards upgradation and modernization of cruise terminals as per international standards.

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