

1st Tourism Working Group Meeting under G20 to start tomorrow at Rann of Kutch in Gujarat

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The breathtaking white sands of Rann of Kutch in Gujarat will witness the congregation of representatives of Tourism Sector of G20 countries during 7-9 February 2023. The 1st Tourism Working Group Meeting under G20 hosted by the Ministry of Tourism is slated to start tomorrow and more than 100 delegates would attend the meeting, said Shri Arvind Singh, Secretary Tourism, Government of India today during the curtain raiser press conference at Dhordo, the venue of the meeting. The meeting will be graced by Minister of Tourism, Culture and DONER, Government of India, Sh. G. Kishan Reddy; Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Government of India, Sh. Parshottam Rupala and Chief Minister of Gujarat Sh. Bhupendra bhai Patel. The participants would be senior delegates from G20 member countries, invitee countries and international organizations.

For celebrating India's G20 Presidency the Ministry of tourism has planned to organize number of events engaging not only the government level stakeholders but also the travel trade and hospitality sector, the Secretary said. The Ministry would be organizing the first Global Tourism Investors' Summit (GTIS) in April/May 2023 in New Delhi. The objective of GTIS is to attract global investment into the Indian tourism and hospitality sector along with investments in tourism infrastructure, technology, skill development, startups and more.

G20 CEO Forum alongside the Ministerial Meeting will be held at Goa in June. The event is being organized by World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) and WTTC (India initiative). The Ministry of Tourism will also be organizing a MICE Global Conference and event on adventure tourism in May and June respectively in 2023, Shri Singh said.

Five priority areas in the tourism sector have been identified during India's G-20 Presidency, which will constitute the key building blocks for accelerating the transition of the tourism sector and will achieve the targets for 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. The five priority areas are as follows:

Green Tourism "Greening of tourism sector for a sustainable, responsible and resilient tourism sector"

Digitalization "Harnessing the power of digitalization to promote competitiveness, inclusion and sustainability in tourism sector"

Skills "Empowering youth with skills for jobs and entrepreneurship in tourism sector"

Tourism MSMEs "Nurturing tourism MSMEs / Startups/ private sector to unleash innovation and dynamism in tourism sector"

Destination Management "Rethinking the strategic management of destinations towards a holistic approach that delivers on the SDGs"

The Tourism Secretary also said that two side events focusing on rural tourism and promotion of Archaeological Tourism would be the highlights of three-day event. Shri Singh said Rural tourism has a high potential to stimulate local economic growth, social change, and inclusive community development. Rural tourism values and safeguards rural villages along with their associated landscapes, knowledge systems, biological and cultural diversity, local values, and activities (agriculture, forestry, livestock and/or fisheries), including their gastronomy. While talking about the second focus area, Shri Singh said archaeological sites have rich historical and cultural artifacts, which provide insightful discoveries regarding ancient civilizations across the world. Tourism can be used a vehicle for promoting awareness about archaeological sites, which

can lead to better understanding of cultural heritage of a destination and promotion of economic and social development of local communities.

Visit India Year 2023 initiative was kicked off on 31st January this year and has grand plans and activities for promoting tourism in India. More than one lakh foreign delegates will visit India this year and they will be able to witness the variety, richness and diversity of India's culture, including monuments and festivals.

Shri Hareet Shukla, Tourism Secretary, Gujarat Government and Shri Abhay Kumar, DDG, ICCR, Ministry of External Affairs were also present during the press conference.

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