

Shri G. Kishan Reddy launches 'Best Tourism Village Competition Portal', Global Tourism Investor Summit 2023 Portal and Rural Tourism Portal in New Delhi today

India is seeing a rapid revival of Foreign Tourist Arrivals post Covid; will become a major tourist destination of the world with the whole government approach policy: Shri G. Kishan Reddy

One crore foreign tourists expected to visit India this year - G. Kishan Reddy

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The Union Tourism Minister, Shri G. Kishan Reddy launched important initiatives today for tourism promotion in the country in the presence of MoS, Tourism Shri Ajay Bhatt. He launched a unique initiative 'Best Tourism Village Competition Portal' and Rural Tourism Portal. The Global Tourism Investor Summit 2023 portal was also launched on the occasion.

The Ministry of Tourism is organizing 1st Global Tourism Investors' Summit during 17-19 May 2023 to showcase investible projects and opportunities in tourism and hospitality sector in India to domestic and international investors. This is being organised in the backdrop of India's G20 Presidency this year.

India is also observing 'Visit India Year 2023' on which a presentation was made. In order to develop tourism in mission mode and to accelerate India's rise towards world leadership in tourism sector, the Ministry of Tourism has launched Visit India Year 2023. It is a unique, collective movement that invites the world to explore India during 2023 - a historical year of India's G20 presidency as well as grand celebrations of India@75 Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav.

On the occasion, the Union Minister of Tourism, Shri G. Kishan Reddy also interacted with Media on several key achievements of the Ministry of Tourism during the last few years and future strategy for promoting tourism in the country.

Shri Reddy highlighted the whole of government approach followed by the Government in promoting and developing tourism sector in the country with focus on connectivity, civic infrastructure, tourist amenities and soft infrastructure.

He said that the country is taking a new flight of development with the mantra of "Vikas Bhi aur Virasat bhi" under the guidance of Prime Minister. India is seeing a rapid revival of Foreign Tourist Arrivals post Covid and India will soon become a major destination of the world with the Whole of Government approach policy.

The Union Minister further said that in 2014, 76.8 lakh foreign tourists had come to India and in 2019 this number stood at 1.09 crore before Covid. Despite tourism being the most affected sector due to Covid, but still in 2022 this number has increased to 61 lakh. Union Minister also said that one crore foreign tourists are expected to visit India this year.

Shri Kishan Reddy also spoke about the phenomenal spurt in domestic tourism. Giving the example of Jammu and Kashmir, he said that in 2022, J&K received a staggering 1.84 cr tourists breaking all previous records since Independence.

He informed that the Government, for the first time focussed on the development of spiritual destinations and PRASHAD (National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual and Heritage Augmentation Drive) scheme was launched by the Ministry of Tourism in 2015. Till date, under PRASHAD scheme, a total of 45 projects for an amount of Rs.1586.10 Crore have been sanctioned.

He further informed that the Ministry of Tourism introduced Swadesh Darshan scheme in 2014-15 with focus on integrated development of theme-based tourist circuits in the country. 76 projects were sanctioned for an amount of Rs.5315.59 Crore under various themes such as eco, heritage, Himalayan, coastal theme etc. The Scheme has now been revamped as Swadesh Darshan 2.0 with the objective to develop sustainable and responsible tourist destinations in the country. The Ministry has selected 50 destinations for development in the country.

The Ministry of Tourism has also sanctioned 51 projects for an amount of Rs.737.89 Crore from 2014-15 to 2022-23 under Assistance to Central Agencies scheme for various projects such as sound and light show, development cruise terminals, border tourism projects such Attari Post Tourism Infrastructure, Tanot Post Tourism Infrastructure etc.

He informed that the Ministry of Tourism sanctioned 59 tourism routes under Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS) UDAN-3 to provide better connectivity to important tourist places including Iconic sites. Out of this, 51 are already being provided viability gap funding, he said.

The Ministry is also working with Ministry of Road Transport and Highways to improve the road connectivity to various tourist destinations and setting up of wayside amenities.

Ministry of Tourism is also working with Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways to promote cruise tourism both in oceans and inland waterways and has funded several cruise terminals projects. The Ministry is working with Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change for promotion of wild life tourism and eco-tourism and has funded several projects under Swadesh Darshan Scheme.

The Ministry of Tourism has been working very closely with Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of External Affairs for easing of the Visa Regime in the country to facilitate seamless travel. The Ministry strongly supported launch of e-Visa regime on 27.11.2014 and subsequently e-Tourist Visa. It was initially introduced for 46 countries, which provided a major boost to inbound tourism. At present, the e-Tourist visa facility is available for the nationals of 165 countries. Post pandemic, the Government also announced 500,000 free visas to the tourists. The Ministry of Tourism, in association with the Ministry of External Affairs, has appointed Tourism Officers in 20 countries in 2021, who will promote Indian tourism in those countries.

During 2019, there was reduction in tax on hotel rooms with tariffs of ₹1,001 to ₹7,500/night to 12%; those above ₹7,501 to 18% to increase India's competitiveness as a tourism destination vis-à-vis other competing markets in the region.

He also highlighted that the Ministry has introduced several IT based reforms and electronic portals were set up for hotel classification and travel trade recognition. These has been further revamped into National Integrated Database of Hospitality Industry (NIDHI), a technology driven system for providing services to Hospitality and travel industry.

The Minister further informed that the Government introduced International Tourism Mart (ITM) in 2014 with focus on promoting tourism in North Eastern region.

The Government has further formulated "a Coordinated Strategy for Revival of India as a Global Centre of

Buddhist Culture and Tourism with Special Focus on Bodhgaya”. Inauguration of Kushinagar Airport will further boost Buddhist tourism in the country and 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 Ministry of Tourism launched the Dekho Apna Desh initiative in January 2020. More than 150 webinars have been conducted so far.

Talking about skill development initiatives of the Ministry, the Minister informed that the Ministry of Tourism is imparting hospitality and tourism education to our youth through 21 CIHMs, 28 SIHMs, 12 FCIs and one IITTM with four regional centres apart from Indian Culinary Institute and National Council for Hotel Management and Catering Technology and Indian Institute of Skiing & Mountaineering (IISM) Gulmarg.

Keeping in view the role of youth in all spheres of nation building, the Ministry of Tourism has launched a program for **Yuva Tourism Club** across the country to engage youth with tourism. It will provide youth with better understanding of their culture, heritage and tourism by engaging in a variety of activities. It will also create awareness about the career opportunities in the field of tourism and hospitality.

Developing Tourism in Mission Mode

Under India’s G20 Presidency since 1st Dec 2022 and in the backdrop of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, the Government has resolved to develop tourism in mission mode with focus on convergence and public private partnership.

Under India’s G20 Presidency more than 200 meetings are being organized at 56 locations which will give unprecedented opportunity to these destinations to come on the tourism world map.

India will consolidate the gains from transformation in connectivity and infrastructure, growing economic power and tremendous improvement in the framework conditions for growth of tourism in the country to promote and develop tourism in mission mode during Amrit Kaal. It has set out a vision to make India one trillion USD tourism economy by 2047 with 100 million international visitors.

Ministry of Tourism has formulated Draft National Tourism Policy. The National Tourism Policy is part of the vision of New India on high trajectory of growth and prosperity. The new Policy is a holistic framework for sustainable and responsible growth of tourism sector in the country. The Policy aims at Improving framework conditions for tourism development in the country, supporting tourism industries, strengthening tourism support

Visit India Year campaign will highlight India’s commitment to sustainable & rural tourism. It will propel India as a seamless, modern and smart tourism destination.

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