

Inaugural session of the 2nd G-20 Tourism Working Group Meeting held at Siliguri in West Bengal

Vision is to make India a one trillion dollar tourism economy by 2047: Shri G.Kishan Reddy

Aim of the National Adventure Tourism strategy is to place India among the top Adventure Tourism Destinations of the World: Shri G.Kishan Reddy

The niche product of Adventure Tourism will benefit India's Tribal Communities, disadvantaged communities , women and youth by providing jobs & entrepreneurial opportunities : Shri G.K Reddy

The overall aim is to see that the tourism sector contributes towards improving the quality of life of people in general: Shri John Barla

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The Inaugural session of the 2nd Tourism Working Group Meeting under G20 hosted by the Ministry of Tourism was held at Siliguri, West Bengal today morning. The inaugural session was addressed by Union Minister for Tourism, Culture and DoNER Shri G.Kishan Reddy and Minister of State for Minority Affairs, Shri John Barla. Shri Raju Bista, Member of Parliament, Darjeeling was also present in the session.

In his opening remarks, Union Minister for Culture, Tourism and DoNER Shri G.K Reddy welcomed all the participants to the beautiful town of Siliguri. He opined that Siliguri possesses a rare combination of Diversity, Culture, Tradition, and beauty. Known as The Gateway to the Northeast, the minister said that the place provides amazing travel experiences such as Spirituality in the various Monasteries and Temples, Wildlife and natural beauty in the National Parks, adventure in the form of camping and rafting . He said that Siliguri is an embodiment of India, a country where diversity delights, culture echoes, tradition speaks and beauty enthral.

Addressing the session, Shri G.Kishan Reddy further said that the ideas discussed will aid in developing tourism in mission mode. It will also aid India in maximising its potential in the tourism sector. He announced that in order to give a boost to the uniqueness of Indian tourism, the country is observing 'Visit India Year 2023' which is a unique, collective movement that invites the world to explore India in the historical year of India's G20 presidency as well as, grand celebrations of 75 years of Indian Independence - India@75 Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.



The minister announced that the vision is to make India a one trillion dollar tourism economy by 2047 - our 100th year of Independence.

He also informed that the Ministry of Tourism has also formulated a Draft National Tourism Policy. The new Policy is a holistic framework for sustainable and responsible growth of the tourism sector in the country and aims at improving framework conditions for tourism development in the country, supporting tourism industries, and strengthening tourism to highlight India's commitment to achieving Sustainable Development Goals 2030. The Union Minister said that the aim is to make India a seamless, modern, and smart tourism destination.

Shri G.Kishan Reddy underscored the need for digitalisation of the Tourism Industry which also is a priority of the Tourism Working Group. He informed that the Government of India is working on various niche products like coastal tourism, wildlife tourism, adventure tourism, cultural tourism, rural tourism, archaeological tourism, spiritual tourism, destination weddings and others. The minister expressed his confidence that a meaningful framework for realising the potential of adventure tourism will be devised.

The minister of State, Shri John Barla said that Government of India has implemented various schemes for the welfare and upliftment of all strata, including minorities, especially the economically weaker and lesser privileged sections of the society, through various schemes of the Government of India.

He also said that the State of West Bengal aims to become a preferred tourism and tourism-related investment destination by leveraging its unique geographical setting along with its various tourism-related assets. It is developing the necessary infrastructure and promoting tourism in an integrated manner which will not only bring in more investment and further the socio-economic goals of the Government of India, but also ensure that all these are in conformity with the relevant acts, rules and regulations relating to environmental protection. The overall aim is to see that the tourism sector contributes towards improving the quality of life of people in general.

Welcoming all the participants, Shri Arvind Singh shared that under India's G20 Presidency, there are over

200 meetings in more than 59 cities across 32 different work streams. It allows India to showcase the rich cultural and natural heritage to G20 delegates and guests.

All the G20 member States (including Troika – Indonesia & Brazil) shared their comments and suggestions on the 1st Draft Outcome and the five priorities introduced by India.

The second session of the tourism working group meeting was planned in Presentation & Open Discussion format. The session discussed all five priorities one by one. A presentation on each priority was made by Turkiye, Saudi Arabia, Australia, Indonesia and Italy on Green Tourism, Digitalization, Skills, Tourism MSMEs, and Destination Management respectively. Each presentation was followed by detailed discussion among member countries, invitee countries and international organizations.

Concluding the meeting, Chair (India) expressed towards all the G20 Members, Invitee countries, International Organizations for endorsing the five priorities and successfully conducting the meeting

In a side event today, on "Tourism in Mission Mode: Advantage Adventure Tourism" presentations by the participants highlighted the benefits, issues and challenges in the promotion of adventure tourism. Ideas were discussed with respect to making India a globally competitive Adventure Tourism hub. The model law on Adventure safety and way of developing vibrant villages as adventure destinations were discussed.



In the side event, the Union Minister for Tourism, Culture and DoNER, Shri G.Kishan Reddy said that the presentations were informative, engaging and thought- provoking. He informed that the ideas mentioned in here have further enriched understanding of Adventure Tourism.

Shri G.Kishan Reddy opined that by the very nature of Adventure Tourism locations, this niche product will benefit India's Tribal Communities, disadvantaged communities women and youth by providing jobs & entrepreneurial opportunities. He announced that India holds great potential to become a global marketplace for adventure activities and sports. The minister said that the National Adventure Tourism strategy has been framed and the aim is to place India among the top Adventure Tourism Destinations of the World by developing infrastructure and setting up high safety standards.

Earlier in the day on the sidelines , Shri G.Kishan Reddy and Shri John Barla flagged off the Himalayan drive Car 9 car rally.

The second day of the meeting concluded with colorful cultural performances by folk artists. On the occasion Adivasi dance performance, Chau dance performance were performed.

Earlier last evening, Union Minister for Culture, Tourism and DoNER Shri G.K Redd; Secretary Information and Broadcasting; Secretary Tourism, Shri Arvind Singh along with the delegates participated in the moonlight tea plucking activity.





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