

In the 2nd Tourism working meeting all countries unanimously adopt Green Tourism to be most important priority for all the participating countries

Discussions during the first two Tourism Working Group Meetings progressing in the right direction for drafting the final GOA Communique: Shri Arvind Singh

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Secretary (Tourism), Shri Arvind Singh addressed the national media after the successful conclusion of the 2nd Tourism Working Group Meeting held in Siliguri, Darjeeling district from 1st – 4th April 2023. The working group meeting was attended by 56 Delegates from 17 Member Countries, 8 Invitee Countries and 4 International Organizations. The event was also graced by the presence of Ambassadors of seven G20 countries viz. Australia, Bangladesh, Japan, Singapore, Mexico, Indonesia and Korea. The inaugural session was graced by Shri G. Kishan Reddy, Minister of Tourism, Culture and DONER, Sh. John Barla and Minister of State for Minority Affairs .

Secretary, Tourism briefed the media about the Working Group meetings held with the member countries, invitee countries and international organizations such as UNEP, ILO and UNWTO.

Briefing the media Shri Arvind Singh said that during the first session of Tourism Working Group meeting, presentations were made by UNEP on 'Travel for LiFE' and by UNWTO on '1st Draft Outcome Document – GOA Roadmap'. The G20 Member countries, Invitee Countries and International organizations shared their comments on the 1st Draft of GOA Roadmap. The GOA Roadmap will be adopted during the Tourism Ministerial meeting at Goa in June 2023.





In the working group meeting presentations were made by Turkiye, Saudi Arabia, Australia, Indonesia, Italy on five priorities of Green Tourism, Digitalization, Skills, Tourism MSMEs, Destination Management respectively. The session also included extensive discussions on each priority area. All the countries unanimously adopted Green Tourism to be most important priority for all the participating countries, the Secretary disclosed.

Secretary (Tourism) concluded the Press Meet with the comments that the discussions during the first two Tourism Working Group Meetings are progressing in the right direction for drafting the final GOA Communique at the Tourism Ministerial Meeting to be held in June at Goa.

On the sidelines of the Working Group Meetings, two side events were held on Adventure Tourism in order to highlight the potential of adventure tourism in the tourism map of India and that of North East Region. 'Adventure Tourism as a vehicle for achieving Sustainable Development Goals' in which Mrs. Gabriella Stowell (Vice President) from Adventure Tour Operators Association (ATTA) and Padma Shri Awardee Mr. Ajeet Bajaj, President of Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI) presented Global and Indian Perspectives on Adventure Tourism respectively.

The second event organized for domestic industry partners and States of Government of India was - 'Tourism in

Mission Mode: Advantage Adventure Tourism' along with local stakeholders. There were deliberations on Best Practices, National Strategy of Adventure Tourism, India as Adventure Destination, Modern Law of adventure safety, Risk Mitigation and access control, Developing Vibrant Villages as adventure destination, and developing adventure tourism in the Northeast States of India.

Minister of Tourism, Culture, and DoNER, Government of India, in his opening remarks during side event shared the initiatives like State Ranking Criteria for the Adventure Tourism sites, Model Adventure Tourism Law, Development of Mega Trails, Development of Adventure Activity Guidelines, Adventure Tourism Rescue Centers, and Development of dedicated Website & social media pages for Adventure Tourism.

In order to experience the rich local traditions of the region, an immersive experience of Moonlight Tea plucking was organized for the international delegates, where they were accompanied by local tea pluckers and musicians playing traditional instruments. Moonlight tea plucking gives one of the most orthodox tea leaves in the world. They also visited the Makaibari Tea Factory to experience the processing of tea leaves from 'field to factory'. Tea Tasting session was organized in the evening in Tea Factory as well as after the side event which was immensely appreciated by all delegates.

The Working Group Meeting ended with a ride on the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The journey started from Ghum Station, India's highest railway station. The first stop on the train ride was at Batasia Loop, where a special Khukuri Dance was organized by the Sainik Board. The train ride ended at Darjeeling Station. It was followed by a visit to Raj Bhawan, Darjeeling with Hon'ble Governor of West Bengal, Shri C. V. Ananda Bose, gracing the occasion with his presence.

The Delegates also participated in the Art and Craft Bazaar organized by the State Government showcasing local handicrafts, work of artisans, signifying the importance of community participation where they 'hands-on' experience through DIY Activities at the Craft Bazaar. This engagement of Delegates encouraged the participating Artisans in the craft bazaar.

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