

## Fourth Tourism Working Group meeting begins in Goa with two side events today

Shri G. Kishan Reddy addressed side events on Cruise tourism and Circular Economy of Plastics in tourism sector

Cruise passenger traffic grew from 1.26 lakhs in 2015-16 to 4.68 lakhs in 2019-20: Shri G.K Reddy

Cruise tourism holds immense potential not only for Goa but for the entire country in fostering economic growth: Shripad Yesso Naik

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Fourth Tourism Working Group of G20 began in Goa with two important side events today. The events were graced by Union Minister for Culture, Tourism and DoNER Shri G. Kishan Reddy, Minister of State for Tourism, Shri Shripad Yesso Naik; Minister of Tourism in Goa Shri Rohan Khaunte; Secretary Tourism Ms V. Vidyavathi graced the occasion.

The first side event was organised on the theme 'Making Cruise Tourism a Model for Sustainable and Responsible Travel'. Addressing the side event on Cruise Tourism Sh G. Kishan Reddy said that Goa is a perfect blend of Sun, Sand and Sea and everyone should experience this beautiful state of India. He said the warmth and fun-loving people of Goa celebrate life with Delightful Music and Delicious food.

He said that India's 7,500 Km long coastline makes her a leader in the maritime sector and our rich maritime history is evident from the sphere of influence that India's civilisation and culture has been able to create across Asia. It includes kingdom of Champa in today's Vietnam and also India's trade with Africa through the port of Mombasa.

He also said that India's long coast, is not only a key lever, for building trade and growing our exports, but also an opportunity to promote tourism and India's long and scenic coastline provides access to several ports, natural beaches, and beautiful Islands .

He also highlighted that the cruise passenger traffic grew from 1.26 lakhs in 2015-16 to 4.68 lakhs in 2019-20. He also said that cruise vessel traffic increased from 128 in 2015-16 to 451 in 2019-20.

He further said that Indian cruise tourism is like peace far away, from the stress of life and

experiencing life through natural surroundings. He also said that Indian Cruise Tourism, offers something for everyone in the family. Cruise tourism appeals, to those looking for multi-generational travel options.

The Union Minister added, "Today 73% of cruise travellers are sailing with family members, that represent at least two generations."

He also informed that the Ministry of Tourism, through the Central Financial Assistance Scheme has been supporting Tourism Infrastructure Development for Developing ports and cruise Terminals, Development of Light-houses, Purchase of ferries, Development of river cruise circuits.

He further said that the Ministry of Ports Shipping and Waterways is also working towards the development of dedicated terminals for cruise passengers and cruise vessels.

Shri G.K Reddy also informed that a dedicated task force has been formulated on Cruise Tourism, jointly by the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Shipping.

He also said that Waterdromes at 16 locations are being developed to enable sea-plane operations and are also aiming at domestic and international cruise terminal development at selected ports by 2023.

He further said that the central government is working for the upgradation and modernisation of the Ports, rationalisation - of port fees, removing ousting charges, granting priority berthing to cruise ships, providing e-visa facilities etc, to promote Cruise Tourism in India.

The promotion of coastal tourism through Beach tourism, Light-house tourism, and Cruise tourism, will help communities such as fishing communities, to find other livelihood opportunities, and supplement their existing income, added Shri G Kishan Reddy. The Minister disclosed that Gol has drawn up a programme for developing tourism in the land next to more than 75 light-houses.

He also highlighted the fact that through the Namami Ganga Mission, the Government has spent more than 4.3 billion US Dollar which is 35,414 crore and clean rivers, will also ensure potential for tourist activities such as Cruise Tourism.

On the occasion Shripad Yesso Naik said that the event has shed light on the immense potential that cruise tourism has and its achievement across the world. He also added that Goa has something for everyone from backpackers to a luxury traveller. He said that the architecture of Goa is a fusion of captivating Portuguese Bungalows and modern hotels. He also added that Goa is also known for its internationally renowned festivals like Goa Carnival, sunburn festival which attract tourists from across the world. These show the rich cultural tapestry of the state and provide visitor with unforgettable experience. He also added that Cruise tourism holds immense potential not only for Goa tourism but for the entire country as it provides employment opportunities, add to tax revenue and fostering economic growth.

At the event, In the presence of Tourism Minister, Shri G Kishan Reddy, Ministry of Tourism today signed an MoU with Airbnb to jointly promote heritage homesteads.

The second side event was organised on the theme 'Towards a circular economy of Plastics in Tourism -The global Tourism Plastic initiative'. Addressing the meeting Shri G.K Reddy quoting from Atharva Veda said "The earth is our Mother and we are her Children". He also said that Indian philosophy and lifestyle have always been rooted in the concept of coexistence with nature and we belong to a civilisation where sustainability and environment protection is an integral part of our ethos".

He further highlighted that over the last nine years, under Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's leadership, India has emerged as a global leader in supporting sustainable and inclusive growth.

He also said that sustainability is a key driver of conscious and responsible hospitality and when we talk about Sustainable Tourism,

People and planet first; Decarbonization of destinations ; Empowering Entrepreneurs should be prioritised.

He also added that there are approximately 30,000 Yuva Tourism Clubs in India, with membership ranging from fourth-graders to college students and these clubs will promote responsible tourism practices, renew interest in sustainable tourism, re-emphasise the initiatives of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat and Dekho apna Desh.

Shri G.K Reddy also informed that the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India's National Strategy for Sustainable Tourism and Swadesh Darshan 2.0 initiative have laid down the guidelines for management of plastic waste in the tourism sector.

He also urged that G20 countries together should take concrete steps to contribute to reducing plastic with the ethos of 'mindful and sustainable consumption.

At the second side event an MOU was signed between the Central Nodal Agency, Sustainable Tourism, RTSOI and Punjab Tourism Board in the presence of Minister Shri G. Kishan Reddy, to collectively unite and address plastic pollution in the tourism sector.

Panel discussions were also held in each of the side events with sharing of experiences, best practices, suggestions, way forward and usefulness of fostering partnerships. Special sessions on Gender balance in Cruise tourism, Developing India as a hub of Cruise Tourism and Global perspective on cruise Tourism were organised. On the occasion Goa tourism gave a detailed presentation- Pearl of the Orient, highlighting the unique features of Goa tourism and its potential.

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