

Ministry of Tourism to organize International Tourism Mart at Shillong, Meghalaya from 21st to 23rd November to create awareness about tourism potential of North East Region

Event to provide a platform to North Eastern stakeholders to interact with their counterparts from both within the country and overseas markets

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The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India is organizing the 11th edition of International Tourism Mart at Shillong, Meghalaya from 21st to 23rd November 2023. The International Tourism Mart is an annual event held by the Ministry in one of the North Eastern States on rotation basis, with an objective to provide a bigger platform to the North Eastern stakeholders to interact with their counterparts from both within the country and overseas markets as well as to create awareness about the tourism potential of North East Region (NER) and highlight its unique tourism products, rich bio diversity, unique intangible heritage including local traditions, dance forms, arts, handicrafts and handlooms to a domestic and international audience.

The International Mart is also going to be a unique event, as it has been planned as a Green Event by adopting low carbon options on the lines of the action points formulated by Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, GOI for implementation of Mission LiFE and sensitizing the tourism stakeholders and generating greater awareness about its objectives. There will be no use of SUP (Single Use Plastic), a digital and paperless route will be followed as well as a tree plantation drive will be undertaken.

The event is scheduled to be inaugurated by Union Minister of Tourism, Culture and DoNER, Shri G. Kishan Reddy and will be attended by North-Eastern Tourism Ministers, Seniors Officials of North-Eastern States, State Governments and Heads of the Tourism & Hospitality Associations. The earlier editions of this Mart have been held in Guwahati, Tawang, Shillong, Gangtok, Agartala, Imphal, Kohima and Aizwal. Shillong will be hosting this event for the second time, since its inception. An approximate number of 100 delegates including domestic and international, would be participating in the event.

The event will include an exclusive session dedicated to business meetings between local North Eastern stakeholders and domestic and international buyers. The eight North Eastern States would present the updates on their new destinations as well as new opportunities in their States. Knowledge sessions and panel discussions with panelists from both the Government and private sectors would deliberate on the advances and development of connectivity in the region. The air connectivity in the North East has increased tremendously in the last few years. At present, there are more than 16 airports providing accessibility to tourist destinations in the North East Region. The Ministry of Tourism has collaborated with the Ministry of Civil Aviation under their RCS-UDAN Scheme. As part of this collaboration, 53 tourism routes have become operational of which 10 routes are exclusively for North East Region. The 3 vistadome trains operating in

North East region have greatly contributed to not only connectivity but also in enhancing its tourism appeal.

Further, in order to take forward the Travel for LiFE, a sectoral programme initiated by the Ministry of Tourism, under the aegis of Mission LiFE, Ministry is working with all the stakeholders in the tourism ecosystem including the State Governments, Industry, destinations and tourists. Travel for LiFE Program is envisaged to position India as a leader in promoting sustainable and responsible tourism and using tourism as a vehicle for achieving Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. This Mart also upholds the action points formulated by MoEF for organization of national and international Conferences.

Development of tourism infrastructure and tourism promotion in NER

Development of tourism infrastructure and tourism promotion activities in the North East Region has been one of the priorities of Ministry of Tourism. Sixteen projects have been sanctioned in the North East States under the **Swadesh Darshan** Scheme for a total amount of Rs.1309.00 crores. A total of 15 tourist destinations are being taken up in the North East for development under the revamped Swadesh Darshan Scheme 2.0 with an objective to develop sustainable and responsible destinations with a tourist and destination-centric approach. Further, Ministry of Tourism under the **PRASHAD** Scheme has sanctioned a total of 8 projects for an amount of Rs.256.45 Crore for the integrated development of identified pilgrimage destinations in the North East States. The Ministry of Tourism has also sanctioned the development of 22 viewpoints at the cost of Rs.44.44 Crore to provide world-class infrastructure and related services for the highway network viz, commercial spaces, logistic parks, traveler facilities such as wayside amenities (WSA) in the North East Region. Many of the projects sanctioned under SD 1.0 and PRASHAD Schemes have already been completed and dedicated to the nation.

Beena Yadav

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