There is a growing interest in the world towards heritage tourism in India says President of India Smt. Droupadi Murmu addressing the Joint Sitting of Two Houses of Parliament

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More than 5 crore people have visited Mahakaal

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North East is witnessing record tourist arrivals; There is heightened excitement about Andaman-Nicobar and Lakshadweep islands: President

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The President of India, Smt. Droupadi Murmu addressed the joint sitting of the two houses of Parliament, here today. The President, in her address, highlighted the achievements and various initiatives taken by the Government of India during the last 10 years for development of tourism sector, pilgrimage destinations and historical sites across the country.

In her address, the President said, "Tourism is a big sector providing employment to the youth. In the last 10 years, my government has done unprecedented work in the field of tourism. Along with the number of domestic tourists in India, the number of foreign tourists coming to India has also increased".

The President said, "The reason for the growth in the tourism sector is owed to India's growing stature. Today the world wants to explore and know India. Apart from this, the scope of tourism has also increased due to excellent connectivity. Building of airports at various places is also advantageous. Now, North East is witnessing record tourist arrivals. Now there is heightened excitement about Andaman-Nicobar and Lakshadweep islands".

"Government has laid emphasis on the development of pilgrimage destinations and historical sites across the country. This has now made pilgrimage in India easier. At the same time, there is a growing interest in the world towards heritage tourism in India. In the last one year 8.5 crores of people have visited Kashi. More than 5 crores of people have visited Mahakaal. More than 19 lakh people have visited Kedar Dham. In the 5 days of "Pran Pratishtha" 13 lakh devotees have visited Ayodhya Dham itself. There is unprecedented expansion of facilities at pilgrimage sites in every part of India, East-West-North-South", stated the President.

The President said, "government also wants to make India a leading destination for meetings and exhibitions related sectors. For this, facilities like Bharat Mandapam, Yashobhoomi have been created. In near future, tourism will become a major source of employment".

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## Beena Yadav

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