

SAFE TRAVEL OF FOREIGNERS

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Safety and Security of tourists is essentially a State Government subject. However, the Ministry of Tourism has been continuously taking up the matter with all the State Governments/Union Territory (UT) Administrations for setting up of dedicated Tourism Police. With the efforts of Ministry of Tourism, the State Governments /UT Administrations of Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim and Uttar Pradesh have deployed tourist police, in one form or the other.

As a part of its endeavours to make travel for tourists safe and secure, the Ministry of Tourism has set up a 24x7 Multi-Lingual Tourist Info-Helpline on the toll free number 1800111363 or on a short code 1363 in 12 Languages including 10 international languages (German, French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Arabic), Hindi and English for domestic and foreign tourists to provide support service in term of information relating to Travel in India and to offer appropriate guidance to tourists in distress, while travelling within India.

Ministry of Tourism classifies operational hotels under the star rating system and approves hotel projects under its voluntary scheme of classification/approval of hotels/hotel projects. As per the guidelines laid down by the Ministry, the hotels are classified taking into consideration of various parameters viz. No Objection Certificates from Fire Department, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and consent to operate from State Pollution Control Board, CRZ clearance (wherever applicable), sewage treatment plant etc., including at ecologically sensitive areas.

Under the National Mission on 'Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive' (PRASHAD), Ministry of Tourism supported integrated development of Kedarnath Dham. The Ministry has also provided funds for development of infrastructure for pilgrimage facilitation in Badrinath ji Dham and augmentation of pilgrimage infrastructure facilities at Gangotri and Yamunotri Dham.

Ministry of Tourism also promotes tourism destinations and products of India including both in domestic and global markets. Promotion is carried out through various initiatives including events and social media. Some of the campaigns and schemes for such promotions organized by the Ministry are Dekho Apna Desh (DAD), Bharat Parv, International Tourism Mart (ITM) and Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat which include promotion of Char Dham Yatra.

In addition to the above, the Department of Tourism, Government of Uttarakhand have informed that they, along with related departments like medical, police and disaster management, etc., organizes the Chardham Yatra, every year. For an easy and convenient yatra for the pilgrims, the department has implemented the following measures:

- i. Online registration of pilgrims
- ii. WhatsApp registration
- iii. Registration through a mobile app
- iv. Queue management and token distribution for darshan (holy viewing)
- v. 24/7 Helpdesk and Control Room for tourists
- vi. Promotion and dissemination of information regarding Chardham through various platforms of digital and print media.

They have informed further that the Char Dhaam Yatra is a significant event for which weather forecasts are crucial due to the region's terrain and altitude. The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) provides special forecasts and advisories specifically tailored for pilgrimage season to ensure the safety and comfort of the pilgrims.

This information was given by Union Minister for Tourism and Culture Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat in a written reply in Lok Sabha today.

BY/SKT

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