GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF TOURISM

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.2460
ANSWERED ON 04.08.2025

INTER-CULTURAL TOURISM BETWEEN NER AND SOUTHERN INDIA

2460. SHRI DURAI VAIKO:

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a)   whether the Government is taking steps to strengthen cultural exchange and tourism connectivity between the North Eastern Region (NER) and Southern India, especially Tamil Nadu;

(b)   whether the Government has launched any specific schemes or initiatives to promote inter-cultural tourism circuits, experiential travel, or student/youth exchange programmes between the said regions;

(c)   whether Tiruchirappalli, being a key spiritual, cultural and heritage centre, is being included or considered under such inter-regional tourism promotion plans;

(d)   whether the Government has engaged with the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Indian Railways to ensure better air and rail connectivity between North Eastern capitals and major South Indian cities including Trichy; and

(e)   if so, the details of projects implemented or proposed and the future roadmap for building greater cultural integration and tourism-based livelihood opportunities through such linkages?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM   (SHRI GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT)

(a) to (e): Yes, Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) launched the Regional Connectivity Scheme Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik (RCS-UDAN) on 21.10.2016 to enhance regional air connectivity from unserved and underserved airports in the country and make air travel affordable to the masses.

Under this scheme, with a view to strengthen tourism connectivity, 53 Tourism RCS routes across the country including North Eastern Region (NER) and Southern India are operationalised under Tourism - RCS (TRCS). These routes were funded with 100% Viability Gap Funding (VGF) reimbursement by Ministry of Tourism providing direct air connectivity to tourist destinations

and cultural sites in the country. Though there is no direct air connectivity under RCS Udan between airports at North-Eastern region to Southern Indian airports, indirect connectivity is available through connecting flights.

A total of 90 routes have been operationalised in the North Eastern Region (NER) under the Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS-UDAN), connecting 10 airports and 02 heliports across the NER states.

Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) has informed that total 17 trips of Bharat Gaurav Trains on theme based circuit were operated in Financial year 2024-25 in which 9,246 tourists visited Tamil Nadu. Out of these 17 tours, Tiruchirapalli (Trichy) was included in 04 trips and 1,923 tourists visited Tiruchirapalli (Trichy).

IRCTC has organized different tours connecting Southern Part of India and North East destinations as a part of Yuva Sangam Tours which is an initiative by Government of India under "Ek Bharat Shresth Bharat" scheme to strengthen people to people connect especially between youth belonging to various States/UTs. In the Yuva Sangam Tours, institutes from the North-Eastern region and Tamilnadu have been paired together for the cultural exchange.

IRCTC also conducts Domestic Air packages providing tourism connectivity between the North Eastern Region and South India. Following table give details in this regard:

S. No.	Package Name	Source	Destination	Duration	Departure
1.	KERALA LUXE ESCAPE EX-BAGDOGRA	Bagdogra	Munnar / Thekkady / Alleppey / Trivandrum / Kochi	6 Nights / 7 Days	11.10.2025
2.	KERALA LUXE ESCAPE EX-GUWAHATI	Guwahati	Munnar / Thekkady / Alleppey / Trivandrum / Kochi	6 Nights / 7 Days	11.10.2025

North East India offers diverse tourism-based livelihood opportunities rooted in cultural experiences such as community-based tourism, eco-friendly homestays, cultural performances, nature-based activities, culinary tourism,

and sustainable farming. Similarly, South India presents potential through tribal arts, rural experiences, and cultural exchange programs.

Such cultural integration and tourism-linked livelihoods helps a sustainable and inclusive future roadmap by preserving heritage and empowering local communities across regions.

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