

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF TOURISM**

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.5853
ANSWERED ON 30.03.2026**

**REGULATING TOURIST NUMBERS IN ECOLOGICALLY SENSITIVE
AREAS AND TREKKING ZONES**

5853. MS. PRANITI SUSHILKUMAR SHINDE:

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has considered or implemented any policy to fix a carrying capacity or upper limit on the number of tourists visiting ecologically sensitive areas, wildlife reserves and popular trekking routes across the country;**
- (b) the details of criteria and scientific studies used to determine such limits, if any along with the areas where these have been notified so far;**
- (c) whether instances of environmental degradation, waste generation and disturbance to wildlife have been reported due to unregulated tourism and trekking in such sensitive regions;**
- (d) the details of coordination mechanism among the Ministry of Environment, State Governments and forest authorities is in place to regulate tourist inflow and enforce sustainable tourism practices; and**
- (e) the details of steps taken or proposed to be taken to ensure that tourism in ecologically sensitive and trekking areas is environmentally sustainable while safeguarding local livelihoods?**

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT)

(a) to (e): Development, promotion and maintenance of tourist destinations is primarily undertaken by the respective State Government / Union Territory (UT) Administration.

The Ministry of Tourism through its central sector schemes of 'Swadesh Darshan', 'Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive (PRASHAD)' and 'Assistance to Central Agencies for Tourism Infrastructure Development' extends financial assistance to the

State Governments / UT Administrations for tourism infrastructure development in the country. The central financial assistance is being extended according to guidelines and based on proposals / detailed project reports received from the States and UT Governments.

The Ministry of Tourism has issued guidelines for its Swadesh Darshan scheme (SD2.0), which emphasises benchmarking and gap analysis with respect to multiple items including carrying capacity. The Ministry of Tourism has also circulated a Template for Destination Master Plan, Strategy and Action Plan to the State Governments which includes guidance on assessment of carrying capacity of destination and managing carrying capacity. The said method guides to undertake assessment of physical carrying capacity of the destination in terms of number of visitors that can be allowed over a period of time in a delineated limit. It further advises to consider other natural and/or man-made factors affecting the tourism carrying capacity of destination based on significance and criticality of these factors to the said destination. These factors may include variables such as heavy rainfall days, heavy snowfall days etc. Reviewing and updating criteria based on change in visitor number, environmental conditions and local community needs can be done as per destination requirement in order to ensure destination's ability to sustainably and safely accommodate visitors without degrading the environment, resources and to ensure long-term tourism viability.

The scheme focuses on implementation of sustainable and responsible tourism practices in various projects and initiatives and also encourages adoption of principles of sustainable tourism viz. environmental sustainability, socio-cultural sustainability and economic sustainability including employment generation.
