

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
TOURISM
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3410
ANSWERED ON:10.08.2015
Tourism Competitive Index
Verma Shri Anshul

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Travel and Tourism competitiveness Index 2013 of the World Economic Forum has ranked India quite low amongst 140 countries in tourism competitiveness;
(b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto;
(c) the measures taken by the Government to improve India's tourism competitiveness, particularly regarding infrastructure and restrictive visa policy; and
(d) the success achieved by the Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR TOURISM (INDEPENDENT CHARGE)
(DR. MAHESH SHARMA)

(a) and (b): As per the Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI) 2013, of the World Economic Forum, India ranks 11th in Asia and Pacific region and 65th amongst 140 countries in tourism competitiveness. Improving ranking of India from 65th to 52nd position in travel and tourism competitiveness index had been set as a target in the Result Framework Document (RFD) of Ministry of Tourism for the year 2014-15.

(c): The measures taken by the Government to improve India's tourism competitiveness, particularly regarding infrastructure and restrictive visa policy are as below:

Infrastructure:

Development and promotion of tourism is primarily responsibility of the respective State Government/Union Territory (UT) Administration. The Ministry of Tourism provides Central Financial Assistance (CFA) for tourism projects that are complete as per existing scheme guidelines and sanctioned subject to availability of scheme/funds and utilization of funds released earlier.

Pursuant to the announcement made in the Budget 2014-15, the following two new schemes were launched in 2014-15 under Central Sector:

(i) Swadesh Darshan - Integrated Infrastructure Development as Theme-Based Tourist Circuits.

Swadesh Darshan were launched for development of theme based tourist circuits in a way that caters to both mass and niche tourism in a holistic manner. Twelve Circuits namely North-East India Circuit, Buddhist Circuit, Himalayan Circuit, Coastal Circuit, Krishna Circuit, Desert Circuit, Tribal Circuit, Eco Circuit, Wildlife Circuit, Rural Circuit, Spiritual Circuit and Ramayana Circuit have been identified for development under this Scheme.

(ii) National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive (PRASAD).

In the first phase, 12 cities have been identified for infrastructure development. The cities identified are Amritsar, Kedarnath, Ajmer, Mathura, Varanasi, Gaya, Puri, Dwarka, Amravati, Kanchipuram, Vellankanni and Guwahati.

Visa policy:

- i. The Government of India has introduced e-Tourist Visa facility with effect from 27.11.2014. This facility is presently available to nationals of 77 countries. This is a major step taken to ease the visa regime as the e-Tourist Visa would enable the prospective visitor to apply for an Indian Visa from his/her home country online without visiting the Indian Mission and also pay the visa fee online.
- ii. The restriction of two-month gap on re-entry of foreign nationals coming to India on Tourist Visa has been lifted with effect from 4th December, 2012.

(d): As per the Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI) 2015, of the World Economic Forum, rank of India has improved significantly to 52nd in 2015 from 65th in 2013.
