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Title: Need to include Dhauli-Ratnagiri-Lalitgiri-Udayagiri-Langudi Buddhist Circuit in Odisha under Swadesh Darshan Scheme.

SHRI BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB (CUTTACK): Madam, I would like to draw the attention of the Government, through you, to the huge potential of Buddhist tourism in the State of Odisha.

Archaeological exploration and excavations have established more than 200 Buddhist sites across the State. The Buddhist Triangle -- popularly known as the Diamond Triangle of Odisha comprising of Ratnagiri, Lalitgiri and Udayagiri, which is about 100 kms. from the State Capital Bhubaneswar -- is now a major tourist attraction. Buddhism flourished in these places from 3rd Century BC till 15th Century AD. The Buddhist remains in the form of Chaityas, Stupas, Monasteries and the Tooth Relic in Golden Casket found here aptly established this circuit at par with other major sites in the country.

The socio-cultural life of early medieval Odisha is reflected in the cultural art of these Buddhist monuments. It is a well-established fact that Buddhism spread to the rest of the world after the great Kalinga War from these places of present day Odisha by Emperor Ashoka. Thus, the Dhauli-Ratnagiri-Lalitgiri-Udayagiri-Langudi Buddhist Circuit of Odisha deserves to be included in the list of Buddhist Circuits under the *Swadesh Darshan Scheme* so that these Buddhist destinations are improved with adequate tourism infrastructures and facilities.

Recently, the Civil Aviation Ministry has also started a flight from Varanasi to Bhubaneswar, but these sites have not been included in the International Buddhist Circuit map. I would also like to apprise the House through you, Madam, that it was in 1958 when the then Prime Minister of Burma - today's Myanmar, Mr. U Nu; the Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru; and the then Chief Minister of Odisha had planted a sapling of *Peepal*, which was brought from Anuradhapura, Candy. It is there in Bhubaneswar and these are unique things that Bhubaneswar still has and that still Odisha has. Bhubaneswar has become an international airport today. I would request the Central Government to include these sites of Buddhist importance in the Buddhist Circuit of the country.

HON. SPEAKER : Shri Keshav Prasad Maurya is permitted to associate with the issue raised by Shri Bhartruhari Mahtab.

13.00 hours

माननीय अध्यक्ष : आप थोड़े में बोलिए, इससे ज्यादा लोगों को बोलने का मौका मिलेगा।