



Revolutionary Infrastructure Growth in the Last 11 Years Fuels Unprecedented Expansion of India's Tourism Sector: Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat

Record Growth in Tourist Arrivals, Infrastructure Development and Global Positioning

India's National Highway network has expanded by 60%, from 91,287 km in 2014 to 1,46,195 km at present, significantly improving road connectivity to major and emerging tourist destinations

From Gradual Progress to Historic Transformation: India's Infrastructure Revolution Drives Record Tourism Growth

India's Road, Rail and Waterway Revolution Triggers Unprecedented Tourism Boom

A Decade of Infrastructure Transformation Powers India's Rise as a Global Tourism Destination

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Union Minister for Tourism, Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, today said that while India witnessed gradual development in road and rail infrastructure in the decades following Independence, the last 11 years have seen a revolutionary transformation across road transport, railways, and waterways. This massive leap in infrastructure has not only strengthened the national economy but has also led to unprecedented growth in the tourism sector.

Addressing a press conference in New Delhi, Shri Shekhawat stated that India's tourism sector has undergone a historic expansion over the past decade, powered by focused policy interventions, extensive infrastructure creation, and sustained global branding efforts. These achievements underline India's emergence as a preferred destination for both international and domestic travellers.



Sharp Increase in Tourist Arrivals

- India recorded 161.16 million International Tourist Arrivals (ITAs) during 2014–2024.
- Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) rose to 86.22 million during 2014–2024, up from 52.99 million in 2004–2013.
- Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEEs) stood at Rs. 18.85 lakh crore during 2014–2024—more than triple the Rs. 6.01 lakh crore earned in 2004–2013.
- Domestic Tourist Visits (DTVIs) surged to 18,639.35 million during 2014–2024, compared to 6,779.10 million during 2004–2013.

Massive Tourism Infrastructure Expansion

Swadesh Darshan Scheme (2015 onwards)

- 76 projects sanctioned with Rs. 5,290.33 crore; 75 projects physically completed.

Swadesh Darshan 2.0 – Sustainable & Destination-Centric Tourism

- 53 projects sanctioned with Rs. 2,208.27 crore for responsible and tourist-centric development.

Challenge-Based Destination Development (CBDD)

36 projects approved with Rs. 648.11 crore across:

- Spiritual Tourism
- Culture & Heritage
- Vibrant Village Programme

- Ecotourism & Amrit Dharohar Sites

These initiatives improve the entire tourism value chain, enhancing visitor experience and accessibility.

Development of Iconic Tourist Centres (SASCI – 2024–25)

- 40 projects sanctioned across 23 States with Rs. 3,295.76 crore under long-term (50-year) interest-free loans to elevate tourist destinations to global standards.

Assistance to Central Agencies Scheme

- 57 projects sanctioned worth Rs. 845.51 crore for ASI, Port Trusts, ITDC, Railways, etc.
- 34 projects completed; 9 foreclosed.

Connectivity Boost: Expansion of National Highways

- India's National Highway network expanded by 60%, from 91,287 km in 2014 to 1,46,195 km at present, dramatically improving access to key tourist centres.
- For context, India's National Highways measured 65,569 km in 2004.
- (Source: Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, Annual Report 2024–25)

India's integrated approach to infrastructure development, sustainable tourism, and enhanced connectivity has driven major socio-economic gains, strengthened livelihoods, and positioned India as a rising global tourism powerhouse. The achievements of the last decade reflect the Government's commitment to making tourism a pivotal driver of national growth.

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