

STRENGTHENING OF TOURIST SAFETY

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Safety and Security of tourists is essentially a state subject. However, the Ministry of Tourism has been continuously taking up the matter with all the State Governments and Union Territory (UT) Administrations for setting up of dedicated Tourism Police to strengthen on-ground safety mechanism for tourists. With the efforts of Ministry of Tourism, the State Governments /UT's viz Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim and Uttar Pradesh have deployed tourist police.

Ministry of Tourism has been periodically requesting all State Governments and Union Territory Administrations for availing the benefits of the 'Safe Tourism Destination for Women' under Nirbhaya fund which can be utilized for projects specifically designed to improve the safety and security of women tourists.

The Ministry of Tourism along with all stakeholders, including the Tourism Departments of all States and UTs, have adopted the 'Code of Conduct for Safe & Honourable Tourism' which is a set of guidelines to encourage tourism activities to be undertaken with respect to basic rights like dignity, safety and freedom from exploitation of both tourists and local residents, in particular, women and children.

As a part of the Ministry's continuous endeavors to make travel for tourists safe and secure, the Ministry of Tourism has set up a 24x7 Multi-Lingual Tourist Helpline on the toll free number 1800111363 or on a short code 1363 in 12 languages including 10 international languages for domestic and foreign tourists to provide support service in terms of information relating to travel in India and to offer appropriate guidance to tourists in distress, while travelling within India.

With a view to bring in more transparency, accountability and improved service delivery, the Ministry of Tourism introduced an online system of receiving, processing and conveying/ granting approvals for classification of Accommodation Units and recognition of Tourism Service Providers. Applications can be filed at the portal of National Integrated Database of Hospitality Industry (NIDHI+), i.e. nidhi.tourism.gov.in. This online process has also been integrated with a payment gateway.

Effective and adequate connectivity is one of the important aspects for developing a tourist destination. Ministry of Tourism is working very closely with Ministry of Civil Aviation for improving the air connectivity to important tourist destinations and to lesser known/new destinations with high potential. It has coordinated with Ministry of Civil Aviation under their Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS-Udan) and sharing the Viability Gap Funding (VGF) amount for the 53 tourism routes identified for this purpose.

This information was given by Union Minister for Tourism and Culture Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat in a written reply in Lok Sabha today

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