14th International Tourism Mart Inaugurated in Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh

Union Tourism Minister Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat calls for transforming North East's tourism potential into business opportunities and sustainable livelihood

Ministry of Tourism emphasises sustainable tourism, improved connectivity and livelihood opportunities for local communities

Domestic tourist visits to North Eastern States increase from 95.65 lakh in 2019 to 1.51 crore in 2025

Posted On: 29 OCT 2026 9:22PM by PIB Delhi

The 14th edition of the International Tourism Mart (ITM), organised by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, in association with the Government of Arunachal Pradesh and other North Eastern States, commenced today at Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh. The three-day Mart, being held from 29 to 31 October 2026, aims to showcase the tourism potential of the eight North Eastern States and strengthen business engagement with domestic and international tourism markets.



The inaugural session was held in the presence of Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Union Minister for Tourism and Culture; Shri Suresh Gopi, Union Minister of State for Tourism and Petroleum & Natural Gas; Dr. Sukanta Majumdar, Union Minister of State for Education and Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER); Shri Pema Khandu, Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh; and Shri Prem Singh Tamang, Chief Minister of Sikkim. Tourism Ministers from the North Eastern States, senior officials of the Central and State Governments, international and domestic tourism stakeholders and representatives of the travel industry were also present. Addressing the inaugural session, Union Minister Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat emphasised that the International Tourism Mart has evolved beyond a promotional platform into an important avenue for tourism partnerships and business opportunities. He stated, **"**ITM is not merely a tourism marketplace; it is a platform for building partnerships, generating business opportunities and creating a shared vision for the growth of tourism in the North East Region."

Highlighting the immense potential of the region, the Minister said that its rich biodiversity, cultural heritage, spiritual traditions and natural landscapes offer distinctive opportunities for adventure, nature-based and experiential tourism. He particularly emphasised the potential of adventure tourism, music festivals and concert tourism to attract new visitor segments, encourage longer stays and generate economic opportunities for local communities. He also called for developing tourism experiences with appropriate safety standards, community participation and environmental safeguards.

The Minister highlighted the Government's continued focus on improving connectivity, tourism infrastructure and destination experiences in the North Eastern Region. He also underlined the Ministry's support for tourism promotion through domestic and international travel fairs, festivals, digital platforms and familiarisation visits, along with skill development initiatives to create employment opportunities for local youth.

Earlier, addressing a press conference, Union Minister Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat highlighted that the 14th International Tourism Mart has brought together 43 international buyers from 22 countries, the highest-ever international buyer participation at ITM, along with 42 domestic buyers from 16 States and Union Territories and 81 sellers. He emphasised that hosting the Mart in Tawang would bring greater attention to lesser-known destinations in the North Eastern Region and showcase their tourism potential to domestic and international markets. Highlighting the growth of tourism in the region, he noted that domestic tourist visits to the eight North Eastern States increased from 95.65 lakh in 2019 to 1.51 crore in 2025, registering a growth of approximately 58%.



The Minister also highlighted the Government's continued focus on strengthening tourism infrastructure and connectivity in the region. He informed that 16 projects worth ₹1,309 crore have been sanctioned under Swadesh Darshan 1.0, 17 projects worth ₹564 crore under Swadesh Darshan 2.0, nine projects worth ₹139 crore under Challenge Based Destination Development, nine projects worth ₹790 crore under SASCI and nine projects worth ₹258 crore under PRASHAD. Additionally, the Ministry has supported ten tourism routes in the North Eastern Region under the Regional Connectivity Scheme–UDAN. He reiterated the Government's commitment to promoting sustainable tourism, improving visitor experiences and creating livelihood opportunities for local communities.

During the inaugural session, Union Minister of State for Tourism Shri Suresh Gopi highlighted the opportunities for developing innovative tourism products, including cultural, adventure, festival and community-based experiences. He also emphasised the importance of the Ministry's initiatives, Dekho Apna Desh 2.0 and the National Digital Tourism Stack, in promoting lesser-known destinations and improving digital visibility and market access for local tourism service providers.

The inaugural session also featured addresses by Shri Pema Khandu, Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh; Shri Prem Singh Tamang, Chief Minister of Sikkim; and Dr. Sukanta Majumdar, Union Minister of State for Education and DoNER.



As part of the programme, the North East Bazaar was inaugurated, showcasing traditional handicrafts, handlooms and other cultural offerings of the region. A cultural programme highlighting the rich traditions of the North Eastern States was also organised.

The Mart will feature tourism presentations by all eight North Eastern States and structured B2B meetings. A Regional Meeting of Tourism Ministers of the North Eastern States will be held on 30 October 2026 to deliberate on tourism development, regional cooperation, tourist facilitation and emerging tourism opportunities.

The 14th edition marks the return of the International Tourism Mart to Tawang after 13 years, following the second edition held here in 2013. The event seeks to strengthen tourism partnerships, promote lesser-known destinations and position the North Eastern Region as a leading destination for sustainable and experience-based tourism.

***

RK

(Release ID: 2330273) Visitor Counter : 663
Read this release in: Urdu , हिन्दी , Assamese

Share

809 words | 3 min read