



India Moves 12 Places up from 52nd to 40th Position in Travel and Tourism Competitive Index of World Economic Forum

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Dr. Mahesh Sharma, Minister of State (I/C) for Tourism & Culture shared the news about the improvement in ranking of India in the Travel and Tourism Competitive Index (TTCI) of World Economic Forum released on 5th April 2017 with media persons here today. India has moved 12 places up in this ranking from 52nd to 40th position. He acknowledged the vision, guidance and support of Prime Minister for the tourism sector of the country that is the driving force and motivation for all of us to continuously work for the growth of Tourism in India.

The tourism sector in the country has been on a growth trajectory since the present government came into power in May, 2014. India's ranking in the Travel and Tourism Competitive Index (TTCI) of World Economic Forum moved from 65th position to 52nd position in 2015. Now India has moved up by another 12 positions and ranked at 40th position. In all, in last three years India has cumulatively improved its ranking by 25 places which is a significant achievement.

India continues to charm international tourists with its vast cultural and natural resources with a ranking of 9th and 24th respectively which are the USP's of Indian Tourism product. In terms of price competitiveness advantage, we are ranked 10th.

India continues to enrich its cultural resources, protecting more cultural sites and intangible expressions through UNESCO World Heritage lists, and via a greater digital presence.

In terms of International openness, India is ranked 55th, up by 14 places. This has been possible through stronger visa policies. Implementing both visas on arrival and e-visas, has enabled India to rise through the ranks.

The T&T sector benefited from improvements in the country's ground transport infrastructure, which has traditionally been a challenge (29th). India is taking small but important steps in the right direction. The Indian T&T sector presents significant opportunities that are yet to be reaped.

The World Economic Forum has, for the past 11 years, engaged leaders in travel and tourism to carry out an in-depth analysis of the Travel and Tourism competitiveness of 136 economies across the world. The Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index measures "the set of factors and policies that enable the sustainable development of the travel and tourism sector, which in turn, contributes to the development and competitiveness of a country". The Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index enables all stakeholders to work together to improve the industry's competitiveness in their national economies.

At a macro level, the primary reasons for India's jump in the Travel and Tourism Competitive Index 2017 should be attributed to the pro-active steps taken by our Government in terms of development of tourism infrastructure, easing of entry formalities for tourists by introducing the e-visa facilities in November 2014.

Some of the key achievements of the Ministry of Tourism in the last 3 years are as follows:-

Ø Two new schemes for development of tourism infrastructure in the country with a holistic coverage of an entire circuit instead of individual tourist spots. PRASAD Scheme is targeted towards the development of tourism infrastructure in and around famous religious and pilgrimage cities. The Swadesh Darshan Scheme aims at the development of a complete circuit on a specific theme.

Ø 56 projects covering 29 States /UT's worth Rs. 4,823.91 crores have been sanctioned under the Swadesh Darshan Scheme since its launch on 1st January 2015. 13 thematic circuits have been identified under which projects are sanctioned.

Ø 18 projects worth Rs. 488.45 crores have been sanctioned under the PRASAD Scheme since its launch on 1st January 2015. 25 religious cities have been identified under the scheme for development.

Ø Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTA) which were 6.97 million tourists in 2013, increased to 7.68 million in 2014, 8.03 million in 2015 and 8.89 million in 2016. FTA has grown with a CAGR of 8.45% against the international growth rate of 4 - 5%.

Ø FTA registered a growth of 16.5% in January 2017 compared to January 2016. FTAs during the period January- February 2017 were 19.40 lakh with a growth of 14.7%, as compared to the FTAs of 16.91 over January-February 2016.

Ø Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEE) which were US\$18.45 billion tourists in 2013, increased constantly, to US\$20.24 billion in 2014, US\$21.07 billion in 2015 and US\$23.15 billion in 2016. FEE has grown with a CAGR of 7.86% against a contraction of 5% in international tourism receipts. FTA has registered a growth of 16.3% in January 2017 when compared to January 2016.

Ø The e-Tourist Visa was introduced in September 2014 for 46 countries. This facility is now called e-Visa. It is now available for nationals of 161 countries and allows visits for business and medical treatment. The process of obtaining the e-Tourist Visa has been simplified significantly by addressing issues like more than one entry and longer lead period for applying for e-Visa. 10,79,696 tourists visited India on the e-Tourist Visa in 2016.

Ø Incredible India Tourist Helpline was launched on 8th February 2016. The helpline provides assistance and information to tourists in 12 major languages of the world including Hindi & English. The helpline is available 24x7 and can be accessed on the Toll-free Number 1800- 11-1363 or on a short code 1363. The languages covered are Hindi, English, Arabic, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Chinese, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish.

Ø The Ministry of Tourism has launched a 'Welcome Card' for distribution at immigration counters to tourists arriving at international airports. From 15th February 2017 the Ministry has introduced free SIM Cards with pre-loaded talktime and data to all tourists arriving in India on the e-Tourist Visa.

Ø The Indian Culinary Institute (ICI) at Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh was set up and commenced its academic session with the 3-year regular B.Sc. course (Culinary Arts) from August 2016.

Ø The Ministry of Tourism created a task force for Cruise Tourism on 24th November 2015 to formulate a common Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for promotion of Cruise Tourism in India.

Ø The Ministry of Tourism set up a Medical and Wellness Tourism Promotion Board on 5th October 2015 for the promotion of Medical and Wellness tourism in India.

Sanjay Kumar/jk/Tourism/07.04.2017

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