

AS INTRODUCED IN THE RAJYA SABHA
ON THE 3RD MAY, 2010

Bill No. IV of 2010

THE NORTH-EASTERN TOURISM PROMOTION BOARD BILL, 2010

A

BILL

to provide for the establishment of Tourism Promotion Board for the North-Eastern region of the country and for matters connected therewith and incidental thereto.

BE it enacted by Parliament in the Sixty-first Year of the Republic of India as follows:—

- 1.** (1) This Act may be called the North-Eastern Tourism Promotion Board Act, 2010. Short title, extent and commencement.
(2) It extends to the North-Eastern States of the country.
(3) It shall come into force at once.

2. In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires,— Definitions.

(a) “appropriate Government” means in the case of a State, the Government of that State and in other cases, the Central Government;

(b) “Board” means the North-Eastern Tourism Promotion Board established under section 3 of this Act.

(c) “North-Eastern States” include Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura;

(d) “prescribed” means prescribed by rules made under this Act.

Establishment
of the North-
Eastern
Tourism
Promotion
Board.

3. (1) The Central Government shall within one year from the date of commencement of this Act, by notification in the Official Gazette, establish a Board at the national level to be known as the "North-Eastern Tourism Promotion Board" for the purposes of this Act.

(2) The Board shall be a body corporate by the name aforesaid, having perpetual succession and a common seal, with power to acquire, hold and dispose of property, both movable and immovable, and to contract, and shall by the said name sue and be sued.

(3) The head office of the Board shall be at New Delhi and a regional office at Shillong in the State of Meghalaya and the Board may, with the previous approval of the Central Government establish offices in the North-Eastern States and such other places in and outside India as the Central Government may deem necessary for carrying out the purposes of this Act.

(4) The Board shall consist of the following members, namely:—

(a) a Chairperson having vast knowledge and working experience of tourism and hospitality sector to be appointed by the Central Government in such manner as may be prescribed;

(b) one member each from the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha representing each of the North-Eastern State to be nominated by the respective Presiding officers of each House of Parliament;

(c) six members to be appointed by the Central Government to represent respectively the Union,—

(i) Ministry of Tourism;

(ii) Ministry of Culture;

(iii) Ministry of Finance;

(iv) Ministry of Information & Broadcasting;

(v) Ministry of Planning; and

(vi) Ministry of Road Transport & Highways.

(d) Three members to be appointed by the Central Government from amongst the Tour Operators;

(5) The Board shall effect from amongst its members, a Vice-Chairperson who shall exercise such of the powers and perform such of the functions of the Chairperson as may be prescribed and as may be delegated to him or her by the Chairperson.

(6) The term of office of the members and the procedure to be followed in the discharge of their functions shall be such as may be prescribed.

(7) The Board may associate with itself in such manner and for such purposes, as may be prescribed, any person whose assistance or advice it may desire in complying with any of the provisions of this Act and the person so associated shall have the right to take part in the discussions of the Board relevant to the purposes for which he has been associated, but shall not have the right to vote.

(8) The Chairperson and members of the Board shall be entitled to such salary and allowances and such conditions of service as may be, from time to time, be determined by the Central Government.

Secretariat of
the Board.

4. (1) The Board shall have a Secretariat consisting of a Secretary, a Planning Advisor and such other officers and employees as the Central Government may by order determine and consider it necessary for the efficient discharge of the functions of the Board under this Act.

(2) The Secretariat of the Board shall function under the direction, supervision and control of the Chairperson of the Board in such manner as may be prescribed.

(3) The Administrative expenses of the Secretariat including salaries and allowances payable to or in respect of the staff shall be borne by the Central Government out of the moneys allocated by Parliament from time to time for the purpose.

5. (1) The Board shall function as a planning and advisory body for the accelerated and all round development and promotion of tourism in the North-Eastern States and formulate various tourism related schemes for each of the North-Eastern State and issues of common tourism interest of these States in a time-bound manner.

Functions of
the Board.

(2) Without prejudice to the generality of the provisions of the sub-section (1) of section 5, the development and promotional tourism plans and schemes referred to therein may provide for,—

(a) accelerated promotion of tourism of each State of North-Eastern region by way of compilation of tourism related infrastructural requirement of each State by deputing team of experts to the States for making ground assessment of the tourism related infrastructural requirements and making appropriate recommendations;

(b) interlinking of all the places of tourism importance of all the North-Eastern States by air, road and rail and extending communication, telecommunication and IT facilities at such places;

(c) setting up of tourism facilitation centres at all entry points of the borders of each State and at all airports and railway stations with a view to facilitating travel, board, lodging, etc. for the tourists including reservation in air services, trains, buses, hotels, motels and guest houses, etc.;

(d) setting up of hotels, restaurants and motels at all tourism centres with a view to catering to the needs of different categories of domestic and international tourists and recognition of private sector hotels, motels, restaurants, etc. for the benefits of tourists in such manner as may be prescribed;

(e) recognising and preparing a list of paying guest accommodations available at places and more so at places having inadequate hotel or motel accommodation of the Board;

(f) conducting organised tours to different centres of tourism importance in all the North-Eastern States;

(g) organising cultural functions and events in co-operation with appropriate Government and other organisations concerned at various tourist places in each of the North-Eastern States at regular intervals so as to create awareness among domestic and foreign tourists and amongst the general public about the Indian culture, customs and traditions and way of life of the people;

(h) organising cultural functions in various countries in coordination with Indian Embassies and High Commissions in those countries with a view to depicting Indian culture and traditions and also with a view to attracting the foreign tourists to North-Eastern States;

(i) training programmes for tourist guides and tour operators about historical background of tourist centres, traditions and culture of each of the North-Eastern State and services to be extended to domestic and foreign tourists;

(j) recognising transporters and taxi operators and fixing fares to be charged from the tourists by them;

(k) recognising shops, showrooms and stalls selling mementos, handicrafts, local ornaments, etc. in order to prevent fleecing of tourists by unscrupulous traders and touts;

(l) setting up health resorts based on Indian system of medicines at various tourist places in North-Eastern States in consultation with appropriate Government;

(m) making arrangement of security of foreign tourists at various tourist centres in the North-Eastern States in consultation with the appropriate Government;

(n) coordinating with the Archeological Survey of India (ASI) and Tourism departments of the State Governments of the North-Eastern States with a view to protecting monuments and heritage sites; and

(o) making adequate arrangements of public conveniences such as toilets, urinals, drinking water, sitting places and sanitation at such places.

(3) The Board shall give wide publicity to its planning, policies, schemes and programmes for development of tourism in the North-Eastern States through all means of communications including hoardings, banners, posters, booklets and print and electronic media in the country as well as abroad.

Annual
Report.

6. (1) The Board shall submit every year an Annual Report about its tourism development and promotional activities in North-Eastern States to the Central Government in such form as may be prescribed.

(2) The Central Government shall lay before each House of Parliament the Annual Report submitted by the Board, as soon as may be after receipt of the Report along with Memorandum of Action taken on the Report.

Central
Government to
provide
requisite funds.

7. The Central Government shall after due appropriation made by the Parliament by law in this behalf, provide from time to time requisite and adequate funds to the Board as well as to the States covered under this Act for implementation of tourism development and promotional plans and schemes formulated by the Board under this Act.

Power to make
rules.

8. The Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, make rules for carrying out the purposes of this Act.

STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS

Our country is very large with vast tourism potentials having large number of historical places, monuments, forts, historical and archeological sites and remains, national monuments, water bodies, beautiful beaches and coastal areas, desert places, gardens, lagoons and so on and so forth.

The eight North-Eastern States are the unique blend of scenic beauty and picturesque locations having different cultures, traditions and many languages. The tribals of these States have successfully protected their culture, living habits, customs and traditions and they know how to welcome the guests and take care of them. There are hilly areas full of forests, flora and fauna, wild animals, old remains, churches and other religious places and border areas along with our neighbouring countries which boasts of vast tourism potentials. But unfortunately, the tourism potentials of the North-East India has not been exploited fully to the advantage of the North-Eastern States and of the country as a whole. This is because of the neglect of the region consistently and negative publicity of insurgency prevailing in many areas of the region. Whereas, the fact of the matter is that there are various restrictions in force in many of the areas. Most of the tourist centres do not have adequate facilities for the tourists and the State Governments are not in a position to spend money for providing the requisite facilities. Airports and air connectivity, rail services are inadequate. The road network including Highways and National Highways are either do not exist or wherever exist are in dilapidated conditions and are not motorworthy. The hospitality sector is in doldrums with no worthy hotel accommodations and so is the travel sector with no worthy fleets of good buses, taxis and other modes. There are no tourist facilitation centres and the tourists are left to fend for themselves rather they get cheated by middlemen, touts and others which discourages the tourists from visiting these beautiful places.

Of late, the Central Government has started thinking positive to promote tourism in the North-East by giving government employees incentives in leave travel concession etc. to visit these places but this step alone cannot promote the tourism in North-East India.

Hence, it is proposed to set up a Tourism Promotion Board exclusively for the North-East to concentrate upon promoting tourism in the North-East in a big way.

Hence this Bill.

THOMAS SANGMA

FINANCIAL MEMORANDUM

Clause 3 of the Bill provides for the establishment of the North-Eastern Tourism Promotion Board. Clause 4 provides for secretariat of the Board which will also involve expenditure. Clause 7 makes it obligatory for the Central Government to provide requisite funds to the Board and the concerned States covered by this Bill. The Bill, therefore, if enacted, will involve expenditure from the Consolidated Fund of India. It is estimated that a sum of rupees five hundred crore may involve as recurring expenditure per annum.

A sum of rupees two thousand crore may also involve as non-recurring expenditure.

MEMORANDUM REGARDING DELEGATED LEGISLATION

Clause 8 of the Bill gives power to the Central Government to make rules for carrying out the purposes of the Bill. The rules will relate to matters of details only.

The delegation of legislative power is of normal character.

RAJYA SABHA

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(Shri Thomas Sangma, M.P.)