

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF TOURISM

RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO.202
ANSWERED ON 06.08.2026

BUDDHIST CIRCUIT

202 SHRI RATANJIT PRATAP NARAIN SINGH:

Will the Minister of **TOURISM** be pleased to state:

- (a) how the recent 'Bodhi Yatra' has advanced India's Buddhist diplomacy in Southeast Asia;
- (b) the specific long-term strategies being formulated to sustain engagement with ASEAN countries through cultural tourism; and
- (c) whether the Ministry is working with State Governments to develop infrastructure along the Buddhist circuit to meet international tourism standards and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM

(SHRI GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT)

(a) to (c): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT IN REPLY TO PARTS (A) TO (C) OF RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.202 ANSWERED ON 06.08.2026 REGARDING BUDDHIST CIRCUIT RAISED BY SHRI RATANJIT PRATAP NARAIN SINGH

(a): Buddhism continues to serve as an important cultural and civilizational bridge between India and several Southeast Asian countries. Shared Buddhist heritage remains a key pillar of India's engagement with ASEAN countries through exchanges of visits of monks, scholars, pilgrims, officials and tourists, fostering people-to-people ties and strengthening cultural cooperation.

Ministry of External Affairs has informed that under the Bodhi Yatra Initiative (2025–26), Buddhist monks, scholars, pilgrims and cultural representatives from ASEAN countries visited sacred Buddhist sites including Bodh Gaya, Sarnath, Kushinagar, Rajgir and Nalanda. The initiative strengthened spiritual diplomacy, cultural engagement and reinforced India's position as the cradle of Buddhism.

India's engagement with ASEAN countries has also been strengthened through participation in the United Nations Day of Vesak 2025 in Vietnam, the MoU signed in May 2025 between International Buddhist Confederation (IBC) and Vietnam Buddhist Sangha (VBS) for promoting peace and intercultural dialogue based on the teachings of Lord Buddha, participation of ASEAN buyers in the International Tourism Mart (ITM), Sikkim (2025), the visit of the Supreme Patriarch of Thailand to India in June 2026, and continued promotion of the Buddhist Circuit through infrastructure, connectivity and digital initiatives.

(b): To sustain long-term engagement with ASEAN countries through cultural tourism, annual ASEAN-India Tourism Ministers' Meeting provides a regular institutional platform for cooperation. The celebration of 2025 as the ASEAN-India Year of Tourism, supported by a USD 5 million contribution to the ASEAN-India Fund announced by the Hon'ble Prime Minister, and the ASEAN-India Joint Leaders' Statement on Sustainable Tourism, adopted at the 22nd ASEAN-India Summit in Kuala Lumpur on 26 October 2025 provide the framework for promoting sustainable, inclusive and culturally rooted tourism cooperation.

(c): Development and promotion of tourism destinations, including Buddhist pilgrimage destinations, is primarily the responsibility of the respective State Governments and Union Territory Administrations. The Ministry of Tourism complements these efforts through its Central Sector Schemes, namely Swadesh Darshan, Swadesh Darshan 2.0, Challenge Based Destination Development (CBDD), PRASHAD, and under the Special Assistance to States for

Capital Investment (SASCI) initiative, by extending financial assistance for tourism infrastructure development, subject to the prescribed guidelines and availability of funds. The Buddhist Circuit has been identified as one of the thematic circuits under the Swadesh Darshan Scheme. Details of projects sanctioned at Buddhist sites under these schemes are placed at **Annexure.**

ANNEXURE

STATEMENT IN REPLY TO PART (C) OF RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.202 ANSWERED ON 06.08.2026 REGARDING BUDDHIST CIRCUIT RAISED BY SHRI RATANJIT PRATAP NARAIN SINGH

S. No	State/UT	Scheme	Year	Project	Amount (in ₹ crore)	Status
1	Andhra Pradesh	SD	2017-18	Development of Buddhist Circuit: Shalihundam–Bavikonda–Bojjanakonda–Amaravati–Anupu	35.24	Completed
2	Andhra Pradesh	CBDD	2024-25	Enriching Buddhist Heritage and Cultural Experiences at Nagarjuna Sagar	25.00	Ongoing
3	Andhra Pradesh	PRASHAD	2015-16	Development of Pilgrim Amenities at Amaravati	27.77	Completed
4	Bihar	SD	2016-17	Development of Buddhist Circuit – Construction of Convention Centre at Bodh Gaya	95.18	Completed
5	Bihar	SD 2.0	2024-25	Buddhist Meditation & Experience Centre at Bodh Gaya	165.44	Ongoing
6	Chhattisgarh	PRASHAD	2020-21	Development of Maa Bamleshwari Devi Temple, Dongargarh	48.44	Physically Completed
7	Gujarat	SD	2017-18	Development of Junagadh–Gir Somnath–Bharuch–Kutch–Bhavnagar–Rajkot–Mehsana	26.68	Completed
8	Madhya Pradesh	SD	2016-17	Development of Sanchi–Satna–Rewa–Mandsaur–Dhar	74.02	Completed
9	Sikkim	PRASHAD	2020-21	Development of Pilgrimage Facilitation at Four Patron Saints, Yuksom	33.32	Physically Completed
10	Uttar Pradesh	SD	2016-17	Development of Shravasti, Kushinagar & Kapilvastu	87.89	Completed
11	Uttar Pradesh	PRASHAD	2015-16	Development of Varanasi	18.73	Completed

12	Uttar Pradesh	SASCI	2024-25	Integrated Buddhist Tourism Development in Shravasti	80.24	Ongoing
13	Telangana	CBDD	2024-25	Buddhavanam – Development of Digital Experience Centre	24.85	Ongoing
