

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF TOURISM

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.2226
ANSWERED ON 06.08.2026

DEVELOPMENT OF THEMATIC TOURISM

2226 SHRI L. K. SUDHISH:

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

- (a) whether Government has initiated the development of thematic tourism trails, including the Bird Watching Trail at Pulicat Lake and the Eco and Nature Trail at Podhigai Hills in Tamil Nadu;
- (b) the details of funds allocated and released for these projects;
- (c) the expected timeline for their completion; and
- (d) the measures taken to ensure local community participation and sustainable tourism practices in these destinations?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM

(SHRI GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT)

(a) to (d): Development and promotion of tourist destinations and products, including eco-tourism is undertaken by the respective State Government/Union Territory (UT) Administration.

The Ministry of Tourism through its central sector schemes of 'Swadesh Darshan, 'Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive (PRASHAD) and 'Assistance to Central Agencies for Tourism Infrastructure Development' extends financial assistance to the State Governments / UT Administrations for tourism infrastructure development in the country. The central financial assistance is being extended according to guidelines and based on proposals / detailed project reports received from the States and UT Governments. The Swadesh Darshan Scheme of the Ministry has been revamped as Swadesh Darshan 2.0 with the objective to develop sustainable and responsible tourism destinations following a tourist & destination centric approach.

Pursuant to the announcement made in Paras 69(i), (ii) and (iii) of the Union Budget 2026–27, the Ministry of Tourism has initiated action for the development of ecologically sustainable Mountain, Turtle and Bird Watching Trails in the identified States/UTs, including Pulicat Lake and the Eco-Nature Trail at Podhigai Hills in Tamil Nadu.

A Joint Committee has been constituted to provide technical and institutional support to the concerned States/UTs. Meetings with the identified States/UTs have been held, and States have been advised to identify and validate the proposed trail alignments in consultation with the concerned Forest Department.

No DPRs have been received from the respective State Governments till date.
