

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF TOURISM

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.617
ANSWERED ON 23.07.2026

DIGITAL TOURISM, SAFETY & SECTORAL REFORMS

617 SHRI S. SELVAGANABATHY:

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

- (a) the measures taken to strengthen digital initiatives such as National Integrated Database of Hospitality Industry (NIDHI+) and the multilingual tourist helpline for improving service delivery and transparency;
- (b) the steps taken by States/UTs to deploy tourist police and improve safety, especially for women travellers;
- (c) whether the Ministry has issued any guidance to States regarding granting of “industry status” to tourism and hospitality and the response received; and
- (d) how reforms such as e-Visa expansion and GST rationalisation have influenced tourist flows and competitiveness relative to other destinations?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM

(SHRI GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT)

(a): With a view to bring in more transparency, accountability and improved service delivery, the Ministry of Tourism introduced an online system of receiving, processing and conveying/ granting approvals for classification of accommodation units and recognition of Tourism Service Providers. Applications can be filed at the portal of National Integrated Database of Hospitality Industry (NIDHI+), i.e. nidhi.tourism.gov.in. This online process has also been integrated with payment gateway.

Further, to provide multilingual tourist helpline assistance, the Ministry of Tourism has taken steps to upgrade the existing system, including technological based solutions.

(b): Safety and Security of tourists is under the purview of State Governments/UT Administrations. However, the Ministry of Tourism has continuously taken up the matter with the States/UTs for setting up of dedicated Tourism Police to strengthen on-ground safety mechanism for tourists. The State Governments /UT Administrations viz. Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tripura and Uttar Pradesh have deployed tourist police in some form or the other.

State Governments and Union Territories have the provision for availing the benefits of the ‘Safe Tourism Destinations for Women’ under Nirbhaya fund for projects specifically designed to improve the safety and security of women tourists.

(c): Yes. The Ministry of Tourism launched a Handbook on Industry Status to the Tourism and Hospitality Sector in September, 2024. This has been circulated to the State Governments/UT Administrations for adapting into their industry/tourism policy. Presently, many States/UTs have accorded industry status to the tourism & hospitality sector.

(d): E-visa has become very popular among foreigners which is evident from the fact that the number of e-visa issued has gone up rapidly over the last few years. At present there are fourteen sub-categories of e-visa and is now available to the nationals of 174 countries for entry through 33 designated Airports, 35 designated seaports and 04 land ports.

The government introduced a simplified GST structure with significant rate reductions across key sectors of trade and commerce, including the hospitality sector, with effect from 22.09.2025.

The highlights of the GST reforms affecting the tourism and hospitality sector are listed as follows:

- (i) The GST on hotel rooms priced below ₹7,500 per day has been reduced from 12% to 5% (without ITC).
- (ii) GST on buses with a seating capacity of over 10 persons has been cut from 28% to 18%.
- (iii) GST on art and cultural goods has been lowered from 12% to 5%, providing direct support to artisans and sculptors.
- (iv) Consumer durables, Food and related items: Most of the food and related consumables are now having reduced GST at 5 percent or some have nil GST. Similarly, many items used in hospitality such as TVs, refrigerators, ACs etc. are having reduced GST positively impacting the sector with reduced cost of operations and capital expenditure.
