

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF TOURISM**

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.4738
ANSWERED ON 23.03.2020**

**NEGATIVE TREND IN TOURISM SECTOR AFTER OUTSPREAD OF
CORONAVIRUS**

4738. SHRI K. MURALEEDHARAN:

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that the tourism sector in the country has been showing a very negative growth after the spread of Coronavirus across the globe;**
- (b) whether it is also true that the arrivals of tourists have sharply declined and is nearly nil in tourists favoured spots like Kerala; and**
- (c) if so, the steps taken by the Government to correct the situation in the coming months?**

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF STATE FOR TOURISM (INDEPENDENT CHARGE)
(SHRI PRAHLAD SINGH PATEL)**

(a) to (c): Ministry of Tourism, Government of India has not conducted specific study on impact of spread of Coronavirus on tourism sector in the country. However, provisional data of Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTA) in the country during January & February, 2020 and those of like period in previous year are given below:

	January 2019	February 2019	January 2020	February 2020
FTA	11,03,380	10,87,694	11,18,150	10,15,632

Data on tourist visits on various tourist spots are not maintained in Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. Details of steps taken by Ministry of Tourism, Government of India to sensitize about the measures required to be taken as well as to facilitate tourists in the country is attached at Annexure.

ANNEXURE

STATEMENT IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (c) OF THE LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.4738 ANSWERED ON 23.03.2020 REGARDING NEGATIVE TREND IN TOURISM SECTOR AFTER OUTSPREAD OF CORONAVIRUS.

Ministry of Tourism has taken the following initiatives to generate awareness about the measures required to be taken as well as to facilitate tourists in the country:

A: Dissemination of Information and GOI guidelines:

- (i) All Travel related advisories and guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health & Welfare from time to time have been circulated amongst all Travel and Hospitality related Associations.**
- (ii) The links to the guidelines have also been made available on the MOT website and social handles. . Tweets of Ministry of Health & Family Welfare are being re-tweeted.**
- (iii) All Associations and their members have been advised to be vigilant about possible suspect cases and bring cases of persons showing symptoms to the notice of the health authorities on the Ministry of Health Helpline number 011- 23978046and Helpline e-mail ID: ncov2019@gmail.com.**
- (iv) Travel Advisory along with Self Reporting Form as received from the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare have been circulated to the Pr. Secretary / Secretary (Tourism) of all States and UTs.**
- (v) A letter was issued to Chief Secretaries of all States / UTs requesting that in case of tourists with no exposure to the virus, necessary instructions may be issued to district collectors / concerned local officials, not to stop their entry and to allow them to check in to hotels and if required medical testing of the tourists may be undertaken as per prescribed procedures.**
- (vi) Specific guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare on prevention of transmission and disinfection of hotels/ lodging facilities where**

suspect/confirmed Coronavirus (COVID-19) cases have been housed have been forwarded to Hotel Associations for circulation amongst their members.

- (vii) A letter has been issued to States / UTs and Travel Associations advising that movement of tourist groups within the country may be avoided so as to minimize the chances of spread of coronavirus.**
- (viii) A whatsapp group of senior Central and State Govt. officials has been created by Ministry of Health & Family Welfare for regular updating on the subject and issues involved. Secretary (Tourism) and DG (Tourism) are part of this group.**

B: Providing Assistance

Ministry of Tourism Helpline

- (ix) The Ministry of Tourism has in operation a 24x7 Info-Help Line on toll free number 1800111363 or on a short code 1363 in 12 Languages including 10 international languages (German, French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Arabic), Hindi & English.**

The Helpline has been receiving queries related to Corona virus. A large number of queries have been regarding advisories issued, if any, for travel to other countries such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Thailand, etc. and travel within the country. These have been responded to on the basis of advisories / guidelines issued by Ministry of Health.

The following actions have been taken:

- A team in the Help Centre identified and designated specifically for dealing with Corono virus queries**
- FAQs have been prepared for responding to queries received**
- In case of queries not covered under the FAQs, the matter is being referred to a specific team identified in the Ministry of Tourism, who would address the matter with approval of the competent authority.**

- (x) **A WhatsApp group has been created amongst the senior officials of MOT to coordinate amongst themselves and redress issues brought to notice from tour operators, State governments and other tourism related stakeholders.**
- (xi) **A number of cases have been referred to the Ministry of Tourism by Tour Operators, relating to tourist groups from countries including Italy, Germany, France, Netherlands who have arrived in India before the travel restrictions were imposed and have faced issues:**
- **Hotels were not willing to allow foreign tourist groups to check in, even though they had no symptoms, and in many cases they were insisting on medical certificates before allowing the tourists to check in.**
 - **In other cases, the foreign tourists had checked into hotels but were not being permitted to move out of the hotel by the District authorities.**
 - **In some cases it was informed that District Administration is advising local tour operators to ensure that the foreign tourists leave the destination.**

The Ministry of Tourism is in constant touch with the concerned authorities in the States to facilitate such tourists who have been facing issues. The Ministry has also advised the CMD – ITDC to accommodate tourists in the Samrat Hotel in Delhi and the same has been done as and when required.

A letter was issued to all Hotel Associations not to deny accommodation to foreign tourists and to follow required procedures prescribed by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.

- (xii) **Based on communication addressed to Secretary (Tourism) by Cabinet Secretary, a letter has been issued to the Pr. Secretary / Secretary (Tourism) of all States / UTs requesting them to identify facilities / buildings, if there are any that can be used as quarantine centers or can be converted to temporary hospitals with isolation facilities. States / UTs have also been requested to**

facilitate surveillance activities and to maintain a vigil particularly at major tourist spots and towns across the country.

(xiii) The issue of waiving of cancellation charges on account of cancellation of tour packages, hotel accommodation, and air and rail tickets has been raised by the Tour Operator Associations.

- A letter in this regard has been addressed to the Hon'ble Minister of State for Civil Aviation (IC) by the Hon'ble Minister of State for Tourism (IC) requesting that advisories may be issued to airline operators and other stakeholders in the aviation industry to resist from charging any fee / levies towards cancellation/ rescheduling of air tickets till such time the situation normalizes.**
- Letters also sent to all Travel & Hospitality Associations, State Governments & UT Administrations, Ministries of Civil Aviation and Railways on the issue.**

(xiv) A meeting with stakeholders was chaired by the Hon'ble Minister of State for Tourism (Independent Charge) on 13.3.2020, wherein the stakeholders made several suggestions on measures that could be taken to keep the confidence of the industry, consumers and stakeholders, which will be considered for taking up with the concerned Ministries/ authorities. It was also discussed that the travel industry should start formalizing plans for revival, once the situation stabilizes and is under control.
