

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF TOURISM**

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.2418
ANSWERED ON 15.12.2025**

PROMOTION OF RELIGIOUS TOURISM

**2418. SHRI ATUL GARG:
SHRI RAJESH VERMA:**

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has formulated any specific policies or schemes to promote religious tourism while ensuring sustainable infrastructure and local community participation, particularly in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and if so, the details thereof;**
- (b) the impact of religious tourism on local economies, small businesses and employment generation in these hotspots;**
- (c) whether the Government has taken steps to address challenges such as overcrowding, environmental degradation and infrastructure strain in high-footfall pilgrimage sites and if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and**
- (d) the role of digital platforms and public-private partnerships in enhancing the religious tourism experience through better connectivity, hospitality and safety measures particularly in Ghaziabad, Samastipur and Khagaria Lok Sabha Constituencies?**

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT)

(a): Development and promotion of tourist destinations and products including religious tourism is primarily undertaken by the respective State Government/Union Territory (UT) Administration. The Ministry complements the efforts of States/UTs by developing tourism infrastructure through various schemes and initiatives in consultation with the State Governments/UT Administrations.

The Ministry of Tourism under the “Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive” (PRASHAD) aims to enhance the spiritual and pilgrimage experience by holistically developing tourism infrastructure at pilgrimage and heritage sites. As on date, the Ministry has sanctioned 54 projects in 28 States/UTs with an estimated cost of Rs.1726.74 Crores

In addition, under the Swadesh Darshan Scheme, the Ministry of Tourism has sanctioned 76 projects at a total sanctioned cost of Rs.5290.33 Crore under various thematic circuits such as Spiritual circuits, Buddhist Circuits, Krishna Circuits, Tirthankar and other circuits.

The Swadesh Darshan scheme has been revamped as 'Swadesh Darshan 2.0' with the objective to develop sustainable and responsible tourism destination. As on date, 53 projects have been sanctioned at a total sanctioned cost of Rs.2,208.27 Crore including projects in religious sites.

The Ministry of Tourism has issued guidelines for ‘Challenge Based Destination Development’, a sub-scheme under Swadesh Darshan 2.0. Under this sub-scheme, the Ministry of Tourism has sanctioned 36 projects at a total cost of Rs.648.11 Crore under different categories such as Spiritual Tourism, Culture & Heritage, etc.

Further, the Government of India under the guidelines for Special Assistance to States/Union Territories for Capital Investment (SASCI) for Development of Iconic Tourist Centres to Global Scale has approved 40 projects amounting to Rs.3295.76 Crore across 23 States, including projects at religious destinations.

The Ministry of Tourism under the Scheme of Assistance to Central Agencies for Tourism Infrastructure Development also provides support to Central Agencies for tourism infrastructure development which includes infrastructure development at sites of religious significance. Till date, a total of 66 projects have been sanctioned at a total sanctioned cost of Rs.948.78 Crore.

The details of the projects sanctioned by the Ministry of Tourism in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar are given in the Annexure.

In addition, the Ministry of Tourism as part of its ongoing endeavour promotes various tourism destinations and products of the country including religious tourism through promotional activities such as events, website, social media promotions, fairs and festivals, etc.

(b) to (d): The Ministry of Tourism under its ongoing schemes undertakes tourist infrastructure development in an inclusive, integrated, and sustainable manner that focuses on livelihoods, skills, service delivery, etc. with a focus on employment generation through active involvement of the local communities.

To address challenges such as overcrowding and infrastructure strain in high-footfall pilgrimage sites, the Ministry of Tourism has sanctioned various pilgrim amenities such as Queue management complex, Waiting halls, Cloak room, Widening of approach roads, CCTVs for pilgrim safety, Foot-over Bridges, Parking, Tourist Information Centre, basic amenities such as toilets, dustbins, drinking water facilities, and other site development works such as benches, landscaping, flooring, etc.

In addition, the Ministry of Tourism has sanctioned various components at the pilgrimage sites to maintain environment sustainability such as solid waste management systems, sewage treatment plants, pet bottle flaking machines, e-vehicles, solar energy systems, waste segregation units, pious waste management, etc.

Further, the Ministry of Tourism emphasizes the State Governments/UT Administrations to prioritize carrying capacity, sustainable practices, clean energy sources, use of locally available material for construction while formulating the DPRs.

Also, the Ministry of Tourism has approved various digital interventions/components across its sanctioned projects to enhance tourist experience. Some of the components includes AR/VR interpretation centres,

virtual Darshan, Digital signages, tourist information apps, online booking platforms, smart parking solutions, etc.

Safety and security components are also sanctioned to ensure safe and efficient movement of pilgrims during peak footfall. These includes installation of CCTV surveillance systems, setting up of integrated command and control rooms, provision of fire safety mechanisms, etc.

Further, the Ministry of Tourism encourages the State Governments/UT Administrations to ensure sustainable operation and management of the completed projects, including through public-private partnerships wherever required.

*** * * * ***

ANNEXURE**STATEMENT IN REPLY TO PART (a) OF LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.2418 ANSWERED ON 15.12.2025 REGARDING PROMOTION OF RELIGIOUS TOURISM RAISED BY SHRI ATUL GARG AND SHRI RAJESH VERMA****(i) List of Projects under PRASHAD Scheme in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh**

Sr. No.	State	Name of the Project	Sanctioned Cost (Rs. in Crore)
1.	Bihar	Development at Patna Sahib	29.62
2.		Development of basic facilities at Vishnupad temple, Gaya, Bihar	3.63
3.		Development of AmbikaBhawani Temple, Saran	13.29
4.	Uttar Pradesh	Development of Varanasi – Phase –I	18.73
5.		Development of Mathura-Vrindavan as Mega Tourist Circuit (Ph-II)	10.98
6.		River Cruise Tourism in Ganga, Varanasi	9.02
7.		Construction of Tourist Facilitation Centre at Vrindavan	9.36
8.		Development of Varanasi – Phase –II	44.60
9.		Development of Infrastructure facilities at Govardhan	37.59

(ii) List of Projects under Swadesh Darshan Scheme in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh

Sr. No.	State	Name of the Project	Sanctioned Cost (Rs. in Crore)
1.	Bihar	Development of Vaishali- Arrah- Masad- Patna- Rajgir- Pawapuri- Champapuri	33.96

2.		Development of Kanwaria Route: Sultanganj – Dharmshala- Deoghar	44.76
3.		Development of Buddhist circuit- Construction of Convention Centre at Bodhgaya	95.18
4.		Development of Bhitiharwa- Chandrahia-Turkaulia	44.27
5.		Development of Mandar Hill &Ang Pradesh	44.55
6.	Uttar Pradesh	Development of Srawasti, Kushinagar, &Kapilwastu	87.89
7.		Development of Chitrakoot and Shringverpur	69.45
8.		Development of Ahar-Aligarh-Kasganj-Sarosi (Unnao)-Pratapgarh- Kausambi-Mirzapur-Gorakhpur-Domariyaganj-Basti-Barabanki-Azamgarh-Kairana- Baghpat- Shahjahanpur	71.91
9.		Development of Bijnor- Meerut- Kanpur- Kanpur Dehat- Banda- Ghazipur- Salempur- Ghosi- Balia- Ambedkar Nagar- Aligarh- Fatehpur- Deoria- Mahoba- Sonbhadra- Chandauli- Mishrikh- Bhadohi	67.51
10.		Development of Kalinjar Fort (Banda)- MagharDham (SantKabir Nagar)- ChauriChaura, Shaheed Sthal (Fatehpur)- MahuarshaheedSthal (Ghosi)- Shaheed Smarak (Meerut)	36.65
11.		Development of Ayodhya	127.21
12.		Development of Jewar-Dadri-Sikandrabad- Noida-Khurja-Banda	12.03
13.		Development of Gorakhnath Temple (Gorakhpur), Devipattan Temple (Balrampur) and Vatvashni Temple (Domariyagunj)	18.30

(iii) List of Projects under Swadesh Darshan 2.0 Scheme in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh

Sr. No.	State	Name of the Project	Sanctioned Cost (Rs. Crore)
1.	Bihar	Development of the Buddhist Meditation & Experience Centre, Bodh Gaya	165.44
2.	Uttar	Azad Park and DekhoPrayagraj Trail Exp	14.52
3.	Pradesh	Vedic- wellness Experience	17.80

(iv) List of Projects under CBDD Scheme in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh

Sr. No.	State	Name of the Project	Sanctioned Cost (Rs. Crore)
1.	Bihar	Development of Tourist Facilities at SonapurMela Ground, Saran	24.29
2.	Uttar Pradesh	Development of Cultural Landscape at Mahoba	24.98

(v) List of Projects under SASCI Scheme in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh

Sr. No.	State	Name of the Project	Sanctioned Cost (Rs. Crore)
1.	Bihar	Development of Matsyagandha Lake in Saharsa	97.61
2.		Karamchat Eco-Tourism and Adventure Hub in Karamchat	49.51
3.	Uttar	Development of Bateshwar in District-Agra	74.05
4.	Pradesh	Integrated Buddhist Tourism Development in Shrawasti	80.24

(vi) List of Projects under Assistance to Central Agencies for Infrastructure Development in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh

Sr. No.	State	Name of the Project	Sanctioned Cost (Rs. Crore)
1.	Bihar	3D Mapping with Aqua Screen Projection and Sound Show at Buxar, Bihar and Dynamic Lighting & Motif at Ram RekhaGhat, Bihar	5.99
2.		Gaya Railway Station	5.18
3.	Uttar Pradesh	Illumination of monuments in Varanasi/Sarnath (Dhamekh Stupa in SarnathChaukhandi Stupa in Sarnath, Tomb of Lalkan in Sarnath and Man Mahal in Banaras).	5.12
4.		Illumination of three monuments in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh- 1.DashashwamedhGhat to DarbhangaGhat (stretch of 300 m) 2.TulsiManasMandir 3. Sarnath Museum	2.94
5.		Rai-Bareilly Railway Station	4.44
6.		Agra Cantt. Railway Station	5.05
