

**P.R.No. 767**

**Date:16.10.2020**

**Press Release**

The Hon'ble Minister of Tourism, Government of Tamilnadu participated in a virtual meeting convened by the Hon'ble Minister of State for Tourism, Government of India, along with the Additional Chief Secretary to Government, Tourism, Culture and Religious Endowments Department Thiru.Vikram Kapur, IAS and the Commissioner of Tourism & Managing Director, TTDC Thiru.T.P.Rajesh, IAS, for reviewing the various initiatives taken by Government of India, Ministry of Tourism and State Governments in handholding the tourism industry during this unprecedented pandemic particularly in the following schemes viz.

**SAATHI - System for Assessment, Awareness and Training for Hospitality Industry** and **NIDHI - National Integrated Database of Hospitality Industry**, which will provide digital platform expecting electronic delivery of various services and benefits to the hospitality units. The Hon'ble Minister has stated that so far 1082 units have been registered in NIDHI and efforts are being taken to register all the other units.

The Hon'ble Minister proudly mentioned that Tamil Nadu has topped the list of tourist visits from 2014-2018 and in 2019 alone, 49.49 crore domestic tourists and 68.66 lakh foreign tourists visited Tamil Nadu.

The Hon'ble Minister has highlighted the various initiatives being taken by the Government of Tamil Nadu under the leadership of Hon'ble Chief Minister Thiru Edappadi Palanichamy and the State Government has issued guidelines for the visitors coming to Tamilnadu from abroad and other States. Intrastate travel has been

eased to facilitate the travelers to move anywhere. Hotels and restaurants have been permitted to function strictly adhering to the protocols and as per the SOP issued by the Ministry of Tourism for instilling confidence in the minds of domestic tourists. The concept of 'safe zones' and 'safe destinations', are going to be the emerging mantra now to attract domestic tourists in this Covid period.

The Hon'ble Minister also said that the Covid-19 is the single biggest challenge we face today in the Tourism sector and strategy is to focus on **survive (short-term), revive (medium-term) and thrive (long-term)**.

The Hon'ble Minister expressed confidence that the travel & tourism industry will certainly stage a come-back with more resilience and placed before the following requests for kind consideration:

1. Ministry of Tourism may introduce an innovative scheme called "Let's Travel" by providing 50% subsidy on air, rail or road travel, accommodation and food, for triggering demand and consumer spending in the hospitality and travel sector. Government of India may also review the LTC cash voucher scheme announced recently for Central Government employees as it is likely to affect the hospitality and tourism sector by diverting funds away from it.
2. Tamilnadu is one of the worst affected states due to Covid pandemic, all tourism players are badly affected due to resource crunch & deprivation of livelihood opportunities. Hence requested the Union Tourism Ministry to allocate a special financial grant to Tamil Nadu to the tune of Rs.250

crore, which may be used to fund innovative strategies for the revival of the industry in the state.

3. Tamilnadu Tourism has sent Initial Project Reports for the following proposals.

- Development of Mamallapuram Iconic Tourist Site at an estimated cost of Rs.563.50 crore as this proposal was conceived as a follow up for the historic visit of Hon'ble Prime Minister last year to Mamallapuram.
- Development of Ramayana circuit for Rs.99.84 crore and Arupadai veedu circuit for Rs.99.31 crore under Swadesh Darshan scheme.

The Hon'ble Minister requested early sanction of these proposals.

The Hon'ble Minister of Tourism stated that additionally new tourist products such as 'Rural tourism', 'Adventure tourism', 'Cruise tourism' and 'Water sports' which have immense potential in Tamilnadu, can be realized through adequate support from Ministry of Tourism, Government of India for promoting domestic tourism.

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