



INDIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



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Press Release

## Travel India 2017 A Conference And Expo On Travel & Tourism

**Kolkata, 19<sup>th</sup> December, 2017: Government of West Bengal is focussing greatly on the tourism sector of the economy to promote and showcase West Bengal among other states in India and other countries across the globe: Mr. Goutam Deb, Hon'ble Minister in Charge, Department of Tourism, Government of West Bengal**

**The tourism industry is all about people; Tourism has a wider scope in generating employment in the economy compared to the IT sector: Dr. Suborno Bose, Chief Mentor & Chairman, IIHM & Indismart Group Worldwide**

**"India is a tourist paradise": Mr. G M Kapur, INTACH Kolkata Chapter**

Speaking at the **Travel India 2017 summit organized by the Indian Chamber of Commerce** at the **Hotel Taj Bengal, Kolkata** today, **Mr. Goutam Deb, Hon'ble Minister in Charge, Department of Tourism, Government of West Bengal** highlighted the significance and uniqueness of the strategic location of West Bengal. West Bengal is surrounded by various SAARC countries. West Bengal is working towards promoting opportunities to enhance the foreign and domestic tourist visitors in West Bengal. He mentioned that West Bengal has its own Tourism Policy, Homestay Policy and stated that with around 208 acres of land a hospitality training institute is being planned in Gajoldoba in North Bengal along with plush resorts, an ayurvedic spa, youth hostel, bird watching centre, golf course, boating, elephant and jeep safaris through Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode. He also mentioned about the road and train connectivity work going on in the East- West Corridor and Asia Highway. Mr. Goutam Deb urged the private investors to invest in West Bengal because of easy investor friendly policies by the state government, presence of a Single Window Policy. Appreciating the efforts of the Indian Chamber of Commerce in organizing the Travel India 2017 Summit, Mr. Deb emphasized the need for similar other conferences, conclaves and seminars to boost the tourism sector in in India and particularly in West Bengal.

**Mr. J. P. Shaw, Regional Director, India Tourism, Kolkata** discussed some of the major initiatives of the Ministry of Tourism in promoting the tourism industry in India. He mentioned that the Ministry is working towards promoting India as a 365 days destination. Mr. Shaw stated that during January to October 2017 more than 7.9 million foreign tourists have arrived in India approximating the figures to greater than 13% from the previous year. He also mentioned the fact that Bangladesh ranks at the top position among the foreign travelers to India. He also stated about the launching of Multilingual Tourist Infoline, Swachh Paryatan Mobile App, e-tourist



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visas, visa on arrival, Swadesh Darshan and PRASAD schemes, revamping of existing schemes such as Hunar se Rozgar

tak, introducing an Incredible India Tourist Helpline, and undertaking various skill development initiatives such as setting up of Indian Culinary Institute and approval of new Institutes of Hotel Management. The “Incredible India 2.0 Campaign”; ‘Adopt A Heritage’ Project and new Incredible India Website alongwith Swachch Bharat initiative were also been mentioned by Mr. J.P Shaw among various other initiatives by the Ministry of Tourism. Mr. Shaw stated that at present West Bengal ranks at 5<sup>th</sup> position in India in receiving foreign tourists and at 9<sup>th</sup> position in domestic tourist arrival. He also stated that the foreign exchange earnings in India has increased greatly in the present times. Highlighting the eastern region of India, Mr. Shaw mentioned that with the Central and State government initiatives the region can be promoted as a potential tourism destination.

**Dr. Suborno Bose, Chief Mentor & Chairman, IIHM & Indismart Group Worldwide,** mentioned that in the last ten years hotel room occupancy has increased to more than 75% in India and there has been more demand in hotel rooms than supply focusing the fact that there has been a surge and hotel and hospitality sector in India. Mr. Bose highlighted upon skill development and to enhance capacity building in the tourism sector which can generate greater employment opportunities in this sector which has a far greater scope than the IT industry and therefore requested the state and central government along with private organisations to come forward regarding this initiative. Lastly, Mr. Suborno Bose work in coordination with the ministry as well as the Indian Chamber of commerce in organizing bootcamps, workshops, skill development sessions in enhancing skill development in the tourism industry.

**Mr. G M Kapur, INTACH Kolkata Chapter** stated that tourism is considered as an engine of economic growth and stated that adequate infrastructure, carrying capacity must be developed as well as heritage sites in India should be protected as well as tourism potential in the North Eastern region of the economy should be exploited in a planned manner to boost tourism in the economy.

**Mr. Apurva Salarpuria, Chairman, Tourism Expert Committee, ICC** mentioned that during 2006–17E, direct contribution of tourism & hospitality to GDP is estimated to have registered a CAGR of 14.05 per cent. He stated that though the regulatory changes through demonetization and GST has impacted the industry but these have benefitted the tourism sector as well. He mentioned that the advent of technology which includes online ticket booking, social media marketing block chain technology is leveraging the tourism sector and has opened up various avenues in the sector. Mr. Apurva mentioned about the National Tourism Policy 2015 as well as the West Bengal Tourism Policy along with medical tourism, cruise shipping, infrastructure initiatives which has provided a big boost to the travel and tourism industry in India



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**Dr. Rajeev Singh, Director General, ICC** stated that the tourism industry is a significant growth driver of the service sector in India and the country is fast becoming a major global destination for tourists. He mentioned that India is a beautiful and diverse tourism destination and with the right

policies in place will give impetus to grow towards ranking even higher in terms of its tourism economy. Dr. Singh ended the session by delivering the formal vote of thanks.

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