

## **National Tourism Policy on the anvil to boost growth of tourism infrastructure**

***Secy. Lalit Panwar inaugurates first-ever Tourism Investors Meet at FICCI Federation House***

**NEW DELHI, 22 July 2015:** The National Tourism Policy which is in the offing would become a catalyst to drive the tourism industry and give a fillip to infrastructure projects in the sector. The industry is private sector driven, where young and innovative entrepreneurs are the providers of products and services and the government's role is to act as a facilitator in removing the barriers and irritants for smooth functioning of the sector.

This was stated here today by **Dr. Lalit K. Panwar, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, at the first-ever Tourism Investors Meet (TIM)**. The two-day meet focusing on interactive meetings between the State Governments and prominent investors is organized by FICCI in partnership with the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India and Tourism Finance Corporation of India (TFCI).

In his Inaugural Address, Dr. Panwar announced that from 2016 onwards '**India Travel Mart**' would be held every year in the country and all stakeholders would be invited for discussion on various issues related to the sector, including investment prospects. Tourism reflects perception and India needs to improve its perception across the globe by enhancing the quality of tourist experience, providing good products and assuring safety and security of the visitors, he added.

**Dr. Panwar said** that the government was all set to relaunch the Incredible India 2.0 and also attempts were being made to create synergy for community participation. Highlighting the steps initiated by the government to give the sector a fillip, he said that electronic visa on arrival (VOA) has become a game changer and the government tends to extend VOA to 150 countries by the end of this fiscal year. Also, the Indian Culinary Institute would become a reality soon and help produce world-class supporting staff and workers for the travel and hospitality sector. He added that ministry's helpline was also active for resolving issues.

Emphasizing the importance of tourism in Prime Minister Modi's agenda, **Dr. Panwar said** that PM has signed MoUs of cooperation in tourism with all countries that he has visited. He also stated that the launch of Rs. 500 crore mega project 'Swadesh Darshan' is a great opportunity for private sector for investing in access, accommodation and amenities for the destinations under the project. Dr. Panwar added that tourism has been identified as a sector for 'Make in India' hence it has become a natural beneficiary of policies under the initiative.

**Dr. Panwar urged** the states to come on board and offer investor-friendly policies and packages to the stakeholders. He also informed that the establishment of National Tourism and Hospitality University has received a nod from the Cabinet and the first academic session is likely to begin from July 2017. Besides, ITDC is opening Centre of Excellence for hospitality

where students would be imparted with practical training as well. He added that an inter-ministerial coordination committee had been constituted to remove the bottlenecks and Medical and Wellness Tourism Board was on the anvil.

In his Special Address **Mr. Amitabh Kant, Secretary, Department of Industrial Promotion and Policy (DIPP)**, said that tourism sector had a multiplier effect on the economy and suggested that the visa regime and civil aviation sector should be opened up completely for connecting regional tourist destinations with international circuit to allow free movement of tourists from places across the globe. States should focus on civil governance and develop five tourist destinations and turn them into world-class tourists' attractions. There is also a need to imbibe and embed the culture of hospitality from school level, he added.

To improve quality of experience on ground, private sector should look at capacity building and focus on skill development, said Mr. Kant and added that a new innovative communication strategy was needed for Incredible India 2.0 and digital media should be leveraged to this end. He said that India also needs to build 300 exhibition and convention centres across the country to harness MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions) tourism market.

In his theme state address **Mr. Mukesh Kapoor, Chief General Manager - Planning, Government of Madhya Pradesh**, highlighted that the state enjoyed investor and tourism friendly policies, making it an ideal place for private players to invest. The year 2015-2016 has been announced as the 'Tourism Year' by the state government to showcase its earnestness towards enhancement of the sector.

**Dr. Jyotsna Suri, President, FICCI**, said that the first-ever TIM was conceptualized by FICCI to bridge the infrastructure gap in tourism sector. The annual meet would allow interactive one-to-one meetings where by exhibiting destinations would be showcasing their policy and facilities with respect to soliciting investment in tourism infrastructure through pre-scheduled structured face-to-face business meetings between the state governments and prominent investors.

**Mr. S K Sangar, MD, TFCI**, said that TFCI's mission was to develop tourism as one of the main industries in the country and ensure optimum utilization of rich resources in building sustainable tourism growth. The objectives of the company is to focus on providing financial assistance to enterprise for tourism-related projects/services and consultancy and advisory services. He added that TFCI looks forward to sharing its experience with industry and government to improve ease of doing business in tourism.

**Dr. A Didar Singh, Secretary General, FICCI**, said that the investors meet has been organized to generate interest and business opportunities in the tourism sector. There are 13 state governments showcasing their tourism products and services in the meet. He added that FICCI has been promoting tourism across the country and would continue this endeavor.

**FICCI MEDIA DIVISION**