

World Class amenities being provided at 100 Adarsh Smaraks: Culture Minister

Ministry of Culture

World Class amenities being provided at 100 Adarsh Smaraks: Culture Minister**Nearly One Crore artists have registered till date on the central portal under National Mission on Cultural Mapping of India**

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Continuing its endeavour to promote India's glorious culture and Heritage, the Ministry of Culture, Government India is committed to showcase India's cultural vibrancy to the entire world. Addressing media persons in New Delhi today on Budget 2018 and achievements of Ministry of Culture, Minister of State (I/C) for Culture and MoS for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Dr. Mahesh Sharma said that there is an urgent and pressing need to re-connect the people-especially the youth- with their indigenous culture, its multi-faceted nature, magnificence, opulence and historical importance in the context of India as a Nation.

Dr. Mahesh Sharma further informed that the Budget Allocation of the Ministry of Culture has been increased by about 4% in 2018-19. The Budget allocation of Ministry of Culture for 2018-19 is increased by 104 crore (i.e Rs 2843 crore) in comparison with previous budget (i.e Rs 2,738.47 crore). Out of the total financial allocation, the Archaeological Survey of India has been allocated Rs 974.56 crore, which is 5.42 per cent more than the 2017-18 allocation.

The Culture Minister explained that a massive exercise has been taken up by Culture Ministry such as 100 Adarsh Monuments, E-ticketing facility for all ticketed Monuments, Cultural Mapping of India, Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav, Ganga Mahotsav, 8th Theatre Olympiad, Festival of India aboard, Digitisation etc. to popularize Indian culture especially among the youth.

Dr. Mahesh Sharma expressed gratitude towards the Union Finance Minister, Shri Arun Jaitley for giving special emphasis to creating World Class Amenities in Iconic ASI Protected monuments. The excerpts of the Budget speech of Union Finance Minister pertains to the Adarsh Monuments is as follows:

Budget Announcement:

“India is blessed with an abundance of tourist attractions. It is proposed to develop ten prominent tourist sites into Iconic Tourism destinations by following a holistic approach involving infrastructure and skill development, development of technology, attracting private investment, branding and marketing. In addition, tourist amenities at 100 Adarsh monuments of the Archaeological Survey of India will be upgraded to enhance visitor experience.”

-- Union Finance Minister

World Class Amenities in Iconic ASI Protected monuments

Budget speech by Hon'ble Finance Minister highlighted amenities to be provided in the following iconic ASI monuments:

- Taj Mahal and Fatehpur Sikri, Agra (U.P);Ajanta and Ellora Caves, Aurangabad (Maharashtra);Red Fort, Humayun's Tomb, Qutb Minar and Purana Qila (All Delhi);Khajuraho group of temples (Madhya Pradesh);Hampi group of monuments (Karnataka);Shore Temple, Mahabalipuram (Tamil Nadu);Sun Temple, Konark (Odisha); andGolkonda Fort, Hyderabad (Telangana)

Efforts will be taken to improve visitor experience holistically by creating amenities and by laying special emphasis on following aspects with the support of local authorities and communities alike:

- Cleanliness within and around the monument;
- Make monuments and their buffers polythene free;
- Improve connectivity and access to the monument;
- Attract private investment for providing visitor amenities; and
- Use of technology in interpretation and dissemination of information

In view of the abovementioned budget announcement, Dr. Mahesh Sharma disclosed that the ASI has already started working towards conservation and providing world class amenities in 10 monuments. Remaining monuments (Ajanta and Ellora Caves, and Golkonda Fort) preparation of design of amenities in full swing (designs, estimates, etc.) to be cleared by March, 2018.

Status of sites where work is ongoing is as follows:

Taj Mahal: All amenities related proposals cleared by ASI. Major ongoing works include:

- Improved ticketing and queue management system and installation of turnstyles along Eastern and Western gateways of Taj complex. Special facilities for high value ticket holders. Creating slots (3 hour each) for visitor's entry. Closure of south gate for entry proposed, exit is permitted. Ticket fee to be revised from Rs. 40 to Rs. 50. Following the recommendations of NEERI report, special ticket of Rs. 200 for the entry to main mausoleum to be introduced shortly. Idea is not to make money but to ensure the protection of built fabric and better crowd management. Development of greenery in Taj Corridor area between Taj Mahal and Agra Fort. Night viewing from Mehtab Bagh, and Coordination with Ministry of Tourism, ADA and local Police for handling *lapka* culture.

Red Fort: Nearly 48 ongoing works related to the conservation of monuments (26 works), refurbishment of British period Barrack buildings to incorporate 6 museums and exhibitions, development of gardens and landscapes (7 works) and scientific cleaning of monuments (9 works) including retrieval of paintings from the ceiling of Chhata Bazar. Major works include:

- Conservation of Mughal Period buildings, Development of landscapes, CPWD has been assigned the work to develop end-to-end electrical solutions within the Fort and illumination and projection mapping on Lahori Gate. Four exhibitions are being organised in Red Fort:
 - 1857- India's First War of Independence
 - Contribution of India in World War-I,
 - Netaji Shubhash Chandra Bose and INA, and
 - Exhibition on Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel

Purana Qila: NBCC Proposal for developing amenities and improvement of lake in front. Prominent works include:

- Development of Parking, Ticket Counter, Souvenir Kiosk, Food Kiosk, Lake-side pathway, Landscaping, Desilting and cleaning of lake.

Work to begin shortly. ASI has exposed the buried archaeological remains inside the fort. Conservation of the exposed remains has started.

Qutb Minar: Yatra.com Proposal for developing amenities include:

- Re-development of Parking, Ticket Counter, Souvenir Kiosk, Food court, Interpretation Centre, Toilets, Landscaping, Signage and Illumination.

Work to begin shortly. ASI has initiated the conservation works within the monument.

Humayun's Tomb: In collaboration with AKTC, work for providing amenities, including an interpretation centre, cafeteria, parking, souvenir shop, etc., is in full swing.

Khajuraho Group of temples: Works related to amenities take up with the support of Indian Oil Foundation (IOF) under NCF Scheme. Proposal includes:

- Development of Parking, Ticket Counter, Souvenir Kiosk, Food court, Interpretation Centre, Toilets, Landscaping and Signage.

Sun Temple, Konark, Odisha: Works related to amenities take up with the support of Indian Oil Foundation (IOF) under NCF Scheme. Proposal includes:

- Development of Parking, Ticket Counter, Souvenir Kiosk, Food court, Interpretation Centre, Toilets, Landscaping and signage.

Agra Fort, Hampi Group of Monuments, Shore Temple Mahabalipuram and Golkonda Fort: Phase I works already started by respective SAs (Superintending Archaeologist). Phase I works include amenities such as signages, dust bins, ramps and pathways, drinking water facilities and cleanliness within monuments.

Dr. Mahesh Sharma also briefed the press about the ongoing plan of action for creating World Class Amenities at 100 Adarsh Smaraks such as Toilet blocks, Signages, Drinking water facilities, Pathways and ramps (for the differently abled), Seating benches, Dust bins, Improved parking facilities, Ticket counters and better queue management, Landscaping, etc. He further informed that the ASI has begun the task of providing amenities (drinking water, benches, dust bins, ramps and pathways and cleanliness) in 27 Adarsh monuments (in Phase I). For 73 remaining Adarsh monuments, proposals are being cleared. He also informed that the WAPCOS, NPCC and NBCC have been proposed for selection for the task of designing and executing amenities in all 100 monuments (Toilets, Cafeteria, Souvenir shop, food court, Illumination and Parking). WAPCOS and TCIL have begun the construction / refurbishment of toilet blocks in 218 protected monuments. The work of Securing monuments and archaeological sites by providing boundary walls to thwart any encroachments and illegal occupation of monument premises is also underway. Work of providing boundary walls in nearly 200 monuments has been given to WAPCOS and TCIL.

The Culture Minister also gave details about the scheme of Cultural Mapping which is being implemented with an outlay of Rs.490 Crores over the next three years in 622 Districts. In this, all the artists in every corner of the country are being registered on the central portal; and through a competitive process they will be divided into various categories. This will not only help provide assistance to these artists but will also help to

preserve those arts and crafts which are on the verge of becoming instinct. Nearly One Crore such artists have already registered with the portal, the Culture Minister explained.

The Culture Minister stated that three new museums will be opened i.e. one at Allahabad on the theme of Kumbh Mela, Virtual museum on Lord Rama in Ayodhya and a museum in Gorakhpur highlighting local culture.

NB/PS/UD

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