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**Press Information Bureau  
Government of India  
Ministry of Tourism**

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**Indo-Nepal Tourism Forum to be set up for mutual consultation and promotion of tourism: Tourism Minister**

**Ramayana and Buddhist circuits to be promoted through common branding by India and Nepal**

The second meeting of tourism Joint Working Group (JWG) between India and Nepal was held in Kathmandu on 06.07.2018. In this meeting it was agreed to set up the Indo Nepal Tourism Forum with representation from government and private sector from both sides for mutual consultation and promotion of tourism in both countries. This JWG also decided to officially recognise two circuits, Ramayana Circuit and Buddhist Circuit by both governments for joint promotions through common branding and marketing exercises.

Earlier, during the Conclave of Special Committee on Tourism for SAARC countries held in India in 2016, the Ministry of Tourism has agreed to offer total 50 seats for three years B.Sc. programme and diploma courses through Institute of Hotel Management (IHM) to the students from SAARC countries including Nepal.

The Bharatmala Pariyojana (approved by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs in October 2017), includes development of 5,300 km border and international connectivity roads including some National Highways stretches leading to Nepal Border. Out of this, 2,000 Km of National Highways for international connectivity has been provided an outlay of Rs.25,000 crore in Phase I (2017-18 to 2021-22) of the program. The National Highway infrastructure developed under the above program would also provide connectivity for tourism related activities.

This information was given by the Minister of State (I/C) for Tourism Shri. K. J. Alphons, in a written reply in Lok Sabha today.

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**NB/JP/PS**