Tourism and Hospitality Sector in Bihar

The state of Bihar is well known for its historical and cultural heritage, ideal traditions and beautiful tourist spots. Bihar is the cradle for different world famed religions like Buddhism, Hinduism and Sikhism. It was also the centre for many great empires like the Mauryas, Guptas and the Nandas. Bodhgaya, Nalanda, Rajgir and Vikramshila are some of the leading Buddhist spots in Bihar which shows the state’s deep connection with Buddhism. The tourist destinations in Bihar are accessible by road, rail and air routes. Bihar is well connected by air with the major metro cities of India and also with some of the major capitals of the world including Colombo, Bangkok and Singapore. Bihar has airports at Patna and Gaya. Gaya airport is a small international airport that is connected to Bangkok, Singapore, Colombo and some other destinations. Thai Airways International, Indian Airlines, Mihin Lanka and Drukair offer international flights from Gaya. The Department of Tourism provides luxury buses and taxies for the comfort of tourist. The state government is planning to set up tourism security force for providing security and friendly services to the tourists. The table below shows the domestic and foreign tourist arrival since 2003 to June 2011:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of tourist arrival in thousands</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Domestic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>5228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>8026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>6881</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>10670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>10353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>19710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>15785</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>15786</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2011</td>
<td>9471</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus as observed in the table above the domestic and foreign tourist arrival has registered a significant growth in 2010 and first six months of 2011.

Availing a hotel in Bihar especially in Patna is not a difficult task as these hotels are near to some of the tourist spots. From luxury hotels to economy class hotels are available in Patna. Some of the renowned hotels in Patna are Hotel Maurya, Hotel Chanakya, Hotel Samrat International, and Patliputra Ashok and so on. The tourist attraction in Nalanda can be conveniently visited from the hotels in Patna. The hotels in Bodhgaya cater to both tourists and pilgrims. The well known hotels in Bodhgaya are Lotus Nikko Hotel, Hotel Siddharta International and Hotel Bodhgaya Ashok.
Though these hotels are present yet the hotel accommodation in Bihar is grossly inadequate and there is a necessity to build star category hotels at all important tourist destinations to provide proper services to both high end international tourists as well as national tourists. Way side facilities are an important part of tourism. In this regard comfortable rest houses loaded with basic amenities on highways would be created with public and private investments. The Government of Bihar would also encourage establishment of heritage hotels in Bihar by identifying heritage buildings and mansions to convert them to heritage hotels in order to provide quality accommodation to tourists. Also the state government would encourage private sector to set up world class amusement parks, golf courses, floating restaurants, casinos etc. The department of tourism is also going to take the initiative to connect tourist spots with world class roads.

The Government of Bihar wants a lot of investment in the hospitality sector. Some tourist destination in Bihar lacks proper accommodation facility which is a major drawback in the promotion of tourism. Like Patna and its adjoining areas it has great potential in finance. Tourism and Hospitality is one the important sector where Patna can be the best choice of investors. Vaishali and Muzzaffarpur bound areas are also in a need of good hotels. Hajipur can be a good place for tourism (Vaishali) because of its nearness from the state capital and open space for the big industries. Sitamarhi and Raxual also need the attention of the investors. Sitamarhi can be the best destination for tourism and can attract Hindu religious people as it is the birth place of Hindu goddess Sita. The government and the private agencies should come forward to develop this city and its nearby areas. Gaya, Nalanda and Buddhist circuit regions sees a lot of inflow of tourist’s majority from the Southeast Asian countries and mostly they are Buddhist. Because of tourist attraction there are plenty of opportunities in hotel industry in Gaya, Rajgir, Pawauri, Nalanda, and Fatuha and so on. Nalanda will become the centre for world tourism particularly after the revival of Nalanda University which is on full swing. Investment in this sector will be fully welcomed as this Buddhist circuit lacks deluxe hotels and even good 3 star hotels which often becomes a problem for the visiting tourists.

Bihar State Tourism Development Corporation Limited (BSTDC) which is monitored by its parent Tourism Department was established in the year 1981 with the goal of developing tourism in the state and for commercializing tourist resources available in the state. In regard to this various tourist infrastructures such as tourist bungalows, restaurants, cafeterias, transportation facilities etc are being provided at various tourist spots by this Corporation. Along with the state the BSTDC will redefine its role to be the administrative agency for facilitating private sector investment and formation of joint venture companies for setting up world class infrastructure. The BSTDC as well as private entrepreneur are being provided with some of the incentives such as full exemption in Stamp Duty and Registration fee in sale/ lease/ transfer of land for setting up a tourism project. This is a onetime facility. Again upcoming projects will be exempted from luxury tax for seven years from the
commencement of commercial operations. Also full exemption in Electricity Duty for seven years will be provided.

In a road show organised by Bihar Tourism in New Delhi on 13th January, 2012 Navin Kumar the General Manager of BSTDC stated that the government is playing its role to set up hotels both under government investment and under Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) mode. The plan is to set up star-rated hotels of different categories at key tourism destination across Bihar. The destinations identified include the capital city that is Patna and in the Buddhist circuit such as Bodhgaya, Vaishali, and Rajgir and so on.

For further information contact:

Bihar State Tourism Development Corporation
(A Govt.of Bihar Undertaking)
Bir Chand Patel Path,
Patna.
PIN-800 001.
Bihar. India.
Phone: +91-612-2225411,
Fax: +91-612-2506218.
Email: bihartourism.bstdc@gmail.com
Web Site: http://bstdc.bih.nic.in/

HOTEL & RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION OF EASTERN INDIA
The association covers 13 States in Eastern India
West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Assam, Jharkhand, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pardesh, Nagaland, Amanipur, Mizoram, Tripura, The Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Sikkim.
Hotel & Restaurant Associations of Eastern India
18A/1 Everest House, 18th floor,
46C, Chowringhee Road
Kolkata - 700071
Ph: 91-33-2288-1742, 91-33-2288-1743
Fax: 91-33-2288-1742
E-Mail:hraei@vsnl.net

******************************************************************************

19th September, 2012.