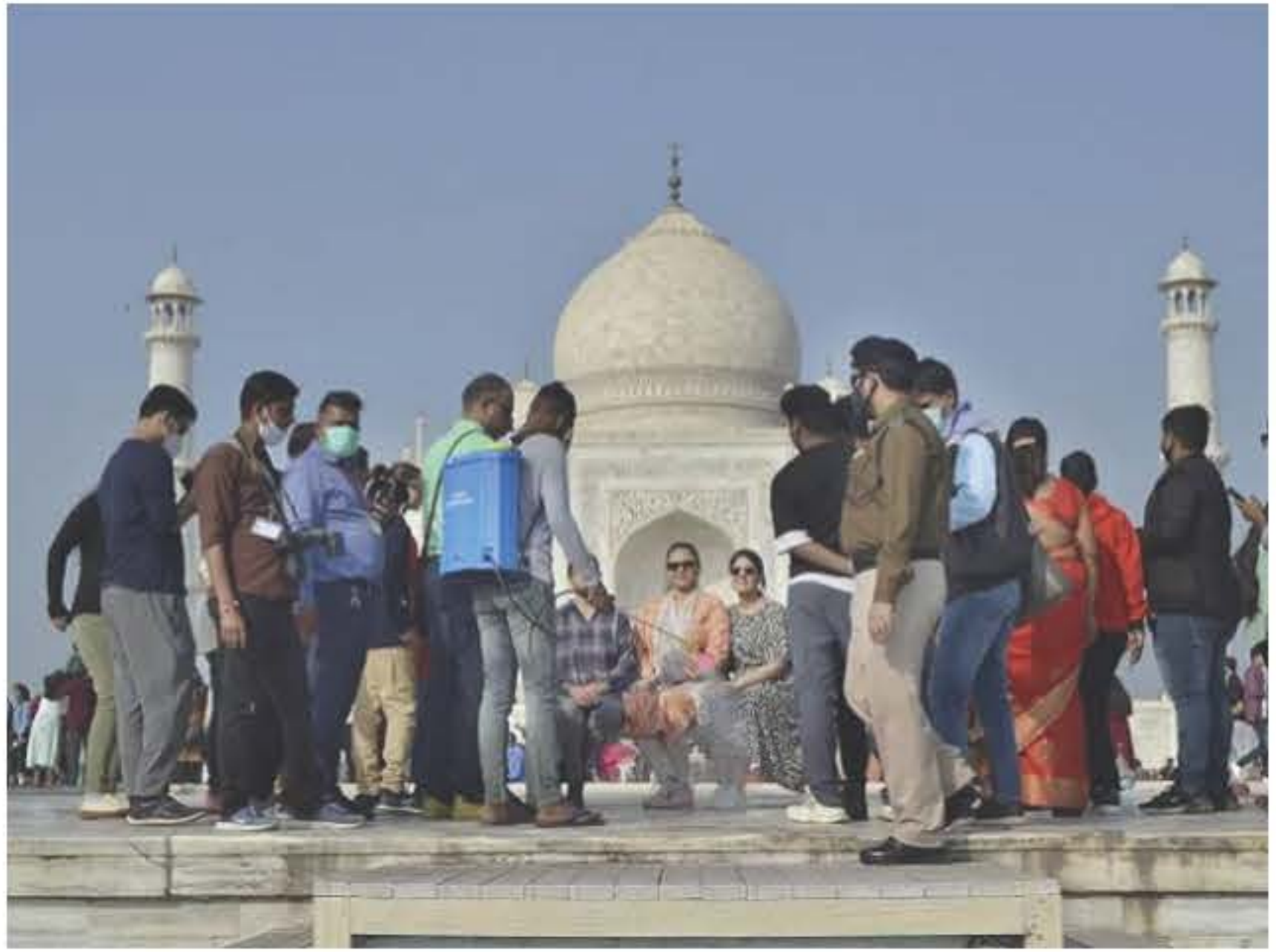


Govt working on comprehensive national tourism policy: G Kishan Reddy

Union Tourism and Culture Minister G Kishan Reddy on Sunday said that the government is working towards a comprehensive national tourism policy to give an impetus to the tourism industry.

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Union Tourism and Culture Minister G Kishan Reddy on Sunday said that the government is working towards a comprehensive [national](#) tourism policy to give an impetus to the tourism industry.

Addressing the last day of the two-day India International Cruise Conference here, Reddy also urged the industry stakeholders to prepare a road map for the development of the cruise tourism industry and asked them to create an action plan on cruise tourism in a mission-mode.

The government is taking a slew of initiatives to promote river cruise tourism, which include river front development, increasing the number of cruise ships to 1,000, infrastructure development for water parks, among others, he said at the event hosted by the Ports, Shipping and Waterways Ministry in collaboration with industry body Ficci.

During the day, as many as eight memorandum of understanding (MoUs) were signed between Mumbai Port Trust, Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) and various cruise services operators in the presence of Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Sarbananda

Sonowal and Reddy.

The domestic river cruise industry is at a nascent stage with an initial focus on NW 1 (Ganga) and NW 2 (Brahmaputra) servicing around 13,000 passenger movements in 2019, across 100 cruise trips, accounting for around 1 per cent of the global river cruise market.

However, this segment of tourism also got impacted due to COVID-19 pandemic and is now looking at revival.

Globally the river cruise market has grown at around 5 per cent over the last few years and is expected to constitute around 37 per cent of the cruise market by 2027.

Europe has been driving growth with around 60 per cent share of river cruise vessels in the world with rivers Danube in Europe and Yangtze in China dominating the river cruise market globally.

"We are working on a comprehensive [national](#) tourism policy to promote the tourism industry. It will also bring in important stakeholders including the various state governments together," Reddy said.

Calling for international cruise operators to invest in the domestic cruise tourism industry, the Union Tourism Minister said that the government will facilitate all that is required to set up business here.

"We need to concentrate both on domestic and international tourism. This is high time we work together and explore the potential of tourism in the country," the Minister said.

He said that India would be hosting the G23 Summit next year, during which some 120 conferences on different subjects, including on cruise tourism, are expected to be organized across various cities in the country, adding that, "We should utilize this opportunity with proper branding."

Speaking at the conference, IWAI Chairman Sanjay Bandopadhyay said that the river cruise segment saw double-digit growth.

As per Maritime India Vision 2030, of the 12 ports identified for Cruise Tourism, the infrastructure expectations have been implemented in six of its major ports and are to be taken up for the remaining six in--Kolkata, Porbandar, Ganpatipule, Diu, Somnath, and Konark.

The Maritime Vision 2030 talks about the significant untapped potential river cruise has across [national](#) waterways. Linking river and sea tourism between inland and coastal cities as well as with neighbouring countries like Bangladesh, Myanmar and Thailand could provide a unique experience to passengers.

The eight MoUs signed on Sunday include an initial pact between IWAI and Heritage River Journey Pvt Ltd operating under the brand Antara Luxury River Cruises, for river cruise between Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh and Bogibee in Dibrugarh district of Assam via Kolkata and Indo-Bangladesh Protocol route.

Another one was signed between Mumbai Port and Angriya Sea Eagle Ltd for cooperation, development and promotion of the cruise industry in the country. As part of the initial pact, the company also plans to invest Rs 500 crore over the next five years in the cruise tourism business.

The Delhi-based Waterways Leisure Tourism Pvt Ltd signed an MoU with Chennai Port Authority for home porting of their cruise ships in Chennai for the upcoming cruising season .

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