

Tourism ministry asks states to beef up security at hotels

In its bid to ensure that tourists feel safe in the wake of the terror attacks on Mumbai's Taj and Oberoi Trident hotels, the tourism ministry has written to all state governments to provide stringent security at hotels.

Tourism ministry officials told IANS that tourism secretary Sujit Banerjee has written to all state governments, asking them to take steps to secure both government-run and private hotels.

In his letter, Banerjee said : 'As you are aware, the hotel establishments in your state need much more stringent security in view of the present security scenario.'

He suggested that security systems like x-ray machines for checking luggage should be installed at hotel entrances.

'This may instil a sense of security in the minds of the tourists and the guests alike,' the letter said, adding that after the steps are taken the tourism ministry should be informed about it.

Banerjee has also asked the tourism departments of all states to work with the police to create a secure and safe environment for the tourists.

The ministry is also convening a meeting of the National Tourism Advisory Council on Dec 15 to assess the situation in the wake of the [Mumbai](#) terror attacks and the global economic crisis, and discuss confidence building measures for both domestic and foreign tourists. Tourism Minister Ambika Soni will chair the meeting.

Through its website, the ministry also tried to instil confidence among visitors.

'Security all over the country is being beefed up to ensure the safety of all the citizens and tourists visiting the country,' it said.

The website was also giving out information about the steps taken by the Indian government when terrorists struck Mumbai on Nov 26. About 172 people were killed in the carnage that lasted nearly 60 hours.

When the terror attack was on, the ministry was putting news updates on its website.

'The ministry of tourism and tour operators along with the hotels are also closely co-coordinating and assure travellers that India is a safe destination.

'India is a large nation and an incident in one place does not impact tourism and daily life in the rest of the country. There is normal buoyancy in tourism and business in the rest of the country,' the website said.

Sources said the ministry has already sent communications through e-mails and letters to different stakeholders and tour operators abroad, listing the measures taken by it during and after the terrorists attack in Mumbai.

They said the ministry has also offered its assistance in the 'seamless movement of tourists' to the country and is ready to take 'confidence building measures' that may strengthen India's efforts in fighting the fallout of the unfortunate incidents in Mumbai.

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