Culture Ministry comes up with a 100-day agenda

Big screens for aarti at 24 spots, 25 science museum vans

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Installing big screens and audio systems at two dozen spots where a large number of devotees gather for prayers or aarti, rolling out 25 science museums on wheels to reach out to rural students, and digging rainwater harvesting pits at over 100 major monuments across the country are all on the Union Culture Ministry's 100-day agenda.

As a part of the Narendra Modi government’s plan for its first 100 days after returning to power in May, Union Culture and Tourism Minister of State (Independent Charge) Prahlad Singh Patel told The Hindu that the Ministry would be focusing on constructing three pits each at 123 sites, including the 100 monuments covered under the Adarsh Smarak scheme. He added that greening would also be carried out at these sites, with a focus on planting trees that have long lives and won’t have to be shifted for any future works. Also on the 100-day plan was the development of places for aarti in order to facilitate the large number of people who visit daily, Mr. Patel said.

“Right now, there are many places where aarti takes place and a large number of people participate, but it is unplanned. We are in the process of providing some screens, audio systems and software,” he said.

A total of 24 spots, including Har ki Pauri in Haridwar and sites in Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat among others, would have large screens and audio systems.

Expanding reach

In order to expand the reach of its science centres, Mr. Patel said the Ministry would deploy 25 mobile vans that will house science museums. So far, the Ministry operates 23 such vans, but they tend to visit State capitals and metropolitan areas only, a Ministry official said.

The 25 new vans would be deployed in the 115 “aspirational districts”, as identified by the Centre, the official added.