

(b) whether it is correct, that too much reliance on public sector in this regard has kept foreign tourists away from India?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PURUSHOTTAM KAUSHIK): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir. Too much reliance is not being placed on the public sector in this regard, inasmuch as adequate assistance and encouragement are being given to the private sector also for providing facilities for foreign tourists. In any case, the number of tourists visiting India has progressively increased as will be seen from the figures given below:—

Year	Tourist arrivals	% change
1974	423,161	..
1975	465,275	10.0
1976	533,951	14.8
1977 (Jan—June)	282,449 (over corresponding period 1976)	19.3

Foreign Tourists to India

3660. SHRI SATISH AGARWAL Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government did not achieve the targets set for foreign tourists' arrival in India so far in the 5th Plan; and

(b) whether Government propose to hold officials responsible for this national loss and punish them?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PURUSHOTTAM KAUSHIK): (a) The Department of Tourism had set a target of 800,000 international tourists by the end of 1978 at a projected growth rate of 15 per cent per annum. This target was laid down when the Fifth Five Year Plan was being formulated in 1973 when there was no indication of the decline in international tourist traffic due to the oil crisis. The flow of international tourist traffic to India, therefore, received a set-back in 1974 the first year of the Fifth Plan, when an increase of only 3.2 per cent in international tourist arrivals was registered as against the projected growth rate of 15 per cent. As compared, however, to the world tourist figures, which declined by 2.8 per cent in 1974 even the marginal increase of 3.2 per cent in tourist arrivals was an achievement.

In subsequent years the flow of international tourist traffic to India has shown a progressive increase by registering a 10 per cent growth in 1975, 14.8 per cent in 1976, and 19.3 per cent in the first half of 1977. If the present encouraging trend in international tourist arrivals continues, and no political or economic crisis engulfs the world, it should be possible to reach the targetted figure of 800,000 international tourists by the end of 1978.

(b) Does not arise.

Steps to Receive Foreign Tourists

3661. SHRI SATISH AGARWAL: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state the steps that are being taken to receive one million foreign tourists, as was proposed earlier, by 1980 through private and public sector agencies?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PURUSHOTTAM KAUSHIK): A Statement outlining the various measures

taken to receive a larger volume of international tourist traffic is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Statement

1. To augment the present hotel capacity of 16,771 rooms, the Department of Tourism has encouraged new hotel projects. The public sector has programmed projects at selected places of tourist importance in the country. The private sector is also encouraged to set up more hotels by means of various incentives offered by way of fiscal reliefs, financial assistance in the form of institutional loans, priority consideration for essential requirements etc. In all about 10,000 hotel rooms in the public and private sectors will be added during the Fifth Plan period at important tourist centres to meet the requirements of international tourists.

2. For providing supplementary accommodation, the construction of 15 youth hostels was initiated of which 14 have been commissioned. The fifteenth youth hostel is in the process of completion and will be commissioned during 1977-78. Action has also been initiated for the construction of two more youth hostels, one each at Pondicherry and Mysore.

3. To provide additional accommodation for middle-income group tourists, the construction of 11 tourist bungalows was taken up. Of these, 7 are already commissioned and the remaining are in various stages of construction. They are expected to be completed during the Fifth Plan period.

4. It is proposed to start 5 camping sites on National Highways connecting important places of tourist interest to meet the growing demand of tourists travelling by road.

5. Additional facilities at the Kovalam Beach Resort and at Gulmarg for

winter sports development have been provided for catering to a larger volume of destination tourist traffic.

5. For wild life enthusiasts, construction of 5 forest lodges was taken up. Two have already been commissioned and the remaining 3 will be commissioned during 1977-78. It is also proposed to construct 2-3 forest lodges during the Fifth Plan period. Besides accommodation, mini-buses are also provided at selected wild life sanctuaries for the viewing of animals and birds.

7. The India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) has a network of transport units at major tourist centres. Its transport fleet consists of 101 luxury cars, 65 Ambassador cars, 38 large tourist coaches and 8 mini-buses. The ITDC as well as several State Tourism Development Corporations operate guided sightseeing and excursion services by coach. Such conducted coach tours are also operated by a few leading travel agencies.

8. The transport loan scheme provides hire-purchase facilities to private tourist transport operators for augmenting their fleet of tourist vehicles.

9. Two motor launches each at Gobindasagar and Nagarjuna Sagar lakes have been provided to enable tourists to cruise on these lakes. Besides, a ferry boat has been given to the Vivekananda Memorial for ferrying passengers between Kanyakumari and the Vivekananda Rock.

10. The Indian Airlines have air-linked a number of important tourist centres to provide an easy and interesting travel circuit within the country.

11. Special 'Discover India' air fares and 'Indrail passes' have been introduced by the Indian Airlines and the Railways to facilitate inexpensive

travel by international tourists within the country enabling them to visit as many tourist centres as possible within the period of their stay in India.

12. Organisation of special cultural programmes, *son-et-lumiere* spectacles, and package tours for travel within India generally or to specific places are yet some more facilities provided to cater to the requirements of international tourists.

Claims filed by Vanaspati Units with State Trading Corporation

3662. SHRI VASANT SATHE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND CIVIL SUPPLIES AND COOPERATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of Government has been drawn to the news item appearing in "Hindustan Times" dated the 25th May, 1977 under the caption "Six Vanaspati Units file claims with S.T.C."; and

(b) if so, the facts thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND CIVIL SUPPLIES AND COOPERATION (SHRI MOHAN DHARIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Two rakes of Palm Oil had arrived in Kanpur in March, 1977. While the oil was being heated for melting before deliveries, a leak developed in the heating coils at the depot of M/s. Ganesh Flour Mills, Kanpur, STC's handling agent and a Govt. owned vanaspati factory. As soon as the facts were brought to STC's notice, further deliveries to vanaspati units were stopped.

2. Only four units have so far filed their claims with the STC. The total quantity of moisture involved is 30 MT against the delivered quantity of about 1200 MT. Samples of the affected oil have been analysed. In the light of the analysis report the claims of the parties are being examined. So far only one party has mentioned the value of their claim and put it at Rs. 91,000/.

3. According to the analysis report received from STC from recognised laboratories the moisture content is excessive. However, excessive moisture content does not render oil unfit for human consumption. M/s. Ganesh Flour Mills, Kanpur offered to lift the balance quantity of the Palm Oil and it was delivered to them.

Merger of Sales-Tax with Excise Duty

3663. SHRI MADHVARAO SCINDIA: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND REVENUE AND BANKING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received a representation from Bihar Paper Merchants' Association regarding merger of sales-tax with excise duty on paper and paper board items; and

(b) if so, the details of the action proposed to be taken by the Government?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND BANKING (SHRI H. M. PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) At present levy of Additional excise duty in lieu of sales-tax is applicable only to textiles (other than silk fabrics) tobacco and sugar. The question of extending the scheme to other commodities had been considered earlier but the State Governments had opposed the proposal. The indirect Taxation Inquiry Committee is now reviewing the structure of all the indirect taxes—Central, State and Local. The question of replacement of sales tax by additional excise duty will be considered again in consultation with the State Government as early as possible.

Minor Irrigation Schemes Financed by Agriculture Refinance Development Corporation Madhya Pradesh

3664. SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND REVENUE AND BANKING be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the minor irrigation schemes in Madhya Pradesh financed by the Agriculture Refinance-