

AN. HON. MEMBER : What is the total amount, Sir ?

MR. SPEAKER : You can just count it. I cannot make him a calculator. That is all. There is nothing much in this question.

[Translation]

SHRI BALKAVI BAIRAGI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, please get one calculator each issued to all by Raja Sahib.

MR. SPEAKER : Why ? Has Raja Sahib set up a factory to manufacture calculators ?

[English]

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH) : It will be about Rs. 64.96 crores.

Development of Kovalam Tourist
Centre and Thekkadi Wild Life
Sanctuary in Kerala

+

*166. SHRI T. BASHEER
SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMA-
CHANDRAN :

Will the Minister of PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) Whether Government have any proposal under consideration for the development of the Kovalam tourist centre and Thekkadi Wild Life Sanctuary in Kerala; and

(b) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND TOURISM (SHRI H.K.L. BHAGAT) : (a) and (b). Kovalam is already a major tourist centre in the country. As far back as 1970 the Central Department of Tourism initiated action to develop Kovalam as a beach resort with a total outlay of Rs. 221.58 lakhs. There is already a 5-star ITDC hotel for many years. I.T.D.C. also has a Transport Unit at Kovalam and the Kovalam Palace Hotel. In addition to this the Kerala State Government also maintains a good hotel at Kovalam beach. State Government also has plans to clean the beaches, to introduce

various life saving measures and also to introduce more water sport facilities.

For the development of Thekkadi, the State Government has a proposal to put up a few Watch Towers to enable the tourists to have a closer view of the flora and fauna. The Central Department of Tourism has a trekking route proposal connecting Thekkadi and Mangaladevi Temple in Tamilnadu border area and provision of more boating facilities at Thekkadi Lake under consideration.

SHRI T. BASHEER : Sir, even the Hon. Minister has said in his reply that Kovalam is a very important beach resort in the matter of international tourism. In 1983-84, the Kovalam ITDC hotel had made a profit of Rs. 1.35 lakhs and in 1984-85 it made a profit of Rs. 3.62 lakhs and the Budget profit for 1985-86 is Rs. 8.3 lakhs. While many ITDC hotels are running at a loss, this ITDC hotel at Kovalam is running at a profit. In spite of this fact, no proper care has been taken towards this tourist resort and that it requires renovation. Therefore, I would request that the Government must give attention to that.

The Hon. Minister in his reply says the ITDC also has a transport unit at Kovalam and the Kovalam Palace Hotel, but I received a reply from the Hon. Minister on 31st July, 1985 saying that ITDC Management has decided to close down this unit of Ashoka Travel and Tours at Kovalam and that steps are being taken by the ITDC to implement that decision. The Unit has a total strength of nine employees. When the Unit is closed, the staff will be transferred to other transport units within the region. To my information the unit is already closed, but here it says there is a unit. This is very misleading. I would like to know the exact position that exists now. My information is that it is closed. And if it is closed, I would request the Hon. Minister to take steps to reopen it and to see that it works properly.

SHRI H.K.L. BHAGAT : I certainly agree with the Hon. Member that Kovalam is a very important tourist centre for the foreign tourists. It is good that the hotel at Kovalam has been making some profit, but it is not correct to say that all ITDC hotels are suffering some loss and that this

is the only hotel that is making profit. It is certainly making some profit now, though initially there was some loss.

The second point the Hon. Member has mentioned is that the repairs and renovation has not been attended to. I shall certainly ask the ITDC to look into it and whatever renovation and repairs are required for proper maintenance will be looked into.

As far as the transport unit is concerned, it is correct that the ITDC has taken a decision to close the unit in the sense the ITDC has decided to withdraw its own vehicles because that was running under a great loss. Secondly, there was an unnecessary competition between them and the State Government vehicles. It has also been decided that all the employees should be transferred to other units so that there is no employee who loses his job. Arrangements have been made with the State Government so that vehicles and everything is ready. That way the ITDC with the support of the State Government will be certainly looking to the transport problems of the tourists. That is the change.

SHRI T. BASHEER : Everywhere even in Delhi, the transport units are running at a loss. So, it is not an experience in Kerala only. My second supplementary is this: There is a hill resort near Kovalam which is only 40 kilometres away in Ponmudi (Golden Top). If you travel from Kovalam to Ponmudi, you can travel in one hour's time. If you travel one hour by road you will reach a hill resort from a beach resort. This is a very rare facility and natural resource which is available in the country. So, if you develop Ponmudi also along with Kovalam, that will be a fantastic idea for the Minister. I am giving a very rare information to the Hon. Minister; and a fantastic idea for his imagination. I know the Hon. Minister is a man of high imagination and implementation also. I would like to know from the Hon. Minister whether he will take steps to develop both Ponmudi and Kovalam, linking both these tourist resort and implement this proposal at least under the Seventh Five-Year Plan? It is a fantastic idea for our Minister.

SHRI H.K.L. BHAGAT : I am grateful to the Hon. Member for improving my imagination and giving me this information. I am indeed very grateful to him. I would only suggest to him that he should give this idea to the State Government. Now in our Seventh Plan strategy we do wish to develop hill areas; we do wish to develop beach areas. The emphasis certainly will remain on the development of cultural tourism. But the emphasis is also going to be very much on places of scenic beauty and other holiday resorts. The idea is good. I believe it is good because an Hon. Member who is knowledgeable is saying so. And I hope that he passes on this information to the State Government. They have already given us some proposals for consideration for further development of water resources in Kovalam and certain other places in Kerala. Kerala is certainly one of the most beautiful States in the country. Certainly a lot of tourism can be developed with Central funds, with State funds and private sector funds. If he passes on this suggestion and we get a proposal from the State Government, the Central Government will certainly consider the proposal. As far as other transport centres which are incurring losses are concerned, we are thinking of rationalising everywhere wherever we think it is necessary.

SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN : May I know from the Hon. Minister whether it is a fact that certain species of animals in the Thekkadi Wild Life Sanctuary are on the verge of extinction both due to the denuding of forests as well as by illegal poaching? Will the Minister give instruction to the Government of Kerala to prevent the same?

SHRI H.K.L. BHAGAT : I would certainly agree with the Hon. Member that the species of animals must be preserved and forests should not be destroyed. It is the job of the State Government itself. I will also certainly ask the State Government to take all possible steps. The Chief Minister told me when I went to Kerala recently that they are taking all possible steps.

PROF. P. J. KURIEN : I wish to ask a question. Thekkadi is in my constituency.

SHRI VAKKOM PURUSHOTHAMAN : In Kerala there are backwaters throughout

the coastal belt. We have got innumerable rivers also with crystal clear water. They are not as polluted as the Dal Lake. Will the Government take steps to introduce houseboats and connect water sports areas in Kerala along with the tourist centres ?

SHRI H.K.L. BHAGAT : Sir, we are very much interested in encouraging water sports in Kerala and in fact the State Government has forwarded a project proposal for Central assistance to provide boating facilities at Thekkadi, Quilon, Kumarakom and Cochin at a total cost of Rs. 54 lakhs, and we have asked them to furnish the details. Similarly, there are other proposals. We are very keen to develop water sports in Kerala. We would like to develop them to the best of the availability of our finances, we like them to develop them at national and international standards, but I hope the proposals which are before us are certainly under consideration.

MR. SPEAKER : Next question—Shri Mohanbhai Patel.

PROF. P.J. KURIEN : Sir, Thekkadi is in my constituency. Other Members are intruding into my constituency.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : What is more in this question ?

PROF. P.J. KURIEN : Sir, it being in my constituency, you should allow me to put a question.

MR. SPEAKER : All right.

SHRI VAKKOM PURUSHOTHAMAN : Kovalam is in my constituency !

(Interruptions)

PROF. P.J. KURIEN : Sir, in Kerala there are tourist resorts like Kovalam, Thekkadi and other places. But these are all maintained as if we are encouraging only the foreign tourists. Sir, what about domestic tourists ? Thekkadi is in my constituency and when the Prime Minister visited there, I went there. There is an ITDC hotel. I wanted to stay there one

night. You know, I went there and I heard about the charge. So I had to go for a cheaper one. If I give half of my monthly salary, then only I can stay there one day. So, which Indian can stay ? There is no facility for domestic tourists to stay in a place like Thekkadi. I want our own people should go and see the beauty of Thekkadi. They should also have a boat ride. Therefore, will the Hon. Minister take steps to start janata hotels in all these tourist centres whereby ordinary people can afford to pay and stay there ?

SHRI H.K.L. BHAGAT : Sir, the Hon. Member has raised a very relevant question and I agree with him that there is necessity for developing domestic tourism facilities for men of meagre means. I agree with him, and the focus in the Seventh Plan is going to be on this. In this Plan period we are going to construct lots of Yatrikas which are improvised dharmashalas, at least one in each State, and also Yatri Niwas. In the dharmashalas the accommodation will be available on payment of Rs. 2/- per head, and in the Yatri Niwas on payment of Rs. 60-65 per seat. These plans are there and there are plans for one or two Yatrikas in Kerala as also for a Yatri Niwas in Kerala. In fact the emphasis in the Seventh Plan is to provide accommodation for people with meagre means and we would like the private sector also to come in a big way because ultimately the funds of the Government are limited.

Review of Performance of Bank Officials

+

*170. **SHRI PRAKASH V. PATIL :**
SHRI SOMNATH RATH :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have ordered to review the performance of senior officials of public sector banks to remove inefficient and corrupt people as reported in "The Hindustan Times" of 18th October, 1985;

(b) whether review will be conducted from General Manager level downward; and

(c) if so, the action taken or being taken against the staff of branches of nationalised