

LOK SABHA

Friday, April 29, 1983/Vaisakha 9,
1905 (Saka)

*The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the
Clock*

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Attracting Foreign Tourists

*810. SHRI SUDHIR GIRI : Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have arranged for publicity abroad about the places of interest in India for attracting foreign tourists ;

(b) if so, the names of places of interest thus advertised abroad ;

(c) the number of foreign tourists who visited India in 1982 and the places which were visited by most of them ; and

(d) whether it is a fact that some tourist have complained of frequent changes in the schedules of Indian Airlines ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ASHOK GEHLOT) :

(a) to (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House,

STATEMENT

(a) to (c) The Department of Tourism through its 23 Tourist Offices located in America, Europe, Australasia, West Asia and East Asia undertakes publicity and promotion of Tourism to India in the major tourist generating markets of the world. The

various attractions India has to offer are advertised and promoted by means of publicity literature, films, audio-visuals, India evenings and other press and public relations activities. The statistics of international tourists visiting India are compiled on an all India basis and not place-wise. A total of 12,88,162 foreign tourists visited India in 1982.

(d) The Indian Airlines as a matter of policy avoid changing established time schedules ; but the rapid expansion in domestic traffic accompanied by a number of new places being brought on the get map of India, has led to some unavoidable schedule changes. However, such changes are resorted to under unavoidable circumstances.

SHRI SUDHIR GIRI : Sir, if you go through the answer given by the Minister, my question No. (b) has not been answered. The answer has been cleverly avoided.

I had put this question because of a serious allegation made by the State Government of West Bengal against the Central Government and the Tourism Department. It has been alleged that the tourist spots of West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa etc. i.e. the eastern zone of our country are not being advertised abroad. Not only that. The foreign visitors are compelled to obtain some inner line permit if they want to visit the tourist spots in West Bengal. So, I want to know from the hon. Minister whether the Central Government would advertise the tourist spots of the eastern region, particularly of West Bengal, Bihar and Orissa abroad.

AN HON. MEMBER : Why not Assam ?

SHRI SUDHIR GIRI : What will the Government do, to do away with the system of obtaining inner line permits from the Central Government before visiting the tourist spots in West Bengal ? Even visitors who go to Gangtok in Sikkim are not

required to obtain the inner line permit ; but in the case of West Bengal, the permit system has been made compulsory. Is the Government of India going to do away with this system ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI KHURSHEED ALAM KHAN) : At the outset, I would certainly like to refute the charge that we are not advertising places located in West Bengal or any other part of the country included in the north-eastern region. Actually, we give due publicity to all the States and to all the regions equally ; and it is obvious from the fact that we have circulated separate folders for each State, highlighting the places of tourist interest in each State ; and, therefore, you cannot say that places in West Bengal have not been highlighted, or that places in West Bengal have not advertised.

AN HON. MEMBER : It is because a Marxist Government is there ?

SHRI KHURSHEED ALAM KHAN : I am interested in tourism, and not in any other aspect. As far as tourism is concerned, I can assure the hon. Member that West Bengal receives the same attention, and the north-eastern region receives much more attention than, any other region.

As regards the inner line permit, I have mentioned more than once that this is a matter which is to be dealt with by the Home Ministry. It is a question of security. Certain areas are restricted areas ; certain areas are prohibited areas. I am sure that the Home Ministry has to be referred to in this matter ; only they can take a decision about the restrictions imposed; or the relaxations that are required to be made in respect of West Bengal, or any region in that area.

SHRI SUDHIR GIRI : We are proud that we Indians have a glorious past. We also have some distinct cultural traits. On 15th January 1983, there was an incident in the Calangute Beach in Goa. There was a nude sun-bathing parade by the Hippies. Hundreds of school children were scared. Not only that ; the foreign visitors were also scared. In view of this, I want to know from the hon. Minister whether he

would take steps to prevent the recurrence of such incidents in future.

Secondly, is the Government in a position to resort to an integrated tourism whereby foreign visitors would be given an opportunity to choose a village, where they will pass days exactly as the villagers do ? Is Government in a position to offer such opportunities to foreign visitors ?

SHRI KHURSHEED ALAM KHAN : When the tourists come to this country, they are given full liberty and full choice—they can go wherever they want to go, except to places which have restrictions. And in order to take people to various places, we provide all the necessary information and facilities. Infrastructure is created in such a fashion, that wherever they go, in any part of the country, they get the necessary facilities of accommodation, transport and all the information that they need for sight-seeing and other purposes, particularly for the culture tourism. We always try to make it possible for the foreign tourists to know our rich cultural heritage including our performing of arts and all other allied matters.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV : Assam has got nice tourist spots. But the question is that inland permit takes a long time because this is being issued from here. Is it possible for the Tourism Ministry to request the Home Ministry to open one office in Calcutta to sort out this problem ?

DR. SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY : I am happy to hear from the Minister that they would like to encourage more foreign tourists. I would like to know from the Minister whether they have a selective policy on tourists coming into India. Recently, the Minister may have seen in the Press that an Israeli couple was arrested somewhere in Bhubaneswar or a place like that. I would like to know whether government wants to discourage tourists coming from certain countries, for example, from Israel or is this tourism independent of the foreign policy of the country ?

SHRI KHURSHEED ALAM KHAN : I am sorry to say that I have not read anything about this incident of arrest of an Israeli couple,

DR. SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY : I represent the City of Bombay. An Israeli Consulate is there. Jews are living there and their relatives are living in Israel. I have got a right to ask this question.

MR. SPEAKER : Has anybody objected to your right ?

SHRI KHURSHEED ALAM KHAN : As far as we are concerned, we always encourage quality tourism ; and about quality tourism, I suppose the hon. Professor knows much more about it than I do. Particularly his love for Israel, I never thought so much that he is going to plead Israeli tourism case in this House.

DR. SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY : Is there any ban on tourists coming from Israel or not ? That is a straight question, not for love for Israel. My love for India is larger than my love for Israel.

SHRI KHURSHEED ALAM KHAN : Tourists are welcome from any part of the world provided they have valid travel documents.

SHRI CHANDRAJIT YADAV : The question basically is of attracting foreign tourists. Now, I fear that this quality tourists may be misinterpreted and the interpretation may be that those who come and stay in Five Star Hotels, they are quality tourists. The government has given much more attention to the construction of Five Star Hotels thinking that most of the foreign tourists who come to India are rich people ; they can afford to stay in Five Star Hotels while the fact is otherwise. Now, many tourists who belong to middle income group in foreign countries, they would like to come and visit India provided cheaper accommodation—what you call Three Star Hotels or motel—is available on a larger scale. Is the government paying any attention to it ?

MR. SPEAKER : That had been answered earlier also.

SHRI CHANDRAJIT YADAV : Japan is one country whose thousands of tourists are going all over the world, but the number of tourists from Eastern Japan is very small, though it has increased during the last two years. Would the government use certain specialised agencies, which can create

conditions and take responsibility for publicity so that more and more tourists come to India from Eastern Japan ?

SHRI KHURSHEED ALAM KHAN : On the previous occasion also, I had made it very clear that tourism in this country is not all Five Star Culture. As far as Five Star Hotels are concerned, not many hotels are available of that category in this country. There are few in the five-star category. As regards five-star hotels, particularly, they are in some of the metropolitan cities. Rest of the accommodation is only three-star, two-star or one-star. There are rooms which are even un-starred.

There are 29,000 rooms which are the approved rooms, and out of these 29,000 rooms not even one-third are five-star rooms. There are 80,000 rooms available in all.

MR. SPEAKER : I hope, you do not refer to my Unstarred Question !

DR. SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY : You need not be stary-eyed, either.

SHRI KHURSHEED ALAM KHAN : So, there is sufficient accommodation available for the Buddhist tourists and we are always conscious of this fact.

As regards tourists from Japan, we know that for million tourists go out of Japan and our share is only one and a half per cent. We are making special efforts to attract tourists especially the Buddhist tourists who want to visit the various Buddhist pilgrim places in the country. For example, we are constructing Japanese style hotels at Rajghir and Kushinagar and there is also a train called the Great Indian Rover which is for Japanese tourists, particularly those who want to visit the Buddhist shrines, like Rajghir Bodh Gaya and Kushinagar. This train will take them to all such places of Buddhist interest and take them back to Calcutta.

AN HON. MEMBER : Is Saranath also include ?

SHRI KHURSHEED ALAM KHAN : Yes. All the important pilgrim places of Buddhist interest have been included in the itinerary and I hope this will be a great attraction to the Buddhist tourists coming to this country.

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Bhim Singh.

इलाहाबाद बैंक द्वारा शहरी क्षेत्रों में और शाखाएँ खोलने की अनुमति मांगी जाना

*812. श्री भीम सिंह :

श्रीमती किशोरी :

क्या वित्त मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या इलाहाबाद बैंक ने शहरी क्षेत्रों में और शाखाएँ खोलने की अनुमति दिये जाने का हाल में अनुरोध किया है;

(ख) यदि हाँ, तो तत्संबंधी तथ्य क्या हैं;

(ग) क्या सरकार का विचार बैंक को ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में भी अपनी गतिविधियाँ बढ़ाने के लिये कहने का है; और

(घ) यदि नहीं, तो इसके क्या कारण हैं?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY) : (a) to (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

It has been the endeavour of the Reserve Bank of India to secure increased availability of banking facilities in the rural and semi-urban areas. The current branch licensing policy of the Reserve Bank of India for the period 1982-85 accordingly lays stress on opening of branches at unbanked rural and semi-urban centres in underbanked areas having a banking coverage poorer than 1 branch for every 17,000 people. Primary responsibility for opening these branches is to be borne by the Regional Rural Banks in the districts of their operation. Other banks involved area-wise are to be those having sizeable presence in the area. Branch opening at urban/metropolitan centres is limited and related to felt needs in terms of new localities, volume of business, specific project development etc.

Within the parameters of the policy set out above, Reserve Bank of India have allowed Allahabad Bank to open 23 branches at unbanked rural/semi-urban centres. Of the 14 metropolitan/port town centres and 29 urban centres for which Allahabad Bank had sought licences, Reserve Bank of India

have, upto March 1983, allowed the Bank to open branches at 6 metropolitan centres and 6 urban centres.

श्री भीम सिंह : अध्यक्ष महोदय, जो स्टेटमेंट इन्होंने टेबल पर रखा है, उसमें इन्होंने लिखा है कि

'It has been the endeavour of the Reserve Bank of India to secure increased availability of banking facilities in the rural and semi-urban areas. The current branch licensing policy of the Reserve Bank of India for the period 1982-85 accordingly lays stress on opening of branches at unbanked rural and semi-urban centres in underbanked areas having a banking coverage poorer than one branch for every 17,000 people.'

इन्होंने इलाहाबाद बैंक को जो मंजूरी दी है, इस स्टेटमेंट में मैशन किया है—

'Reserve Bank of India have, up to March 1983, allowed the Bank to open branches at six metropolitan centres and six urban centres.'

इनकी पालिसी में अर्बन और सेमी-अर्बन के लिए रिजर्व बैंक ने मंजूरी दी है।

Is it not contrary to your policy ?

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY : It is not contrary to our policy. The Reserve Bank is following a rational policy and expansion of banks has to be done in a phased manner. Before nationalisation, in the year 1969 we had one branch for a population of every 65,000 and today, according to the policy of the Reserve Bank, there are 17,000 in rural and semi-urban areas. That is why, now, so far as the Allahabad Bank is concerned.—not only Allahabad Bank, for every nationalised Bank—we have got certain policies. The Reserve Bank has allotted the branches to be opened by each Bank. So far as the Allahabad Bank is concerned, they have got 23 branches in rural areas and 12 in metropolitan and urban areas. If the hon. Member wants to know which are the places where we want to open the branches, I can give him the list of those branches also.

श्री भीम सिंह : मेरा इतना ही निवेदन था कि जो भी आपने इमीडिएटली ब्रांच खोलने की