

LOK SABHA

Friday, August 25, 1995/Bhadra 3, 1917 (Saka)

(The Lok Sabha met at two Minutes past Eleven of the Clock)

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Road Side Tourist Centres

[English]

*321 SHRI ANIL BASU : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government have received proposals from the State Governments for setting up road side tourist centres; and

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the decision taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM) (SHRIMATI SUKHBUNS KAUR) : (a) and (b): The Department of Tourism receives proposals from the State Governments/UTs for setting up of wayside amenities. The amount sanctioned for setting up of various wayside amenities by the States/Union Territories for new projects during the last three years is as follows:

(Rs. in lakhs)

Year	Amount Sanctioned
1992-93	77.47
1993-94	77.45
1994-95	65.47

SHRI ANIL BASU : In the reply, the Minister has said that she has received proposals from the State Governments but regarding the proposals she has not said anything. Then, she has said about the sanctioned amount and the figures given here in the reply reflects that the sanctioned amount is getting reduced year after year, i.e., from Rs. 77.47 lakh, it has come down to Rs. 65.47 lakh.

Sir, it is very difficult to understand that when the Government is giving so much importance to the domestic tourism and also to the foreign tourists coming to our country, the facilities which should be provided to the tourists, the sanctioned amount is getting reduced year after year. In view of the reply given by the hon. Minister, I would like to put a question through you: What are the proposals received from the State Governments and what is the fate of those proposals? How much amount has been sanctioned to each of the State Government as per the proposals sent by them? Whether she has received any proposal from the Tourism Department of

the West Bengal Government for setting up of a wayside Tourist Complex by the side of Darakeswar River at Arambagh in the District Hoogly? If yes, what is the fate of the proposal?

SHRIMATI SUKHBUNS KAUR : Let me explain to the hon. Member about the amount he has mentioned. I would like to answer the second part first. It is, in fact, encouraging to note that private sector is also taking an initiative and is setting up wayside amenities, and this amount is only what the Central Government has given as assistance to the State Governments. The State Governments from their own funds also have set up wayside amenities. But the figures, of course, I do not have. I do not have the figures regarding how much amount each State has spent. It need not, in any way, be taken as neglect on the part of the Central Government that amount sanctioned or the figures showing that the amount is decreasing.

Secondly, I have here the total projects which we had taken up in the last three years. In 1993-94, for Andhra Pradesh we have sanctioned one wayside amenities project. If you like, I would read them out. Otherwise, I will just give figures of West Bengal. For West Bengal, we have sanctioned one project in 1993-94.

The total cost, on Manudweep, is Rs. 14.99 lakh. The total amount which we have spent on the State, I can get those figures and give later on but what we have spent on the wayside amenities is already given.

SHRI ANIL BASU : I asked a very specific question regarding my constituency, whether there has been any proposal by the West Bengal Government to the Department of Tourism in the Union Government. She has not replied to that.

SHRIMATI SUKHBUNS KAUR : I will give that.

SHRI ANIL BASU : You can send it to me. Otherwise, it will take much time of the House.

If you permit, I would put my question in two parts.

My constituency is a constituency of our country where the great sons of our country hail from, like Shri Vidyasagar, Ramakrishna Dev, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, etc. I am very much fortunate that these great sons hail from my constituency. Lakhs and lakhs of pilgrims from all over the country converge at the Tarakeswar Temple of Lord Shiva at Tarakeswar during April to August carrying Ganga water, walking on foot covering a distance of 16 kms from the Baidyabati Ghat of River Ganga to Tarakeswar. There is no proper place where they can stay for some short time. In order to encourage domestic tourism and for providing a wayside stay for the pilgrims, a wayside tourist complex is very urgently necessary at Hanipal between Tarakeswar and Baidyabati. They can take shelter and food there. So, I would like to know

whether Minister is ready to examine this proposal and sanction the same on an urgent basis.

The next part is this. Has the Government decided to set up Regional Tourist Centres to boost tourism in various States?

MR. SPEAKER : This kind of a question, to my mind, may not be replied. You are asking about your constituency, about the regions, about the States and all these things. If so, what are the locations of such proposed tourist centres?

SHRI ANIL BASU : All these are connected with the tourism aspect.

MR. SPEAKER : If you have the information, you can give it. Otherwise, you send it to him in writing.

SHRIMATI SUKHBUNS KAUR : I can give it, Sir.

SHRI ANIL BASU : This is connected with tourism.

I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Government has identified eight integrated tourism projects, which are to be funded by the State Governments, Union Government and the private parties.

MR. SPEAKER : Please conclude now.

SHRI ANIL BASU : If so, the details thereof. I would also like to know whether West Bengal and Eastern India have been included in these ten projects. If not, the reasons therefor.

SHRIMATI SUKHBUNS KAUR : I will give a general answer.

We have decided to set up regional centres. We had the State Tourism Ministers' Conference on the 5th and the 6th of August, in which it was decided that we would have regional circuits so that three or four States could jointly have a circuit. We are going to have them. It is not only that we are going to have regional centres, as such, there could also be a regional advisory committee, which would be taking all the decisions in what areas we are going to have these centres. It is not going to be just in one area. As far as West Bengal is concerned, I would like to say that, we are giving as much financial assistance as possible. In 1992-93, we gave Rs. 94 lakh; in 1993-94, we gave Rs. 1.67 crore and in 1994-95, we have given Rs. 1.45 crore.

As far as your particular constituency is concerned, you must appreciate that it is a State subject and it is primarily the State Government, which has to send us its proposals. We would be very happy to consider them. I can inform the hon. Members that as many project proposals come to us, if they fulfil all the requirements, we sanction money for them.

SHRI ANIL BASU : Thank you.

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, of late tourism has become an important and major source of foreign exchange earnings. Would the hon. Minister

be able to tell us what is the percentage of the budget that the Government of India spends to promote tourism further and what percentage of the States' budget does the Centre give to the States for this purpose?

SHRIMATI SUKHBUNS KAUR : This is a very very important question; though it does not relate to the main question, I would like to answer it. But before I answer this, I would like to say a few words.

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL : It relates to tourism.

SHRIMATI SUKHBUNS KAUR : Yes, it does.

Tourism today is the largest growing industry in the world. Tourism receipts are growing at a larger rate than any other commodity. I would like to mention that the percentage is 12.7 for tourism and 11.5 for other commodities. In India also, today it holds the third position in the gross earnings of foreign exchange and second in the net earnings of foreign exchange.

The other aspect is employment generation. I would also like to say it in terms of labour-capital ratio. I am giving it in a little detailed way because it is a very very important one. If you spend Rs. 10 lakh in agriculture for example, the jobs created are 44.7 per cent, in manufacturing it is 12.6 per cent, in mining and others it is 2.6 per cent.

MR. SPEAKER : Is this reply directed to the Finance Minister?

SHRIMATI SUKHBUNS KAUR : No, Sir. In tourism, it is 47.5 per cent; and if you take out the segment of hotel and restaurant, it goes up to 89 per cent. Unfortunately, tourism has not got the importance as it should. I do not have all the details; but I have the details for some of the States.

MR. SPEAKER : We have left it to the private sector.

SHRIMATI SUKHBUNS KAUR : Yes, Sir.

If you take Himachal Pradesh for instance, out of their Budget of Rs. 750 crores, its percentage is 1.03; in the case of Madhya Pradesh it is only 0.17 per cent of their Budget. The Minister had held meetings and we had urged upon the State Governments to try and give at least 10 per cent of their Budget to tourism.

[Translation]

SHRI BRISHIN PATEL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the Government as to how many proposals, have been received from Bihar Government for setting up tourism Centres and what is the latest position thereof. I would also like to know the policy of the Government regarding maintenance of Tourism Centres.

[English]

SHRIMATI SUKHBUNS KAUR : Sir, I cannot say as to how many proposals have been received. What

happens is that every year the State Governments send their representatives, we hold discussions with them, then the projects are selected and then only we fund them. I can give the details - I have the details of wayside amenities - for Bihar, if they would like to know. I would like to assure the hon. Members that whatever projects are brought to us, we do fund them as much as possible.

[Translation]

SHRI PRABHU DAYAL KATHERIA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to draw Government's attention to Sauripur - Bateshwar which is a major place of pilgrimage of western Uttar Pradesh. I have written to hon. Minister three-four times in this regard. The Ministry has allocated a sum of Rs. 40 lakh for the development of this place. May I know from the hon. Minister whether this amount is being utilised properly by the Uttar Pradesh Government and whether any proposal has been received from U.P. Government for declaring this place as tourist centre?

SHRIMATI SUKHBUNS KAUR : Sir, this amount of Rs. 40 lakh has been allocated only on receipt of a proposal from Uttar Pradesh Government. The hon. Member has met me. We are taking up the development work in consultation with U.P. Government.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Sultan
Salahuddin Owaisi — Not present.
Shri Jagmeet Singh Brar — Not present.
Shri Guman Mal Lodha — Not present.

... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : No, please. We have gone to the third question now. Q. No : 324, Shri Anna Joshi.

[Translation]

Import of Consumer Items

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324. SHRI ANNA JOSHI :

SHRI KUNJEE LAL :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have taken a decision to liberalise import of consumer goods;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefore;

(c) its likely impact on local industries engaged in production of such goods, outflow of foreign currency and prices of these items in the market; and

(d) the steps being taken by the Government to increase the production of local consumer items?

(English)

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.V. CHANDRASHEKHARA MURTHY) : (a) to (d) : A statement is laid on the table of the House.

STATEMENT

(a) and (b). Under the current Export and Import Policy, as amended upto 31st March, 1995, import of consumer goods is not permitted except against an import licence or in accordance with Public Notice. However, 75 items of consumer goods nature, as listed in the Export and Import Policy (Chapter XV, Part II) are freely importable. In addition, import of 75 items listed in the Policy (Handbook of Procedures — Vol. I), are permitted against freely transferable special import licences.

(c) It is too early to assess the impact of recent amendments in the Export and Import Policy, particularly relating to the consumer goods imports.

(d) Measures taken by the Government to increase the production of local consumer items include economic reform policies to promote growth of incomes and purchasing power, rationalisation of excise and customs duties, extension of MODVAT system to a number of consumer goods items, enhancement of the Small Scale Industry (SSI) Excise exemption scheme, and steps to improve availability of credit from the banking and financial institution system for the small scale sector.

SHRI ANNA JOSHI : Sir, in answer to parts (a) and (b) of the question, it is said that under the current Export and Import Policy as amended, import of consumer goods is not permitted except for some items.

Two lists of 75 items each have been given in the Annexure of the Policy Handbook. I would like to know whether 150 items mentioned in the two lists are not available in India; or are they not of the standard of good quality? If not, what efforts has the Government made to improve their quality for that purpose and also to stop the import?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI MANMOHAN SINGH) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, these two lists of 75 commodities each represent a very small proportion of India's total consumption. In many cases, these things are not produced or they are in short supply. For instance, take the case of pulses. Pulses in India are in chronic short supply. Therefore, pulses are on the Open General Licence with a nominal duty of five per cent.