

Closure of Tourist Offices Abroad

2733. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA : Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) in what manner Government propose to make India a major tourism destination for the global visitors;

(b) how effectively the tourist offices abroad are facilitating tourist inflow to the country; and

(c) whether there is any plan to reduce the number of such offices in the future as it seems that there are more cheaper and effective ways of generating foreign tourist to the country ?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR) : (a) To make India a major tourist destination for the global visitors, Government is publicising and promoting India through its 18 overseas tourist offices by advertising in print and electronic media, Public Relations, participating in travel fairs/exhibitions, brochure support to the travel trade, direct mailing, organising India evenings, India tourism website, CD ROM etc.

(b) The tourist arrivals have increased by 5.2% and foreign exchange increased by 3% (in INR) during 1999 over the corresponding period of 1998.

(c) Currently there are no plans to reduce the number of overseas tourist offices. Other cheaper and effective ways can supplement the efforts of the Tourist offices but can not substitute them.

Declaration of Tourism as Industry

2734. SARDAR BALWINDER SINGH BHUNDAR : Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have announced tourism as industry;

(b) whether any Gazette notification has been issued; and

(c) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR) : (a) At the request of Ministry of Tourism 25 States/UT Governments have announced tourism as Industry and 3 States have announced Hotels as Industry.

(b) and (c) State/Union Territory Governments have issued Gazette Notifications broadly giving incentives like allocation of land at concessional rates, exemption from building tax levied by the Revenue Department and concession of electricity and water charges etc. for hotels.

Payment of Compensatory Wages to ITDC Employees

2735. SARDAR BALWINDER SINGH BHUNDAR : Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether ITDC was paying any compensatory wages to its employees during the Election days during the last four years;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether this practice is still continuous; if not, reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR) : (a) to (c) ITDC has been allowing compensatory off to the employees in lieu of performing normal duties on election day in its hotel units in the past. In the year 1998 for the first time one day extra wages were paid in its four units, namely, Hotels Kanishka, Ranjit, Janpath and Indraprastha, New Delhi to employees for performing normal duties on Election day. To obviate confusion, a policy circular has been issued by the Management to permit compensatory off to the employees who perform their duties in the hotels on election day.

Development of Adventure Tourism

2736. SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN : Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) the plans of Government to promote extensively domestic tourism both for the foreign and domestic tourists;

(b) the details of activities being devoted towards adventure tourism and the sports which have been developed for this;

(c) whether Government agencies are adequately equipped to handle this growing adventure tourism or some private agencies have been involved in this; and

(d) if so, what are the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI ANANTHKUMAR) : (a) 1. Creating awareness by way of advertising in print and electronic media.