

Funds for Tourism Projects in Assam

1657. SHRI PRAKANTA WARISA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) the details of budgetary funds given by Government to the State of Assam including Autonomous Council of Hill Areas, for development of tourism projects during the last three years;

(b) the details of new proposals for development of tourism projects in the State during the current financial year and the next two years; and

(c) the effective measures being taken or proposed to be taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRI OMAK APANG) (a) The Ministry of Tourism provides financial assistance to State/Union Territory Governments on a year to year basis for specific projects submitted for assistance. The financial assistance released to the Government of Assam for implementation of tourism projects during the last three years was as given below:

Year	Amt. Released (Rs. in lakhs)
1995-96	39.00
1996-97	32.66
1997-98	94.20

(b) and (c) The projects for financial assistance during 1998-99 are not yet identified. The State Govt. is required to prepare the proposals as per the guidelines of the Ministry.

Lifting of RAP in North-East Region

1658. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any increase in the number of foreign tourists visiting the North-East region after lifting of the Restrictive Area Permit (RAP);

(b) if so, the number of tourists that visited the North-East region, year-wise since the RAP was lifted;

(c) number of foreign and domestic tourists who visited Majuli Island of Assam;

(d) details of the proposals of his Ministry in the pipeline for development of tourism in the North-East region;

(e) number of projects financed by the Department of Tourism alongwith year-wise allocation during the last five years in the region; and

(f) areas of North-East which are still restricted for visit by foreign tourists?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRI OMAK APANG) (a) and (b) According to the figures available from three States of Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura, there has been some increase in foreign tourist visits to these States after the lifting of the Restricted Area Permit (RAP) in 1995. The State-wise details are as given below:—

State	Foreign Tourst Arrivals		
	1995	1996	1997
Assam	2575	5885	3506
Meghalaya	1172	1512	1071
Tripura*	96	192	806

*Figures relates to the respective financial years.

(c) The foreign and domestic tourists who visited Majuli Island during 1997 were 117 and 121000 respectively.

(d) The projects for financial assistance to North Eastern States during 1998-99 have not yet been identified.

(e) The number of projects financed and amount sanctioned to the North Eastern States during the last five years were as given below:

Year	Projects Financed	Amount Sanctioned (Rs. in Lakhs)
1993-94	26	279.46
1994-95	17	239.23
1995-96	23	345.90
1996-97	26	588.89
1997-98	49	1217.72
Total	141	2671.20

(f) Restricted Area Permits have been lifted in the case of Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura only in the North Eastern States.

Development of Tourism in some States

1659. SHRI CHIMANBHAI HARIBHAI SHUKLA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) Whether the tourism infrastructure in Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa remains undeveloped;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the amount of Central assistance made available for tourism development during each of last three years, year-wise;

(d) whether there is any proposal to involve private sector in the development of tourism infrastructure in Orissa; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRI OMAK APANG) (a) to (c) The development of tourism infrastructure is a continuous process and is primarily the responsibility of the State Government.

The details of financial assistance sanctioned by the Ministry of Tourism to the State of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa during the last three years were as given below:

State	Amount Sanctioned (Rs. In lakhs)		
	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
Gujarat	7.98	82.21	111.82
Madhya Pradesh	—	—	119.81
Orissa	108.86	463.28	557.05

(d) and (e) It is the policy of the Government to encourage private involvement in the tourism sector. A number of incentives like income tax concessions, interest subsidy, reduced customs duty, etc. are being provided by the Union Government for this purpose. These incentives are available to the investor in Orissa also.

Boosting Tourism to Religious Places

1660. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to boost tourism for religious places in the country; and

(b) if so, the details of places identified for developing tourist facilities, the amount sanctioned and the target set up for development?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRI OMAK APANG) (a) The religious places in the country are being visited by a large number of pilgrim tourists every year. The Government develops infrastructure facilities in these pilgrim centres with the combined efforts of Central and State govts., religious institutions and private sector.

(b) On the basis of the recommendations of a Committee on Pilgrim tourism the following places have been identified for the development of facilities in the first phase.

1. Tirupati (Andhra Pradesh)
2. Kamakhya (Assam) --
3. Bodh Gaya and Patna Saheb (Bihar)
4. Dwaraka, Palitana and Udwad (near Vapi Gujarat)
5. Paonta Saheb and Jwalaji (Himachal Pradesh)
6. Mata Vaishno Devi (Jammu & Kashmir)
7. Sringeri and Gulbarga (Karnataka)