

of foreign exchange is going out. (b) ONGC itself is a big foreign exchange spender. In that context, may I know from the hon. Minister whether it is a fact that India is at the bottom of oil producing countries? Even Cameroon, Angola, Brazil and Malaysia are much higher. And my source is Petroleum Encyclopaedia. I draw his attention and I drew the attention of his predecessors also several months back in that context. We are flaring gas for the last 20 years in Bombay High, and twenty years back right here, his predecessor, Mr. Bahuguna, replied that they will stop it soon. And that 'soon' has not come. I have got the data with me and will give it later on. There are two things. One is the foreign exchange saving, indigenisation of several things imported by the ONGC. They do not show tremendous interest in indigenisation. That interest is very important. Will the Minister take care of that? And the second thing is, there is a report in the Financial Express of 30th June 1991 that non-implementation of a gas-lift scheme has resulted into loss of oil worth 7.5 million dollars, 49.38 million tonnes of oil which is twice the annual production of last year. And this has been brought out on 30th June 1991 by the Financial Express. Has the Minister's attention been drawn towards it? The scheme was to be completed in November, 1990 and this is July 1991 now. The country is losing tremendous amount of money. Will the Minister kindly understand the difference between the idle capacity and non-production? We have not understood it so far. I am sure he will be able to get through the maze. These are very important things on which you can contribute and relieve the Prime Minister's headache, the Finance Minister's headache, the country's headache of saving foreign exchange and producing more oil.

SHRI B. SHANKARAN AND: While admitting that the hon. Member has made very good suggestions for the Government to look into, I can say

about flaring of gas. Currently, gas is flared to the level of about 14 million cubic metres per day and the value would be about Rs. 720 crores per year. May I say about the reasons for flaring? It is lack of adequate compression, processing and transportation facilities for gas particularly in the western off-shore...

SHRI VIREN J. SHAH: It is for the last 20 years. You may say what is going to be done.

MR. CHAIRMAN: They are trying to do something.

SHRI B. SHANKARAN AND: Hon. Member, I should say, made some suggestions for action by the Government. These are certain things for the Government to look into.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He is going to look into it.

SHRI B. SHANKARAN AND: I was giving reasons for flaring. Second is lack of users for gas particularly in the North-Eastern region. Third is lack of facilities to use associated gas in preference to non-associated gas..

SHRI VIREN J. SHAH: Maharashtra Government has asked for second power station based on gas which is being flared. How is it due to lack of users? From Petroleum Encyclopaedia I gave you the data. Have you access to that?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Next question.

Visit India Year

*24. SHRI P. UPENDRA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been a short-fall in the number of tourists arriving in the country this year; and

(b) if so, what are the reasons that the "Visit India Year" is not taking off as expected?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI M.O. H. FAROOK): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Gulf War and its aftermath adversely affected the international tourist traffic to India during the "Visit India Year".

SHRI P. UPENDRA: Sir, it is not the Gulf War alone which is responsible for the fall in tourist traffic. Between January and April this year, there was a shortfall of 21 per cent in the tourist traffic, and during the same period countries like Malaysia and Indonesia which are endowed with much less attractions than India have attracted many more tourists. Even other countries have reported increase in their tourist traffic. I would like to know from the Minister whether India has been declared as an unsafe country by the tour operators abroad and what steps the Government is taking to remove that impression, and whether internal law and order condition is one of the main reasons for fall in tourist traffic.

SHRI M. O. H. FAROOK: Sir, before the commencement of the Gulf War, several countries had issued travel advisories asking their citizens not to travel unless it was a must. USA had issued an advisory requesting their citizens not to travel outside the country. Similarly, advisories were issued by Japan, Australia, France etc. India is one of those countries against which advisories issued, even after the Gulf War. The war, in general, created a fear psychosis among the prospective travellers which resulted in a large scale cancellation of routes and individual tourists not only to India but to other parts of the world. A number of international airlines reduced their operations and some of them to the extent of 50 per cent of their total operations. This was because of the reduction of traffic and diversion of aircraft for mobilisation of war efforts. Economic recession also in some of those important tourist gene-

ration markets added fuel to the fire. The Government has taken a lot of initiatives after this.

A number of familiarisation tours of travel media, tour operators and travel agents have been organised from different parts of the world to visit the country in order to give them first-hand experience of the country. A total of 61 familiarisation tours were organised between January and June 1991. After the war, 11 familiarisation trips have been organised from France, 4 from Japan, 3 from U.K. and 6 from Germany.

A conscious decision was taken by the Ministry of Tourism to launch a major programme for strengthening the tourism infrastructure both at the Central and State level. Ministry sanctioned projects/schemes to State Governments/UTs amounting to nearly Rs. 28.00 crores in one year alone, as compared to a total of Rs. 57.00 crores provided in the entire Seventh Plan period.

Constant inter-action is being organised with the travel agents, tour operators, hotel industry, national and international airlines and the State Tourism Development Corporations, in order to solve some of the pressing problems which inhibited the growth of tourism in different sectors.

Efforts have been made to concentrate and develop special tourist circuits and to revive traditional fairs and festivals in rural areas and places with historical monuments to generate interest in tourists.

SHRI P. UPENDRA: My specific question is whether India has been declared as unsafe by the tour operators and what are the steps taken by the Government for the promotion of tourism? Has India been declared as unsafe from the law and order aspect?

MR. CHAIRMAN: He is referring to the effect on tourism because of the terrorism in the country... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI S.K.T. RAMACHANDRAN: Mr. Upendra is a senior Member and the Minister's maiden speech should not be interrupted.., *(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is why I have permitted him to go on.

SHRI M. O. H. FAROOK: It is true that at one stage the foreign Governments have declared that India is not a safe place... *(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is a maiden reply and that should be appreciated. Let him reply.

SHRI M. O. H. FAROOK: Sir, I told you earlier that India has been declared as unsafe and foreigners did not come to India at one stage because there were some problems,

MR. CHAIRMAN: What he is asking is that other than the Gulf War, is it a fact that tourists are not coming because of the unsafe conditions here or the impression elsewhere that travelling is not safe?

SHRI M. O. H. FAROOK: It is so.

SHRI P. UPENDRA: My second supplementary is, I understand that a number of Government tourist offices abroad have been closed down recently. Could the Minister tell us at which places these are closed?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Have you closed down the tourist offices abroad?

SHRI M. O. H. FAROOK: Some of the offices have been closed down and some are under process. *(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: He is giving the correct position. Why should you object to it?

SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES: Sir, we all know—the hon. Minister has also admitted—that the 'Visit India

Year' has been a failure. In this connection, may I know from the hon. Minister what is the amount spent by the Department on overseas publicity in term of dollars? Secondly, in view of the failure of the 'Visit India Year', whether the Government is contemplating to extend this scheme by one more year, i.e. 1991-92?

SHRI M. O. H. FAROOK: Mr. Chairman, Sir, a decision was taken by the earlier Government that the 'Visit India Year' should not be extended. But we have now decided to extend it....

MR. CHAIRMAN: By one more year?

SHRI M. O. H. FAROOK: Up to March next year and, if necessary, we are prepared to extend it. In regard to the amount spent about 25 lakhs of rupees were spent in 1990-91 on publicity alone.

श्री जगदीश प्रसाद माथुर : श्रीमान, मंत्री जी ने कहा है कि वह प्रदेशों के साथ भी मिलकर कुछ कार्यवाही कर रहे हैं तो मैं जानना चाहूंगा कि किस प्रदेश के साथ विशेष रूप से उन्होंने ऐसा किया है, मुख्यतः महाराष्ट्र जहाँ पर कि कुछ मांति है, उत्तर भारत में काश्मीर वगैरह में शायद गड़बड़ हो, और मध्य प्रदेश में पचमढ़ी एक स्थान है, श्रीमान् आप भी वहाँ रह चुके हैं, क्या महाराष्ट्र के एक-दो स्थान हैं और विशेषतः मध्य प्रदेश का जो पचमढ़ी स्थान है इसके विषय में भी कोई योजना की है ?

SHRI M. O. H. FAROOK: It is true that we have contacts with all the States. We have contact with Madhya Pradesh. We have contact with Maharashtra. I can give the details in regard to Maharashtra.

SHRI JAGDISH PRASAD MATHUR: I have asked about Pachmarhi[^] in Madhya Pradesh.

SHRI M. O. H. FAROOK: You asked about Maharashtra.

SHRI JAGDISH PRASAD MATHUR: Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, both.

SHRI SURESH KALMADI: You can talk about Maharashtra first.

SHRI M. O. H. FAROOK: The hon. Member asked about Maharashtra.

SHRI VIREN J. SHAH: He asked about Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, both. But you can mention about Maharashtra first and about Madhya Pradesh later on.

SHRI M. O. H. FAROOK: As far as Maharashtra is concerned, we have sanctioned about Rs. 230 lakhs for 1991-92.

SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Only Rs. 2 crores.

SHRI M. O. H. FAROOK: We are prepared to do more. But this is for the first time we are doing it. We have sanctioned Rs. 230 lakhs.

SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Rs. 230 lakhs.

DR. BAPU KALDATE: Make it Rs. 230 crores.

SHRI JAGDISH PRASAD MATHUR: What about Madhya Pradesh?

SHRI BHUVNESH CHATURVEDI: There is no Government in Madhya Pradesh.

SHRI JAGDISH PRASAD MATHUR: If it is so, it needs more attention.

SHRI M. O. H. FAROOK: In the case of Madhya Pradesh, we have sanctioned Rs. 219 lakhs.

SHRI JAGDISH PRASAD MATHUR: Sanctioning of money is all right. You have said that you are in consultation with the States. What are the plans you are taking up? What are the steps you are taking?

SHRI M. O. H. FAROOK: Different States have got different plans. I will not be able to give the details right now.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He requires notice for this.

SHRI G. G. SWELL: Sir, there are a variety of reasons, as the hon. Minister himself admitted, for the decline in the tourist traffic to India. As you know, there are large areas in the country which are not open to tourists. The North-East, for instance, is a tourist paradise in terms of the wild life, in terms of the climate, in terms of the landscape and also in terms of the variety of people living there. Now, I know that foreign tourists cannot go to the North-East because there are certain administrative restrictions. But the question of lifting of these restrictions was under the active consideration of the last Government. Is that consideration still there and, if so, when are you going to lift these restrictions?

SHRI M. O. H. FAROOK: You can put a separate question. I need notice for this.

SHRI G. SWAMINATHAN: It is mentioned that there has been arrival of 16 lakh tourists in India during the year 1991. I want to know whether the Minister has got any figures to state the arrival of these tourists in various States of the country.

My second important point is as I have understood it, the hon. Minister has said that about Rs. 21 crores were spent on the promotion abroad of the key centres. These key centres are Kashmir, Taj Mahal and Delhi. And these three centres are unsafe for tourists, this also they have been informed abroad. In this context, will the hon. Minister take some of the places in South India and promote them for tourism? I think instead of spending Rs. 21 crores, an amount of Rs. 10-15 crores was sufficient. The hon. Minister comes from Pondicher-

ry. Will he take interest for promoting tourist centres in South abroad? (Interruptions)

MB. CHAIRMAN: Not only Pondicherry, other areas also.

SHRI M. O. H. FAROOK: We do not have complete State-wise figures about tourists coming here, but I appreciate the point of the hon. Member that South would have also to be concentrated upon more and we are prepared to work on that.

Strike by Air India Pilots

25. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Air India pilots went on a strike recently;

(b) if so, what were the issues involved and what was the period of their strike; and

(c) what is the estimated loss suffered by Air India as a result thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI M. O.

H. FAROOK): (a) to (c) The members of the Indian Pilots Guild went on strike on the midnight of 5th/6th May, 1991 through a directive issued to the members on 5th of May, 1991. The strike was withdrawn without any reservation on 20th May, 1991. The demands of the L.P.G were: —

(a) Letter dated 6th November, 1990 written by the Director of Operations, Air India to the Director General of Civil Aviation pertaining to Capt. M. Sharma should be withdrawn;

(b) The case against Capt. M. Sharma should be withdrawn,

(c) The Management should follow all the Bilateral Agreements in force and protect the members of the I.P.G. against any action from third agency.

2. While no precise estimate is possible, the net cash loss suffered by Air India because of the strike may be of the order of Rs. 4 to 5 crores.

SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: I understand, the Air India pilot's decision to go on a wild cat strike on 5th May was on a very flimsy ground. What exactly happened was that one of the pilots decided to go off the duty because his flight duty time limitation had exceeded by a few minutes. So, a show cause notice was served on him. The action of the pilot had caused a lot of inconvenience to passengers who were about 260 in number. They had to remain on board for about 4-5 hours. They had to stay there on board because the London Airport was closed. And as the reply says, Air India lost about 4 to 5 crores of rupees, a considerable amount of which was in foreign exchange, as all the passengers had to be accommodated in the hotels. The Air India pilots, in my opinion, should have shown greater consideration for the passengers' convenience and welfare.

I am asking my first question with certain purpose and that is, perhaps the duration of the flight time limitation in India is comparatively lower than what it is in other Airlines. So, my first question is what is the flight time limitation and what is the flight duty time limitation in Air India and how does it compare with other Airlines?

SHRI M.O.H. FAROOK: What the hon. Member has said is correct. Because of the pilot's error, as he walked out during that time, the passengers were put to a lot of inconvenience and the Airlines also was put to a lot of inconvenience. There was an agreement between Air India and the flight people. It is because the rest period time is about 10. 15 or 20 minutes, the pilot had walked out and a notice has been issued to the pilot. Due to this, after some time the pilot association had