

development, publicity, marketing, human resource development, etc. The measures taken by Ministry of Tourism recently are planned to attract more foreign tourists to the country.

Decline in tourist inflow

94. SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI:

SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN :

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether inflow of tourists from foreign countries has seen a declining trend in the past few years;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government has recently formulated a strategy to boost the inflow of tourists; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRI SULTAN AHMED): (a) and (b) The number of foreign tourist arrivals (FTAs) in India and the growth rates over the corresponding period of previous year, during 2006, 2007, 2008 and January-May, 2009, are given below:—

| Period | FTAs (in Million) | Growth over previous year |
|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| 2006 | 4.45 | 13.5% |
| 2007 | 5.08 | 14.3% |
| 2008* | 5.37 | 5.6% |
| January-May 2009* | 2.13 | -10.6% |

*Provisional

While the number of FTAs during 2006, 2007 and 2008 show a rising trend, during the period January-May 2009 there has been a decline. The decline in FTAs in recent months may be due to various reasons including global financial meltdown and terrorist activities.

(c) and (d) To boost the arrival of tourists in the country, the Government has taken the following steps:—

- A “Visit India 2009” Scheme has been announced, in collaboration with all stakeholders including airlines, hotels, tour operators, State Governments for incentivising travel to India.
- Financial support being provided to approved service providers for undertaking promotional activities overseas under the Market Development Assistance (MDA) Scheme has been enhanced.
- With a view to promoting Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE) Tourism, the scope of the MDA Scheme has been enhanced, so as to include active members of the India Convention Promotion Bureau (ICPB).

- Enhanced subsidy of 25% in participation fee is being offered by the Ministry of Tourism and the Indiatourism offices overseas in the Indian Pavilions set up at the major International Travel Fairs and Exhibitions till the end of the financial year 2009-10.
- All States have been requested to beef up security measures in hotels and at tourist sites in their respective States.
- Familiarisation Tours for trade and media representatives to Mumbai and other regions of the country have been specially organized to project the ground realities relating to safety/security conditions in the country.
- Permission has been given to corporates in the hotel sector to avail of External Commercial Borrowings (ECB) upto US\$ 100 million per year for foreign currency and/or rupee capital expenditure for permissible end users.

In addition to the above specific measures initiated recently, the other steps taken by the Government to promote tourism in the country include:—

- Development of tourism infrastructure at tourist sites with the cooperation of other Ministries/Departments and State/UT Governments;
- Focusing on growth of hotel infrastructure, particularly that for budget hotels;
- Enhancing connectivity through augmentation of air capacity and improving road infrastructure to major tourist attractions;
- Direct approach to the consumers through electronic and print media through the “Incredible India” Campaign; and
- According greater focus to the emerging markets, particularly of China, North East Asia and South East Asia.

Target of tourist arrival

95. SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has any proposal to waive off visa fee, reduction in entrance charges to monuments and temporary tax holiday till Commonwealth Games in 2010 to soften the blow for the tourism industry;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Foreign Tourist Arrival (FTA) has come down significantly due to economic slowdown;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps taken by Government to achieve the target of 10 million tourists by 2010?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (KUMARI SELJA): (a) and (b) With a view to encourage development of hotel accommodation for the forthcoming Commonwealth Games 2010, a five year Tax Holiday under Section 80-ID (1) of the Income Tax Act was announced in the budget of