

(a) whether Government is aware of the fact that most of the forts in Maharashtra are of historical importance and situated in the Sahyadri mountain ranges having scenic charm;

(b) whether Government is thinking to develop a few of them as tourist centres which would attract tourists;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (KUMARI SELJA) : (a) to (d) Development and promotion of tourism is primarily undertaken by the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations themselves. However, Ministry of Tourism provides Central Financial Assistance (CFA) for tourism projects, identified in consultation and interaction with them, subject to availability of funds and *inter-se*-priority under various schemes of the Ministry.

Ministry of Tourism had sanctioned projects worth Rs. 82.67 crore to the State of Maharashtra during the Tenth Five Year Plan which included development of Vijaydurg, Sindhudurg, Sinhagad, Sewri Fort, Ghodbundar Fort, Worli Fort, Bandra Fort, Sevadi Fort and Panhala Fort.

In addition, the Ministry of Tourism had also sanctioned projects worth Rs. 65.28 crore to the State during the first three years of the Eleventh Plan *i.e.* 2007-08 to 2009-10 which included a project for Major Circuit Development for Eco-Tourism in Vidarbha Region consisting a component for development of Tent Resort Centre at Narnala Fort.

Southern Splendour Train Project in Andhra Pradesh

2242. SHRI K.V.P. RAMACHANDRA RAO: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the State Government of Andhra Pradesh has submitted the Southern Splendour Train Project modelled on the Palace on Wheels;

(b) if so, the details of the project;

(c) whether it is a fact that the State Government of Andhra Pradesh has requested the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India for sanction of Rs. 10 crores as Central Financial Assistance under Large Revenue Generation Scheme; and

(d) the final decision taken by the Government?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (KUMARI SELJA) : (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. The project for Southern Splendour Luxury Train submitted by the Andhra Pradesh Government with a project cost of Rs. 40.00 crore has been approved, in principle, under the Large Revenue Generating Scheme. However, the Government of Andhra Pradesh have not yet finalized the tie up with the Indian Railways.

Closing of Simlipal National Tourist Park

2243. SHRI BHAGIRATHI MAJHI: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state: