

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to improve tourism facilities at Gulmarg; and

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard and what is the estimated expenditure involved?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SURENDRA PAL SINGH) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) In the Central Sector it is proposed to augment the winter sports facilities at Gulmarg through the import of additional ski equipment as also a snow grooming machine; erection of the aerial transportation system between Gulmarg and Kihl anmarg; construction of cafeteria and staff quarters. For this purpose an amount of Rs. 124 lakhs has been provided in the last 3 years of the Fifth Plan.

The construction of a centrally heated hotel by the India Tourism Development Corporation at an estimated cost of Rs. 145 lakhs is awaiting clearance.

Tourist traffic from Gulf countries

-285. SHRIMATI SUMITRA G. KULKARNI :

SHRI B. RACHAIAH :

SHRI R. NARASIMHA REDDY.

Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) what steps Government have taken to attract tourists from Gulf countries;

(b) whether any concession in fares has been offered to encourage tourist traffic during the winter tourist season;

(c) what are the names of the places where Government have opened tourist offices in the Gulf area and in the East Asian countries; and

(d) whether any tourist literature is prepared for giving publicity in these countries

about the places of tourist interest in India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SURENDRA PAL SINGH) : (a) With a view to attracting tourists from Gulf and West Asian countries, the Government have opened a Tourist Office located at Kuwait for promotion of tourism and dissemination of tourist information.

(b) Yes, Sir. A number of concessional fares from the Middle East to India are available to promote tourist traffic from the region.

(c) Tourist Offices are functioning at Kuwait, for promotion in West Asia including Gulf States and in Tokyo and Singapore to cover East Asian countries.

(d) Yes, Sir.

Excise duty evasion by industrial firms in Bombay

*286 SHRI S. K. VAISHAMPAYEN : Will the Minister of REVENUE AND BANKING be pleased to state :

(a) whether a drive against evasion of excise duty by industrial firms in Bombay was launched by the Bombay Central Excise Collectorate in the first week of May, 1976; and

(b) if so, what is the number of industrial firms found guilty of evasion and what is the total amount of evasion of excise duty detected?

THE MINISTER OF REVENUE AND BANKING (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) Yes, Sir. A drive against evasion of Central Excise duties was launched by the Bombay Central Excise Collectorate in the first week of May, 1976 in pursuance of an Action Plan chalked out for this purpose.