

Tourists at Ajanta and Ellora caves

737. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Ajanta and Ellora caves in Aurangabad, Maharashtra are tourist destinations for domestic and foreign tourists;

(b) if so, the number of tourists, domestic and foreign separately, who visited these caves during the last three years, year-wise; and

(c) the steps Government has taken to develop infrastructure such as budget and economy hotels, affordable transport, guided tours etc. in Aurangabad to attract more tourists to visit these caves?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (DR. K. CHIRANJEEVI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The number of domestic and foreign visitors to the centrally protected ticketed monuments of Ajanta and Ellora caves during 2009, 2010 and 2011 were as follows:

Year	Visitors	Ajanta Caves	Ellora Caves
2009	Domestic	346018	738841
	Foreign	22964	18946
2010	Domestic	389572	1187432
	Foreign	28192	32540
2011	Domestic	412473	1308262
	Foreign	28576	33023

(c) To encourage Hospitality Sector a Five Year Tax Holiday has been announced in 2008-09 for 2, 3 and 4 star category hotels located in all UNESCO declared World Heritage sites (Except Mumbai and Delhi) for hotels operating w.e.f. 01.04.2008 to 31.03.2013.

Other efforts made by Ministry of Tourism for improving the facilities for foreign and domestic tourists include, creation/upgradation of tourism infrastructure, wayside amenities, improving road connectivity leading to the tourist sites,

especially from the National Highways/State Highways and other points under its Plan Scheme of Product/Infrastructure Development for Destinations and Circuits, increasing the availability of trained manpower, etc.

Foreign exchange through tourism

738. SHRI AVINASH PANDE: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that tourism, a 1.2 trillion dollar industry, is growing strongly amidst decline of other sectors;

(b) whether tourism is a big foreign exchange earner yet Government has not paid enough attention to make it globally competitive and India's share in the world tourism is abysmal;

(c) whether Government has planned to take any new radical steps to revitalize tourism in the country;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (DR. K. CHIRANJEEVI): (a) As per the estimates of the United Nations World Tourism Organisation, total receipts from international tourism including international passenger transport, reached US \$1.2 trillion in 2011. The total receipts from international tourism excluding international passenger transport, stood at US \$1.03 trillion (provisional) in 2011, showing a growth rate of 11.1% over 2010.

(b) The Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEEs) through tourism in India during 2011 were Rs. 77591 Crore (Provisional).

The share of India in International Tourist Arrivals in 2011 was 0.64 per cent.

Although the tourism sector in India has grown in the recent years, it is felt that with India's vast bounties of nature, its great treasures of art, architecture and philosophical thought, its rich cultural heritage, its varied rural countryside and wildlife, age – old practices of Yoga, Siddha, etc. spread across different States/ Union Territories, there is immense tourism potential to tap, which can lead to further growth in tourism.