

arrivals during 1994 registered a positive growth of about 6.9 percent despite the set back suffered during October and November due to plague and its adverse publicity. The foreign exchange earnings through tourism also registered an increase of about 15.7 percent during the year. The growth in tourist traffic is still continuing and as such tourism industry is not expected to suffer any loss.

[English]

Shortage of Coins

1641. DR. ASIM BALA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether coins supply in the country is adequate; and

(b) if not, the steps taken to ensure the requisite supply of coins in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M. V. CHANDRASHEKHARA MURTHY):

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

[Translation]

National Action Plan for Tourism

1642. SHRI RAM TAHAL CHOUDHARY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether some new programmes have been introduced under the National Action Plan for tourism to expedite development of tourism in the country; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the States where these programmes are proposed to be introduced?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) and (b). Under the National Action Plan for Tourism announced in May 1992, the Government of India in consultation with State Governments has introduced the following programmes for the development of tourism in the country:

(i) Identification of 11 travel circuits and 6 destinations for integrated development. The list of travel circuits and destinations is placed at *Annexure*.

(ii) Identification and creation of Special Tourism Areas for integrated development of tourism facilities. In consultation with State Governments the following Special Tourism Areas have been identified:

- Bakal Beach (Kerala)
- Muttukadu-Mahabalipuram (Tamil Nadu)
- Sindhudurg (Maharashtra)
- Puri-Konark Beach (Orissa)
- Diu (Diu)

(iii) Scheme for encouraging the growth of heritage hotels.

(iv) Tourist trains to be started on important tourist routes based on the success of the Palace-on-Wheels.

(v) Liberalised air charter policy.

Circuits-cum-Destination Identified for Intensive Development Under National Action Plan

Travel Circuits

1. Kulu-Manali-Leh
2. Gwalior-Shivpuri-Orcha-Khajuraho
3. Bagdogra-Sikkim-Darjeeling-Kalimpong
4. Bhubaneswar-Puri-Konark
5. Hyderabad-Nagarjunasagar-Tirupati
6. Madras-Mahabalipuram-Pondicherry
7. Rishikesh-Narender Nagar-Gangotri-Badrinath
8. Indore-Ujjain-Maheshwar-Omkareshwar-Mandu
9. Jaisalmer-Jodhpur-Bikaner-Barmer
10. Raigad Fort-Janjira Fort-Kuda Caves-Sirivardhan-Harihareswhar-Sindhudurg.
11. Bangalore-Mysore-Hassan

Destinations

1. Lakshadweep Islands
2. Andaman Islands
3. Manali (Solang-Nalah)
4. Bekal Beach
5. Muttukadu Beach
6. Kangra (Pong Dam)

Interest Rates

1643. SHRI SATYA DEO SINGH:
SHRI SHRAVAN KUMAR PATEL:
SHRI J. CHOKKA RAO:
SHRI SURENDER PAL PATHAK:
SHRI SOBHANADREESWARA RAO VADDE:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware of the competitive atmosphere created by the banks in regard to interest rates on deposits and credits;

(b) if so, the details of the latest guidelines issued by the RBI in this regard;

(c) whether there has been adverse effect on bank deposits due to constant changes in the interest rates by banks; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the corrective steps proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.V. CHANDRASHEKHARA MURTHY): (a) and (b). As a step towards rationalisation of deposit rates, effective 22.4.1992, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) have prescribed a maximum deposit rate for maturity of 46 days to 3 years and above. The banks are free to fix various maturities and interest rates within the prescribed maximum rate. As for credit, with a view to reducing the element of prescription of interest rates by RBI, effective October 18, 1994, lending rates of commercial banks for credit limits of over Rs. 2 lakhs were freed. However, to protect small borrowers availing credit limits upto Rs. 2 lakhs, the lending rates continue to be prescribed by RBI.

Since the banks have been given freedom to fix their own deposit rates for different maturities within the maximum rate prescribed by RBI, competition among banks for attracting depositors is inevitable.

(c) and (d): Interest rates have to be changed taking into account emerging developments in the economy. These would also dictate the frequency in such changes. The changes in rates ensure that the attractiveness of bank deposits to savers is maintained and there are no adverse effects on mobilisation of deposits.

[English]

List of Extreme Focus Products

1644. SHRI S.M. LALJAN BASHA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have received any request for inclusion of tobacco under the List of Extreme Focus Products;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c): Tobacco is harmful to public health. Further, tobacco does not have a potential to achieve a 30% growth per annum, in volume or value, over the medium term. Therefore, tobacco has not been included in the List of 'Extreme Focus Products'.

Decline in price of Cardamom

1645. SHRI P. C. THOMAS: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the price of cardamom has come down during the current year;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether India has launched large scale international publicity campaign about the qualitative supremacy of Indian cardamom over the Guatemalan cardamom;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether the Government and Spices Board have made any plan to provide proper publicity and education regarding the wide medicinal and other uses of cardamom in the country; and

(f) if so, the details thereof including the amounts spent on such publicity during each of the last three years, till date?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (d) The prices of cardamom have shown a down-ward trend in the present financial year owing mainly to increased domestic production and lesser off-take in the domestic and international markets.

(c) and (d) The Spices Board is undertaking regular promotional programmes of Indian cardamom through TV, Press, Direct Mailing and Instore promotion aimed mainly

at the principal cardamom consuming markets in the Middle East. The Board has also been participating in important Trade Fairs, organising buyer-seller meets in India and also extending financial support to exporters for undertaking brand promotion activities.

(e) The Species Board participates regularly in selected domestic fairs which are organised in important commercial centres in the country. It also undertakes regular distribution of promotional consumption in India.

(f) The Total expenditure incurred on publicity/promotion in domestic market, including fairs participation is given below:

| Year | Rs. in Lakhs |
|---------|--------------|
| 1992-93 | 1.87 |
| 1993-94 | 1.65 |
| 1994-95 | 2.22 |

Claims of Gulf War Sufferers

1646. SHRIMATI SUSEELA GOPALAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of public sector as well as private sector banks designated for opening of special accounts for claiming compensation for the loss or injuries suffered during the August, 1990 Gulf War;

(b) whether such banks have adequate branches in Kerala as the number of claimants from Kerala is larger than any other State; and

(c) the number of claimants in each of the branch and the details of the claims cleared so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M. V. CHANDRASHEKHARA MURTHY): (a) to (c) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Import of Sugar by STC and MMTc

1647. SHRI SRIKANTA JENA:

DR. S. P. YADAV:

SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether State Trading Corporation and Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation have imported sugar from the international market before the opening of tenders;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the total quantity of sugar imported including the rate per MT on c.i.f. and f.o.b. basis and the total foreign exchange incurred thereon organisation-wise;

(d) whether the said organisations have made any plan for the disposal of the imported sugar and the rate at which it will be sold in the domestic market by these organisations, separately;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the end use of the sugar purchased from abroad and the likely effect on the domestic prices of sugar?