

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1062
ANSWERED ON:01.03.2006
ADVISORIES ISSUED BY AUSTRALIA AND CANADA
Kharventhan Shri Salarapatty Kuppusamy

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Australia and Canada have issued advisories warning to its citizens against traveling to some of the North-Eastern States and some other parts of the country citing adverse law and order situation;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has taken any concrete steps to rectify the situation and to improve the tourist traffic in all parts of the country particularly in those States;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) if not, the reasons therefor?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED)

(a) & (b) : Canada: Canadian Foreign Office has issued a travel advisory updated on 27 January 2006. It advises against traveling to the North-Eastern States of Manipur, Tripura, Assam and Nagaland. It also advises against travelling to Jammu & Kashmir with the exception of Ladakh. It recommends against travelling to the border areas of Gujarat, Rajasthan, Punjab and areas of Ladakh close to the Line of Control. It also advises against travelling to the border areas of Assam and West Bengal. High Commission of India, Ottawa has taken up the matter with the Canadian Government.

Australia: Australia has issued travel advisory regarding travel to India. The overall advice is to exercise extreme caution in respect of travel to certain parts of India. Apart from J&K, their advice is to `reconsider need to travel` to the North-Eastern States of Assam, Nagaland, Tripura and Manipur. The reasons cited are possible risks of armed robbery, kidnapping, extortion and terrorism related incidents. The Australian advisory earlier mentioned `communal tension` also as one of the reasons for exercising caution to travel to India. However, the matter was taken up with the Australian authorities by our Mission in Canberra. Following their efforts, reference to `communal tension` has since been dropped in December 2005 travel advisory.

(c), (d) & (e): Government has taken various steps to counter the threat posed by insurgent groups in the North Eastern Region which, interalia, include holding peace talks with various insurgent groups, enhancing the capabilities of the State Police, reimbursement of Security Related Expenditure to the North Eastern States, deployment of Army and Central Para Military Forces in the region, coordinated action by the security forces for counter insurgency operations and development of socio-economic infrastructure in the region.

To encourage flow of foreign tourists to protected/restricted areas in the North Eastern Region, some relaxations have been made in the Protected Area Permit/Restricted Area Permit regime prevalent in the North Eastern Region. The North Eastern States are also encouraged to participate in international travel fairs and exhibitions to showcase their tourism products, by providing space on a complimentary basis within the India Pavilion set up by the Ministry of Tourism at certain major international exhibitions.