

(e) the reaction of the Government to the suggestions made at the workshop; and

(f) the time by which the Group Insurance Scheme is likely to be introduced amongst the beedi workers in the beedi manufacturing states ?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY) : (a) to (b) Efforts are being made to popularise the concept of Group Insurance Scheme amongst the beedi workers through various fora. A Workshop, was held in New Delhi on the 16th May, 1995 to review the working of the Group Insurance Scheme for beedi workers, which is in operation since 1-4-1992 and also to devise appropriate measures to popularise the scheme so that its benefits could reach the workers who are widely dispersed. The workshop was attended by the officers of the Ministry of Labour, Welfare Commissioners, Life Insurance Corporation and representatives from concerned Ministries, State Governments and other organisations. The Workshop recommended various steps for stepping up publicity efforts and other measures to bring about requisite degree of awareness about the scheme and also to widen its coverage including involvement of State Labour Departments, Panchayati Raj Institutions, NGOs, Trade Unions, employers/contractors, Mahila Mandals, Workers' Cooperatives and other Social Organisations. The Workshop also suggested enhancement in the quantum of benefit under the scheme from Rs. 3,000/- to Rs. 5,000/- in the case of natural death and from Rs. 5,000/- to Rs. 10,000/- in the case of death due to accident. As the recommendations/suggestions made at the workshop are mainly to be implemented of the Life Insurance Corporation of India, Welfare Commissioners and the State Governments, these have been forwarded to them for taking necessary follow up action.

[English]

Investments by Regional Rural Banks

546. SHRI K. PRADHANI : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Reserve Bank of India has approved the securities etc. for disinvestment of non-SLR fund of Regional Rural Banks as suggested by NABARD; and

(b) the details of possible areas where Regional Rural Banks can invest their surplus funds and the rate of interest proposed to be charged by the RRB from the respective agency thereon ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (DR. DEBI PROSAD PAL) : (a) and (b) Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has permitted Regional rural Banks (RRBs) to invest their Non-SLR Surplus Funds in certain investment avenues as under :

- (i) Approved scheme of Unit Trust of India (UTI) Scheme;
- (ii) fixed deposits in profit making term-lending financial institution like Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI), Industrial Finance Corporation of India (IFCI), Industrial Credit and Investment

Corporation of India (ICICI) and small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI); (iii) bonds of nationalised banks and profit earning public sector institution with top category rating by credit rating agencies which are on the approved list of sponsor banks; (iv) non-convertible debentures of reputed blue chip companies. The return on investments of surplus non-SLR funds will depend on the composition of the investment portfolio and the rates offered on the various instruments.

Closer Interaction between AI and IA

547. DR. RAMKRISHNA KUSMARIA : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to encourage closer interaction between Indian Airlines and Air India for optimum utilisation of their resources and to avoid duplication in some operations;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM AND MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD) : (a) to (c) To ensure that the resources available to the two airlines can be put to optimum use and opportunities can be fully exploited by the combined effort by the two companies, the Board of Directors of both companies constituted Sub-Committees for synergistic cooperation between Air India and Indian Airlines.

The two member Sub-Committee of the Boards identified the following areas for cooperation between both the airlines :

(i) Code sharing arrangement.

(ii) Optimum utilisation of maintenance and overhaul facilities with both the airlines.

[Translation]

Barter Trade

548. SHRIMATI SHEELA GAUTAM : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) the names of countries with which barter trade system took place during each of the last three years;

(b) the break-up of the items exported and imported separately during the above period;

(c) whether such a system of trade has helped and encouraged the domestic industries;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the steps proposed to be taken by the Government to start barter trade discussions with those countries which have export potentiality ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF