

An amount of Rs. 268 lakhs and Rs. 884 lakhs has been released so far as Central assistance towards the growth centre at Alleppey-Pathanamthitta and Kannur-Kozhikode-Malappuram respectively.

(c) The growth centres are to be developed and established during the period of the VIII Five Year Plan.

Levy of Customs Duty

400. SHRI SOMJIBHAI DAMOR : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state .

(a) whether the Government of Manipur have requested the Union Government to relieve Timber, Rice, Dal, Rajma and Spices of Myanmar origin from levy of customs duty.

(b) if so, the details thereof and the action taken thereon.

(c) whether the Government are aware that customs officials are levying heavy fines arbitrary on natural inflow of timber from Myanmar to Manipur, and

(d) if so the remedial steps taken or proposed to be taken to ensure imposition of the fines in the spirit of the representation of the State Government on the issue?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND MINISTER OF COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) (a) to (d) No Sir, no such request has been received from the Government of Manipur

As regards Timber, this item is not included in the Indo-Myanmar treaty. Hence cases of its unauthorised import are to be adjudicated. It has been reported that in such cases, goods have been released on payment of duty, fine and penalty as provided for in the law

Restructuring of BIFR

401 SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA
SHRI RUPCHAND PAL
SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state

(a) whether the Government are considering a proposal to restructure Board of Industrial and Financial Reconstruction and to bring forward a bill on industrial sickness, and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken being taken to revive the sick industrial units?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND MINISTER OF COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) (a) and (b). Yes. However, no final decision has been taken

Smuggling of Gold

402. SHRI PINAKI MISRA : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have noticed a spurt in the gold and narcotic drugs smuggling during the recent months; and

(b) if so, the contraband seized during each month since January, 1996?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND MINISTER OF COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) Reports available with the Government do not indicate that there is spurt in smuggling of narcotic drugs or gold. However, smuggling being a clandestine activity, the trends in smuggling cannot be stated with certainty.

(b) The quantity of Narcotics seized in the country each month since January, 1996 is as follows :

Drug	Quantity seized in Kgs.					
	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June (prov)
Opium	37	630	153	228	13	3
Heroin	145	88	112	158	167	2
Ganja	2086	7287	4724	5159	91	-
Hashish	190	3622	731	17	19	-
Cocaine	-	-	-	0 097	0 135	-
Mandrax	-	4 0750	-	-	-	-

The value of contraband including gold seized in the country (other than Narcotics) each month since January, 1996 is as follows :-

Month	Value
January, 96	2414
February, 96	4524
March, 96	6910
April, 96	2441
May, 96	1960
June 96	1704 (Prov)

Winding up of Public Sector Projects

403 SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state .

(a) whether the Government have decided either to wind up or sell major public sector projects which have failed to take off.

(b) if so, whether such projects have since been identified; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND MINISTER OF COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) to (c). Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

[Translation]

National Highways in Bihar

404. SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) the names of the national highways passing through Bihar;

(b) whether these national highways are in a dilapidated condition due to lack of repairs,

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the details of repair work proposed to be undertaken of these highways; and

(e) the number of roads proposed to be declared as the new national highways?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G VENKATRAMAN) : (a) The National Highways passing through Bihar are as under :-

NH No.	Name of NHs
2	Delhi-Calcutta
6	Calcutta-Dhule
19	Ghazipur-Patna
23	Chas-Taichar
28	Lucknow-Barauni
28 A	Piprakothe-Raxaul
30	Mohania-Bakhtiyarpur
31	Barhi-Guwahati
32	Gobindpur-Jamshedpur
33	Barhi-Bharagora

(b) and (c) No. Sir These National Highways, passing through Bihar, are generally being maintained in traffic worthy conditions, within available resources.

(d) Maintenance of National Highways is a continuous process and ordinary repairs,

periodic renewals and restoration of monsoon damages are taken up, wherever and whenever necessary.

(e) Ghazipur-Patna highway has been declared as National Highway No. 19 recently. However, due to meagre allocation of funds during the 8th Five Year Plan, it is difficult to declare any other Highway, in the State of Bihar, as National Highway.

[English]

Irregularities in Vysya Bank Ltd., New Delhi

405. SHRI R.L.P. VERMA : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) the details of the cases of frauds and issue of cheque books unauthorisedly and illegally in the branches of Vysya Bank Ltd. at New Delhi during 1994, 1995 and 1996 so far indicating the action taken in each of these cases;

(b) the reasons for not reporting all the cases of frauds and issue of cheque books illegally and unauthorisedly to the police,

(c) whether such cases have been reported to the Reserve Bank of India; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND MINISTER OF COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) Details of the cases of frauds/issue of cheque books unauthorisedly/illegally in the Connaught Place, Karol Bagh and Chandni Chowk Branches of Vysya Bank Ltd in Delhi during 1994, 1995 and 1996 as reported by Reserve Bank of India (RBI) are given in the attached *statement*.

(b) RBI has intimated that the Bank has reported to Police both the cases pertaining to Karol Bagh Branch. However, since the amount in the case at Connaught Place Branch had been restored to the customer and personal responsibility has been fixed to recover the amount from the concerned officer, no complaint was lodged with the police. However, RBI is advising the Bank to report the matter to the police. In so far as the fraud case at Chandni Chowk Branch is concerned, the bank has instructed its controlling office to lodge a complaint with the police immediately.

(c) and (d) RBI has intimated that all the cases, except the one at Chandni Chowk Branch which occurred recently, have been reported to it.