

Governments and various interests in textile industry, the concerned Central Ministries, etc. Government will announce its decisions on the recommendations of the Committee as early as possible.

The Government announces minimum support price for cotton which takes into account the cost of various inputs as well as reasonable return to the farmers. The cotton farmers have been able to sell their produce at prices higher than the minimum support price during 1990-91 season

[English]

Devaluation of Rupee

*112. SHRI DHARAMANNA MONDAYYA SADUL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the factors taken into consideration by the Government before devaluation of Indian currency in international market; and

(b) the details of assessment made, in respect of each hard currency?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR):

(a) Adjustments in the external value of the rupee were effected on 1st and 3rd July, 1991 after due consideration of the balance of payments position, international competitiveness of our exports reflected by the movements in the real effective exchange rate of rupee, the state of our foreign exchange reserves and market perceptions and expectations regarding the exchange value of the rupee.

(b) The decision on the recent exchange rate adjustments of rupee was taken in the light of movements in India's real effective exchange rate taking into account the exchange rate behaviour of India's major trading partners, and the inflation rate in India and abroad, and was not based on movements in individual currencies or bilateral exchange rates.

[Translation]

Superannuation Age of Military Personnel

*113. PROF. PREM DHUMAL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to raise the age of superannuation of military personnel also up to 58 years;

(b) if so, by when; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (c) There is no proposal to raise the retirement age of all Defence Services personnel up to 58 years as this would be detrimental to the need of maintaining a youthful profile and fighting efficiency of the forces.

[English]

Closure of Jute Mills in West Bengal

*114. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) the details of Jute Mills in West Bengal which are at present

either lying closed or are working much below their capacity:

(b) the estimated loss of foreign exchange as a result of the closure of these mills and the number of workers rendered unemployed;

(c) whether the Government of West Bengal has time and again requested the Union Government for the take-over of these mills; and

(d) if so, how the Government propose to tackle this issue ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI ASHOK GEHLOT) : (a) and (b) The details of the jute mills in West Bengal that were lying closed, as on 30th June, 1991 are given below :

Sl. No.	Name of Mill	No. of Workers	Date of Closure
1	Nuddca	4,000	2-6-88
2	Budge Budge	3,400	18-3-88
3	Agarpara	3,400	13-6-91
4	Anglo India	5,500	20-5-91
5	Prem Chand	900	17-10-90
Total		17,200	

Some jute mills like Bharat, Calcutta, Gourepore and Tirupati Jute Mills are working far below their rated capacity.

It is not possible to estimate the loss of foreign exchange as a result of closure of these mills.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Government are of the view that take-over/nationalisation is no solution to the problem of sickness and Government will not, as a rule, intervene in such cases. Government have taken several measures for the revival of sick mills including creation of Jute Modernisation Fund to cater to the modernisation requirements of the jute industry, establishment of Special Jute Development Fund for restructuring the jute economy, enactment of mandatory use of jute packing for foodgrains,

sugar, cement and urea, grant of financial support for R&D activities and product diversification programmes, regular purchase of B. T will bags on cost plus basis, encouragement of diversification by providing facilities of excise exemption, concessional import duty, marketing support etc. Government have also set up a Board for Industrial & Financial Reconstruction (BIFR) to determine and enforce remedial, preventive and ameliorative steps for the revival of sick industrial companies.

Taxi Fare Hike

*115. SHRI UDAYSINGRAO GAIKWAD : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news—item captioned 'Arbitrary pre-paid taxi