

terms of the current branch licensing policy for the period 1985-1990, co-terminus with the Seventh Five Year Plan, branch expansion in metropolitan centres would be considered by Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in a consolidated and selective manner taking into account the growth in population and economic activities, increase in residential and commercial complexes etc.

(b) and (c) A survey of the Delhi/New Delhi metropolitan centre was conducted by a Working Group consisting of representatives of major banks for identifying unbanked/underbanked localities, under the last branch licensing policy for 1982-85. The Working Group had identified 50 localities of which 32 were allotted to various banks. No survey has been conducted recently under the current branch licensing policy for 1985-90.

(d) and (e) Yamuna Vihar had not been identified for opening branches of banks. No bank had also applied for opening a branch in the locality under the last branch licensing policy for 1982-85. RBI has reported that representations for opening a bank branch at Yamuna Vihar have been received from some residents of the locality and that RBI would consider the question of opening a bank branch in the locality on merits in the light of the current branch licensing policy for 1985-90.

[English]

Threat to officials by business houses raided

3804. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL :
DR. B. L. SHAILESH :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have seen in the Press a series of statements made in self-defence by business houses who have recently been apprehended for the evasion of Income Tax, Central Excise duty and other taxes and malpractices like the wrong withdrawal of drawback claims and some of them even threatening the Officers with legal suits; and

(b) if so, the steps which Government propose to take to discountenance such actions and threats by these rich people ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY) : (a) Attention of the Government has been drawn to the Press reports referred to in the question.

(b) Raids/searches are conducted by the authorities in accordance with the provisions of the relevant laws & Government will not be deterred from taking such action. The Government has however, no intention of curbing the freedom of expression as guaranteed under the constitution of India. The culpability or otherwise of the charged parties would, however, be decided by the court/appropriate authorities and not by the media.

Action plan for strengthening and expansion of Public Distribution System

3805. SHRI SHARAD DIGHE : Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state :

(a) the present number of fair price shops which receive foodgrains from the Food Corporation of India for sale to consumers;

(b) whether it is a fact that at the seventh meeting of the Advisory Council on Public Distribution System an action plan for strengthening and expanding the public distribution system was discussed;

(c) if so, the suggestions in that action plan; and

(d) how many of these suggestions have been implemented so far ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI A. K. PANJA) : (a) There are at present 3,25,081 fair price shops in the country which sell wheat and rice to consumers under the Public Distribution System. Most of the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations have