

Pradesh Government for reducing the rate of interest on loans given to weavers by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD);

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken by the Government in this regard so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (DR. ABRAR AHMED): (a) to (c). Following a number of representations received from Co-operative Banks/State Governments/Societies, it was decided by National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) to reduce the interest rate on refinance provided by it to State Co-operative Banks for refinancing production and marketing activities of Primary Weavers Cooperative Societies and procurement and marketing of cloth by Apex/Regional Weaver Cooperative Societies, from 11.5 per cent to 9.5 per cent per annum with effect from 1.2.1994. The State Co-operative Banks and Central Co-operative Banks are required to charge the same rate of interest to handloom weavers Societies on the advances provided by them NABARD's refinance support.

[English]

Setting Up of Tobacco Auction Centre in West Bengal

2468. SHRI AMAR ROYPRADHAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have received any request from the Tobacco growers of West Bengal to open auction centres at Cooch Bihar/Jalpaiguri districts of West Bengal to provide remunerative prices to the growers;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which these centres are likely to be set up?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) to (c). Yes, Sir. The request has recently been received and is under examination.

Duty Free Import of Samples

2469. SHRI RAM KAPSE: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under consideration to increase the value of duty free import of samples by exporters from the present limit of Rs. 1300; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.V. CHANDRASHEKHARA MURHTY): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Farm Debt Relief

2470. PROF. UMMAREDDY VENKATESWARLU: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the NABARD has decided against grant of farm debt relief;

(b) if so, the reasons thereof;

(c) whether the NABARD has given any suggestions to assist farmers indebted due to high costs of farm inputs;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and