

and quantity restrictions. The Food Corporation of India has also been permitted to export/sell for export upto 2.0 million tonnes of fine and superfine varieties of rice from the public stocks. Such exports would also include export of rice to Bangladesh. Statewise-data on export is not being maintained.

[Translation]

Minimum Wages

3312. SHRI SURENDRA PAL PATHAK: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government have taken any decision on its proposal for national minimum wages;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI P.A. SANGMA): (a) to (c): The issue relating to national minimum wage has been considered by various fora in the past. A Group of State Labour Ministers in September, 1985 decided that it might not be feasible to frame a National Wage Policy at the present stage. This subject was also considered by the Indian Labour Conference (ILC) held in November, 1985. The ILC expressed the view that "till such time a national wage is feasible it would be desirable to have regional minimum wage in regard to which the Central Government may lay down the guidelines. The minimum wages should be linked with rise in cost of living." Accordingly, the Government have issued guidelines on Regional Minimum Wages in July, 1987 to all the State Governments and U.T. Administrations. The State Governments/U.T. Administrations were requested to provide for variable Dearness Allowance linked to Consumer Price Index, as a part of minimum wages, to be revised every six months. The country was divided into six regions namely, Eastern Region, North-Eastern Region, Southern Region, Northern Region, Western Region and Central Region. The first round meetings of the Regional Minimum Wages Advisory Committee, renamed as Regional Labour Ministers' Conference, were held during 1987 and 1992. The second round of Conferences of the Regional Labour Ministers were held in 1994 & 1995.

[English]

Conversion of Cooperative Banks into Commercial Banks

3313. SHRI MANIKRAO HODLYA GAVIT: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state; (a) whether the Government propose to allow scheduled urban

cooperatives banks to convert themselves into commercial banks as has been reported in the "Hindustan Times", dated June 6, 1995; and

(b) if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.V. CHANDRASHEKHARA MURTHY): (a) and (b): The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Setting up of National Tourism Board

3314. SHRI DHARMANNA MONDAYA SADUL: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

- (a) whether some of the leading Hotel Managements have requested the Union Government to set up National Tourism Board and also creation of special funds for development of tourism in the country;
- (b) if so, details therefor; and
- (c) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) No Sir.

(b) and (c): Does not arise.

Private Banks

3315: SHRI SHIV SHARAN VERMA:
SHRI D. VENKATESWARA RAO:
SHRI BOLIA BULLI RAMAIAH:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether leading corporate houses of the country interested in setting up private banks, are mounting big pressure on the RBI to change its latest selection norms which virtually disallows the established companies from entering into the banking sector;

(b) if so, the details thereof and whether RBI has decided a three formula for selection of the private sector banks;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the number of banks likely to be set up in private sector in the country in the near future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.V. CHANDRASHEKHARA MURTHY): (a) to (c): No, Sir. Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has reported that as per the policy being followed by it in taking up for consideration the applications for setting up new banks in the private sector, initially preference was given to financial institutions because of their built-up expertise in credit appraisal, good track record in respect of managerial competence and profitability. Thereafter,

preference was given to non-banking financial companies because they undertake a broad spectrum of activities, such as, investment dealings, equipment leasing, hire purchase and housing finance, financing consumer durables etc. and to promoters having professional banking background. Weightage was also given to promoter groups seeking to establish new banks in the under-developed and under-banked areas and those with business focus on rural development.

(d) RBI has reported that although it is not considering putting a cap on the number of private sector banks to be set up, it is not possible to indicate, at this point of time, the number of banks likely to be set up in the private sector in the country.

Cancellation of Calcutta Silchar Flights

3316. SHRI DWARAKA NATH DAS: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that Indian Airlines flights from Calcutta to Silchar are cancelled off and on causing serious inconveniences to the passengers;

(b) if so, the reasons therefore

(c) whether landing and take off facilities of flights are also not improved at Silchar Airport:

(d) if so, the steps taken by the Government to improve these facilities;

(e) whether the Government propose to allow to private airlines to operate from Calcutta to Silchar; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) and (b): During the period January, 1995 to July, 1995, only 7 flights of Indian Airlines between Calcutta and Silchar were cancelled, out of a total number of 173 flights scheduled, 3 flights were cancelled due to agitation of pilots and 4 due to non-availability of Commanders.

(c) and (d): Precision Approach Path Indicator (PAPI) and Very High Frequency Omni Range (VOR) equipment are already available at Silchar airport. Airports Authority of India has also drawn up plans to provide additional facilities for landing and take off within a year.

(e) and (f): NEPC Airlines has already started operating four services a week on Calcutta- Imphal-Guwahati-Silchar sector.

Bombay-Calicut Flight

3317. SHRIMULLAPPALLY RAMCHANDRAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be

pleased to state:

(a) whether the Bombay-Calicut Indian Airlines flight has been converted from the domestic to an international flight;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government are aware that the domestic passengers on the above flight are facing immense difficulties and delay; and

(d) if so, the remedial steps the Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD) : (a) and (b): With a view to provide connections to/from Calicut to passengers travelling between Calicut and other countries over Bombay, the Bombay-Calicut-Bombay service of Indian Airlines has been converted into an international service.

(c) No complaints have been received against the above arrangement.

(d) Does not arise.

Demands of Beedi and Cigar Workers

3318. SHRI RAMCHANDRA MAROTRAO GHANGARE: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have received any representation from the All India Beedi, Cigar and Tobacco Workers Federation, Ahmednagar (Maharashtra);

(b) if so, the main demands raised by them;

(c) whether the Government have permitted the multi-national cigarette Companies including prominent Indian Cigarette Companies to manufacture macro-cigarettes since 1994 and also reduced excise duty on them from Rs. 120/- to Rs. 60/- per thousand;

(d) if so, whether the Government are aware that these steps have thrown lacs of indigenious beedi workers mostly women out of employment and forced their families to starvation; and

(e) if so, the steps the Government contemplate to save the beedi industry of the country?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI P.A. SANGMA) (a) and (b): Yes, Sir. The main demands raised therein relate to minimum wages, dearness allowance, supply of raw material, implementation of Labour Laws, abolition of contract labour, issue of identity card, pension and insurance scheme in respect of beedi workers and implementation of 1991 Supreme Court decision in respect of Tamil Nadu in all States etc.

(c) to (e): The Government have received representations from the manufacturers of beedis and the Associations of beedi workers stating that the present