

(a) whether Government had agreed to establish Reference Standards Laboratory in Karnataka during the Sixth Five Year Plan period for providing metrological facilities to States/Union Territories industries in the Southern Region; and

(b) if so, the progress made so far in the matter ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI A. K. PANJA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The process of setting up the Laboratory in Bangalore has been commenced in a temporary accommodation provided by the State Government. The State Government has transferred a plot of land measuring about 3.2 hectares for permanent building of the Laboratory. A few functional posts have been created and basic equipments have been procured. The Laboratory is likely to be commissioned shortly.

Fraud in Punjab National Bank

8519. SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether his attention has been drawn to the news item captioned "Fraud in PNB" appearing in 'Economic Times' of 7 February, 1986;

(b) if so, whether the serious allegation contained therein regarding "benami" foreign exchange transactions have been subjected to inquiry by the intelligence authorities;

(c) if so, the findings thereof; and

(d) whether the said allegations pertain to a non-official Director of the Bank ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d). The information is being collected and to the extent available will be laid on the Table of the House.

Fire at the Cotton Godowns at Vijayawada

8520. SHRI K. S. RAO : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that cotton worth 2.5 crores of rupees has been destroyed by fire accidents at the godowns at Vijayawada and Warangal;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the fire accident was due to sabotage or for the purpose of cheating the corporation by undesirable elements;

(d) whether Government have any proposal to adopt safety measures against such accidents; and

(e) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN) : (a) and (b). There has been a fire accident at the ginning and pressing factory at Warrangal. 5240 bales of cotton worth rupees One crore have been destroyed. There was no incident of fire at Vijayawada.

(c) The exact cause of the fire is under investigation.

(d) and (e). Safety measures against fire incidents are generally provided in the ginning and pressing factories. Facilities like water hydrants, fire extinguishers and other fire fighting equipments are provided in the ginning and pressing factories. The inspection of the fire fighting facilities are also carried out by insurance companies. The safety measures are under constant review.

Setting up of More LIC Division in Andhra Pradesh

8521. SHRI BEZAWADA PAPI REDDY : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) the number of Life Insurance Corporation divisions functioning in Andhra Pradesh at present;

(b) whether there is any proposal to set up more Life Insurance Corporation divisions in Andhra Pradesh; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY): (a) The LIC has four divisions at Hyderabad, Cuddapah, Visakhapatnam and Masulipatnam in Andhra Pradesh at present.

(b) and (c). Yes, Sir. The LIC has recently opened a new Divisional Office at Warrangal out of the existing Hyderabad Division to supervise the branches in Adilabad, Karim Nagar and Khammam districts.

Steps to Rehabilitate Jute Industry

8522. SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the jute mill industry has cut down production by about 10 per cent to contain losses and to avoid mounting inventories; and

(b) if so, the steps being taken by Government to help improved the offtake of jute goods and avert the situation leading to a lay off of labour?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN): (a) There has not been any organised cut in production as such in jute industry in West Bengal. However, production has been adversely affected recently to some extent due to several factors such as :

- (i) Exodus of labour to their village homes on Leave, which is a regular feature during April to June every year;
- (ii) Sluggish market demand during this period on account of lesser offtake in domestic market;
- (iii) Closure of six jute mills during April, 1986 so far on account of reported labour unrest.

(b) The Government is continuing to help the jute industry in domestic and international markets through various measures which include :

- (i) Purchase of jute goods by Govt. (DGS&D) from jute industry on cost plus basis; and persuading intending agencies to advance their purchase programme for jute bags for packing 1986 Kariff crop from May, 1986 onwards so as to generate some additional demand and tone up gunny market sentiment;
- (ii) Persuading other user Departments to encourage use of more jute bags instead of synthetic substitutes for packing fertilizers and compulsory use of 100% new jute bags by cement industry;
- (iii) Providing higher cash compensatory support (CCS) to dynamic sectors of jute goods;
- (iv) Improving the competitiveness of jute goods vis-a-vis synthetic substitutes through fiscal and R&K efforts;
- (v) Introducing a Scheme of buffer stocking of raw jute so as to ensure availability of raw jute to mills at reasonable prices.

Construction of Drive-in-Hotels on National Highway

8523. SHRI GURUDAS KAMAT : Will the Minister of PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether a proposal to construct drive-in-hotels on the National Highway is under consideration of Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) when the proposal is likely to be finalised?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND TOURISM